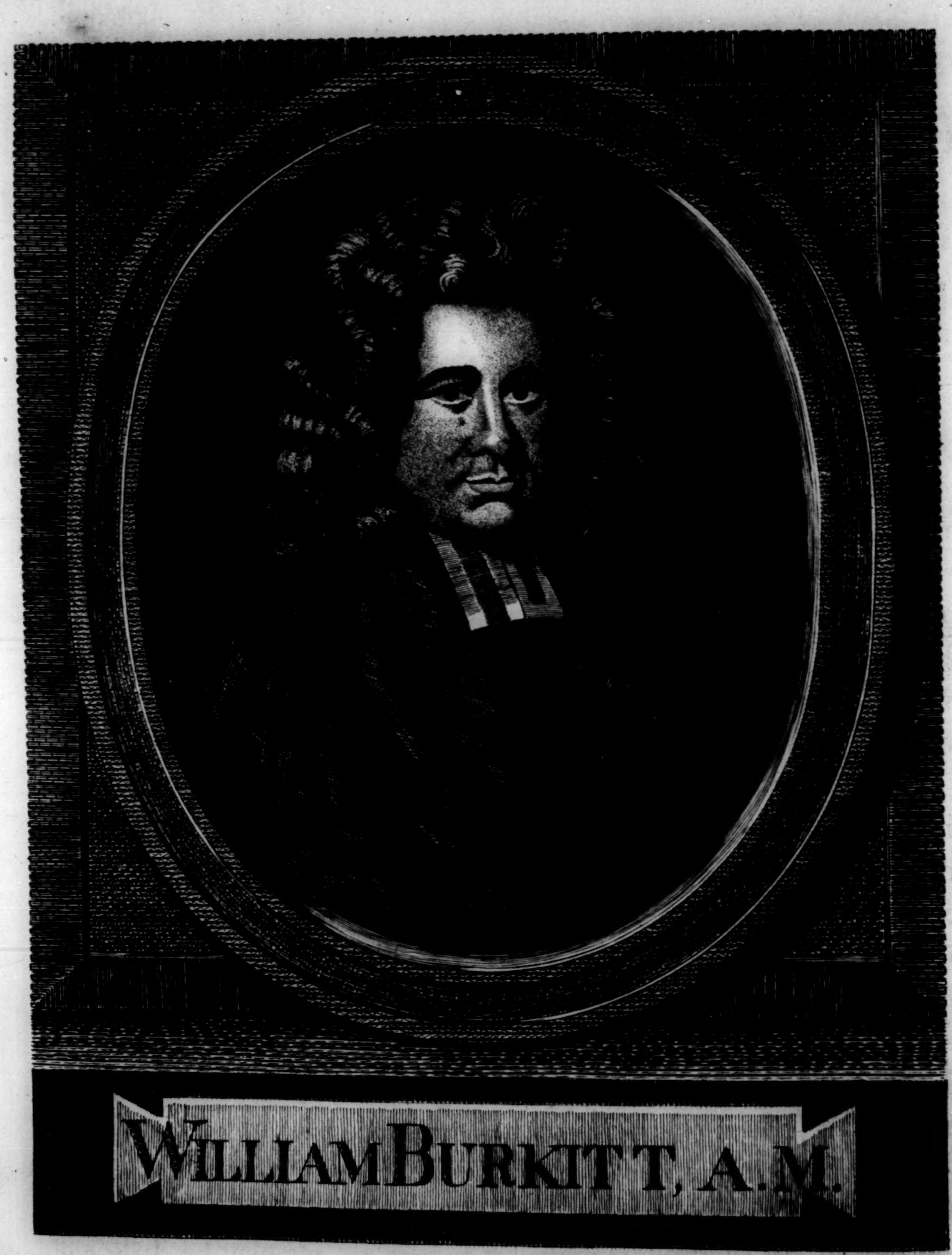

WILLIAM BURKITT, A.M.

EXPOSITORY NOTES,
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

K. Bible

UPON THE
New Testament
OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST.

WHEREIN THE WHOLE OF THE
SACRED TEXT IS RECITED, THE SENSE EXPLAINED,
AND THE
INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE OF THE BLESSED JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES,
TO OUR IMITATION RECOMMENDED.

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BIRMINGHAM,
PRINTED BY J. THOMPSON; AND SOLD BY ALL THE BOOKSELLERS IN GREAT-BRITAIN.

MDCCLXXXIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

FAMILY GOVERNORS,

PARTICULARLY

THOSE OF MY CHARGE.

AS religion did always conſiſt in an imitation of God, and in are ſemblance of thoſe excellences which ſhine forth in the *beſt* and moſt *perfect* Being, ſo we may imitate him now with much more eaſe and greater advantage, ſince his *Son was manifeſt in the fleſh and dwelt among us:* For he was pleaſed to become *man* on purpoſe to ſhew us how we might become like to God, by a daily imitation of his holineſs. And it is moſt certain, that God our Father will never own any of us for his children, unleſs he ſees upon us the air and features, the impreſſions and reſemblance of Chriſt our elder Brother.

This conſideration has induced me to ſet the example of the Holy Jeſus before myſelf and you, in theſe *plain*, *practical notes* upon the *Holy Evangliſts*, which contain remarks upon the hiſtory of our Saviour's *life*, *doctrine*, and *miracles*, and of his *death*, *reſurrection* and *aſcenſion:* to the intent that the temper of our minds, and the actions of our lives, may be a lively tranſcript of them ind and life of our bleſſed Redeemer: that we may admire and imitate his unſpotted purity, his condeſcending humility, his fervent charity, his patience under ſufferings and reproaches, his readineſs to forgive injuries, and his entire reſignation to the Divine Will in all conditions of life whatſoever: that ſo following our Lord and *Maſter* in all the ſteps of an imitable virtue, and ſetting his example continually before us, we may be daily correcting and reforming our lives by that glorious pattern; for without preſent likeneſs to him, we have no grounds to hope that we ſhall hereafter live with him.

A true compaſſion to your ſouls, and a fervent deſire to further their ſalvation from the *preſs* as well as from the *pulpit*, has put me upon redeeming time for this work.

I muſt acknowledge my conſtant preaching three times a week unto you (beſides occaſionals) and viſiting as often a populous and ſcattering pariſh from houſe to houſe amongſt you (which I have *always* accounted a moſt important part of my duty) would allow me but little, too little time for ſuch a work as this, which I heartily wiſh had fallen upon the ſhoulders of ſome that had more leiſure, and greater abilities for writing on this noble and lofty ſubject, which even to eternity can never be exhauſted. But thus much I can truly ſay, that earneſtly imploring divine aſſiſtance, I have done what I could; my work has been my recreation, and the Lord accept it, and ſucceed it.

And I have this obſervation to ground my hope of acceptance and ſucceſs upon, that Almighty God has in all ages rendered thoſe labours of his ſervants (how mean ſoever in themſelves) moſt acceptable and uſeful, which have been employed in the profitable explication of any part of the Holy Scriptures; as if He, who imprinted ſuch majeſty upon the text, delighted alſo to reflect an honour upon the interpreters thereof.

My deſign in preparing and giving theſe *notes* into your hands, is to oblige you to read a part of the Holy Scriptures in your families every day; and to invite you thereunto, the ſacred text is here at large recited, and controverſies declined.

And I do moſt affectionately requeſt you, not to ſuffer the *holy word of* GOD, which is in all your hands, to lie by you as a neglected book; but daily to read it in and to your families, with a ſimplicity of mind to be directed and inſtructed by it.

All the return I deſire from you for this *my labour of love*, is your living in a *daily* imitation of that grand pattern of holineſs and obedience, which is here ſet before you, and in every page recommended to you; and that we may continue to ſtrive together in our prayers one with and for another, for that grace which may enable us to the faithful diſcharge of our reſpective duties towards God, towards each other, and all mankind; and that the happy union, and unanimity which hath hitherto been amongſt us, may continue and increaſe ſtill with us, to the *glory* of God, the honour of our holy religion, the preſent benefit and comfort, and the eternal joy and rejoicing, both of the miniſters and people, in the day of our Lord Jeſus; which as it is the fervent prayer, ſo it ſhall be the conſtant endeavour of your unworthy miniſter, whoſe higheſt ambition it is to ſerve you in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel, whilſt I am,

W. BURKITT.

A

PRAYER

BEFORE THE

READING

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ALMIGHTY God and merciful Father, who haſt appointed thy word to be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths, and cauſed all holy ſcriptures to be written for our learning; grant us the aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may in ſuch ways read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

And ſeeing, of thy tender love to mankind, thou haſt given thy dear and only Son to be unto us both a ſacrifice for ſin, and alſo an example of godly life give us grace that we may always moſt thankfully receive this his ineſtimable benefit, and alſo daily endeavour ourſelves to follow the bleſſed ſteps of his moſt holy life: who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt ever one God, world without end. Amen.

EXPOSITORY

EXPOSITORY NOTES, &c.

UPON THE

GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

St. MATTHEW.

The HOLY BIBLE contains the whole revelation of the will of GOD *to the children of men. This ſacred book is uſually divided into the Old and New Teſtament. The Old Teſtament contains the law and the prophets: The writings of the New Teſtament are either hiſtories or epiſtles: The hiſtories are the four Goſpels and the Acts of the Apoſtles. The four Goſpels were written by the four Evangeliſts whoſe names they bear; of whom St.* Matthew *and St.* John *were eye-witneſſes of what they wrote, but St.* Mark *and St.* Luke *had what they wrote from the relation of others.*

This Goſpel before us of St. Matthew, *contains an hiſtory of the birth, life, miracles, death, and reſurrection of the holy* JESUS*: all which are the moſt ſtupendous and amazing matters and myſteries, as well as the moſt neceſſary truths to be known and believed in the world: And,*

This chapter before us contains the genealogy or pedigree of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, *as he was man, unto verſe* 17, *and then relates the fact of his wonderful incarnation to the end of the chapter.*

CHAPTER I.

THE book of the generation of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſon of David, the ſon of Abraham.

That is, the deſcent of Jeſus Chriſt, who was according to the fleſh, the ſon of David and the ſon of Abraham, is on this wiſe. And his genealogy from Abraham down to his reputed father was thus. Here *note*, That our Evangeliſt, deſigning to write a narrative of our Saviour's life, begins with his pedigree and genealogy, and ſhews whom he deſcended from, namely, from David and Abraham. Where, *obſerve*, 1. That David is named before Abraham, becauſe he being a king, and an illuſtrious type of the Meſſias, the Jews expected, and do to this day expect, that the ſon of David ſhould reign over them; and that they ſhould enjoy a temporal kingdom by him. 2. The names given to our bleſſed Saviour, *Jeſus* and *Chriſt*; *Jeſus* is his Hebrew name, and ſignifies a Saviour; *Chriſt* is his Greek name, and ſignifies Anointed. From whence ſome do infer an intimation and encouragement, that both Hebrews and Greeks, both Jews and Gentiles, may alike come unto Chriſt for life and ſalvation, he being the common Saviour of both; according to that of St. John, Epiſt. I. chap. ii. ver. 2. *He is the propitiation for our ſins, and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world.*

2 Abraham begat Iſaac; and Iſaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; 3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Eſrom; and Eſrom begat Aram; 4 And Aram begat Aminidab; and Aminadab begat Naaſſon; and Naaſſon begat Salmon;

Both the evangeliſts, St. Matthew and St. Luke, make mention of our Saviour's pedigree; the former by his reputed father's ſide, the latter by his mother's ſide. The deſign of both was, to preſent us with a general draught of our Lord's pedigree and deſcent, and not to be ſtrict and accurate in enumerating every individual perſon. This ſhould teach us, not to be over curious in ſcanning the parts of this genealogy, much leſs captiouſly to object againſt it. For, if the evangeliſts were not critical and exact in compoſing this genealogy, why ſhould we ſhew ourſelves ſo in examining of it? Rather let us attend to the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in writing of it, which was twofold: Firſt, for the honour of our Saviour, as man, ſhewing who were his noble and royal progenitors, according to the fleſh. Secondly, For the confirmation of our faith, touching the reality of our Redeemer's incarnation. The ſcripture making mention of all his progenitors, from the firſt man Adam to his reputed father Joſeph, will not ſuffer for us to doubt, either of the truth of his human nature, or of the certainty of his beingt he promiſed Meſſias. *Learn* hence, That the wiſdom of God hath taken all neceſſary care, and uſed all needful means, for the ſatisfying the minds of all unprejudiced perſons touching the reality of Chriſt's human nature, and the certainty of his being the promiſed Meſſias: for both theſe ends is our Saviour's genealogy and deſcent recorded in the holy ſcriptures.

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz
begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jeſſe; 6 And
Jeſſe begat David the king; and David the king begat
Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;
7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat
Abia; and Abia begat Aſa; 8 And Aſa begat Joſaphat;
and Joſaphat begat Joram; and Joram
begat Ozias; 9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and
Joatham begat Achas; and Achas begat Ezekias;
10 And Ezekias begat Manaſſes; and Manaſſes
begat Amon; and Amon begat Joſias; 11 And
Joſias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the
time they were carried away to Babylon: 12
And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias
begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;
13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat
Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; 14 And Azor
begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim
begat Eliud; 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and
Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;
16 And Jacob begat Joſeph the huſband of Mary,
of whom was born Jeſus, who is called Chriſt. 17
So all the generations from Abraham to David, *are*
fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying
away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations;
and from the carrying away into Babylon unto
Chriſt, *are* fourteen generations.

Obſerve, Here are ſeveral women mentioned in our Saviour's genealogy, and all, or moſt of them, have a brand of infamy upon them. Thamar was one with whom her father-in-law, Judah, committed inceſt; Rachab is called an harlot; Ruth came of Moab, whom Lot begat of his own daughter; and Bathſheba, the wife of Uriah, was one with whom David had committed adultery. Now the wiſdom of God has thought fit to leave all this upon record, for ſeveral ends and purpoſes. 1. To denote the freeneſs of God's grace, which extends itſelf in the ſaving effects and benefits of it to them that are moſt unworthy and ill-deſerving. 2. To encourage the greateſt ſinners to go unto Chriſt by faith, and ſeek to be ingrafted in him: for as Chriſt by the power of his godhead, did purify our nature from all the pollution of our anceſtors, ſo he can, by the power of his grace and ſpirit, ſanctify our perſons and natures, how foul and impure ſoever they either are, or have been. 3. Hereby our Lord gives us to underſtand, that he came to ſave the moſt notorious ſinners, as well as thoſe whoſe lives have been leſs ſcandalous. 4. This is recorded for the ſupport of ſuch as are illegitimate and baſe-born; how vile ſoever their parents' ſin has rendered them in the eyes of men, it is their own ſin only which expoſes them to contempt in the ſight of God. It is not illegitimacy, but unregeneracy, that makes us objects of God's wrath.

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe: When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the holy Ghoſt.

That is, the birth of Chriſt was not in the ordinary and natural way, but his mother Mary was found to be with child by the extraordinary and miraculous operation of the Holy Ghoſt. Here *note*, That the eſpouſal of Mary to Joſeph was for the ſafety of Chriſt, and for the credit and reputation of the Virgin. It was for our Saviour's ſafety, becauſe being to fly into Egypt, he has Joſeph his reputed father to take care of him; and it was for the Virgin's reputation, leſt ſhe ſhould have been accounted unclean. *Learn* hence, What eſpecial regard almighty God has to the fame and reputation of his children; he would have them free from the leaſt ſuſpicion of evil and diſhoneſty. Mary being eſpouſed to an huſband, frees herſelf from the ſuſpicion of naughtineſs, and her ſon from an imputation of an illegitimate birth. *Obſerve* farther, The miraculous conception of Jeſus; the Holy Ghoſt overſhadowed the Virgin, and did miraculouſly cauſe her conception without the help of an human father. Thus Chriſt was the Son of God, as well in his human as in his divine nature; he muſt needs be a perfect holy perſon, who was conceived purely by the Holy Spirit's operation.

19 Then Joſeph her huſband being a juſt *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

That is, being an holy perſon, and a ſtrict obſerver of the rites of his nation, he was unwilling to accompany with a defiled woman, and therefore minded to put her away, by giving her a bill of divorce into her hand before two witneſſes; but being kind and gentle, he intended *to put her away privily*, leſt ſhe ſhould have been expoſed, and ſtoned to death. *Obſerve* here, How early our Lord's ſufferings began; he and his mother are deſigned to be put away, even when he was but an embryo in the womb. *Obſerve* farther, From the great clemency of Joſeph toward the ſuſpected Virgin, that kind and merciful men always preſume the beſt, and proſecute with gentleneſs, eſpecially where life is concerned. Meek Joſeph doth reſolve upon the milder courſe, and chuſes rather to put her away privily, than publicly to expoſe her.

20 But while he thought on theſe things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, ſaying, Joſeph, thou ſon of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghoſt.

Two things are here obſervable; namely, the care that almighty God takes, 1. For Joſeph's ſatisfaction; 2. For vindicating the Virgin's reputation. For Joſeph's ſatisfaction, an angel is diſpatched to give him aſſurance that the Virgin was not defiled by man, but overſhadowed by the Holy Ghoſt. Whence *note*, That almighty God will certainly find out ways and means for his people's ſatisfaction, when they are willing and deſirous above all things to come to the knowledge and right underſtanding of their duty. 2. How the angel clears the Virgin's innocency, as well as ſatisfies Joſeph's doubtings, by aſſuring, that what was conceived in her was by the Holy Ghoſt. *Learn* hence, That God will, in his own time, clear the innocency of ſuch as ſuffer in their name and reputation for the ſake of Chriſt, though for the preſent they may lie under the burden of diſgrace and ſhame.

21 ¶ And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name JESUS: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.

Obſerve here, 1. A prediction of our Saviour's birth: the Virgin *ſhall bring forth a ſon*. 2. A precept for the impoſition of his name; *Thou ſhalt call his name* JESUS, that is, a Saviour. 3. The reaſon why that name was given him; becauſe *he ſhould ſave his people*, not temporally, as Joſhua did the Iſraelites from their enemies, but ſpiritually and eternally, *from their ſins*; not *in* their ſins, but *from* them; that is, from the guilt and puniſhment, from the power and dominion of them. 4. The peculiar ſubjects of this privilege; *His people: He ſhall ſave his people from their ſins. Learn*, 1. That ſin is the evil of evils; or that ſin, conſidered in itſelf, is comparatively the greateſt and worſt of evils. 2. That the great end of Chriſt's coming into the world, was to be a Saviour from this evil. 3. That Chriſt's own people do want, and ſtand in need of a Saviour, as well as others; if he does not ſave them from their ſins, they muſt die in and for their ſins, as well as others. Therefore he ſaves them from ſin three ways; 1. By obtaining pardon for ſin, and in reconciling us to God. 2. By weakening the reigning power of ſin, and implanting a new principle of holineſs in the heart. 3. By perfecting and accompliſhing all theſe happy beginnings at the end of this life in heaven. *Dr. Hammond's Practical Catechiſm.*

22 Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, 23 ¶ Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.

Of all the prophets in the Old Teſtament, the prophet Iſaiah has the honour to be firſt recited in the New. Here the evangeliſt quotes his prophecy of Chriſt's incarnation, *Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child. Learn* thence, That the great myſtery of our Saviour's wonderful incarnation was (though darkly) revealed to the church of God under the Old Teſtament. *Obſerve* farther, The name given to our Saviour under the Old Teſtament, *Emanuel*, that is, *God with us:* God manifeſt in our fleſh; God appearing in our nature; God reconciling man to himſelf. O happy and bleſſed union of two natures in one perſon! Chriſt is God and man united, that God and man may be reconciled.

24 Then Joſeph being raiſed from ſleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.

Joſeph is no ſooner aſſured that Mary is with child by the overſhadowing power of the Holy Ghoſt, but he inſtantly obeys the Lord's command, and takes Mary to him, without farther diſputing or delaying. *Learn* thence, That a gracious perſon, when once ſatisfied in God's word of command, diſputes no farther, but inſtantly complies with the will of God, even in the moſt hazardous and difficult duties.

25 And knew her not till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon. And he called his name JESUS.

It is piouſly believed, though not poſitively in ſcripture aſſerted, that the Virgin had no other child but our Saviour; it is a very probable opinion, though not an infallible article of faith, as the church of Rome would make it: For the word *until* ſignifies in ſcripture as much as *never*. So Gen. xxviii. 15. *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have promiſed*; that is, *I will never leave thee.* So the words following, *Her firſt-born ſon*, do not imply that ſhe had any child after, but that ſhe had none before. That child which firſt opened the womb, is uſually in ſcripture called the *firſt-born*, though there was no other born after. Thus Joſh. xvii. 1. Machir is called the firſt-born of Manaſſeh, though he had no more children. So that Chriſt, not only as God, but alſo as he was man, was the firſt-born and only ſon. St. Auſtin expounds and applies Ezek. xliv. 2. to the Virgin Mary; *This gate ſhall be ſhut, it ſhall not be opened, and no man ſhall enter in by it; becauſe the Lord God of Iſrael hath entered in by it: therefore it ſhall be ſhut.* And others of the ancients ſay, That as Chriſt lay in a tomb, in which none lay before himſelf, ſo he lodged in a womb, in which none ever lay, either before or after himſelf. But he ſaid, *Quid poſt partum ſecutum erat curioſe non eſt quærendum.* What the Virgin was afterwards is of ſmall concern to the myſtery, therefore not to be enquired after. And yet it is now paſſed by ſome into a matter of faith, that the Virgin Mary was ever a virgin, and it hath been ſtyled hereſy to hold the contrary; but how it is conſiſtent with good divinity, to make that an article of divine faith, which is founded on no divine revelation, or to make that neceſſary to be believed, which confeſſedly is not contained in the holy ſcripture, let the church of Rome anſwer.

CHAP. II.

Our Saviour's miraculous conception, being recorded in the firſt chapter, ſeveral remarkable circumſtances relating to his birth are ſet down in this: viz. The place of his birth, Bethlehem: *And the time,* In the days of Herod the king.

NOW when Jeſus was born in Bethlemen of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wiſe men from the Eaſt to Jeruſalem.

Obſerve here, 1. The place of our Lord's birth, Bethlehem; he was born, not at Athens, nor at Rome, nor at Jeruſalem, nor in any opulent or magnificent city, but in the meaneſt of the cities of Judah: thereby ſhewing us, that his kingdom was not of this world, that he little regarded pomp and outward greatneſs. O how can we be abaſed enough for Chriſt, that thus neglected himſelf for us! 2. The time of our Lord's birth, *In the days of Herod the king*. This Herod being a foreigner, and made king by the Romans, which now reigned over the Jews, in him was fulfilled Jacob's prophecy, Gen. xlix. 10. *That the ſcepter ſhould not depart from Judah*: that is, the Jews ſhould have governors of their own nation, *until Shiloh come*; that is, until Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah come in the fleſh. So that, conſidering the circumſtance of time and place, where and when Chriſt was born, it was and is wilful obſtinacy in the Jews to deny that Chriſt is come in the fleſh. 3. That tribute of honour which was paid unto our Saviour at his birth; the wiſe men of the Eaſt came and worſhipped him; that is, the Chaldean, Arabian, or Perſian aſtronomers, who, as the firſt fruits of the Gentiles, ſeek after Chriſt, whilſt the Jews, his own people, rejected him. O how will their coming ſo far as the Eaſt to ſeek Chriſt riſe up another day in judgment againſt us, if we refuſe to be found by Chriſt, who came from heaven to ſeek us!

2 Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have ſeen his ſtar in the Eaſt, and are come to worſhip him.

Obſerve here, 1. The inquiry that they make after Chriſt: they do not aſk *whether* he was born, but *where* he was born; not doubting of the fact, but ignorant of the place. 2. The ground of their inquiry; *For we have ſeen his ſtar*. They had ſeen a ſtar; but how did they know it was his ſtar? Probably by divine revelation; they had a light within, as well as a ſtar without, or they had never ſeen Chriſt. It is likely the Holy Spirit's illumination accompanied the ſtar's apparition. As God made known the birth of Chriſt to the Jews by an angel, ſo he manifeſted the ſame to the Gentiles by a new-created ſtar. 3. The end of their Journey; *We are come to worſhip him*; that is, to pay all that honour and homage which is due to a great and mighty prince; all that adoration and worſhip which belongs to the promiſed Meſſiah, the Redeemer of the world. All honour and homage, all glory and worſhip is due to Chriſt from the ſons of men, and will be given him by them that know him.

3 When Herod the king had heard *theſe things*, he was troubled, and all Jeruſalem with him.

Obſerve here, That when Chriſt came into the world to ſave men, it caſt the world into a conſternation, and cauſed wonderful diſturbances. Herod is firſt concerned, and next *all Jeruſalem with him*; Herod for fear of loſing his kingdom, Jeruſalem for fear of new commotions. Thus Chriſt, who was the angel's ſong, the wiſe men's joy, Iſrael's conſolation, becomes Herod's fear, and Jeruſalem's terror. But why was Herod thus diſturbed? It is true a king is born, but one whoſe kingdom is not of this world; it was Herod's falſe apprehenſion that was the cauſe of this perturbation. Hence we ſee that the greateſt enmities and bittereſt animoſities have ariſen from cauſeleſs fears and groundleſs jealouſies.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief prieſts, and ſcribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Chriſt ſhould be born. 5 And they ſaid unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet; 6 And thou, Bethlehem *in* the land of Judah, art not the leaſt among the princes of Judah: for out of thee ſhall come a governor, that ſhall rule my people Iſrael.

Herod being in great perplexity, convened a council of the chief prieſts and ſcribes, and demands of them the place where Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, was to be born. They readily reply out of the prophet Micah, chap. v. 2. that Bethlehem was the place; this was the city of David's birth, and of Chriſt's the ſon of David. Bethlehem ſignifies *the houſe of bread*, and was ſo called from its fertility and fruitfulneſs; and, as ſome think, with reference to Chriſt, the true bread of life, born there. Bethlehem was a mean and contemptible place in itſelf; but being honoured with Chriſt's preſence, how great is it! *Learn* thence, That the preſence of Chriſt dignifies and exalts a place, how mean ſoever in itſelf. Bethlehem, though a little city in itſelf, yet is not the leaſt among the cities of Judah, becauſe Chriſt is born there.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wiſe men, inquired of them diligently what time the ſtar appeared. 8 And he ſent them to Bethlehem, and ſaid, Go, and ſearch diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worſhip him alſo.

Obſerve here, 1. How Herod cloaks his intended cruelty with diſguiſed hypocriſy; he has a murder in his heart, when he pretended to worſhip Chriſt with his mouth. There is no villainy ſo great, but will maſk itſelf under a pretence and ſhew of piety. Herod veils his intent to kill Chriſt, with a pretence to worſhip him. 2. Herod calls him *the young child*, not *the young king*: that was a word of too exalting a nature to come out of Herod's proud mouth; he could neither bear the thing, nor brook the title. A king it is true he is, but one that will never be thy rival: he has a kingdom, but it is not of this world.

3. How craftily Herod lays his plot; he deſires the wiſe men to inquire thoroughly, and to inform him privately. To be wiſe in doing miſchief is the worſt wiſdom in the world: it is not the wiſdom from above, but from hell beneath.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the ſtar which they ſaw in the Eaſt, went before them, till it came and ſtood over where the young child was. 10 When they ſaw the ſtar, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 ¶ And when they were come into the houſe, they ſaw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worſhipped him: and when they had opened their treaſures, they preſented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh.

Obſerve here, 1. How the ſtar, which for ſome time diſappeared, now appears again, to their farther direction in finding Chriſt; teaching us, that God will not be wanting to ſuch as are on the way to ſeek Chriſt, but will renew directions and encouragement to them, according as they ſtand in need: none ever ſincerely ſought Chriſt, but they certainly found him at the laſt. 2. That the joy which ariſes in ſuch ſouls as have found Chriſt is unutterable and unſpeakable. The wiſe men here *rejoiced with joy, with great joy, with exceeding great joy.* 3. The wiſe men having found this young king, they bring preſents to him, according to the manner of the eaſtern countries; namely, gold, frankincenſe, and myrrh, which were the principal commodities of the Eaſt. But the beſt preſent we can make to Chriſt is ourſelves: he ſeeks not ours, but us; and rather deſires what we are, than what we have. Yet the providence of God was wonderfully ſeen in theſe preſents; for hereby proviſion was made for the ſuſtenance of Joſeph and Mary, and the child Jeſus, in their exile or flight into Egypt, which they were ſhortly to undergo.

12 And being warned of God in a dream, that they ſhould not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

God having warned theſe wiſe men in a dream not to go back to Herod, they return home another way. But did theſe wiſe men play the parts of honeſt men, in that they returned not again to Herod! *Anſ.* It appears not that they promiſed Herod to return, though he expected it; or, if they did, it was in conſideration that Herod ſhould come and worſhip Chriſt, not murder and deſtroy him. But if they promiſed him never ſo poſitively, God Almighty gave them a diſpenſation from that promiſe, by commanding them to return home another way. Herod kept his deſign againſt Chriſt cloſe from the wiſe men; but he could not conceal his intentions from the infinitely wiſe God: he knew the purpoſes of his heart, and, by his providence, kept Chriſt out of his hand. There is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joſeph in a dream, ſaying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him. 14 ¶ When he aroſe, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, Out of Egypt have I called my ſon.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Lord's humiliation by perſecution in the very morning of his life: he was baniſhed almoſt as ſoon as born. *Flee into Egypt; for Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him.* Ungrateful Herod! Was this entertainment for a Saviour—to raiſe the country upon Chriſt, as if a deſtroyer, rather than a Saviour, had landed upon thy coaſts? Oh, barbarous injuſtice! to deny a ſubject the protection of thoſe laws under which he was born: the child of a beggar might claim that as his birthright, which is here denied to the Son of God. Lord! how great an humiliation was this, not only to become an infant, but in thine infancy to be hurried up and down, and driven out of thine own land as a vagabond! 2. How our Lord himſelf, in a time of perſecution, flies for ſafety, who was able a thouſand ways to preſerve himſelf from danger: teaching us, that in times of difficulty and danger, it is neither unwarrantable nor unbecoming to preſerve our lives by flight. Surely, it is no ſhame for us to fly, when our Saviour doth both practiſe it, and command it alſo.—Chriſt, by his own example, hath ſanctified that ſtate of life unto us; and by his command, has made it lawful for us. 3. The place which Chriſt flies into for ſafety; and that is Egypt, an unlikely place, conſidered in itſelf. Who could expect liberty in that houſe of bondage? but any place is good, if God ſends us thither, and Chriſt be in our company. His preſence can make Egypt itſelf not only ſafe, but delightful alſo. 4. How readily Joſeph complies with the divine command: inſtantly he aroſe, and took the young child, and fled. Faith gave wings to his obedience, and inſtantly vanquiſhed all his fears, and afforded a fuller ſupply than all the treaſures of the Arabian princes: teaching us, That when our direction is clear, our compliance ſhould be ſpeedy. We cannot be too forward and expeditious in the execution of divine commands. 5. Though Joſeph, at the command of God, flies preſently from Herod's rage, yet he flies privately by night, and prudently begins his journey when leaſt notice ſhould be taken of his motion: teaching us, That although we have never ſo many promiſes of ſafety and deliverance, yet we muſt not put God upon working miracles for our preſervation, when it may be obtained in the uſe of means.

16 Then Herod, when he ſaw that he was mocked of the wiſe men, was exceeding wroth, and ſent forth and ſlew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and all the coaſts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wiſe men.

Obſerve here, How Herod, having played the fox before, acts the lion now: His ſecret policy not ſucceeding, he breaks out into open and inhuman cruelty. *Learn*, That when fraud and ſubtilty fail the enemies of the church, then they fall to open rage and barbarous inhumanity. Thus here theſe holy innocents fall as a ſacrifice to Herod's rage, and die for Chriſt, who came to die for them; and ſo were martyrs in deed, though not in will. Some affirm, that Herod did not ſpare his own child, then at nurſe in the coaſts of Bethlehem; which made Auguſtus ſay, "He had rather be Herod's hog, than Herod's child;" becauſe the Jews did never eat ſwine's fleſh; and Herod, in compliance with the Jews, abſtained from it.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, becauſe they are not.

Obſerve here, The loud and bitter cry which the mothers of Bethlehem make for the death of their innocent children, which were barbarouſly ſlain by the ſword of Herod. Here was lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, made by Rachel; that is, by the women inhabiting in and about Bethlehem, where Rachel's ſepulchre was. For the land about Bethlehem was called Rachel, from her ſepulchre, ſo famous in thoſe parts. Rachel here is not the name of a perſon, but of a place. 2. The cauſe and reaſon of this cry and bitter lamentation; the mothers weep, not becauſe their children are, but becauſe they are not; they did not, with ſome wicked parents, repine becauſe they had children, but becauſe they had loſt them: mothers have the ſharpeſt throes both in their childrens births and burials. As children in their births are their mothers Benjamins; ſo in their burials they are their mothers Benonies, Sons of Sorrow.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joſeph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Iſrael: for they are dead which ſought the young child's life.

Obſerve, 1. Herod's death; like a bloody perſecutor, he is ſent unlamented to his grave. Hiſtorians ſay, that out of his body iſſued forth ſuch impure ſtreams of blood, that the loathſomeneſs and pain made him attempt the killing of himſelf. God ſeldom ſuffers perſecutors to paſs in quiet to their graves; they rarely die the common death of all men, having no other balm at their funeral than their own blood. 2. The happy conſequence of Herod's death. Chriſt is now called home without danger: Herod being dead, the holy family may now ſafely return to their native country. The death of perſecutors is the delivery of the perſecuted. 3. An angel is diſpatched to acquaint Joſeph with Herod's death. O! how chearfully do thoſe glorious ſpirits execute the commands of their ſovereign maſter! With what delight do they carry the meſſages of God's kindneſs to their fellow-creatures! Lord, what an argument is this of thy love unto us, that in this our pilgrimage-ſtate, thou alloweſt us thine own royal guard to attend and preſerve us!

21 And he aroſe, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Iſrael. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither. Notwithſtanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aſide into the parts of Galilee:

Obſerve here, 1. The juſt fear that Joſeph has upon his mind, that Herod's ſon would be as bloody a tyrant as his flagitious father. No wonder that the children of cruel perſecutors are ſuſpected to tread in their parents ſteps. 2. How God's warrant and direction doth quiet Joſeph's mind, reſolves his doubts, and removes his fears, and makes him readily comply with the command of God; *Being warned of God he removes out of Egypt into Galilee.* O how ſafe and ſatisfactory is it, in all our ways, to follow the call and command of God! Joſeph and Mary durſt not move their feet, not even out of Egypt, till God gives them a warrant for their departure, and bids them go.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, He ſhall be called a Nazarene.

A threefold interpretation is given of theſe words, *He ſhall be called a Nazarene.* Some read the words, *He ſhall be called a Nazarite.* The Nazarites were a religious and ſeparate rank of perſons among the Jews, who abſtained from wine, and came not near the dead, for fear of pollution. Chriſt was a holy perſon, but no Nazarite, in a ſtrict ſenſe; for he drank wine, and touched the dead. Others read the words, *He ſhall be called a Netzer*, a branch, in alluſion to Iſa. xi. 1. where he is called a *branch of the root of Jeſſe.* Chriſt was that true branch of which the prophets had ſo often ſpoken. And ſome will have the word *Nazarene* refer to the city Nazareth. Where Chriſt was conceived, and lived moſt of his time: *He ſhall be called a Nazarene*, becauſe he dwelt at Nazareth. Hence his diſciples were called the ſect of the Nazarenes, that is, the followers of him that dwelt at Nazareth; and Chriſt himſelt is pleaſed to own the title, Acts xxii. 8. *I am Jeſus of Nazareth whom thou perſecuteſt.* *Learn* from hence, The great humility of mind that was found in our Saviour. He was born in Bethlehem, a little city; and he lived at Nazareth, a poor contemptible place: he aſpired not after the grandeur of the world, but was meek and lowly in ſpirit. May the ſame humble mind be in us which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.

CHAP. III.

The Evangeliſt having declared our Saviour's miraculous conception in the firſt, and recorded ſeveral circumſtances relating to his birth in the ſecond chapter, in this he paſſes over in ſilence how he ſpent his minority at Nazareth, where he dwelt till he was thirty years of age; when he entered upon his public miniſtry, having John the Baptiſt for his harbinger and forerunner, as this chapter fully informs us.

IN thoſe days came John the Baptiſt, preaching in the wilderneſs of Judea, 2 And ſaying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The preacher ſent by God, *John the Baptiſt*; a pattern of mortification, and a preacher of repentance. 2. The place he is ſent to preach in, *the wilderneſs of Judea*; not in populous Jeruſalem, but in a barren wilderneſs, where inhabitants are few, and probably very ignorant and rude. *Learn* hence, That it is God's prerogative to ſend forth the preachers of the goſpel, when and whither, and to what people he pleaſes; and none muſt aſſume the office before they be ſent. 3. The doctrine of repentance, *Repent ye*. This was to prepare the people for the Meſſiah, and the grace of the goſpel. *Learn* thence, that the preaching of the doctrine of repentance is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to the preparing of the hearts of ſinners for the receiving Chriſt Jeſus and his holy doctrine. 4. The motives which St. John uſes to inforce the exhortation to repentance, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*; that is, Now is the ſo much expected time of the appearing of the Meſſiah come; the Old Teſtament diſpenſation is now to be aboliſhed, and the mercy and grace of the goſpel is now to be revealed; therefore repent, and amend your lives. *Note* thence, That the free and full tenders of grace and mercy of the goſpel, are the moſt alluring arguments to move a ſinner to repent, and to convert to God.

3 For this is he that was ſpoken of by the prophet Eſaias, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

The Papiſts, from John the Baptiſt's living in the wilderneſs, would make him the firſt founder of the order of hermits, but very groundleſsly. For, 1. What he did was by God's command; what they do is by the dictates of their own fancy. 2. He buſied himſelf in preaching in the wilderneſs; they bury themſelves alive and do nothing. 3. He lived in the wilderneſs but for a time, afterwards we find him at court, preaching a ſermon to Herod; but they bind themſelves by a vow to live and die hermits.

4 ¶ And the ſame John had his raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was locuſts and wild honey.

The plainneſs of John's habit and diet is here declared: he was habited in a plain ſuit of camels hair, much as Elijah was before him; and as his habit was plain, ſo his diet was ordinary, feeding upon herbs, and ſuch things as the wilderneſs afforded. Hence it was that Nazianzen ſaid he was all voice; a voice in his habit, a voice in his diet, and a voice in his whole converſation. His example teaches us, that the miniſters of the goſpel are not to affect bravery of apparel, or delicacy in diet, but having the neceſſary comforts and needful conveniences of life, to be therewith content.

5 Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.

Obſerve here, The great encouragement which John had in his miniſtry, from the people's attendance upon it. He was now fiſhing for ſouls, and God brought the people very thick about the net of the goſpel, and multitudes were incloſed, no doubt, to his joy and great ſatisfaction. For it is matter of great rejoicing to the miniſters of Chriſt, when they find their people forward to encourage their miniſtry, by a diligent attendance.

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

This paſſage the Papiſts bring to ſupport their doctrine of auricular confeſſion, but very groundleſsly. For, 1. The confeſſion of thoſe converts was voluntary, and not conſtrained. 2. It was general, and not of every particular ſin. 3. It was public and open, and not in the ear of a prieſt. 4. It was a confeſſion of ſin committed before baptiſm, and not after they were baptized. In all which circumſtances, it differs from the auricular confeſſion of the church of Rome very greatly. *Note*, That confeſſion of ſin paſt, together with a profeſſion of faith in, and obedience to Chriſt for the time to come, are neceſſary requiſites and qualifications in all perſons of riper years that are admitted to baptiſm, John admitted theſe perſons to baptiſm, upon their confeſſion of ſin, and promiſe of amendment. From whence we may learn, that ſuch perſons as have been very bad, upon a profeſſion of their repentance, and promiſing to become better, may be admitted to the holy ſacrament, provided that we warn them, as the Baptiſt did theſe, not only to make profeſſion of repentance, but to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

7 ¶ But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father. For I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

Here we have the reception which John gave to his unexpected auditors, the Phariſees, and Sadducees, which came to hear him, and to be baptized by him. He gives them firſt a quick and cutting compellation, *O generation of vipers!* next a ſharp and ſevere reprehenſion, *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* It was matter of wonder and admiration, to ſee ſuch men turn proſelytes. *Note* thence, That the condition of proud Phariſees, pretending and falſe-hearted hypocrites, though it be very dangerous, yet is not hopeleſs and deſperate; and their ſalvation, though very improbable, yet muſt not be deſpaired of as impoſſible: and accordingly, the Baptiſt having given them a ſmart reproof, ſubjoins a ſeaſonable exhortation, *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance*; as if he had ſaid, Do not ſatisfy yourſelves with a bare profeſſion of repentance, but let us ſee the fruits of repentance in your daily converſation. *Learn* thence, That ſincere repentance is not a barren thing, but conſtantly brings forth the fruits of holineſs anſwerable to its nature. As the body without the ſpirit, and as faith without works is dead, ſo repentance without works is dead alſo. *Note* farther, How he enforces his exhortation with a neceſſary caution; *Think not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham for our father*, &c. As if he had ſaid, Truſt not to your outward privileges, and glory not in them; flatter not yourſelves, that becauſe you are Abraham's ſeed and the only viſible church, that therefore the judgments of God will not reach you; for God can, out of the obdurate gentile world, who now worſhip ſtones, raiſe up a people to himſelf, and take them into covenant with himſelf, and caſt you all out, who have Abraham's blood running in your veins, but nothing of Abraham's faith in your hearts, nor of his obedience in your lives. Now from St. John's plain dealing with theſe hypocritical Phariſees, we *learn*, That it is the duty, and ought to be the endeavour of the miniſters of Chriſt, to drive hypocrites from their vain confidence, who do conſtantly bear up themſelves upon their external privileges, in the enjoyment of which they promiſe themſelves a freedom from the judgments of God. *Think not*, &c.

10 And now alſo, the ax is laid to the root of the tree: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good frutit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.

The Baptiſt having preached the doctrine of repentance in the former verſes, backs it with a powerful motive in this verſe, drawn from the certainty, the ſeverity, and ſuddenneſs of that vengeance which would come upon them, if they continued impenitent: *Now is the ax laid to the root of the trees. Learn*, 1. That thoſe whoſe hearts are not pierced with the ſword of God's word, ſhall certainly be cut down, and deſtroyed by the ax of his judgments. 2. That it is not unſuitable for goſpel preachers to preſs repentance and holineſs of life upon their hearers from arguments of terror; St. John does it here, and elſewhere.—*Note* farther, That foraſmuch as the ſin here ſpecified is a ſin of omiſſion, which brings this ſevere and ſore judgment, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit*, as well as that which bringeth forth evil fruit, *is hewn down and caſt into the fire*; we may gather that ſins of omiſſion are certainly damning, as well as ſins of commiſſion; the neglects of duty are as dangerous as the acts of ſin. Such trees as ſtand in God's orchard, and bring forth no good fruit, are marked out as fuel for unquenchable fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear; he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and *with* fire.

In theſe words John declares the excellency of Chriſt's perſon and miniſtry above his own. As to his perſon, he owns, that he was not worthy to carry his ſhoes after him, or to perform the loweſt offices for him. And as to his office, he declares that Chriſt ſhould not baptize as he did with water, but with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire; that is, ſhould plentifully pour down of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit upon his proſyletes, which like fire in their operation, ſhould purify their hearts from ſin, conſuming their luſts and corruptions; but at the ſame time, he ha a fiery indignation, and flaming judgements, to deſtroy and burn up impenitent ſinners like combuſtible ſtubble.—Our Saviour is here repreſented by one and the ſame metaphor of fire, in a way of comfort to his children, and in a way of terror to his enemies, he is a fire unto both: he ſits in his church as a refiner's fire; he is among his enemies as a conſuming fire; a fire for his church to take comfort in, a fire for his enemies to periſh by.

12 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

In theſe words, St. John compares Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, to a huſbandman, the Jewiſh church to a barn floor. The office of the huſbandman is to threſh, fan, and winnow his corn, ſeparating it from the chaff; preſerving the one and conſuming the other. *Learn* hence, 1. That the church is Chriſt's floor. 2. That this floor he will purge, and that thoroughly. 3. That the word of Chriſt is the fan in his hand, by and with which he will thoroughly purge his floor. The church is compared to a floor, upon account of that mixture which is in the church; in a floor there is ſtraw as well as grain, chaff as well as corn, tares as well as wheat, cockle and darnol as well as good ſeed. Thus in the church there is and will be a mixture of good and bad, ſaints and ſinners, hypocrites and ſincere chriſtians. But this floor Chriſt will purge; purge it, but not break it up; purge out its corruptions, but not deſtroy its eſſence and exiſtence. And the fan with which he will purge his floor, is his word, accompanied with the wind of diſcipline, The fan detects and diſcovers the chaff, and the wind diſſipates and ſcatters it; and by the help of both, the floor is purged. *His fan is in his hand*, &c.

13 ¶ Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Here we have our Saviour's ſolemn inauguration and public entrance upon his prophetic office, by baptiſm, or waſhing with water, according to the manner of the prieſts under the ceremonial law, Exod. xxix. 4. Where we have obſervable, 1. The circumſtance of time, *Then cometh Jeſus*; that is, after he had lain hid in Nazareth thirty years, he comes abroad, and enters upon his public miniſtry: teaching us by his example, that when we are ripe and fit for public ſervice, we ſhould no leſs willingly leave our obſcurity, than we took the benefit of it for our preparation. 2. The action itſelf, Chriſt is baptized now, as he was circumciſed before; not becauſe there was any impurity in him, either filth, or foreſkin, which wanted either the circumciſion knife, or the baptiſmal water; yet purity itſelf condeſcends to be waſhed, Chriſt to be baptized for theſe reaſons; 1. That by this ſymbol he might enter himſelf into the ſociety of Chriſtians, as by circumciſion he had done into the ſociety of the Jews; as a king condeſcends ſometimes to be made a freeman of a city or corporation. 2. That he might by his own baptiſm, ſanctify the ordinance of baptiſm unto his church. 3. That thereby he might fulfil the righteouſneſs of the ceremonial law, which required the waſhing of the prieſts with water, when they entered upon their office, Exod. xxix. 4. *Note* alſo, The great condeſcenſion of our Saviour, in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the baptiſm of John: he cometh to John, not John to him. Behold! the Lord ſeeking to his ſervant, Chriſt will be baptized of his meſſenger! Our Saviour's deſign hereby no doubt was, to put honour upon the miniſtry of John. Oh how dare the greateſt upon earth deſpiſe the miniſtry of man, being appointed by God, which Chriſt honoured in his own perſon, and graced with his preſence?

14 But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me?

Note here, 1. The modeſty of John's refuſal: *John forbad him*, and refuſed to admit him. But why? 1. In regard of Jeſus, becauſe he knew he needed it not: Such was his majeſty and greatneſs, that he was above it; and ſuch was his purity and holineſs, that he could not want it. 2. In reſpect of himſelf, he knew his own uncleanneſs; *I have need to be baptized of thee*, &c. He thought it unſuitable that a ſinner ſhould baptize and waſh him that was no ſinner. 3. With reſpect to the people; leſt they ſeeing Jeſus baptized, ſhould apprehend him to be a ſinner, and one that wanted the baptiſm of repentance, as well as themſelves. *Note*, 2. The modeſty of John's refuſal, and the reaſon which he aſſigns for it; *I have need to be baptized of thee*; as if he had ſaid, "Thou art purity, I am pollution; thou art ſpirit, I am fleſh; thou art the Son of God, I am the ſon of Adam:" ſuch an humble apprehenſion has this holy man of himſelf. *Learn*, That the more holy a perſon is, the more ſenſible he is of his unholineſs; where there is moſt grace, there is the greateſt ſenſe of the want of grace.

15 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Suffer *it to be ſo* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him.

Theſe words contain our Saviour's reaſon, why he ſubmitted to John's baptiſm, becauſe it became him to fulfil all righteouſneſs; that is, to own every divine inſtitution, particularly the righteouſneſs of the ceremonial law, which required the waſhing of the prieſts in water, when they entered upon that office. *Learn* hence, 1. That whatever the law required, in order to perfect righteouſneſs, that our Saviour fulfilled in moſt abſolute perfection. 2. That as it became him to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the ceremonial law for himſelf, ſo it is our duty and intereſt to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the moral law for ourſelves, as an evidence of our being righteous in God's ſight, 1 John iii. 7. *He that doeth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

16 And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him. 17 And lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

Here we have the ſolemn inauguration of Chriſt into his prophetic office, accompanied with a threefold miracle. 1. The opening of the heavens. 2. The deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon him like as a dove deſcends. 3. God the Father's voice concerning his Son. The heavens were opened, to ſhew that heaven, which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our ſins, is now opened to us, by Chriſt's undertaking for us. As the firſt Adam ſhuts us out of heaven, the ſecond Adam lets us into it; he opened heaven unto us by his meritorious paſſion, and he keeps it open by his prevailing interceſſion. Next the Holy Spirit deſcends like a dove upon our Saviour;---here we have an evidence of the bleſſed Trinity; the Father ſpeaks from heaven, the Son comes out of the water, and the Holy Spirit appears upon him. Hence we gather, that the Holy Spirit is not a quality, or an operation, but a perſon, and a perſon really diſtinct from the Father and the Son. But why did the Holy Spirit now deſcend upon Chriſt, ſeeing he was now truly and really God? *Anſw.* The divinity of Jeſus was quieſcent in him, till he entered upon the prophetic office at thirty years old and after. And the Holy Spirit now deſcends, *firſt*, For the deſignation of his perſon, to ſhew that he was the perſon ſet apart for the work and office of a Mediator. *Secondly*, For the qualification of his perſon for the performance of his office. This was his unction, Iſaiah lix. 1. when he was appointed above his fellows, to be the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his church. *Laſtly*, We have the audible voice of God the Father, pronouncing, 1. The nearneſs of Jeſus's relation to himſelf, *This is my Son*, not by adoption, but by eternal generation. 2. The endearedneſs of his perſon, *This is my beloved Son.* 3. The fruit and benefit of this near and dear relation unto us; *In whom I am well pleaſed.* *Note*, 1. That there is no poſſibility for any perſon to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; both our perſons and performances find acceptance only for his ſake. 2. That in and through him, God is well pleaſed with all believers: *This is my beloved Son*, &c. Lord! what reviving news is this to thy church, to hear that her Head and Huſband, her Surety Mediator, and Interceſſor, is that only Son of God in whom his ſoul is delighted and ever well pleaſed! That Son who always pleaſed thee, and by and through whom thou art well pleaſed with, and reconciled to thy offending creatures!

CHAP. IV.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with our Bleſſed Saviour's temptation by, and triumph over, Satan; and the firſt verſe informs us of the time when, and of the place where, the event took place.

THEN was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the devil.

Obſerve, 1. The great humiliation of the Son of God: how exceedingly was he humbled by the horrid temptations wherewith he was aſſaulted, than which nothing could be more grievous to his holy heart! What could be more burdenſome to him who was brought up from eternity with God the Father, than to be ſhut up in a wilderneſs with the devil, there to be tempted by him ſo many days, having his ears filled, though not defiled, with horrid blaſphemies, ſpit upon the holy and reverend name of God!

Oh deep abaſement, and wonderful humiliation of the Son of God. 2. The time when Chriſt entered the liſts with Satan, implied in the word *then*, that is, *firſt*, immediately after his baptiſm. He is no ſooner out of the water of baptiſm, but he is in the fire of temptation. *Secondly*, Immediately after the Spirit had deſcended upon, and the Father had, by a voice from heaven, manifeſted his complacency and ſatisfaction in him, *This is*, &c. *Note* thence, That great manifeſtations of love from God, are uſually followed with great temptations from Satan. 3. The place where this event took place, and that is, *in the wilderneſs*. *Learn* thence, That no place can privilege us from temptation, or be a ſanctuary from Satan's aſſaults; the ſolitary wilderneſs has a tempter in it, yea Satan ſometimes makes uſe of men's ſolitarineſs, to further his temptations: a cell, a nunnery, or a cloyſter, are as open to Satan, as the open fields; and the perſons that live in them have a tempter without, and an enticer within, as well as other men. 4. The efficient cauſe of Jeſus' going into the wilderneſs to be tempted by Satan; *He was led up of the Spirit*, ſays St. Matthew: *The Spirit drove him*, ſays St. Mark: that is, the Holy Spirit of God, not Satan the unclean ſpirit, for the devil is ſeldom, if ever, called the Spirit, but uſually ſome brand of reproach is annexed, as the *evil* ſpirit, or the *unclean* ſpirit. Jeſus was *led by the Spirit*, that is, he was carried by a ſtrong impulſe of the Spirit of God into the wilderneſs to be tempted by Satan. *Learn* hence, 1. That none of the children of God ought to expect a freedom from temptations; ſeeing Jeſus himſelf, in the days of his fleſh, was ſolicited by Satan unto ſin. 2. That all temptations wherewith the children of God are aſſaulted, are ordered by divine and ſpecial diſpenſation.. Satan could not aſſault the holy Jeſus till he was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs for that end; and he ſhell not aſſault any of his members but by divine permiſſion.

2 And when he had faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

Note here, How the divine power upheld the human nature of Jeſus without food. What Moſes did at the giving of the law, he doth at the beginning of the goſpel, namely, Faſt forty days and forty nights. Our Saviour here intended our admiration, not our imitation; or, if our imitation, of the action only, not of the time. He here teaches us, by faſting and prayer, to prepare ourſelves for a conflict with our ſpiritual enemies; as he prepared himſelf to grapple with the tempter, ſo ſhould we.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread.

Note here, 1. The occaſion of the temptation. 2. The temptation itſelf. The occaſion of the temptation was our Saviour's hunger, and want of bread. *Learn*, thence, That when God ſuffers any of his dear children to fall into want, and to be ſtraitened for outward things, Satan takes advantage thereupon to tempt and aſſault them. But what doth he tempt Jeſus to? To the ſin of diſtruſt, to queſtion his ſonſhip, *If thou be the Son of God*. And next to diſtruſt his Father's providence and care, *Command that theſe ſtones be made bread*. As if Satan had ſaid, "How unlikely is it, that thou ſhouldſt be highly favoured, and yet be deſerted? What! the Son of God, and yet ready to periſh! Certainly if thou canſt not ſupply thy neceſſities, thou art nothing akin to God." *Learn*, 1. That Satan's grand deſign is, firſt to tempt the children of God to doubt of their adoption, and next, to diſtruſt his fatherly care over them, and proviſion for them; and then, to uſe unwarrantable means to help themſelves. Thus Satan dealt with Jeſus, and thus deals with chriſtians. For to work a miracle at Satan's direction, was not a lawful mean of providing food for himſelf.

4 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Note here, The weapon which Jeſus made uſe of to repel the temptation, and to vanquiſh the tempter; and that is the word of God, *It is written*. *Learn*, That the ſcripture, or the word of God, is the only ſure weapon wherewith to vanquiſh Satan, and to beat back all his fiery temptations. Satan himſelf has not the impudence to oppoſe ſcripture: What abandoned wretches are thoſe who ridicule and deride it; they not only run counter to the practice of Jeſus, but outdo the devil himſelf in impudence.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and ſetteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.

That is, Satan, by God's permiſſion, took up his body, and carried it in the air, and ſet it upon one of the battlements of the temple. *Learn* hence, What a mighty power evil ſpirits have over our bodies, if God permits them to execute and exerciſe their power upon them. 2. That it is owing to the gracious care, and watchful providence of God, that we are not hurried away by Satan. Thanks be to God, though the devil's malice be infinite, yet is his power limited and bounded: and as he cannot do all the miſchief he would to the bodies and ſouls of men, ſo he ſhall not do all he can.—But why is the holy city and holy temple choſen by Satan to be the ſcene of this temptation? *Anſwer*, I cannot tell, unleſs he apprehended (as he might) that the holineſs of the place would aggravate the ſin. No place ſo ſacred, no duty ſo holy, as to protect us from Satan's aſſaults. This enemy purſues us even to the horns of the altar. Lord! how ought we at all times, and in all places, to be upon our watch and guard, eſpecially in thy preſence, becauſe then and there Satan is moſt active and buſy, and moſt deſirous to draw us into ſin!

6 And ſaith unto him, if thou be the Son of God caſt thyſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

Here it is obſerveable, 1. the ſin which Satan tempts Jeſus unto; 2. and the argument which he tempts him from: the ſin tempted to, is the ſin of ſelf-murder; *Caſt thyſelf down*. Whence we *learn*, That ſelf-murder is a ſin which our Saviour himſelf was, and the beſt of ſaints may, by Satan, be tempted to the commiſſion of. But foraſmuch as Satan tempted Jeſus to murder himſelf, but had not power to do it himſelf, do thou *caſt thyſelf down*; we *learn*, That though Satan may tempt, yet ye cannot compel; he may entice, but cannot enforce any to ſin, without their own conſent. 2. The argument which Satan uſes; it is a ſcripture argument, he quotes the promiſe of God, *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee*, What a marvel is here, to find Satan with a Bible under his arm, and a text of ſcripture in his mouth! Chriſt had alledged ſcripture before to Satan, here Satan retorts ſcripture back again to him: *It is written*, ſays Chriſt: *It is written* ſays Satan. *Learn* thence, That it is no wonder to hear heretics and hypocrites quote ſcripture, when Satan himſelf recited it: he that had profanely touched the ſacred body of Jeſus with his hand, ſticks not preſumptuouſly to handle the holy ſcriptures of God with his tongue. Yet *remark*, How wretchedly Satan wreſts, perverts, and miſapplies the ſcripture: When God promiſes his angles ſhall keep us, it is, *in viis non in præcipitiis*; it is in all God's ways, not in any of our own crooked paths. *Note* here, that although the children of God have the promiſe of the guardianſhip of holy angels, yet then only may they expect their protection, when they are walking in the way of their duty, and uſing means for their own preſervation.

7 Jeſus ſaid unto him, It is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Obſerve here, Though the devil had wreſted and abuſed ſcripture, yet ſtill Chriſt alledges ſcripture. The abuſe of the holy ſcriptures, by heretics, and ſeducers, is no argument againſt the uſe of them. We muſt not throw away our Bibles becauſe Satan quotes ſcripture; but as Chriſt here compares ſcripture with ſcripture, ſo ſhould we, in order to the finding out the true ſenſe and meaning of it; for ſcripture is the beſt interpreter of itſelf. Scripture is moſt clearly expounded by ſcripture. This Satan knew full well, and therefore dares not make any further reply.

8 Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down, and worſhip me.

The next ſin which Satan tempts our Saviour to, is the ſin of idolatry, even to worſhip the devil himſelf. O thou impudent and foul ſpirit! to deſire thy Creator to adore thee an apoſtate creature! Surely there can be no *ſin* ſo black and foul, ſo groſs and monſtrous, but that the chriſtain may be tempted to it, when Jeſus himſelf was tempted to worſhip the tempter. St. Matthew reads the words, *If thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* St. Luke, *If thou wilt worſhip before me.* Whence we may gather, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*, That if to worſhip before the devil, be to worſhip the devil, then to worſhip before the image is to worſhip the image. Alſo the bait which Satan makes uſe of to allure our Saviour to the ſin of idolatry; and that was, in repreſenting to the eye and view all the glories of the world in the moſt inviting manner, and that in a moment of time; to the intent it might affect him the more, and prevail the ſooner. *Learn* thence, that the pomp and greatneſs, the glory and grandeur of this world, is made uſe of by Satan, as a dangerous ſnare, to draw men to a compliance with him in his temptations unto ſin. When Satan ſets thee upon a pinnacle, look to thyſelf.

10 Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

Note here, 1. With what zeal and indignation of ſpirit the bleſſed Jeſus repels and beats back this temptation of Satan, *Get thee hence*. *Learn* thence, That the greater the ſins are which Satan tempts us to, the greater our zeal and indignation ought to be in oppoſing and reſiſting the temptation to them. A great temptation ſhould be withſtood with great reſolution. 2. The weapon with which he repels and beats back the fiery dart of Satan's temptation, and that is, with the ſhield of ſcripture; *It is written, Thou ſhall worſhip the Lord thy God.* *Learn* thence, that GOD is the ſole object of religious worſhip; it is ſo peculiarly the Creator's due, that to give it to any creature is groſs idolatry, and repugnant to the ſcriptures. No creature is to pay divine adoration to any but his Creator; hence it appears, that Chriſt is not a creature, divine worſhip being given him.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and miniſtered unto him.

Obſerve here, 1. The iſſue of this conflict; Satan is conquered, and quits the field; *Then the devil leaveth him:* teaching us, That nothing like a vigorous reſiſtance of temptation cauſes the tempter to flee from us; *Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you.* 2. Our Lord's trirumph over his enemy; *Behold, angels came and miniſtered unto him*; food to his hungry body, and comfort to his tempted ſoul. They came no ſooner, leaſt it ſhould be thought he needed their aſſiſtance. They came now, becauſe he was now pleaſed to make uſe of their aſſiſtance. *Learn* thence, that thoſe who in the hour of temptation do hold out in reſiſting Satan, ſhall find the power and faithfulneſs of God will not be wanting to them, to ſend in ſuccour and relief in the end.

12 Now when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee. 12 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the ſea-coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nepthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nepthalim, *by* the way of the ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The people which ſat in darkneſs, ſaw great light; and to them which ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour hearing of John's impriſonment, provides for his own ſafety, by departing into

Galilee. As our holy Lord avoided perſecution ſo may we. 2. The place in Galilee he comes to, Capernaum. Jeſus had three cities which he called his own; Nazareth, where he was bred; Bethlehem, where he was born; and Capernaum where he dwelt; this was a ſea-coaſt town, in the borders of Zabulon and Nepthali. 3. The ſpecial providence of God, in this change of our Saviour's habitation; for by that means, the prophecy, Iſa. ix. 1. was fulfilled, which declares, that in that dark part of the country, the Meſſiah, the true light, ſhould ſhine forth. *Learn* hence, 1. That a people deſtitute of the ſaving knowledge of the goſpel, are in great darkneſs, how great ſoever the light of their outward comforts may be. This people had natural light enough, and civil light enough; they had abundance of wealth and riches, peace and plenty; but they wanted the light of Chriſt and his goſpel, and therefore are ſaid to ſit in darkneſs. 2. That wherever the goſpel is preached amongſt a people, it is as light ſpringing up and ſhining forth among them; quickening and enlivening, reviving and cheering the ſouls of thoſe who entertain it, how great ſoever their outward darkneſs and diſtreſs may be. *The people that ſat in darkneſs ſaw great light, and to them that ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light,* &c.

17 ¶ From that time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Here our Saviour begins to enter upon his prophetic office, and by preaching to make known the will of God to mankind; *obſerve*, The doctrine which he preached is the ſame that John the Baptiſt did preach, namely, the doctrine of repentance, *Repent ye:* And the argument is the ſame alſo, *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand:* that is, Now is the ſo much expected time of the appearing of the promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn*, That the doctrine of Chriſt and his ambaſſador is alike, and the ſame in ſubſtance: they both teach the doctrine of repentance to a loſt world, as moſt ſuitable to the time and diſpenſation of the goſpel.

18 ¶ And Jeſus walking by the ſea of Galilee ſaw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: for they were fiſhers. 19 And he ſaid unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men. 27 And they ſtraitway left *their* nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he ſaw other two brethren, James the *ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ſhip with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ſhip and their father, and followed him.

Our bleſſed Saviour, as he was the great prophet of his church, had power and authority to appoint teachers under him; and accordingly, here he begins to call his apoſtles to that great work; and in his call we have ſeveral particulars very obſerveable; as, 1. The meanneſs of the perſons whom he calls, illiterate *fiſhermen*; not a Paul, that had long ſtudied at the feet of Gamaliel, is firſt called; but Peter, who was a ſtranger to eloquence and human learning. Hereby our Saviour took effectual care that his goſpel ſhould be known to be *the power of God*, and not the wiſdom and device of man; and that the inſtrument ſhould not carry away the glory of the work. 2. How Jeſus calls his apoſtles, by couples, two and two, Peter and Andrew, James and John, to let us underſtand, that the work of the miniſtry requires the concurrence of all hands that are called to it: all the miniſters of God ſhould put their hands, and join their hearts as one man to this great work; and all little enough to carry it on with advantage and ſucceſs. 3. The work which they were called to, from being *fiſhermen*, to be *fiſhers of men*. They catched fiſh before with the labour of their hands; they ſhall catch men now with the labour of their tongues. 4. Our Saviour's command; firſt to follow him, before they are ſent out by him; *Follow me, I will make you fiſhers of men.* We muſt be Chriſt's diſciples, before we are his miniſters; his followers, before his ambaſſadors. We muſt learn Chriſt before we preach him; otherwiſe we may fiſh for a livelihood, for honour and applauſe, but not for ſouls: if we be not incloſed ourſelves in the net of the goſpel, we can have but ſmall hopes of bringing in others. 5. The promiſe which Jeſus gives his diſciples for their encouragement: 1. To qualify them, *I will make you fiſhers.* 2. To ſucceed them, *I will make you fiſhers of men.* Faithfulneſs and care, diligence and endeavour, is our part; but the bleſſing and ſucceſs is Chriſt's. Biſhop *Hall* ſays, "Our labour is only in the caſt, Chriſt's power is wholly in the draught. Some fiſh cleave to the rocks, others play upon the ſands, and more wallow in the mud, and we ſhall labour all our days, and catch nothing, if Chriſt doth not bring our fiſh to the net, and incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the throwing of it." 6. The apoſtles ready compliance with our Saviour's call—*Straightway they followed him.* Whom Jeſus calls, he calls perſuaſively, and effectually; whom he calls, he draws, and works them to a willing compliance with their duty. 7. Upon their call to the miniſtry, they leave off their trade, they forſake their ſhip and their nets, and lie cloſe to their miniſterial employment. Teaching us, that the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould wholly give themſelves to their work, and not encumber themſelves with ſecular affairs: nothing but an indiſpenſable neceſſity in providing for a family can excuſe their entangling themſelves with worldly buſineſs.

23 And Jeſus went about all Galilee, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe among the people.

Our Saviour having called Peter, James, Andrew, and John, to be diſciples, in order to their being apoſtles to preach the goſpel, in the foregoing verſes, this acquaints us how he went himſelf along with them in the work. He did not ſend them forth as his curates to labour, and lie at home himſelf upon his couch at eaſe. What ſhall we ſay of thoſe lazy fiſhermen, who can ſet others to the drag, and care only to feed themſelves with the fiſh, not willing to wet their hands with the net? Our bleſſed Saviour, when he ſent forth his diſciples, went along with them, and laboured himſelf as much as any of them.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all ſick people that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed of devils, and thoſe which were lunatick, and thoſe that had the palſy; and he healed them.

Obſerve here, 1. That although our Saviour's doctrine needed no confirmation beyond his own authority, yet he was graciouſly pleaſed to exert the power of his godhead in working miracles for the eſtabliſhment of our faith. 2. That the miracles which he wrought were not judicial, but beneficial to mankind. Moſes's miracles were as great judgments as wonders: but Chriſt's miracles were ſalubrious and healing, full of goodneſs and compaſſion, and very advantageous to the world. He diſpoſſeſſed devils, healed the ſick, cleanſed the lepers, was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. O bleſſed Saviour! thy life, in all inſtances, was a life of univerſal ſerviceableneſs and beneficialneſs to mankind.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jeruſalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

Obſerve here, How affecting our Saviour's miniſtry was at firſt: multitudes crowd after him; they come from all parts to attend upon his miniſtry, when he began to preach among them. His miniſters find it thus alſo; at their firſt coming among a people, their labours are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt good. Our people's affections are then warmeſt, and our own zeal perhaps is then greateſt. Happy is that miniſter that improves all opportunities and advantages for the good of ſouls: "For he that winneth ſouls is wiſe."

CHAP. V.

This chapter, and the two next following, contain Chriſt's famous ſermon upon the mount, which comprehends the ſum and ſubſtance both of the Old and New Teſtament; which our Saviour begins with a declaration who are bleſſed; including an exhortation to duty, and annexes a reward to the performance of that duty. By this ſermon the chriſtian world will be judged in the laſt day; and by the particulars of it, we muſt either ſtand or fall.

AND ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him. 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

Obſerve here, 1. The preacher; *He*, that is, Jeſus, the great prophet and teacher of his church. 2. The place where he preached, upon *a mountain*; probably, for conveniency to himſelf, and advantage to his auditors: though ſome imagine a myſtery in it—that as the law at firſt was given on a mountain, ſo Chriſt would now explain it upon a mountain; or to ſhew the ſublimity of his doctrine and precepts. 3. The poſture in which he preached, ſitting; *When he was ſet, he taught*, according to the cuſtom of the Jewiſh doctors, who ſat, to ſhew their authority. 4. The ſermon itſelf, which begins with beautitudes and bleſſings, and is accompanied with promiſes of reward. Not as the law was delivered on mount *Sinai*, with threatnings and thunder, with fire and earthquake, but in a ſoft voice. Our Lord's lips are full of grace, they drop as the honeycomb. Bleſſings and promiſes are our encouragements to obedience.

3 ¶ Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. It is not ſaid, Bleſſed are the poor in eſtate; but, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit:* it is not a poverty of purſe and poſſeſſion, but a poverty of ſpirit, that intitles us to the bleſſing. 2. It is not ſaid, Bleſſed are the ſpiritually poor, but, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit*: He that is deſtitute of the grace and ſpirit of Chriſt, that has no ſenſe of his ſpiritual wants, he is ſpiritually poor, but he is not poor in ſpirit. Farther, 3. It is not ſaid, Bleſſed are the poor-ſpirited, but, *the poor in ſpirit*. Such as act below and beneath themſelves as men and as chriſtians, theſe are poor-ſpirited men, but theſe are not poor in ſpirit. It is not ſaid, Bleſſed are they that make themſelves poor, by leaving their property and callings, as ſome do among the Roman catholics; but bleſſed are they whom the goſpel makes poor, by giving them a ſight of their ſpiritual wants and neceſſities, and directing them to our Saviour that they may be made rich. In ſum, not thoſe that are poor in eſtate, or thoſe whom the world has made poor in poſſeſſion, but thoſe whom the goſpel has made poor in ſpirit, that is, the truly humble lowly ſpirits, have a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. Now humility is called poverty of ſpirit, becauſe it is the effect and fruit of God's ſpirit.

4 Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.

Obſerve here, 1. That mourning for ſin is a goſpel-duty, the law allows no place for repentance, though we ſeek it carefully with tears. 2. The time and ſeaſon for this duty. Bleſſed are they that *now* mourn. Sorrow for ſin is phyſic on earth, but it is food in hell. Repentance is here a grace, but there a puniſhment. 3. As mourning goes before comfort, ſo comfort ſhall follow after mourning. Our godly ſorrow for our own and others ſins ſhall end in everlaſting joy and comfort.

5 Bleſſed *are* the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth.

Note here, 1. The grace and duty recommended, *meekneſs*. 2. The wages and reward belonging to that grace and duty, the inheritance of the earth. Meekneſs either reſpects God or our neighbour. As it reſpects God, ſo it implies flexibleneſs to his commanding will, and ſubmiſſiveneſs to his providential pleaſure. As it reſpects our neighbour, it conſiſts in forgiving injuries, bearing reproaches, and recompenſing good for evil. The reward and bleſſing inſured to this grace and duty is, the inheritance of the earth, where heaven is not excluded, but included; yet the earth is mentioned to ſhew that men ſhould be no loſers by their meekneſs as to their outward eſtates; for almighty God will make good to them whatever they loſe for peace ſake. O happy temper of mind, that at once ſecures heaven and earth! *Bleſſed are the meek for they ſhall inherit the earth* in this life, and heaven in the life that is to come.

6 Bleſſed *are* they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

Obſerve, 1. The characters of the perſons whom Chriſt pronounces *bleſſed*; ſuch as *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*. 2. Wherein their bleſſing doth conſiſt: *They ſhall be filled*. By righteouſneſs we are to underſtand, 1. A righteouſneſs of juſtification; the righteouſneſs of the Mediator imputed to us, by which we ſtand righteous in God's ſight, being freed from condemnation. (Dr. *Hammond's Pract. Catechiſm.*) 2. A righteouſneſs of ſanctification, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, enabling us to act righteouſly. By the former there is a relative change in our condition; by the latter, a real change in our conſtitution. *Learn*, 1. That all, and only ſuch as ſpiritually hunger and thirſt after Chriſt and righteouſneſs, are in an happy and bleſſed condition. 2. To hunger after holineſs, is to apprehend the worth of it, to be ſenſible of the want of it, to be deſirous of it, and reſtleſs in endeavours after it, as men uſually do that are pinched with hunger.

7 Bleſſed *are* the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy.

Our bleſſed Redeemer recommends to us a compaſſionate regard towards the miſeries of others, and that both in ſoul and body, name and eſtate; to be forward to pity and pardon, relieve and help, to give and forgive. And as an encouragement, he adds, that as we deal with others, God will deal with us; our charity towards men ſhall be crowned with mercy from God, and that in abundance too; for our rivulet of charity we ſhall partake of an ocean of mercy; *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy*. *Learn*, That the merciful man is a bleſſed man, and therefore bleſſed, becauſe he ſhall obtain mercy when he moſt wants, and moſt deſires it. Mercy, not wages.

8 Bleſſed *are* the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God.

Note here, 1. The duty required and called for, *Purity of heart and life*; the firſt expreſſed, the other included: for a clean heart will be accompanied with a clean life. Where there is a principle of grace within, there will be the acting of grace without. 2. The incentive to this duty; the pure in heart, and holy in life, ſhall *ſee* and *enjoy* God; infinitely pure and perfectly holy God. They ſhall ſee him ſpiritually and mediately in this life, glorioully and immediately in the life to come.

9 Bleſſed *are* the peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the children of God.

Obſerve 1. The connection between peace and purity; purity of heart and peaceableneſs of life accompany one another. There is no inward purity where there is not an endeavour after inward peace. 2. The duty exhorted to, namely, to love peace; and to labour after peace; to love it ourſelves, and to promote it amongſt others; to be not only peaceable, but peace-makers. 3. The title of honour that is here put upon ſuch as are of this peaceable and peace-making temper; they ſhall be called the children of God; that is, they ſhall be reputed and eſteemed God's children, for their likeneſs to him, who is the God of peace. And they ſhall be dignified and honoured with the privileges of God's children; grace here, and glory hereafter.

10 Bleſſed *are* they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Bleſſed *are* ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute *you*, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Note here, 1. That all the diſciples and followers of Chriſt, live they never ſo holily and inoffenſively in the world, muſt expect ſuffering and perſecution. 2. That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt edge of perſecution is uſually turned againſt the miniſters of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the prophets of God. 3. That ſuch ſufferings and perſecution as will afford a man ſolid comfort, and entitle him to real bleſſedneſs, muſt be endured and undergone for righteouſneſs ſake. 4. That it is the will and command of our Lord, that thoſe which ſuffer for him, and for righteouſneſs ſake, ſhould not only be meek and patient, but joyous and cheerful: *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad*. 5. That ſuch a patient and cheerful ſuffering of perſecution for Chriſt in this life, ſhall certainly be rewarded with the glory and bleſſedneſs of the life that is to come. *Great is your reward*, &c.

13 ¶ Ye are the ſalt of the earth. But if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Our Saviour compares chriſtians in general, and his miniſters in particular, unto ſalt, for a double reaſon. 1. Becauſe it is the nature of ſalt to preſerve things from corruption and putrefaction, and to render them ſavoury and pleaſant. Thus are the miniſters of the goſpel to labour and endeavour, by the purity of their doctrine, to ſweeten putrefying ſinners, that they may become ſavoury to God and man; and may be kept from being fly-blown with errors and falſe doctrine. 2. Becauſe ſalt has a piercing power in it, which ſubdues the whole lump, and turns it into its own nature: ſuch a piercing power is there in the miniſtry of the word, that it ſubdues the whole man to the obedience of itſelf. As if our Lord had ſaid, " Ye are to be preachers and patterns to the world; ye are appointed by your pure doctrine, and good converſation, to purge the world from that corruption in which it lies: but if you loſe either ſoundneſs of doctrine, or the ſavour of a good converſation, you will be wholly uſeleſs, as to theſe great ends, and may expect to be caſt off by me, as unſavoury ſalt is thrown to the dunghill."

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel, but on a candleſtick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe. 16 Let your light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour's doctrine. 2. The inference which he draws from it, by way of application.--- The doctrine delivered, is this, That chriſtians in general, and the miniſters of the goſpel in particular, are the *light of the world*. But how? Not originally, but derivatively; not efficiently, but inſtrumentally. Our Lord himſelf is the *light of the world* by way of original: his miniſters are lights by way of derivation and participation from him. Farther, Jeſus teaches them the end why he communicated *light* unto them, namely, to enlighten, direct, and quicken others: even as the ſun in the firmament, and a candle in the houſe, diffuſes and diſperſes its light to all that are within the reach of it, ſo ſhould Chriſt's miniſters, by the light of life and doctrine, direct people in their way towards heaven. 2. The inferences which our Saviour draws from the foregoing doctrine, *Ye are the light of the world*, therefore *Let your light ſhine before men. Note* 1. That our good works muſt ſhine, but not blaze; all vain glory and oſtentation ſhould be avoided in the good works we do. 2. Although we muſt abound in good works that men may ſee them, yet not to be ſeen of men. 3. That the glorifying of God, and doing good to mankind, muſt be the great end we propound in all the good works which we perform.

17 Think not that I am come to deſtroy, the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

Our Saviour here informs his followers, that he had no deſign to abrogate any part of the moral law, or to looſe mankind from the leaſt meaſure of their duty, either towards God or man, but that he came to fulfil it: 1. By yielding a perſonal obedience to it. 2. By giving a fuller and ſtricter interpretation of it, than the Phariſees were wont to give; for they taught that the law did only reach the outward man, and reſtrain outward actions. As if he had ſaid, "Though I preach more ſpecial doctrine than is contained even in the letter of the moral law, yet think not that I came to deſtroy or diſſolve the obligation of that law, for I came to fulfil the types and predictions of the prophets, and to give you the full ſenſe and ſpiritual import of the moral law."

18 For verily I ſay unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Another reaſon is here given by our Saviour why he had no intention to abrogate or aboliſh the law; and that is drawn from the duration and perpetuity, the unchangeableneſs and immutability of the law: Sooner ſhall heaven and earth be aboliſhed, than the authority and obligation of the moral law be diſſolved. *Learn*, 1. That the law of God is an eternal and unchangeable rule of life and manners, and is to ſtand in force as long as the world endures. 2. That chriſtianity is not contrary to the laws by which mankind had formerly been governed. Our Saviour commands nothing that the natural or moral law had forbidden, and forbids nothing which they had commanded, but has perfected the law, and ſet it higher than any of the moſt ſtudied doctors did think themſelves formerly obliged by it. To ſuppoſe that Chriſt has added to the moral precepts of the firſt table, is to ſuppoſe that he has added to perfection; for that required the Jew to love God with all his heart, ſoul, and ſtrength: which is the ſame that our Lord requires of us his followers. Nor has he added to the duties of the ſecond table, ſince that requires us to love our neighbour as ourſelves, which St. Paul ſays, Rom. xiii. 9. is the fulfilling of the law.

19 Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach *them*, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

To evidence yet farther, that the moral law is a perfect rule of life, our Saviour tells his diſciples, that if any of them did, either by their doctrine or practice, make void any one of the leaſt of God's commands, either by allowing themſelves in the omiſſion of any known duty, or in the commiſſion of any known ſin, they ſhould never enter into the kingdom of God. *Learn*, That ſuch a profeſſor of chriſtianity as allows himſelf in the leaſt voluntary tranſgreſſion, and encourages others by his example to do the like, is certainly in a ſtate of damnation.

20 For I ſay unto you, that except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed *the righteouſneſs* of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. A glorious prize or reward ſet before the chriſtian as attainable, namely, *The kingdom of heaven*. 2. The means required in order to our obtaining of this prize, and laying hold of this reward; we muſt be holy and righteous perſons: heaven is the reward of righteouſneſs, a reward conferred only upon righteous perſons. 3. Here is the ſpecial qualification of that righteouſneſs expreſſed, which will entitle us to heaven and ſalvation: it muſt be a righteouſneſs which *exceeds the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*; and that theſe three ways: 1. In its principle and motive---Love to God, and obedience to his command; not the applauſe and commendation of men. 2. In its aim and end: the Phariſees made themſelves, their own credit and eſteem, their worldly gain and intereſt, their ultimate end; and not God's glory their ſupreme aim. 3. In the manner of performance: the Phariſees duty wanted that purity and ſpirituality which the law of God required. They had reſpect only to the outward action, without any regard to the inward intention, and to that purity of heart which God required.—*Queſt.* In what things are we to exceed the Scribes and Phariſees? *Anſw.* In ſincerity, or by being that within, which we ſeem to be without. In ſimplicity, or having holy ends in our religious actions. In humility, or having low and humble thoughts of ourſelves, and our beſt performances. In *charity*, or having compaſſion on all diſtreſſed perſons. In univerſality of obedience to all commands.---*Learn*, That holineſs of heart, and righteouſneſs of life, which God's law requires of us, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation.

21 ¶ Ye have heard, that it was ſaid by them, of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill; and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. 22 But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother, without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Raca, ſhall be in danger of the council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell fire.

Here our Lord begins to expound the ſpiritual ſenſe and meaning of the law, and vindicate it from the corrupt gloſſes of the Phariſees. Where *note*, Chriſt doth not deliver a new law, but expounds the old; doth not enjoin new duties, but enforces the old ones. The law of God was always perfect, requiring the ſons of men to love God with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themſelves. In this expoſition of the law, our Lord begins with the ſixth commandment, *Thou ſhalt not kill*: where he ſhews, that beſides the actual taking away of life, a perſon may violate that command, 1. By raſh anger. 2. By diſgraceful and reviling words. Thence *learn*, That every evil motion of our hearts conſented to againſt our neighbour, all unjuſt anger towards him, all terms of contempt put upon him, are forbidden by the law of God, no leſs than the groſs act of murder itſelf. 2. That wrath and anger, without juſt cauſe, hath its degrees; and according to the degrees of the ſin, will the degrees of puniſhment be proportionable in the next world. 3. That ſelf-murder is here forbidden, and in no caſe lawful, man having no more power over his own life, than over the life of another; though life be never ſo miſerable and painful, yet muſt we wait God's time for diſmiſſion and releaſe.

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whilſt thou art in the way with him; leſt at any time thine adverſary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon. 26 Verily I ſay unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no means come out thence till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.

For preventing the ſin of raſh anger, which in our Saviour's account is a degree of murder, he exhorts all his diſciples and followers to brotherly agreement, and to ſeek mutual reconciliation with each other. *Agree with thine adverſary*, that is, thy offended or offending brother; agree with him, as becomes a man: quickly, as becomes a chriſtian: implying, that it is a neceſſary duty for every chriſtian to ſeek reconciliation ſincerely and ſpeedily, with ſuch as have offended, or have been offended by him. 2. The argument, or motive, with which Chriſt inforces his exhortation to brotherly reconciliation, drawn from the peril and danger of the neglect, and this is two-fold: The firſt reſpects our preſent duties and ſervices, when we wait upon God at his altar, and attend upon him in holy offices.—None of our performances will find acceptance with God, if there be found malice and hatred, anger and ill-will againſt our brother. *Learn*, That no ſacrifice we can offer will be acceptable to God, ſo long as we ourſelves are implacable to men. A ſecond danger reſpects us, when we appear before God in judgment; then God will be our adverſary, Chriſt our judge, Satan our accuſer, hell our tormenter; *If now from the heart we do not every one of us forgive our brother his treſpaſſes.* Lord! how heinous then is this ſin of inveterate anger, hatred, and malice in our hearts againſt any perſon! No gift, though never ſo coſtly, no devotions, though never ſo ſpecious, will prevail with God to paſs it by, whilſt we live; if we die with hearts full of rancour and bitterneſs, we can never expect to be incircled in the arms of him, who is all love, all mercy, all goodneſs and compaſſion: no reconciliation with God, without an hearty good-will to all men. Nay farther, the text ſpeaks of a priſon, which is the diſmal dungeon of hell; into which the implacable and unreconciled perſon muſt be caſt, and lie for ever without mixture of pity: and it is not men's ſcoffing at it that will ſecure them againſt the horror of it.

27 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery: 28 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Our Saviour next proceeds to explain the ſeventh commandment, which forbids adultery; by which the Phariſees underſtood only the groſs act of uncleanneſs, and carnal lying with a woman. But, ſays our Saviour, Whoſoever ſecretly in his heart deſires ſuch a thing, and caſts his eye upon a woman in order to ſuch an act, entertaining only a thought of it with pleaſure and delight, is an adulterer in God's account. *Learn*, That ſuch is the purity and ſpirituality of the law of God, that it condemns ſpeculative wantonneſs, no leſs than practical uncleanneſs; and forbids not only the outward action, but the ſecret purpoſe and intention, and firſt out-goings of the ſoul after unlawful objects.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it

out, and caſt *it* from thee: for *it* is profitable for
thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not
that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 30
And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and
caſt *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that
one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy
whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.

Our Saviour had condemned ocular adultery in the foregoing verſe, or the adultery of the eye; *He that looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed*, &c. Whence *note*, That the eye is an inlet to ſin, eſpecially the ſin of uncleanneſs: Luſt enters the heart at the window of the eye. In theſe verſes, Chriſt preſcribes a remedy for this eye-malady: *If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out:* Which is not to be underſtood literally, as if Chriſt had commanded any man to maim his bodily members; but ſpiritually, to mortify the luſts of the fleſh, and of the eye, which otherwiſe will prove a dangerous ſnare to the ſoul. *Learn*, 1. That ſin may be avoided; it is our duty to avoid whatever leads to it, or may be an occaſion of it. If we find the view of an inſnaring object will inflame us, we muſt, though not put out our eye, yet make a covenant with it, that we will not look thereupon. 2. That the beſt courſe we can take to be kept from the outward acts of ſin, is to mortify our inward affection and love to ſin. Thus to kill it in the root; and if once our inward affections be mortified, our bodily members may be ſpared and preſerved; for they will no longer be weapons of ſin, but inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto holineſs.

31 It hath been ſaid, Whoſoever ſhall put away
his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
32 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall put
away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication,
cauſeth her to commit adultery: and whoſoever ſhall
marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

Our Saviour ſtill proceeds in vindicating and clearing the ſeventh commandment from the corrupt gloſſes of the Phariſees. Almighty God had tolerated the Jews, in caſe of uncleanneſs, to put away their wives by a bill of divorce. Deut. xxiv. 1. Hereupon, the Phariſees maintained it lawful, to put away the wife upon every ſlight occaſion. This abuſe Chriſt corrects; and ſhews, that divorce, except in caſe of adultery, is a certain breach of the ſeventh commandment. *Learn*, 1. That ſo indiſſoluble is the marriage-covenant betwixt two perſons, nothing but adultery can diſſolve or diſannul it. 2. When perſons are unjuſtly put away, it is unlawful for them to marry to any other, or for others, knowingly to marry them.

33 Again, we have heard that it hath been ſaid by
them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf,
but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34
But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all: neither by
heaven; for it is God's throne; 35 Nor by the
earth: for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem;
for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither ſhalt
thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make
one hair white or black.

The next commandment which our Lord expounds and vindicates, is the third, which requires a reverend uſe of God's name. Now, the Phariſees taught, that perjury was the only breach of this commandment; and that ſwearing was nothing, if they did not forſwear themſelves: and that perſons were only obliged to ſwear by the name of God in public courts, but in their ordinary and common diſcourſe, they might ſwear by any of the creatures. Now, in oppoſition to theſe principles and practices, Chriſt ſays, *Swear not at all:* That is, 1. Swear not profanely in your ordinary diſcourſe. 2. Swear not unduly by any of the creatures, for that is to aſcribe a Deity to them. 3. Swear not lightly upon any trifling or frivolous occaſion; for oaths upon ſmall occaſions, are great ſins. So that an oath is not here forbidden by our Lord, but reſtrained: for though light and needleſs, common and ordinary ſwearing, be a great ſin, yet to take an oath upon a ſolemn occaſion, when lawfully called thereunto, is a chriſtian and neceſſary duty. Chriſt, by this prohibition, doth not forbid all ſwearing, as a thing abſolutely evil; nor doth he forbid all aſſertory or promiſſory oaths in matters teſtimonial, when impoſed by the magiſtrate; for Jeſus himſelf, when adjured by the high-prieſt, did anſwer upon oath. But he forbids all voluntary oaths in common diſcourſe; becauſe an oath is an act of religious worſhip: therefore, to trifle with it, is horrid provocation.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea;
Nay, nay: for whatſoever *is* more than theſe, com-
eth of evil.

Here our Lord preſcribes a proper mean and remedy for ſhunning the occaſion and danger of raſh ſwearing; and that is, by uſing and accuſtoming ourſelves, in converſation, to a true ſimplicity and conſtant plainneſs of ſpeech; either affirming or denying, according to the nature of the thing; letting oaths alone till we are called to them upon great occaſions, for ending ſtrife between man and man. *Learn*, that the great end of ſpeech being to communicate the ſenſe of our minds to each other, we ought to uſe ſuch plainneſs and ſimplicity in ſpeaking, that we may believe one another without oaths, or more ſolemn or religious aſſeverations.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, An eye
for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I ſay
unto you, That ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever
ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the
other alſo. 40 And if any man will ſue thee at the
law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke
alſo. 41 And whoſoever ſhall compel thee *to go* a
mile, go with him twain.

Our Saviour here vindicates the ſixth commandment, which obliges us to do no wrong to the body of our neighbour. God hath given a law to the public magiſtrate, to require an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, when a perſon was wronged: Hereupon the Phariſees taught, that a private perſon wronged by another, might exact ſatisfaction from him to the ſame degree in which he had been wronged by him; if he had loſt an eye by another, he might revenge it, by taking away the life of another. But ſays Chriſt, *I ſay unto you, Reſiſt not evil:* that is, ſeek not private revenge, but leave the avenging of injuries to God and the magiſtrate; and in trifling matters, not to appeal at all; and when forced, not for revenge ſake. Teaching us, that we ought rather to ſuffer a double wrong, than to ſeek revenge: chriſtianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently, rather than to revenge one privately.—Religion, indeed, does not bid us invite injuries, but teaches us, to bid them welcome: we are not to return *evil* for *evil*, but rather to endure a greater evil than to revenge a leſs.

42 Give to him that aſketh thee: and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

Our Saviour here preſſes the law of charity upon his diſciples: this is two-fold; a charity in giving to them that beg, and a charity in lending to them that deſire to borrow. Chriſtianity obliges all thoſe who have ability, to abound in works of charity of all ſorts and kinds whatſoever. He that is truly charitable, doth not only give, but lend; yea, ſometimes lend, looking for nothing again. It is not enough to act charity of all ſorts, but we muſt be ready to act it in every kind, and to the higheſt degree that our circumſtances will admit. Giving is a godlike thing; he is the giver of every good and perfect gift; he gives before we aſk, and we muſt imitate God in giving; namely, by giving what we give, cheerfully, ſincerely, diſcreetly, proportionably, univerſally, in obedience to God's command, and with an eye at his glory. And there is ſometimes as great charity in lending as there is in giving; many a poor family, by our lending them a ſmall matter, may raiſe themſelves into a condition to live comfortably and honeſtly in the world.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou
ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:
44 But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs
them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you and
perſecute you.

Another corrupt gloſs which the Phariſees had put upon the law of God, our Lord here takes notice of: the law ſaid, *Thou ſhall love thy neighbour*, Levit. xix. 18. This they interpreted to relate only to their countrymen the Jews; concluding, that they might hate all the uncircumciſed nations, as enemies: but ſaith our Lord, I require you to love all men; for if enemies muſt not be ſhut out of your love, none muſt. *Love your enemies*; here the inward affection is required. *Bleſs them that curſe you*; there outward civility and affability is required. *Do good to them that hate you*; here real acts of kindneſs and charity are commanded to be done by us to our bittereſt enemies. *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you:* Theſe are the higheſt expreſſions of enmity that can be, calumny and cruelty; yet we are commanded to pray for thoſe that touch us in theſe two tendereſt points, our reputation and our life. *Learn*, That chriſtianity obliges us to bear a ſincere affection towards our moſt malicious enemies; to be ready upon all occaſions to do good unto them, and pray for them.

55 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.

To encourage us to the foregoing duty of loving our enemies, our Lord propounds the example of God himſelf to our imitation, *that you may be the children of your Father*; that is, that you may be known to be the children of your Father which is heaven. *Note*, 1. That the beſt evidence we can have of our divine ſonſhip, is our conformity to the divine nature, eſpecially in thoſe excellent properties of goodneſs and forgiveneſs. 2. That God doth good to them that are continually doing evil unto him. Rain and ſun, fat and ſweet, gold and ſilver, are ſuch good things as their hearts and houſes are filled with, who are altogether empty of grace and goodneſs.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what re-
ward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame?
47 And if ye ſalute your brethern only, what do ye
more *than others?* do not even the publicans ſo?

Yet farther to encourage us to this duty of loving our enemies, Chriſt aſſures his diſciples, that he expects more from them than from others; more than common humanity and civil courteſy among friends; for even Heathens, by the light of nature, were taught to love thoſe that loved them: but he expected that chriſtianity ſhould teach them better, and lead them farther, even *to love their enemies, and to bleſs them that curſe them*. *Note*, Love for love is juſtice; love for no love is kindneſs; but love for hatred and enmity is divine goodneſs; a Chriſt like temper, which will render us illuſtrious on earth, and glorious in heaven.—But, Lord! how do men confine their love to little ſects and parties! and from hence comes that bitterneſs of ſpirit of one party towards another; but oh! how hard is it to find a chriſtian of a true catholic love and temper!

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

That is, aim at perfection in all chriſtian virtues and divine graces, but particularly in this of love; in imitation of your heavenly father, who is the perfect pattern of all deſirable goodneſs and adorable perfections. *To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*, is indeed impoſſible, as to equality, but not to imitation. The word rendered here *perfect*, by St. Matthew, is elſewhere by St. Luke, rendered *merciful*, Luke vi. 36. implying, that charity is the perfection of a chiſtian's graces: he that is made perfect in love, is perfect in all divine graces, in the account of God. *Learn*, 1. That there is no ſtanding ſtill in religion; he that will be ſaved muſt preſs on towards perfection. 2. That no leſs than perfect and complete perfection in grace, and particularly in the grace of love and charity, is and ought to be the aim of every chriſtian in this life, and ſhall be his atainment in the next.

CHAP. VI.

This chapter is a continuation of our Saviour's incomparable ſermon upon the mount, in which he cautions his diſciples againſt the hypocriſy and vain-glory of the Phariſees, both in their almſgiving and prayers: The former in the firſt four verſes of this chapter, which ſpeaks thus:

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be ſeen of them, otherwiſe you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doeſt *thine* alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the ſynagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I ſay unto you, They have their reward. 3. But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; 4 That thine alms may be in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty directed to, almſgiving after a right manner; *Do not your alms before men:* ſome copies read it, *Do not your righteouſneſs before men:* Becauſe almſgiving is a conſiderable part of that righteouſneſs and juſtice which we owe unto our neighbour; he that is uncharitable is unjuſt. Acts of charity are acts of juſtice and equity. It alſo intimates to us, that the matter of our alms ſhould be goods righteouſly gotten: to give alms of what is gotten unjuſtly, is robbery and not righteouſneſs. 2. Our Lord's cautionary direction in giving alms, *Take heed that ye do them not to be ſeen of men.* It is one thing to do our alms that men may ſee them, and another thing to do them that we may be ſeen of men. We ought to do alms before men, that God may be glorified: but not to be ſeen of men, that ourſelves may be applauded by men. 3. The particular ſin which our Saviour warns his diſciples againſt in giving their alms, namely, oſtentation and vain-glory, which the Phariſees were guilty of: *Sounding a trumpet*, to call people about them when they gave their alms. Thence *learn*, That the doing any good work, eſpecially any work of charity and mercy vain-gloriouſly, and not with an eye to God's glory, will certainly miſs of the reward of well doing in another world. 4. The advice which our Lord has given for the prevention of this ſin and danger; and that is, to do our acts as ſecretly as we can; *Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth:* That is, conceal it from thy neareſt relations, and, if poſſible, from thyſelf. *Note* thence, that the ſecrecy of our charity is one good evidence of its ſincerity. Hence the Egyptians made the emblem of Charity to be a blind boy, reaching out honey to a bee that had loſt her wings.

5 ¶ And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites *are*; for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. Verily, I ſay unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.

Here our Saviour warns his diſciples 'gainſt the ſame Phariſaical hypocriſy in praying, which he had before reproved in almſgiving. It was lawful to pray in the ſynagogues, and to pray ſtanding, and that before men: but to do this upon deſign to be applauded by men, is condemned by our Lord. Our buſineſs in prayer lies with God, we are not to concern ourſelves how men like our performances; it is ſufficient if God doth approve and will accept them. To cure the foregoing vanity, Chriſt directs to ſecret prayer in our cloſets, where God is the witneſs, and will be the rewarder of our ſincerity. *Note*, That ſecret prayer is a commanded and encouraged duty, and when in ſincerity performed ſhall be attended with a public and glorious reward: *Pray to the Father which*, &c.

7 But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye aſk him.

A vain-glorious oſtentation in prayer was condemned by our Lord in the former verſe: Here a vain-glorious multiplicity of words, by idle tautologies and impertinent repetitions, is condemned alſo; after the manner of the heathen, who expected to have their prayers granted by God for the multiplicity of words uſed by themſelves.—Hence *note*, That a chriſtian's buſineſs in prayer being not to inform God (*for he knoweth what things we need before we aſk him*) nor yet to move and perſuade God (for he is *our Father*) it certainly argues an undue apprehenſion of God, when we lengthen out our prayers with vain repetitions and a multitude of words. Yet, *note*, 1. That it is not all repetition of the ſame words in prayer which Chriſt here condemns, for he himſelf prayed thrice, uſing the ſame words, that the cup might paſs from him. Nor, 2. Are we to apprehend that prayers continued to a conſiderable length are forbidden by Chriſt; for Solomon's prayer was ſuch, 1 Kings viii. Nehemiah's ſuch, chap. ix. It is ſaid the people confeſſed and worſhipped for three hours; our Lord continued in prayer all night; and the Church, Acts xii. made prayers without ceaſing for St. Peter's enlargement. And we read of St. Paul's praying night and day, 1 Theſſ. iii. 10. and of his commanding the churches to be inſtant in prayer, and to continue in prayer. But Chriſt here condemns prayer lenthened out upon an apprehenſion that we ſhall be heard for our much ſpeaking, or can move God by arguments whilſt we continue in our ſins. Dr. *Whitby*.

8 After this manner therefore pray ye:

As if Chriſt had ſaid, For preventing theſe and all other faults in prayer, I will myſelf give a complete form of prayer, and an exact pattern and platform for your imitation when you pray. *Note*, That the Lord's prayer is both a perfect form of prayer, which ought to be uſed by us, and alſo a pattern and platform, according to which all our prayers ought to be framed. St. Matthew ſays, *After this manner pray ye*; St. Luke ſays, *When ye pray, ſay*,

9 Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be
thy name; 10 Thy kingdom come; thy will be done
in earth as *it is* in heaven: 11 Give us this day our
daily bread; 12 And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors; 13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom,
and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The ſenſe and ſignification of this beſt of prayers is this: 'O thou our Father in Jeſus Chriſt! who remaineſt in thy throne in heaven, and art there perpetually praiſed, and perfectly obeyed by glorious angels and glorified ſaints; grant that thy name may be glorified, thy throne acknowledged, and thy holy will obeyed here on earth below, by us thy ſons and ſervants, moſt ſincerely and readily, and in ſome proportion to what is done in heaven. And becauſe, by reaſon of the frailty of our natures, we cannot ſubſiſt without the comforts and ſupports of life, we crave that ſuch a proportion of the good things of this life may be given unto us as may be ſufficient for us; and that we may be content with our allowance. And knowing that thy holineſs and juſtice obliges thee to puniſh ſinners, we plead with thee, for the ſake of thy Son's ſatisfaction, to pardon us our daily treſpaſſes which we are guilty of in this ſtate of imperfection, as we do freely and heartily forgive others that have offended and wronged us. And ſeeing, that by reaſon of the frailty of our nature, we are prone to ruſh upon, and run into temptation, we crave, that by the power of thy omnipotent grace, we may be kept from Satan's temptations, from the world's allurements, from our own evil inclinations, and be preſerved unblameable to thine everlaſting kingdom; which is exalted over all perſons, over all places, and things, in all times paſt, preſent, and to come. And accordingly, in teſtimony of our deſires, and in aſſurance to be heard and anſwered, we ſay *Amen*; ſo be it, ſo let it be, even ſo, O Lord, let it be for ever.' More particularly, in this comprehenſive and compendious prayer, the following ſeverals are remarkable. Namely, 1. That the learned obſerve, that this prayer is taken out of the Jewiſh liturgies, in which it is entirely found, excepting thoſe words, *As we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* From whence Grotius notes, how far Chriſt, the Lord of his church, was from affecting novelties, or deſpiſing any thing becauſe it was a form; a piece of piteous weakneſs among ſome at this day. 2. The perſon to whom Chriſt directs us to make our prayers; namely, to God, under the notion of a *father*; teaching us, That in all our religious addreſſes to God, we are to conceive of him, and pray unto him, under the notion and relation of a father, *our Father*, &c. So is he by creation, by a right of providence and preſervation, by redemption, by outward and viſible profeſſion, by regeneration and adoption; and this relation which God ſtands in to us, may encourage us to pray unto him: for, being our Father, we are ſure that he is of eaſy acceſs unto, and graciouſly pleaſed to grant what we pray for. And whereas it is added, *which art in heaven*, this is not to be ſo underſtood as if his eſſence were included, or his preſence circumſcribed or confined there, for he fills heaven and earth with the immenſity of it; but he is ſaid to be in heaven, becauſe there is the manifeſtation of his preſence, of his purity, of his power and glory; and teaches us with what holy fear, with what humble reverence, and not without a trembling veneration, polluted duſt ought to make their ſolemn approaches to the God of heaven. 3. That the three firſt petitions relate more immediately to God. (1.) That his *name* may be *hallowed*. By the name of God, underſtand God himſelf, as made known to us in his attributes and words, and works. This name is hallowed or ſanctified by us three ways; by our lips, when we acknowledge his divine perfections, and tell of all his wonderous works; in our hearts, by entertaining ſuitable conceptions of God; and in our lives, when the conſideration of theſe divine perfections engage us to ſuitable obedience. (2.) That his *kingdom* may *come*. By which we are not to underſtand his general and providential kingdom, by which he ruleth over all the world, that being always come, and capable of no farther amplification; but principally the kingdom of grace promoted in the hearts of his people, by the preaching of the goſpel. We pray that God would dethrone ſin and Satan in our own and others ſouls, and increaſe grace and ſanctification both in us and them, and that the kingdom of glory may be haſtened, and we may be preſerved blameleſs to the coming of Chriſt in his kingdom. (3.) That his *will* may be *done*. By which the preceptive rather than the providential will of God is to be underſtood; we are to obey the former univerſally, and to ſubmit to the lattter cheerfully. It intimates, that it ought to be the care, and ſtudy, and endeavour of every chriſtian, that the commanding will of God may be ſo done by men upon earth, as it is by the glorified ſaints and glorious angels, done in heaven: namely, with that alacrity and cheerfulneſs, with that ſpeed and readineſs, with that conſtancy and diligence, that the imperfection of human nature will admit of; imitating the bleſſed angels, who execute the divine commands without reluctancy or regret. 4. The three laſt petitions reſpect ourſelves, as the three former did almighty God. The firſt of which is a prayer for temporal bleſſings; *Give us this day our daily bread:* Where *note*, the mercy prayed for, *bread*, which comprehends all the comforts and conveniences of life, and whatever is neceſſary for the ſupporting human nature. Alſo the qualification; it muſt be our *own* bread, not another's, what we have a civil right to as men, and a covenant right to as chriſtians. *Note* farther, The kind of bread we aſk and deſire; it is *daily* bread. Hereby we are put in mind of our continual dependence upon God for our lives, and the ſupports of life which we enjoy, and alſo kept in mind of our mortality. And mark the way and manner of conveying good things to us; it is in the way of free gift: *Give* us our daily bread, we cannot give it ourſelves, and when we have it of God, we receive it not as debt, but as a free gift. The next petition is for ſpiritual bleſſings; *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Where *note*, 1. Some things ſuppoſed; namely, That we are all ſinners, and, as ſuch, ſtand in need of pardon and forgiveneſs. 2. That our ſins are debts, wilful debts, repeated debts, innumerable debts, inexcuſable debts, debts difficulty diſcharged, and yet, if undiſcharged, undoing debts. 3. That we are obliged to pray every day for daily pardon, as we do for daily bread, for our ſins are many and daily. 4. It is here ſuppoſed, that ſince we are to pray for forgiveneſs of ſin, it is impoſſible ever to ſatisfy the juſtice of God for ſin.—Laſtly *note*, The condition or qualification required, *Forgive, as we forgive:* This requires (1.) That our minds be full of charity, free from rancour and ill-will, and all deſire of revenge, and a ſecret grudge againſt another. (2.) That we ſtand ready to help them, and do any office of ſervice for them that have offended us. (3.) That we admit our offending brother into friendſhip and familiarity, which is called a forgiving him from the heart; our heart muſt be towards him as formerly it was. The ſixth and laſt petition follows, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* Here *note*, A double mercy prayed for; namely, preventing mercy, and delivering mercy. (1.) Preventing mercy; *Lead us not into temptation.* Hereby it is ſuppoſed, 1. That we are unable to keep ourſelves from temptation, partly through our natural depravity, partly through carnal ſecurity. 2. That is God that muſt keep us from Satan's aſſaults, his traps, and ſnares, which every where he lays in ambuſh for us. 3. That it is our own daily duty to be earneſt and inſtant with God in prayer, not to ſuffer us, by the ſubtraction of his grace, or in a way of puniſhment for ſin, to run into the circumſtances which may prove ſnares to us; but daily to afford us ſuch a meaſure of his grace as may keep us from falling by temptation; and not leave us falling under the temptation, but to recover us ſpeedily by his power, and enable us to ſtand more firmly for the future. (2.) We here pray for delivering mercy: *Deliver us from evil*; by which may be underſtood Satan the evil one, but eſpecially the evil of ſin. We pray here that God would graciouſly preſerve us from thoſe vicious inclinations of our minds, and evil diſpoſitions of our hearts, which render us ſo prone to yield to the temptations of Satan. Here we ſee the ugly and deformed face of ſin: It is evil; evil in its author and original, it is of the devil, the evil one; evil in its effects and fruits, it doth debaſe and degrade us, pollute and defile us, befool and deceive us, and, without repentance, damns and deſtroys us. *Obſerve* laſtly, The concluſion of the Lord's prayer, which contains a complication of arguments to urge almighty God with, for obtaining the mercy prayed for. (1.) *For thine is the kingdom:* Thou art the only abſolute and rightful ſovereign, and all men are concerned to honour thee, and obey thy laws: thou art the ſupreme governor of the world, and king of thy church, therefore let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done. (2.) *Thine is the power*, therefore give us daily bread, and forgive our daily ſins; for thou haſt power to ſupply the one, and authority to pardon the other. The power of God is a great encouragement to prayer, and faith in the power of God has a mighty prevalency in prayer with God. (3.) *Thine is thy glory*, that is, thine will be the glory; as if we ſhould ſay, 'Lord! by enabling us to hallow thy name, by owning thy kingdom, by doing thy will, and by thy providing for us, and pardoning of us, thou wilt have much glory by us and from us.' It teaches us, that as our prayers in general ought to be argumentative, ſo an argument in prayer drawn from the glory of God, is a mighty encouragement to hope for audience and acceptance. (4.) *For ever and ever*, that is, thy kingdom is eternal, thy power eternal, thy glory eternal; the God whom we pray to is an eternal God, and this attribute of God is improveable in prayer as an encouragement to expect the ſame bleſſings from God which others have done before us; for he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. *Amen*: A word uſed in all languages, denoting an hearty aſſent to our own prayers, and an hearty deſire to receive the mercies prayed for, and an humble aſſurance that we ſhall be heard and anſwered.

14 ¶ For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

There being no duty to which our corrupt natures are more backward than this of forgiving injuries, our Lord repeats that duty over again, and frequently inculcates it in the holy goſpels, aſſuring us, that forgiving others is the indiſpenſable condition upon which we are to expect forgiveneſs from God. *Learn* thence, That every time we go to God in prayer, and beg forgiveneſs of him as we forgive others, if we do not forgive them heartily and ſincerely, fully and freely, readily and willingly, we fly in the face of God, and our prayers are a ſort of imprecations upon ourſelves. *Note* farther, That although God promiſes us forgiveneſs if we forgive others, yet it is with this limitation, if no other condition of ſalvation be wanting, for this virtue alone cannot obtain favour with God, unleſs other duties are performed.

16 ¶ Moreover, when you faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face: 18 That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.

The next duty which our Lord inſtructs his diſciples in, is that of religious faſting, which is a devoting of the whole man, ſoul and body, to a ſolemn and extraordinary attendance upon God in a particular time ſet apart for that purpoſe, in order to the deprecating of his diſpleaſure, and and for the ſupplicating of his favour, accompanied with an abſtinence from bodily food and ſenſual delights, and from all ſecular affairs and worldly buſineſs. Now the direction of our Lord as to this duty of faſting, is double: 1. He cautions us to beware of an abuſe in faſting: *Be* *not as the hypocrites are, of a ſad countenance*; that is, do not affect a ſullen ſadneſs, ghaſtlineſs, and unpleaſantneſs of countenance, like the hypocritical Phariſees, who vitiate and diſcolour their faces, who mar and aboliſh their native complexion. Hypocriſy can paint the face black and ſable, as well as pride with red and white. 2. He counſels us to take the right way in faſting; *To anoint the head, and waſh the face*: That is, to look as at other times, uſing our ordinary garb and attire, and not affect any thing that may make us look like mourners, when really we are not ſo. Where we may *note*, That though hypocrites, by their dejected countenances, and mortified habits, do ſeek to gain an extraordinary reputation for piety and devotion, yet the ſincere chriſtian is to be abundantly ſatisfied with God's approbation of his ſervices, and with the ſilent applauſe of his own conſcience.

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do break through and ſteal: 20 But lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal. 21 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

Obſerve here, 1. Something implied, namely, That every man has his treaſure; and whatſoever, or whereſoever that treaſure is, it is attractive, and draws the heart of man after it: for every man's treaſure is his chief good. 2. Something permitted; namely, the getting, poſſeſſing, and enjoying of earthly treaſure, as an inſtrument ennobling us to do much good. 3. Something prohibited; and that is, the treaſuring up of wordly wealth as our chief treaſure; *Lay not up treaſures on earth:* that is, take heed of an inordinate affection to, of an exceſſive purſuit after, of a vain confidence and truſt in any worldly comfort as your treaſure. 4. Here is ſomething commanded; *But lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven:* Treaſure up thoſe habits of grace which will bring you to an inheritance in glory: Be fruitful in *good works, laying up in ſtore for yourſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that ye may lay hold of eternal life.* 5. The reaſons aſſigned, (1.) Why we ſhould not lay up our treaſures on earth; becauſe all earthly treaſures are of a periſhing and uncertain nature, they are ſubject to moth and ruſt, to robbery and theft; the periſhing nature of earthly things ought to be improved by us, as an argument to ſet looſe in our affections towards them. (2.) The reaſon aſſigned, why we ſhould lay up our treaſures in heaven, is this: Becauſe heavenly treaſures are ſubject to no ſuch accidents and caſualities as earthly treaſures are, but are durable and laſting. *The things that are not ſeen are eternal.* The treaſures of heaven are inviolable, incorruptible, and everlaſting. Now we may know whether we have choſen theſe things for our treaſure, by our high eſtimation of the worth of them, by the torrent and tendency of our affection towards them, and by our laborious diligence and endeavours in the purſuit after them. *Where the treaſure is, there will the heart be alſo.*

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great *is* that darkneſs!

In the foregoing verſes, our Lord acquainted us, what in our affections and judgments we ſhould eſteem as our chief treaſure; now this judgment concerning our chief treaſure, is by our Saviour here compared to the eye; as the eye is the candle of the body, that enlightens and directs it, ſo our underſtanding and judgment of the excellency of heaven, and the things above, will draw our affections towards them, and quicken our endeavours after them. *Note* thence, That ſuch as our judgment is concerning happineſs, ſuch will our deſires be for the attainment of that happineſs. Our affections are guided by our apprehenſions; where the eſteem is high, endeavours will be ſtrong.

24 ¶ No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

Obſerve here, A two-fold maſter ſpoken of, *God* and the *world*. God our maſter by creation, preſervation, and redemption; he has appointed us our work, and ſecured us our wages. The world is our maſter, by intruſion, uſurpation, and a general eſtimation; too many eſteeming it as their chief good, and delighting in it as their chief joy. 2. That no man can ſerve theſe two maſters, who are of contrary intereſts, and iſſue out contrary commands. When two maſters are ſubordinate, and their commands ſubſervient each to the other, the difficulty of ſerving both is not great; but where commands interfere, and intereſts claſh, it is impoſſible. No man can ſerve God and the world, but he may ſerve God with the world: no man can ſeek God and mammon both as his chief good and ultimate end; becauſe no man can divide his heart betwixt God and the world. *Learn*, That to love the world as our chief good, and to ſerve the world as our chief and ſovereign commander, cannot ſtand with the love and ſervice which we bear and owe to God. The world's ſlaves, whilſt ſuch, can be none of God's free men.

25 Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on: Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

The next ſin which our Saviour cautions his diſciples againſt, is immoderate care for the things of this life, ſuch a ſolicitous and vexatious care for food and raiment, as is accompanied with diffidence and diſtruſt of God's fatherly providence over us, and proviſion for us; and the arguments which our Saviour uſes to diſſuade from this ſin, are many and cogent, laid down in the following verſes. *Learn* here, 1. That almighty God will provide for every ſervant of his food and raiment, and a competency of the comforts and conveniencies of life. *Learn*, 2. That want of faith in God's promiſe, and a diſtruſt of his fatherly care, is a God-provoking, and wrath-provoking ſin. *Learn*, 3. That notwithſtanding God's promiſe to ſupply our wants, we not only may, but muſt uſe ſuch prudential and provident means as are in our power, in order to the ſupply of our own wants. Dr. *Hammond's pract. catechiſm.*

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his ſtature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lillies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they ſpin; 29 And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. 30 Wherefore if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven, *ſhall be* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? 32 (For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all theſe things.

Four arguments are here uſed by our Saviour, to diſſuade us from the ſin of anxious care; it is needleſs, it is fruitleſs, it is heatheniſh, it is bruitiſh. 1. It is needleſs; *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things*, and will certainly provide for you; and what need you take care, and God too? 2. It is fruitleſs; *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his ſtature?* That is, by all our ſolicitous care we can add nothing either to the length or comfort of our lives. 3. It is heatheniſh; *After all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek.* 4. It is brutiſh; nay, worſe than brutiſh: The fowls of the air, and the beaſts of the field are fed by God, much more ſhall his children. Has God a breakfaſt for every little bird that comes chirping out of its neſt? and for every beaſt in the wilderneſs, that comes leaping out of its den? and will he not much more provide for you, *O ye of little faith?* Surely he that feeds the ravens when they cry, will not ſtarve his children when they pray. Naturaliſts obſerve of the raven, that ſhe expoſes her young ones as ſoon as they are hatched, leaves them meatleſs and fatherleſs, to ſhift and ſtruggle with hunger, as ſoon as they come into the world; and whether by the dew from heaven, or flies, or worms, God feedeth them, when they gape and cry, they are provided for: From whence our Saviour infers, that man being much better, that is, a more conſiderable creature than the fowls, the providence of God will provide for him, though no ſolicitude and anxious thoughtfulneſs of his contributes thereto.

33 But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

That is, let your firſt and chief care be to promote the kingdom of grace in this world, and to ſecure the kingdom of glory in the next; and in order unto both, ſeek after an univerſal holineſs and righteouſneſs both of heart and life, and then fear not the want of theſe outward comforts, they ſhall be added in meaſure, though not in exceſs; to ſatisfy, though not to ſatiate; for health, though not for ſurfeit. *Obſerve*, 1. That Chriſtians muſt here on earth ſet themſelves to ſeek heaven, or the kingdom of God. 2. That God's kingdom cannot be ſought without God's righteouſneſs: Holineſs is the only way to happineſs. 3. That heaven, or the kingdom of God, muſt be ſought, in the firſt place, with our chief care and principal endeavour. 4. That heaven being once ſecured by us, all earthly things will be ſuperadded by God, as he ſees needful and convenient for us.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Here our Saviour re-inforces his exhortation from ſolicitous care for wordly things; aſſuring us that every day will bring with it a ſufficient burden of trouble, and therefore we ought not to torment ourſelves, by antedating our own ſorrows, and foretelling what may or may not come to paſs. *Learn*, That it is a painful, ſinful, and unprofitable evil, to perplex ourſelves with diſtruſtful and diſtracting fears of what may come upon us: Every day has its own duty and difficulty; and though ſufferings muſt be expected and prepared for, yet we muſt not torment ourſelves to-day with the fears of what may be to-morrow: but every day caſt our burden of care upon that God who daily careth for us.

CHAP. VII.

Our Saviovr having continued his ſermon on the mount in the former chapter, concludes it in this with an exhortation to ſeveral duties; the firſt of which is, to forbear raſh judging of others.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

Obſerve here, The prohibition, and the reaſon of that prohibition. The prohibition, *Judge not:* This is not meant of ourſelves, but of our neighbour. Self-judging is a great duty; judging others a great ſin: yet is not all judging of others condemned, but a judging of our neighbour's ſtate or perſon raſhly and rigidly, cenſoriouſly and uncharitably; eſpecially unrighteouſly and unjuſtly. And the reaſon of the prohibition is added—If we judge others raſhly, God will judge us righteouſly. *Learn* thence, That a raſh and cenſorious judging of others, renders a perſon liable and obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God. *Note*, That Chriſt doth not here forbid judicial judging by the civil magiſtrate, nor eccleſiaſtical judging by the church-governors, whoſe offices give them authority ſo to do. Nor does he forbid one chriſtian to paſs a judgment upon the notorious actions of another, ſeeing the duty of reproof cannot be performed without it; but it is ſuch a raſh and cenſorious judging our brother as is void of charity towards him, as is accompanied with contempt of him, eſpecially if we have been guilty of the ſame, or greater ſins.

3 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

By *the mote in our brother's eye*, is to be underſtood ſmall or little ſins, or ſome ſuppoſed ſins. By *the beam in our own eye*, is meant ſome notorious ſin of our own.—*Learn* 1. That thoſe who are moſt cenſorious of the leſſer infirmities of others, are uſually moſt notoriouſly guilty of far greater failings. 2. That thoſe who deſire others ſhould look upon their infirmities with a compaſſionate eye, muſt not look upon the failings of others with a cenſorious eye. 3. That there is no ſuch way to teach us charity in judging others, as to exerciſe ſeverity in judging of ourſelves.

6 ¶ Give not that which *is* holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

By *that which is holy*, underſtand the word and ordinances in general, but admonition and reproof in particular: by *dogs* and *ſwine*, incorrigible and unreclaimable ſinners, hardened ſcorners of holy things. It is a proverbial ſpeech expreſſing how ſure charitable reprehenſions are to be caſt away upon incorrigible ſinners. *Learn*, 1. That it is poſſible for ſinners to arrive to ſuch a height and pitch in wickedneſs and ſin, that it may be a chriſtian's duty not to admoniſh or reprove them. 2. How Chriſt provides, as for the honour of his word, ſo for the ſafety of them that publiſh it. As Chriſt will not have his word offered to ſome ſinners, leſt they abuſe it, ſo alſo leſt they ſhould abuſe thoſe that bring it: When ſinners turn ſwine, and we are in danger of being *rent by them*, Chriſt himſelf gives us a permiſſion to ceaſe reproving of them.

7 ¶ Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that aſketh receiveth; and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his ſon aſk bread will he give him a ſtone? 10 Or if he aſk a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? 11 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that aſk him?

Obſerve here, A precept and a promiſe; the precept, or duty commanded, is importunity and conſtancy in prayer, we muſt *aſk, ſeek, and knock*: The promiſe of mercy inſured, is audience and acceptance with God. *Note*, 1. That man is a poor, indigent, neceſſitous creature, full of wants, but unable to ſupply them. 2. That God is an all ſufficient good, able to ſupply the wants, and to relieve the neceſſities of his creatures, if they call upon him, and cry unto him. 3. Yet, if we do not preſently *receive* what we *aſk*, we muſt ſtill continue to *ſeek*, and *knock*; though prayer be not always anſwered in our time, yet it ſhall never fail of anſwer in God's time. 4. That natural propenſity which we find in our breaſts to hear the deſires and to ſupply the wants of our own children, ought to raiſe in us a confident expectation, that almighty God will hear our prayers and ſupply our wants when we call upon him: If a father will give when a child aſks, much more will God. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father*, &c. God loves to be giving, and to give good gifts is his delight. But prayer is the key that opens both his heart and his hand: Yet not every perſon nor every prayer ſhall find acceptance with God; the perſon praying muſt be a doer of God's will, St. John ix. 31. and not regard iniquity in his heart, nor entertain any grudge againſt his neighbours; the matter we pray for muſt be agreeable to God's will, and the manner of our praying muſt be in faith, and with fervency, and unfainting perſeverence.

12 Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Obſerve here, 1. An incomparable rule of life; always to do as we would be done by. *Note*, That the great rule of righteouſneſs and equity in all our dealings with men is this, *To do as we would be done unto*: It is a ſhort rule, a full rule, and a clear rule, both the light of nature and the law of Chriſt bind it upon us. 2. The commendation of this rule, *It is the law and the prophets*; that is, the ſum of the Old Teſtament, ſo far as concerns our duty to our neighbour, and the ſubſtance of the ſecond table. *Learn*, That it is the deſign of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, firſt, to render men dutiful and obedient to God, and then righteous and charitable one to another. *This is the law and the prophets*, yea, the whole of the law and the prophets, to love God above ourſelves, and our neighbours as ourſelves.

13 ¶ Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Becauſe ſtrait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Obſerve here, 1. That every man is a traveller in a certain way. 2. That there are but two ways in which the race of mankind can travel; the one ſtrait and narrow, that leads to life and ſalvation; the other broad and wide, which leads to hell and deſtruction. 3. That becauſe of the difficulties in the way to ſalvation, and the eaſineſs of the way to hell and deſtruction, hence it is that ſo few walk in the one, and ſo many in the other. 4. That chriſtians have the ſtrait way to heaven revealed to them, in and by the word of God, ſhould chuſe rather to go in that way alone to life, than to run with the multitude in the broad way which leads down to the chambers of death and hell. 5. That the metaphor of a gate denotes our firſt entrance into a religious courſe of life; and its being ſtrait, denotes the difficulty that attends religion at firſt: evil habits to be put off, old companions in ſin to be parted with; but when faith and patience have once ſmoothed our way, love will make our work delightful to us.

15 ¶ Beware of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye ſhall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? 17 Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.

Obſerve here, 1. A caution given, *Beware of falſe prophets.* There are two ſorts of deceivers which our Saviour gave his diſciples a ſpecial warning of; namely, falſe *Chriſts* and falſe *prophets.* Falſe Chriſts were ſuch as pretended to be the true Meſſias; falſe prophets were ſuch as pretended to own chriſtianity, but drew people away from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. 2. The ground of this caution; *They come in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves;* that is, they make fair pretences to ſtrictneſs in religion, and to greater meaſures and degrees of ſelf-denial and mortification than others. Whence we *learn,* That ſuch who go about to ſeduce others, uſually pretend to extraordinary meaſures of ſanctity themſelves, to raiſe an admiration amongſt thoſe who judge of ſaints more by their looks than by their lives; more by their expreſſions than by their actions. What heavenly looks and devout geſtures, what long prayers and frequent faſtings had the hypocritical Phariſees, beyond what Chriſt or his diſciples ever practiſed! 3. The rule laid down by Chriſt, whereby we are to judge of falſe teachers; *By their fruits ſhall ye know them. Learn,* That the beſt courſe we can take to judge of teachers pretending to be ſent of God, is to examine the deſign and tendency of their doctrines, and the courſe and tenor of their converſations. Good teachers, like good trees, will bring forth the good fruits of truth and holineſs; but evil men, and ſeducers, like corrupt trees, will bring forth error and wickedneſs in their life and doctrine.

21 ¶ Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.

Not every one; that is, *Not any one that ſaith, Lord, Lord,* that is, that owneth me by way of profeſſion, by way of prayer, and by way of appeal, ſhall be ſaved; *But he that doeth the will of my Father* ſincerely and univerſally. *Learn* hence, 1. That multitudes at the great day ſhall be really diſowned by Chirſt, as none of his ſervants, that did nominally own him for their Lord and Maſter here: many that have now propheſied in his name, ſhall then periſh in his wrath: many that have caſt out devils now, ſhall be caſt out to devils then: ſuch has have now done many wonderful works, ſhall then periſh for evil workers. 2. That a bare name and profeſſion of chriſtianity, without the practice of it, is a very inſufficient ground to build our hopes of heaven and ſalvation upon. A profeſſion of faith, and purpoſes of obedience, without actual obedience to the commands of God, will avail no perſon to ſalvation. 3. That gifts, eminent gifts, yea extraordinary and miraculous gifts, are not to be depended upon as ſufficient evidences for heaven and ſalvation. Gifts are as gold which adorns the temple, but grace is like the temple that ſanctifies the gold.

24 ¶ Therefore, whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock: 25 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man which built his houſe upon the ſand: 27 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Our Lord here ſpeaks of two houſes, the one built upon a rock, the other on the ſand; theſe two houſes were alike ſkillfully built to outward appearance; while the ſun ſhone and the weather was fair, none could diſcern but that the houſe upon the ſand was built as well, and might ſtand as long, as that on the rock; but when the rain fell, the foundation failed. Thus, where is the hypocrite, with all his faith and fear, with all his ſhew and appearance of grace, in a wet and windy day? His goodly outſide is like the apples of Sodom, fair and alluring to the eye, but being touched, evaporate into duſt and ſmoke. An hypocrite ſtands in grace no longer than until he falls into trouble. and, accordingly, our Lord here concludes his excellent ſermon with an elegant ſimilitude. The wiſe builder is not the frequent hearer, but the faithful doer of the word; the houſe is heaven, and the hope of eternal life; and the rock is Chriſt; the *building upon the ſand,* is reſting in the bare performance of outward duties: the *rains, winds,* and *floods,* are all kinds of afflicting evils, ſufferings and perſecutions, that may befal us. *Note,* 1. That the obedient believer is the only wiſe man, that builds his hope of heaven upon a ſure and abiding foundation, *Note*, 2. That ſuch profeſſors as reſt in the outward performances of holy duties, are fooliſh builders, their foundation is weak and ſandy, and all their hopes of ſalvation vain and uncertain. An outward profeſſion of chriſtianity, though ſet off by propheſying and doing miracles, will not avail any man towards his account at the great day, without that real and faithful, that univerſal and impartial obedience to the laws of Chriſt which the goſpel requires.

28 And it came to paſs when Jeſus had ended theſe ſayings, the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the ſcribes.

Here we have two things *obſervable:* 1. The manner of our Lord's teaching, it was *with authority*; that is, it was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable. With what brevity, without darkneſs! with what gravity, without affectation! with what eloquence, without meretricious ornament, were our Lord's diſcourſes! The majeſty he ſhewed in his ſermons, made it evidently appear, that he was a teacher ſent of God, and clothed with his authority. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſucceſs of his teaching: *The people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine*: affected with admiration, believing him to be an extraordinary prophet. *Learn*, That ſuch is the power of Chriſt's doctrine, when accompanied with the energy of the Holy Spirit, that it makes all auditors admirers, yea, believers; it cauſes aſtoniſhment in their minds, and reformation in their manners.

CHAP. VIII.

This chapter is called by St. Ambroſe, ſcriptura miraculoſa, *The miraculous ſcripture*; *there being ſeveral great miracles recorded in this chapter*; *as the cleanſing the leper, the curing of the centurion's ſervant, the appeaſing of the winds, &c. Our Saviour having delivered his doctrine in the former chapters, in this he backs it with with miracles*; *for the eſtabliſhment and confirmation of it.*

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And behold, there came a leper and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean. 3 And Jeſus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will: Be thou clean. And immediately his leproſy was cleanſed. 4 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, See thou tell no man: but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift that Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

Note here, in general, That the Jews paid civil adoration to their kings and to their prophets: thus Saul ſtooped with his face to the ground to Samuel, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face before Daniel, and Obadiah before Elijah; from whence may be gathered, that the adorations given to Chriſt by them that knew nothing of his divinity, were paid him as a prophet ſent from God. Only, next, ſeveral particulars are here *obſervable*; as, 1. The petitioner, and that is a leper, he came and worſhipped Chriſt, and petitions him to heal him, ſaying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean:* Where he diſcovers a firm belief of Chriſt's power, but a diffidence and diſtruſt in Chriſt's will, to heal him. *Learn*, Chriſt's divine power muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly believed by all thoſe that expect benefit by him, and healing from him. *Obſerve*, 2. How readily our Saviour grants his petition; *Jeſus touched him, ſaying, I will: Be thou clean.* Our Saviour, by touching the leper, ſhewed himſelf to be above the law, as God; though ſubject to the law, as man; for, by the ceremonial law, the leper was forbidden to be touched. Yet it was a received rule among the Jews, that a prophet might vary from the punctilios of the ceremonial law, or change a ritual law; ſo did Elijah ſtretch himſelf on the dead child, and Eliſha on the Shunamite's ſon, notwithſtanding the prohibition of coming near the dead. But Chriſt's curing the leper by the word of his mouth, and the touch of his hand, ſhewed his divine power, and proved himſelf to be truly and really ſent of God; leproſy being called by the Jews the finger of God, a diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing; our Saviour therefore, as a proof of his being the Meſſias, tells the diſciples of John, *That the lepers were cleanſed*, Mat. xi. 5. *and the dead raiſed*.. Which being put together, intimates, that the cleanſing of the leper is as peculiar an act of divine power as the raiſing of the dead; and accordingly, 2 Kings, v. 7. ſaid the king, *Am I a god that this man ſends to me to cure a man of his leproſy? Obſerve*, 3. The certainty and ſuddenneſs of the cure; *immediately his leproſy was cleanſed*: Chriſt not only cured him without means, but without the ordinary time required for ſuch a cure. Thus Chriſt ſhewed both power and will to cure him miraculouſly, who believed his power, but queſtioned his willingneſs. *Obſerve*, 4. The charge and command given by Chriſt after the cure: 1. *To tell it no man*; wherein the modeſty, humility, and piety of Chriſt is diſcovered, together with the care of his own ſafety: his modeſty, in not deſiring his good deeds ſhould be proclaimed; his humility, in ſhunning vain-glorious applauſe and commendation; his piety, in deſiring all the praiſe, honour, and glory, ſhould redound entirely to God; and his care of his own ſafety, leſt the publiſhing of this miracle ſhould create him untimely danger from the Phariſees. Chriſtians, behold your pattern to do much good, and make but little noiſe: Chriſt affected no popular air, he did not ſpoil a good work by vain oſtentation. When we work hard for God, take we great care that pride doth not blow either it or us. O how difficult it is to do much ſervice, and not value ourſelves too much for the ſervices which we do! The ſecond part of the charge which Chriſt gave the recovered leper was, *To ſhew himſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift which Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them*; that is, a teſtimony to the Jews that he was the Meſſias, and that he did not oppoſe the ceremonial law given by Moſes. Where *note*, That our Saviour would have the ceremonial law punctually obſerved, ſo long as the time for its continuance did endure; though he came to deſtroy that law, yet whilſt it ſtood, he would have it obſerved. Here Dr.

Lightfoot obſerves, That though the prieſthood was much degenerated from its primitive inſtitution by human inventions, yet Chriſt ſends the leper to ſubmit to it; becauſe though they did corrupt, yet they did not extinguiſh the divine inſtitution.

5 ¶ And when Jeſus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beſeeching him, 6 And ſaying, Lord, my ſervant lieth at home ſick of the palſy, grievouſly tormented. 7 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof: but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having ſoldiers under me: and I ſay to this *man*, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jeſus heard *it*, he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo much faith in Iſrael.

The ſecond miracle our Lord works in this chapter, is the healing of the centurion's ſervant. Where *obſerve*, 1. The perſon that applies to him for help and healing: he was a gentile, an heathen, a Roman ſoldier, an officer, or commander. *Note*, That ſuch is the freeneſs of God's grace, that it extends itſelf to all ranks, to all orders and degrees of men, without exception. Even the bloody trade of war yields worthy clients to Chriſt. He doth not ſo much regard who we are, and whence we are, as what we are, and with what diſpoſitions and inclinations we come unto him. 2. The perſon whom the centurion comes to Chriſt for; not for himſelf, nor for his ſon, but for his ſervant. His ſervant is ſick, he doth not drive him out of doors, nor ſtand gazing by his bed-ſide, but looks out for relief for him: a worthy example! Some maſters have not ſo much regard for their ſick ſervants, as for their oxen, or their ſwine; but he is not worthy of a good ſervant, that, in time of ſickneſs, is not willing to ſerve his ſervant. A conceit of ſuperiority muſt beget in no man a neglect of charitable offices towards inferiors. 3. Unto whom the centurion ſeeks, and with what zeal and application; he ſeeks not to wizzards and conjurors, but to the phyſician, for his poor ſervant; yea, to Jeſus the beſt phyſician; and this is not a formal relation to his mouth, but with a vehement aggravation of the diſeaſe; *My ſervant is grievouſly tormented*; where the maſter's condolence and tender ſympathy with his afflicted ſervant, is both matter of commendation and imitation alſo. 4. The happy mixture of humility and faith which was found in this centurion; he owns his unworthineſs of having Chriſt come under his roof, yet he acknowledged Chriſt's power, that by ſpeaking of a word, his ſervant might be healed by him. Humility is both the fruit of faith, and the companion of faith; an humble ſoul as an high eſteem of Chriſt, and a low eſteem of himſelf. 5. How our bleſſed Lord exceeds both his deſires and expectations; Chriſt ſays, Not only will I heal him, but I will come and heal him: wonderful condeſcenſion! In St. John, chap. iv. 47. we read of a certain nobleman and ruler, who twice intreated our Lord to come to his houſe and heal his ſon, but our Lord refuſed, and did not ſtir a foot: here the centurion doth but barely tell Chriſt of his poor ſervant's ſickneſs, and he, both unaſked and undeſired, ſays, *I will come and heal him.* O how far was Chriſt from ſeeming in the leaſt to honour riches and deſpiſe poverty! He that came in the form of a ſervant, goes down and viſits a ſick ſervant upon his poor pallet-bed, that would not viſit the couch of the ruler's ſon. How ſhould we ſtoop to the loweſt offices of love and kindneſs to one another, when Jeſus thus condeſcendingly abaſed himſelf before us! 6. The notice and obſervation which Jeſus takes of the centurion's faith: *He* wondered at it from him who had wrought it in him. Chriſt wrought this faith as God, and wondered at it as man: What can be more wonderful than to ſee Chriſt wonder? We do not find him wondering at worldly pomp and greatneſs. When the diſciples wondered at the magnificence of the temple, Chriſt rather rebuked them than wondered with them. But when he ſees the gracious acts of faith, he is raviſhed with wonder. Let it teach us to place admiration where Chriſt fixes his—Let us be more affected with the leaſt meaſures of grace in a good man, than with all the gaieties and glory of a great man. Let us not envy the one, but admire the other.

11 And I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: 12 But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 13 And Jeſus ſaid unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee. And his ſervant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour.

This was the firſt occaſion that our Lord took to ſpeak of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. *Obſerve* here, That the unbelieving Jews are called *the children of the kingdom*, becauſe born within the pale of the viſible church; they preſumed that the kingdom of heaven was entailed upon them, becauſe they were Abraham's ſeed; they boaſted of, and gloried in their external and outward privileges. *Note* thence, 1. That goſpel ordinances, and church-privileges enjoyed, are a ſpecial honour to a people admitted to a participation of them: our Lord here ſtyles the Jews upon that account, *The children of the kingdom.* 2. That ſuch privileges enjoyed, but not improved, do provoke almighty God to inflict the heavieſt of judgments upon a people; *The children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt into outer darkneſs*; that is, into the darkneſs of hell, where ſhall be perpetual lamentations for the remembrance of the goſpel kindly offered, but unthankfully rejected; and where repentance and regret will avail them nothing.

14 ¶ And when Jeſus was come into Peter's houſe, he ſaw his wife's mother laid, and ſick of a

fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and ſhe aroſe and miniſtered unto them.

The next miracle which our Lord wrought, was in curing Peter's wife's mother of a fever. The miracle was not in curing an incurable diſtemper, but in the way and manner: 1. It was by a touch of our Lord's hand. 2. It was inſtantaneous and ſudden; *immediately the fever left her*. 3. The viſible effects of her recovery preſently appeared; *ſhe inſtantly aroſe and miniſtered unto them.* That ſhe could ariſe, argued her cure miraculous; that ſhe could and did ariſe and adminiſter unto Jeſus, argued thankfulneſs, and a great ſenſe of his goodneſs upon her mind. *Note* here, 1. That marriage in the miniſters of the goſpel, yea, even in the apoſtles themſelves, and in Peter, the chiefeſt of them, was neither cenſured nor yet condemned by our Lord. St. Peter had a wife and family, which Jeſus condeſcended to viſit. 2. That the firſt thing which Chriſt takes notice of in the houſe, is what aileth any in it; what need they ſtand in of his help and healing; accordingly, together with his preſence, he affords them relief. 3. That when Chriſt has graciouſly viſited and healed any of his ſervants, it ought to be their firſt work and next care to adminiſter unto Chriſt; that is, to employ their recovered health, and improve their renewed ſtrength in his ſervice: *She aroſe and adminiſtered.*

16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with devils: and he caſt out the ſpirits with *his* word, and healed all that were ſick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, Himſelf took our infirmities and bare *our* ſickneſſes.

It was very common about the time of our Saviour's coming, for the devil bodily to poſſeſs perſons, and very grievouſly to torment them. This is one of the ſad and diſmal evils which ſin has made us liable and obnoxious to, to be bodily poſſeſſed by Satan; when we give Satan the power of our hearts, it is a juſt and righteous thing with God, to give him the poſſeſſion of our bodies. But who is the perſon that diſpoſſeſſes Satan? Chriſt Jeſus: it is a ſtronger than the ſtrong man that muſt caſt out Satan: our Jeſus in whom we truſt, by his powerful word alone, can deliver us from Satan's power, and all the ſad effects and conſequences thereof. *Note*, With what condolency and ſympathizing pity he exerciſes theſe acts of mercy and compaſſion towards poor creatures: he is ſaid to take our *infirmities upon himſelf, and to bear our ſickneſſes*; he bare the guilt, which was the cauſe of theſe griefs and ſorrows; and he bare the ſorrows themſelves, by a tender ſympathy with us under the burden of them. Chriſt conſiders our ſufferings as his own: *He is afflicted in all our afflictions*, and pained with all our pains; in this ſenſe, *He took our infirmities, and bare our ſickneſſes.*

18 ¶ Now when Jeſus ſaw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other ſide. 19 And a certain ſcribe came, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 20 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* their neſts: but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

Obſerve here, A perſon reſolving to follow Chriſt; a good reſolution, if made deliberately, and not raſhly, nor for ſiniſter ends and ſecular advantages; which, it is to be feared, was the caſe here, by the anſwer which our Lord gives; for, ſays he, *Foxes have holes*, &c. That is, my condition is very poor, worſe than the birds of the air, for they have their fixed neſts; or the beaſts of the earth, for they have their dens and holes; but I have no fixed habitation. *Note*, 1. That many perſons take up raſh and ſudden reſolutions to follow Chriſt, before they have well conſidered what it will coſt them; and what they are like to loſe by being his diſciples. 2. That ſuch men may find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, who expect to gain any thing by following Chriſt but their ſoul's ſalvation. 3. The title given to Chriſt, he is ſtyled here, and elſewhere, *The Son of man*. (1.) To ſhew the truth of his humanity; the ſon of man muſt be man. (2.) To ſhew the depth of his abaſement; Chriſt humbled, yea, emptied himſelf, when being the Son of God he ſubmitted to be made man: *The Son of man hath not where to lay*, &c.

21 And another of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, ſuffer me to go and bury my father. 22 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury the dead.

We muſt not ſuppoſe by this prohibition, that Chriſt diſallows or diſapproves of any civil office from one perſon to another, much leſs of a child to a parent, either living or dying: but he lets us know, 1. That no office of love and ſervice of man muſt be preferred before our duty to God, unto whom we owe our firſt obedience. 2. That lawful and decent offices become ſinful when they hinder greater duties. 3. That ſuch as are called to the work and employment of the miniſtry, muſt mind that alone, and leave inferior duties to inferior perſons; as if our Lord had ſaid, Others will ſerve well enough to bury the dead; but thou that art a conſecrated perſon, muſt do that unto which thou art conſecrated and ſet apart. Under the law the prieſts might not come near a dead corpſe, nor meddle with the interment of their parents; to which our Lord probably alludes.

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ſhip, his diſciples followed him. 24 And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep. 25 And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us: we periſh. 26 And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe, and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. 27 But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him?

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt and his diſciples no ſooner put forth to ſea, but dangers attend, and difficulties do accompany them; a tempeſt aroſe, and the ſhip was covered with waves. *Learn* thence, that the preſence of Chriſt itſelf, doth not exempt his diſciples and followers from trouble and danger. Here is a great tempeſt about the diſciple's ears, though Jeſus was in their company. 2. The poſture that Chriſt was in when the tempeſt aroſe; he being weary on the land, was fallen aſleep in the ſhip: our bleſſed Redeemer hereby ſhewed himſelf to be truly and really man: as he took upon him our human nature, ſo he ſubjected himſelf to our human infirmities. 3. The diſciples application made to him: they awoke him with a ſad outcry, *Lord, ſave us: we periſh.* Here was faith mixed with human frailty: they had faith in his power, that he could ſave them; but being aſleep, they concluded he muſt awake before he could ſave them: whereas though his human nature was aſleep, yet his divine nature neither ſlumbered or ſlept. *Learn* hence, That the prevalency of fear in a time of great imminent danger, though it may argue weakneſs of faith, yet is no evidence of want of faith: in the midſt of the diſciples fear, they believed Chriſt's power. 4. A double rebuke given by our Saviour: (1.) To the winds and ſeas; and the fears of the diſciples; *He rebukes the winds and ſeas,* and inſtantly *they are calm*; when the ſea was furious as a madman, Chriſt by his divine power calms it. *Learn* hence, That the moſt raging winds, and outrageous ſeas cannot ſtand before the rebukes of Chriſt; if once he rebukes them their rage is down; God lays a law upon the moſt lawleſs creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt lawleſly. (2.) Our Lord rebukes his diſciples fears, *Why are ye fearful?* No ſooner was a ſtorm up, but their fears were up, and they were as much overſet with their boiſterous paſſions, as the veſſel was with the tempeſtuous winds; and accordingly he rebukes the tempeſt within, and then the tempeſt without; firſt he calms their hearts, and then the ſeas. From this inſtance we ſee, that great faith in the habit, may appear little in act and exerciſe; the diſciples faith in forſaking all and following Chriſt, was great faith; but in this preſent act their faith was weak, through the prevalency of their fear, Laſtly, The faith of the diſciples was leſſened through their fear: fear is generated by unbelief, and unbelief ſtrengthened by fear; as in things natural there is a circular generation, vapours beget ſhowers, and ſhowers vapours; ſo it is in things moral, nothing can cure us of fear, till God cures us of unbelief: Chriſt, therefore, takes an effectual method to rid the diſciples of their fears, by rebuking their unbelief.

28 ¶ And when he was come to the other ſide into the country of the Gergeſenes, there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way.

We read of few, if any, in the Old Teſtament that were poſſeſſed with evil ſpirits, but of many in the New Teſtament. Our Saviour came into the world to deſtroy the works of the devil: therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome human bodies, to ſhew his divine power in caſting them out. *Note* here, 1. That the evil angels by their fall loſt their purity, but not their power. 2. That they do no ofter exert their power in doing miſchief to the bodies and lives of men, is from the reſtraining power of God.

29 And behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Obſerve, The devils knew Jeſus to be the Son of God, and that he came into the world to be a Saviour, but not their Saviour; and therefore they cried out, *What have we to do with thee?* or thou with us? O what an uncomfortable faith is this, to believe that Chriſt is a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know that he is none of our Saviour? But what is their outcry againſt Chriſt? This, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* *Learn*, 1. That there are tortures appointed to the ſpiritual natures of evil angels. The fire of hell is conceived to be partly material, and partly ſpiritual; partly material, to work upon the bodies of evil men; and partly ſpiritual to work upon the ſonls of men, and the ſpirits of evil angels. 2. That though the devils be now as full of diſcontent as they can be, yet they are not ſo full of torments as they ſhall be; their ſpeech here intimates, that there will be a time when their torments ſhall be increaſed, when they ſhall have their fill of torment; therefore they pray, Increaſe not our torments before the appointed time of their increaſe.

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many ſwine feeding. 31 So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine.

Note here, 1. A notable inſtance of Satan's limited power, that a whole legion of devils had not power to deſtroy one man, nor were able to hurt the meaneſt creature without permiſſion. 2. The devils' acknowledgment of their own impotency, and Chriſt's power; their aſking leave to go into the ſwine, ſhews that they could not go of themſelves. *Learn* hence, 1. The reſtleſſneſs of Satan's malice; he will hurt the ſwine, rather than not hurt at all. 2. That though Satan's malice be infinite, yet his power is limited and bounded; as he cannot do all the miſchief he would, ſo he ſhall not do all he can.

32 And he ſaid unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine: and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters.

Although Chriſt ſeldom wrought any deſtructive miracle, and although he certainly foreſaw that the ſwine would periſh in the waters; yet that the people might ſee how great the power and malice of the devil would be, if not reſtrained, he permitted him to enter into the ſwine: *Chriſt ſaid unto him, Go*; and how glad was Satan of this permiſſion to enter into the ſwine, in order to their deſtruction! Let it teach us our duty by prayer, to commit ourſelves, and all that we have, morning and evening, into the hands of God's care; all that we have in the houſe, and all that we have in the field, that it may be preſerved from the power and malice of evil ſpirits.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing; and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus; and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.

Obſerve, 1. What a contrary effect this miracle which Chriſt wrought, had upon theſe people: inſtead of believing on him for his miraculous cure of the poſſeſſed, the loſs of their ſwine enrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt to depart from. Temporal loſſes are ſo great in worldly men's eſtimation, that ſpiritual advantages are nothing eſteemed; carnal hearts prefer their ſwine before their Saviour; and had rather loſe the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt, than any part of their wordly profits. 2. How unanimous and importunate theſe Gardarenes were to get rid of Chriſt; the whole city came out, and are not only willing to his departure, but they beſeech him to depart out of their coaſts. *Learn*, That deplorably ſad is the condition of ſuch from whom Chriſt departs; more deplorably ſad is their condition who ſay unto him, Depart; but moſt deplorably ſad is the caſe of them that intreat and beſeech Chriſt to depart from them. Thus did the Gardarenes, and accordingly Chriſt took ſhip and departed from them, and we never read of his return unto them.

CHAP. IX.

AND he entered into a ſhip, and paſſed over, and came into his own city.

In the laſt verſe of the foregoing chapter, the Gadarenes, with one conſent, deſire Chriſt to depart out of their coaſts, and according to their deſire, he is now departing from them into his own city, which was Capernaum; for Bethlehem brought him forth, Nazareth brought him up, and Capernaum was his dwelling place. From their deſire of our Lord's departure, and from his departing according to their deſire, we *learn*, That the bleſſed Jeſus will not long trouble that people with his preſence, who are weary of his company, and deſirous of his departure.

2 And behold, they brought to him a man ſick of the palſy lying on a bed: and Jeſus ſeeing their faith, ſaid uuto the ſick of the palſy, Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgiven thee.

Obſerve, 1. The patient, *One ſick of the palſy*; which being a reſolution of the nerves, weakens the joints, and confines the perſon to his bed or couch. As a demonſtration of Chriſt's divine power, he was pleaſed to ſingle out ſome incurable diſeaſes (as the world accounts them) to work a cure upon, as the leproſy and palſy. 2. The phyſician, *Jeſus Chriſt*; he alone is that wiſe, faithful, and compaſſionate phyſician, that can, and doth cure both ſoul and body. 3. The moving and impulſive cauſe of his cure, *Jeſus ſeeing their faith*; that is, their firm perſuaſion that he was clothed with a divine power, and able to help; together with their confidence in his goodneſs, that he was as willing as he was able; and no ſooner did they exerciſe their faith in believing, but Chriſt exerted his divine power in healing. It was not the ſick man's faith, but the faith of his friends: the faith of others may prevail for obtaining corporal benefits, and temporal bleſſings for us; thus the centurion's faith healed his ſervant, and Jarus's faith raiſed his daughter. 4. The marvellous efficacy and power of faith: It obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected; they deſired only the healing of the body, but Jeſus ſeeing their faith, heals body and ſoul too, ſaying, *Be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgiven thee*; intimating that diſeaſes proceed from ſin, becauſe Chriſt firſt ſpeaks of forgiving them; yet it is conceived that he rather ſpeaketh here of the temporal remiſſion of the puniſhment, than of the eternal; becauſe that depends on our own faith, and not on others.

3 And behold certain of the ſcribes ſaid within themſelves, This man blaſphemeth.

See here, how the beſt of men are ſometimes charged with ſaying and doing the worſt of things; to do well, and bear ill, was the portion of Chriſt himſelf, and may be the portion of the holieſt of thoſe that belong to him. The innocent Jeſus was accuſed of blaſphemy, of ſorcery, and of the blackeſt crimes. Innocency itſelf can protect no man from ſlander and falſe accuſations.

4 And Jeſus knowing their thoughts, ſaid, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is it eaſier to ſay, *Thy* ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay Ariſe and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (then ſaith he to the ſick of the palſy) Ariſe, take up thy bed, and go unto thine houſe.

Our Saviour here gives the Phariſees a two-fold demonſtration of his godhead: firſt, by letting them underſtand that he knew their thoughts; for to ſearch the hearts, and to know the thoughts of the children of men, is not in the power either of angels or men, but the prerogative of God only. Secondly, by aſſuming to himſelf a power to forgive ſins; the Son of man hath power to forgive ſins. Our Saviour here, by forgiving ſins in his own name, and by his own authority, doth give the world an undeniable proof and convincing evidence of his godhead: For, *Who can forgive ſins, but God only?*

7 And he aroſe and departed to his houſe. 8 But when the multitude ſaw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given ſuch power unto man.

Note here, The multitude marvelled, but not believed; they admire our Saviour for an extraordinary man, but did not believe him as the Son of God: they praiſe God for giving ſuch power to heal the bodies of men: but not for ſending his Son into the world to ſave the ſouls of men. *Learn* hence, That the ſight of Chriſt's miracles is not ſufficient to work faith in the ſoul, but requires the concurring operation of the Holy Spirit; the one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

9 ¶ And as Jeſus paſſed forth from thence, he ſaw a man named Matthew ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaith unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe, and followed him.

Obſerve here, The number of our Lord's apoſtles not being filled up, what a ſtrange election and choice he makes; Matthew, a grinding publican, is the man. *Learn*, Such is the freeneſs of God's grace, that it chuſes, and ſuch is the efficacy of it, that it overpowers and brings in the worſt of ſinners unto God; Matthew, a publican; Zaccheus, an extortioner; Manaſſeh, a murderer; Paul, a perſecutor: all theſe are brought home to God by the power of converting grace. 2. Matthew's ready compliance with God's call, *He aroſe and followed Chriſt*. When the inward call of the Spirit accompanies the outward call of the world, the ſoul readily complies, and preſently yields obedience to the voice of God. (*Bp. Hall.*) Chriſt oftentimes ſpeaks by his word to our ears, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his Spirit to our hearts, Satan ſhall not hold us down, the world ſhall not keep us back, but we ſhall ariſe, and follow our Lord and Maſter.

10 ¶ And it came to paſs, as Jeſus ſat at meat in the houſe, behold, many publicans and ſinners came and ſat down with him and his diſciples.

Obſerve here, Chriſt invites Matthew to a diſcipleſhip, Matthew invites Chriſt to a feaſt; the ſervant invites his maſter, a ſinner invites his Saviour. We do not find, wherever Chriſt was invited to any table that he refuſed to go; if a Phariſee, if a publican, or any perſon whatever, invited, he conſtantly went; not for the pleaſure of eating, but for the opportunity of converſing, and doing good; Chriſt feaſts us, when we feaſt him. From Matthew's example, *learn*, That new converts are full of affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive of their love to him. Such as before converſion diſeſteemed him, do afterwards kindly and reſpectfully entertain him. Matthew, touched with a ſenſe of Chriſt's love, makes him a royal feaſt. *Obſerve* father, How at this feaſt many publicans and ſinners were preſent, of Matthew's acquaintance, no doubt, and probably invited by him, that they might alſo ſee Jeſus, and be partakers of the ſame grace with him. Whence we *learn*, That grace teaches a man to deſire and ſeek the converſion of others, and ſuch as are truly brought home to Chriſt, will ſtudy and endeavour to bring in all their acquaintance to him alſo.

11 And when the Phariſees ſaw *it*, they ſaid unto his diſciples, Why eateth your maſter with publicans and ſinners?

See here, what a grief it is to wicked men to find others brought in to Chriſt: the wicked Phariſees murmur, repine, and envy, inſtead of admiring Chriſt's condeſcenſion, and adoring his divine goodneſs: they cenſure him for converſing with ſinners; but he tells them in the following verſes, that he converſed with them as their phyſician, not as their companion. Leaving a ſtriking example to the miniſters of the goſpel, to uſe all poſſible means, in order to bring about the converſion of ſinners.

12 But when Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. 13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

As if our Lord had ſaid, 'With whom ſhould the phyſician converſe, but with his ſick patients? Now I am come into the world to do the office of a kind phyſician unto men. Surely then I am come to take all opportunities to help and heal them: they are ſick, and need the phyſician, but for you Phariſees, who are whole and well in your own opinion, and ſwelled with a conceit of your own righteouſneſs, I have no hopes of doing any good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole deſire no phyſician's help.' *Learn* hence, 1. That ſin is the ſoul's malady, its ſpiritual diſeaſe and ſickneſs. 2. That Chriſt is the phyſician appointed by God for the cure and healing of this diſeaſe and malady. 3. That there are multitudes ſpiritually ſick, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. 4. That ſuch only as are ſenſible of their ſpiritual ſickneſs, are ſubjects capable of cure, and the perſons whom Chriſt is a healing phyſician to; *They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick*.

14 ¶ Then came to him the diſciples of John ſaying, Why do we and the Phariſees faſt oft, but thy diſciples faſt not? 15 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt. 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worſe. 17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: elſe the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles periſh: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preſerved.

The Phariſees themſelves had a contention with our Saviour in the foregoing verſes: here they ſet on the diſciples of John, to contend with him about his diſciples faſting; alledging that the diſciples of John faſted often, Chriſt's diſciples not at all: our Lord owns it, that his diſciples did not faſt at preſent. for two reaſons, 1. Becauſe it was unſuitable to them. 2. Becauſe it was intollerable for them. It was unſuitable to them, becauſe of Chriſt's bodily preſence with them; this made it a time of joy and feaſting, not of mourning and faſting. Whilſt Chriſt the bridegroom is with them, they muſt feaſt and rejoice: when removed from them, there will be cauſe enough to faſt and mourn. Chriſt is the bridegroom, and his church the bride, which he has eſpouſed and married to himſelf;

and whilſt his ſpouſe did enjoy his bodily preſence with her, it was a day of joy and rejoicing to her, and mourning and faſting were improper for her. Again, this diſcipline of faſting was at preſent intollerable for the diſciples; for they were raw, green, and tender, and could no more bear the ſeverities of religion at preſent, than an old garment could bear a piece of new ſtiff cloth ſet into it, which will make the rent worſe, if the garment comes to ſtretch; nor no more than old bottles can keep new wine. Thus, ſays Chriſt, ‘My diſciples are young and green, tender and weak, newly converted, they cannot bear the ſeverer exerciſes of religion preſently; but when I am aſcended into heaven, I will ſend down my Holy Spirit, which ſhall enable them to do all the duties the goſpel enjoins." Hence we may gather, that young converts, till grown up to ſome conſiſtency in grace, muſt not be put upon the ſeverer exerciſes of religion, but handled with that tenderneſs and gentleneſs which becomes the mild and merciful diſpenſation of the goſpel. Our Saviour here commends prudence to his miniſters; that they put not their people upon duties beyond their ſtrength, but conſult their progreſs in chriſtianity, and the proficiency they have made in religion, and treat them accordingly.

18 ¶ While he ſpake theſe things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worſhipped him, ſaying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thine hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live. 19 And Jeſus aroſe and followed him, and *ſo did* his diſciples.

Obſerve the humble poſture in which this man came unto Chriſt, namely, falling at his feet and worſhipping him; which was not only a ſign of tender affection towards his daughter, but an evidence of his faith in our bleſſed Saviour; yet his confining Chriſt's power to his bodily preſence, and to the touch of his hand, was a token of the weakneſs of his faith: *Come*, ſays he, *and lay thine hand upon her and ſhe ſhall live.* As if Chriſt could not have cured her, without either coming to, or laying his hand upon her. *Note* here, That although all that come to Chriſt are not alike ſtrong in faith, yet our bleſſed Redeemer refuſes none that come unto him with a ſincere faith, though in much weakneſs of faith. *Jeſus aroſe and followed him.*

20 ¶ (And behold, a woman which was diſeaſed with an iſſue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment. 21 For ſhe ſaid within herſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole. 22 But Jeſus turned him about, and when he ſaw her, he ſaid, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.)

Whilſt Chriſt is on his way to the ruler's houſe, a diſeaſed woman comes behind him, touches his garment, and is inſtantly healed: the virtue lay not in her finger, but in her faith, or rather in Chriſt, which her faith inſtrumentally drew forth. *Note* here, How faith oftentimes meets with a ſweeter welcome than it could expect. This poor woman came to Chriſt trembling, but went away triumphing; Chriſt bids her, *Be of good comfort*, &c.

23 And when Jeſus came into the ruler's houſe, and ſaw the minſtrels, and the people making a noiſe, 24 He ſaid unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to ſcorn. 25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid aroſe. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

Our Lord being come to the ruler's houſe, finds the people very buſily preparing for the interment of the dead corpſe, with muſic and other ſolemnities. The cuſtom of having muſic at funerals, came from the Heathens; no mention is made thereof in the Old Teſtament; we read of tearing the fleſh, ſhaving the head, eating the bread of mourners, alſo of funeral ſongs, but theſe were only ſung with the voice; but inſtruments of muſic at funerals came from the Pagans. Weeping and lamentation are the moſt proper funeral muſic; then, nothing ſounds ſo well as a ſigh, nor is any thing ſo much in ſeaſon as a tear: yet are all the demonſtrations of immoderate and exceſſive mourning both hurtful to the living, and diſhonourable to the dead; nor is it an argument of more love, but a proof of leſs grace. *Obſerve* next, In what ſenſe our Saviour affirms, that *the damſel was not dead. Mortua eſt vobis, mihi dormit*, ſays St. *Jerom*; ‘She is dead to you, ‘but aſleep to me.’ I can as eaſily raiſe her from death, as you could awake her out of ſleep. Her ſoul was ſeparated from her body, but not yet fixed in its eternal manſion. Souls departed are under the conduct of angels, good or bad, to their ſeveral places of bliſs or miſery. Probably the ſoul of this damſel was under the guard of angels near her deady body, waiting the pleaſure of Chriſt in reference to it; either to reſtore it again to the body, or to tranſlate it to its eternal manſions. *Note* here, That from theſe words of our Saviour, *the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth*, the Jeſuits plead for their doctrine of equivocations and mental reſervations, alledging, that when Chriſt ſaid, *ſhe is not dead*, he reſerved in his mind, ‘in reſpect of my power.’ But the words of our Lord were plainly ſpoken to thoſe who were preparing for her interment and funeral rites; and accordingly intimate, that ſhe was not ſo dead, as they needed to make theſe preparations, he being come to awake her out of ſleep.

27 ¶ And when Jeſus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and ſaying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the houſe, the blind men came to him: and Jeſus ſaith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, ſaying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jeſus ſtraitly charged them, ſaying, See that no man know *it*. 31 But they, when they were departed, ſpread abroad his fame in all that country.

The ruler, and others who came to Chriſt for cure and healing, believed him to be a man unto whom almighty God had communicated divine power. But it is obſervable, that theſe poor blind men did believe him to be the Meſſias, by their calling him the ſon of David; and according to their faith, ſo was their ſucceſs; their faith capacitated them for a cure. But why did our Lord enjoin the blind men ſilence, and ſtraitly charge them to tell no man of the cure? Herein the great modeſty and humility of Chriſt appeared, in avoiding all oſtentation and commendation; as alſo a due care of his own ſafety, leſt the publiſhing of his miracles ſhould create him untimely danger from the Phariſees.

32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought unto him a dumb man poſſeſſed with a devil. 33 And when the devil was caſt out, the dumb ſpake: and the multitude marvelled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael.

Still our Lord goes about doing good; before he healed the diſeaſed, here he helps the poſſeſſed. *Learn*, 1. That amongſt the calamities which ſin has rendered human nature liable and obnoxious to, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſſed by Satan. This man's dumbneſs was cauſed by the devil's poſſeſſion. 2. That one demonſtration of Chriſt's divine power, and a convincing evidence of his being truly and really God, was his caſting out devils by the word of his power.

34 But the Phariſees ſaid, He caſteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

See here the dreadful and ſad effects of blindneſs, obſtinacy, and malice; the Phariſees charge Chriſt with making a contract with the devil, affirming, that he derived his power from him. But how unlikely was this, that Satan ſhould lend our Saviour a power againſt himſelf, and for the deſtruction of his own kingdom! O how dangerous is a wilful and obſtinate oppoſition of the truth! It provokes God to deliver a perſon up to final obduracy.

35 And Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs and every diſeaſe among the people. 36 ¶ But when he ſaw the multitudes, he was moved with compaſſion on them, becauſe they fainted, and were ſcattered abroad, as ſheep having no ſhepherd.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Savour's great work and buſineſs in this world; it was doing good both to the bodies and ſouls of men; the moſt pleaſant and delightful, the moſt happy and glorious work that a perſon can be employed about. 2. His unwearied diligence and induſtry in this great and good work, *He went about all the cities and villages, preaching the goſpel, and healing diſeaſes*; he travelled from place to place, to ſeek occaſions, and to lay hold of all opportunities of being uſeful and beneficial to mankind. 3. The particular inſtance of our Lord's goodneſs and compaſſion towards thoſe cities and villages where he travelled: they wanted the preaching of the goſpel; that is, faithful diſpenſers of it. For though they had the Scribes and Phariſees to teach them, they inſtructed them rather in their own traditions, than in the ſimplicity of the goſpel; Jeſus pities the people as ſheep without a ſhepherd. Thence *learn*, That idle and lazy, unſkilful and unfaithful labourers in Chriſt's harveſt, are no labourers in his account. *They are as ſheep having no ſhepherd.* He who doth not inſtruct his flock, and feed them with the ſincere milk of the word, from an heart full of love to God, and of compaſſion to ſouls, deſerves not the name of a true ſhepherd. Dr. *Whitby*.

37 Then ſaith he unto his diſciples, The harveſt truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt that he will ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, 'There is a great number of people that are willing and prepared to receive inſtructions, but there are but few who are able to inſtruct theſe poor people in the way of righteouſneſs and truth; therefore pray and plead with God, that he would provide ſkilful and faithful miniſters to be ſent out to preach the goſpel.' *Note* here, 1. That God's church is an harveſt field. 2. That the miniſters of God are labourers in his harveſt; under God the Lord of the harveſt. 3. That to God alone doth it belong to ſend forth labourers in his harveſt; and none muſt thruſt themſelves in, till God ſends them forth. 4. That the number of faithful labourers in God's harveſt is comparatively ſmall and few. 5. That it is the churches duty to pray, and that earneſtly and inceſſantly, to the Lord of the harveſt, to increaſe the number of faithful labourers, and alſo to increaſe their faithfulneſs.

CHAP. X.

This chapter acquaints us with the firſt commiſſion which our Saviour gave his diſciples to preach the goſpel: He directs them, firſt, Whither to go, and to whom to preach; namely, to the Jews, whom he calls the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. *He inſtructs them, ſecondly, As to the doctrine he would have them preach, namely, the doctrine of repentance. And laſtly, He arms them againſt all the difficulties they might meet with, in their miniſtry; and particularly, fortifies them againſt the fears of poverty and perſecution.*

AND when he had called unto him his twelve diſciples, he gave them power *aganiſt* unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe.

As the Jewiſh church aroſe from twelve patriarchs, ſo did the chriſtian church become planted by twelve apoſtles; the perſon commiſſioning them was Chriſt. None are to undertake the work and calling of the miniſtry, but thoſe whom Chriſt appoints; and the perſons commiſſionated were diſciples before they were apoſtles: To teach us, that Chriſt will have ſuch as preach the goſpel to be diſciples before they are miniſters; trained up in the doctrine of the goſpel before they undertake a public charge. *Note* farther, The power here delegated by Chriſt to his apoſtles, *over unclean ſpirits, and for healing diſeaſes,* in his name. And after his reſurrection, they were enabled to confer miraculous power on others, by laying their hands upon them; an eminent demonſtration of the truth of the chriſtian faith. *Learn* thence, That to the intent the apoſtles might preach the goſpel with more authority and greater efficacy, Jeſus gave them a power of working miracles; namely, to caſt out devils, and heal all manner of diſeaſes in his name; *When he had called together,* &c.

2 Now the names of the twelve apoſtles are theſe; The firſt, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Lebbens, whoſe ſurname was Thaddeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iſcariot, who alſo betrayed him.

Obſerve here, Of the twelve apoſtles Peter is named firſt, and Judas laſt. Peter is named firſt, becauſe firſt called, or becauſe probably elder than the reſt. Or becauſe, for order-ſake, he might ſpeak before them! from whence may be inferred a primary, but no ſupremacy: a priority of order, but no ſuperiority of degree—as the foreman of a grand inqueſt has a precedency, but no pre-eminency.—Judas is named laſt, with a brand of infamy ſet upon him, that he was the traitor, the perſon that betrayed his Maſter. *Learn* hence, That though the truth of grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a miniſter's ſalvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his office, nor hinder the lawfulneſs of his miniſtry. Judas, though a traitor, was yet a lawful miniſter. Inward holineſs is not neceſſary to render the offices belonging to the miniſterial function valid and effectual; Judas preaches Chriſt as well as the others, and was not excepted, when Chriſt ſaid, *He that receiveth you receiveth me.*

5 Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth, and commanded them, ſaying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not. 6 But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

This was only a temporary prohibition, whilſt Jeſus was here upon earth; the Jews being his own people, of whom he came, and to whom he was promiſed, the goſpel is firſt preached to them: but afterwards the apoſtles had a command to teach all nations, and after the aſcenſion of Jeſus, Samaria received the goſpel by the preaching of Philip. From the character which Chriſt gives of the Jews, calling them *loſt ſheep,* we *learn,* 1. That the condition of a people, before brought home to Chriſt by the mininſters of the goſpel, is a loſt condition, ſinners are as loſt ſheep, wandering and going aſtray from God, till the miniſtry of the word finds them. 2. That the great work of the miniſters of the goſpel, is to call home, and bring in, loſt ſheep unto Jeſus the great Shepherd. *Go,* ſays he, *to the loſt ſheep,* &c.—Our Lord calls the Iſraelites ſheep, though they were not obedient to the voice of their Shepherd, becauſe they were God's choſen people; and he calls them the loſt ſheep, becauſe they were both loſt in themſelves, and alſo in great danger of being eventually and finally loſt, by the ignorance and wickedneſs of their ſpiritual guides.

7 And as ye go, preach ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty enjoined the apoſtles, in order to the bringing home of loſt ſouls to Chriſt, and that is preaching: *As ye go, preach.* *Note* thence, That the plain and perſuaſive preaching of the goſpel is the ſpecial mean appointed by our Lord for the ſalvation of loſt ſinners. 2. The doctrine they are enjoined to preach, *That the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* that is, that the promiſed Meſſiah was come, and had ſet up his kingdom in the world, and expected their obedience to his laws. Where *note,* How that the preaching of John, of Chriſt, and his apoſtles, was one and the ſame; namely, the doctrine of *repentance; Repent,* ſay they all, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* that is, the time of the Meſſiah's appearing, which has been ſo long expected, is now come.

8 Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Here our Lord impowers his apoſtles to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; but gives them a charge to work them freely, without making any private advantage to themſelves. Where *obſerve,* 1. How beneficial the miracles were (which our Lord and his apoſtles wrought) to mankind. Moſes' miracles were as great judgments as wonders; but theſe were beneficent; they delivered men from miſeries, from bodily diſeaſes, from the power and malice of evil ſpirits. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt, to ſhew himſelf a free Saviour, and that whatever came from him was the effect of free grace, gave his apoſtles a charge, to diſpenſe their power in working miracles freely, without money, and without price.

9 Provide neither gold nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes: 10 Nor ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: (for the workman is worthy of his meat.)

This command of our Saviour was temporory, and extended to their firſt journey, which they were ſoon to diſpatch: our Lord encourages them to truſt to God; firſt, for protection; take no ſtaves with you, that is, no ſtriking, or ſmiting ſtaves for your own defence. Preachers muſt be no ſtrikers. Though a walking-ſtaff they might take with them: itinerant preachers might be wearied with travelling, as well as with ſpeaking. Next for proviſion; he would not have them over ſolicitous for that neither; ſaying, The workmen is worthy of his meat. As it is a miniſter's great duty to truſt in God for his maintenance; ſo it is the people's duty to take care for the miniſter's comfortable ſubſiſtence. *The workman is worthy of his hire, and the labourer is worthy of his meat.*

11 And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an houſe, ſalute it. 13 And if the houſe be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that houſe, or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet. 15 Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Our Saviour proceeds to direct his diſciples how to manage this their firſt journey in preaching the goſpel; he enjoins them, 1. To obſerve the rules of decency in their going from one place to another; not like beggars, wandering from houſe to houſe, but having entered a city, or village, to make inquiry who ſtood beſt affected to the goſpel, and there turn in. 2. Our Saviour enjoins them civil and religious courteſy towards thoſe whom they applied themſelves unto. *When you come into a houſe, ſalute it*; give it a civil ſalutation, but eſpecially a Chriſtian and ſpiritual ſalute, wiſhing them mercy, grace, and peace. 3. He encourages his apoſtles in the want of ſucceſs; if they hear you not, *ſhake off the duſt of your feet.* This action was emblematical, and ſignified, that almighty God would in like manner ſhake off them, and eſteem them no better than the vileſt duſt. *Note*, That thoſe who deſpiſe the meſſage which the miniſters of the goſpel bring, ſhall hereafter find the duſt of their feet, and the aſhes of their graves, to give a judicial teſtimony againſt them in the day of Chriſt. Wherever the word is preached, it is for a teſtimony againſt them; for if the duſt of a miniſter's feet bear witneſs againſt the deſpiſers of the goſpel, their ſermons much more. Here Grotius well notes, That the ſin of thoſe who reject the goſpel, muſt be a wilful ſin, which it was in their power to avoid; becauſe it rendered them obnoxious to greater puniſhment than Sodom and Gomorrah were to ſuffer at the day of judgment, and becauſe committed againſt greater light, and greater confirmation of the truth. Doubtleſs the higher a people riſe under the means of grace, the lower they fall if they miſcarry.

16 ¶ Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.

Our Saviour, in this and the following verſes, arms his apoſtles againſt all the difficulties, dangers, and diſcouragements which they might meet with in the courſe of their miniſtry: He tells them he ſent them forth as ſheep amongſt wolves; intimating thereby unto them, that the enemies of the goſpel have as great an inclination, from their malicious nature, to devour and deſtroy the miniſters of Chriſt, as wolves have, from their natural temper, to devour ſheep: He therefore recommends to them prudence and innocence: *Be ye wiſe as ſerpents*, to avoid the world's injuries; and *harmleſs as doves*, in not revenging them. The miniſters of Chriſt muſt not be altogether doves, leſt they fall into dangers; not altogether as ſerpents, leſt they endanger others: For as piety without policy is too ſimple to be ſafe, ſo policy without piety is too ſubtle to be good. Our Saviour in this next teaches us, that wiſdom and innocency ſhould dwell together. Offend none by word or example.

17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their ſynagogues. 18 And ye ſhall be brought before governors and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak. 20 For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you.

Here our Saviour lets his apoſtles know, That for their owning him, and preaching his goſpel, they ſhould be brought before all ſorts of magiſtrates, and in all kinds of courts: But he adviſes them, when they are brought before kings and princes, not to be anxiouſly thoughtful what they ſhould ſay; for it ſhould be given them in that hour what they ſhould anſwer. *Learn* hence, That though truth may be oppoſed, yet truth's defenders ſhould never be aſhamed; and rather than they ſhall want a tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch truths to their minds as all their oppoſers ſhall not be able to gainſay. Yet *note*, That Chriſt doth not here forbid all fore-thoughts what to ſay, but only diſtruſtful thoughts, that they ſhould not, like orators or advocates, ſtrive to make ſtudied pleas, or rhetorical apologies for themſelves, ſince the Spirit would be in their mouths, and give them immediate ſupplies. *Note* alſo, That becauſe Chriſt here promiſed his apoſtles an immediate aſſiſtance from the Holy Spirit, how vain the Anabaptiſts and Quakers are, who, by virtue of this promiſe, do now expect the ſame aſſiſtance in praying and preaching! but they may as well pretend to caſt out devils as the apoſtles did, by virtue of the ſame aſſiſtance which the apoſtles had; whereas theſe extraordinary gifts are long ceaſed.

21 And the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and cauſe them to be put to death. 22 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake: but he that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved.

Our Saviour goes on in a farther diſcovery of the world's hatred and enmity againſt the goſpel, and the preachers of it; and gives all Chriſtians in general, and his miniſters in particular, to underſtand, That ſuch is the enmity of the world againſt holineſs and the profeſſors of it, that it will overcome and extinguiſh even the natural affections of the neareſt and deareſt relations towards each other. Grace teaches us, *To lay down our lives for our brethren*, but corruption teaches a brother to take away the life of a brother; *The brother ſhall deliver the brother to death.* Yet *obſerve*, Our Saviour comforts his diſciples that there will be an end of theſe ſufferings; and aſſures them, That if their faith and patience did hold out unto the end, they ſhould be ſaved. This is our comfort, that if our ſufferings for Chriſt end not in our lifetime, they will end with our lives.

23 But when they perſecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not have gone over the cities of Iſrael till the Son of man be come.

Our Saviour here directs his apoſtles to a prudent care of their own preſervation, and allows them to flee in time of perſecution; aſſuring them, that before they had gone through all the cities of the Jews, preaching the goſpel, he would certainly come in Judgment againſt Jeruſalem, and with ſeverity deſtroy his own murderers and their perſecutors. *Learn*, That Chriſt allows his miniſters the liberty of flight in time of perſecution, that they may preſerve their lives for future ſervice. Surely it is no ſhame to fly when our Saviour commands it, and alſo practiſes it, *Matt.* ii. Chriſt by his own example has ſanctified that ſtate of life unto us, and by his command made it lawful for us.

24 The diſciple is not above *his* maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the diſciple that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord. If they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more *ſhall they call* them of his houſhold.

Our Saviour here teaches all Chriſtians, but eſpecially miniſters, how unreaſonable and abſurd it is for them to expect kinder uſage from an unkind world than he himſelf met with: Are we greater, holier, or wiſer than he? Why then ſhould we expect better uſage than he! Was he hated, perſecuted, reviled, murdered for the holineſs of his doctrines and the uſefulneſs of his life? Why then ſhould any of us *think ſtrange of the fiery trial, as if ſome ſtrange thing had befallen us?* 1 Pet. iv. 12. It is enough, *That the diſciple be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord*, but muſt he hope to be above him?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed; and hid that ſhall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkneſs, *that* ſpeak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the houſe-tops.

Chriſt here exhorts his diſciples to a free profeſſion and open publication of the doctrine of the goſpel, from this conſideration, that whatever they ſay or do ſhall be brought to light, proclaimed, and publiſhed to the world. I will make the excellency of your doctrine, and the innocency of your lives ſhine as the light; your integrity in deſpiſing of it, and patience in ſuffering for it, ſhall redound to God's glory and your commendation, at the revelation of your Lord from heaven. As wicked men have cauſe to fear, becauſe their evil deeds ſhall be made evident, ſo good men have reaſon to rejoice, becauſe their goodneſs, and good deeds ſhall be made manifeſt. Let it be our care to do good, and it ſhall be Chriſt's care to diſcover the goodneſs which we do, to vindicate it from miſconſtruction, and ſet it in its cleareſt light.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.

Obſerve here, the following particulars, 1. An unwarrantable fear condemned; and that is, the ſinful, ſervile, ſlaviſh fear of impotent man; *Fear not him that can kill the body.* 2. An holy, awful, and prudential fear of the omnipotent God commended; *Fear him that is able to kill both body and ſoul.* 3. The perſons that this duty of fear is recommended to, and bound upon, Chriſt's own diſciples, yea his miniſters and ambaſſadors; they both may, and ought to fear him; not only for his greatneſs and goodneſs, but on account of his punitive juſtice; as *being able to caſt body and ſoul into hell:* Such a fear is not only lawful but laudable, not only commendable but commanded, and well becomes the ſervants of God themſelves. The text contains a certain evidence that the ſoul dies not with the body: none are able to kill the ſoul, but it continues after death in a ſtate of ſenſibility; it is granted that men can kill the body, but it is denied that they can kill the ſoul. It is ſpoken of temporal death; conſequently then the ſoul doth not periſh with the body, nor is the ſoul reduced into an inſenſible ſtate by the death of the body; nor can the ſoul be ſuppoſed to ſleep, as the body doth until the reſurrection; for an intelligible, thinking, and perceiving being, as the ſoul is, cannot be deprived of ſenſation, thought, and perception, any more than it can loſe its being; the ſoul after the death of the body being capable of bliſs or miſery, muſt continue in a ſtate of ſenſation.

29 Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall to the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

Obſerve here, 1. The doctrine which our Saviour preaches to his diſciples; and that is, the doctrine of divine providence; which concerns itſelf for the meaneſt creatures; even the birds of the air, and the hairs of our head, do fall within the compaſs of God's protecting care. 2. Here is the uſe which our Saviour makes of his doctrine; namely, to fortify the ſpirits of his diſciples againſt all diſtruſtful fears and diſtracting cares. *Learn*, That the conſideration of the divine care and gracious providence of God over us and ours, ought to antidote our ſpirits againſt all diſtruſtful fears whatſoever. If an hair from the head falls not to the ground without a providence, much leſs ſhall the head itſelf; if the very excrements of the body (ſuch are the hairs) be taken care of by God, ſurely the more noble parts of the body, and eſpecially the nobleſt part of ourſelves, our ſouls, ſhall fall under his particular regard.

32 Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which

is in heaven. 33 But whoſoever ſhall deny me
before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father
which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. That not to confeſs Chriſt, in his account, is to deny him; and to deny him, is to be aſhamed of him. 2. That whoſoever ſhall deny, diſown, or be aſhamed of Chriſt, either in his perſon, in his goſpel, or in his members, for any fear or favour of man, ſhall with ſhame be diſowned, and eternally rejected by him at the dreadful judgment at the great day. Chriſt may be denied three ways; doctrinally, by an erroneous and heretical judgment; verbally, by oral expreſſions; vitally, by a wicked and unholy life. But wo to that ſoul that denies Chriſt any of theſe ways.

34 Think not that I am come to ſend peace on
earth: I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. 35
For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his
father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the
daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law. 36 And
a man's foes *ſhall be* they of his own houſhold.

We muſt diſtinguiſh here betwixt the intentional aim of Chriſt's coming, and the accidental event of it. His intentional aim was to propagate and promote peace in the world; but through the corruption of man's nature, the accidental event of his coming, is war and diviſion: Not that theſe are the genuine and natural fruits of the goſpel, but occaſional and accidental only. *Note*, That preaching of the goſpel, and the ſetting up the kingdom of Chriſt in the world, though it be not the natural cauſe, yet it is the accidental occaſion of much of that war and tumult, of much of that diſtraction and confuſion which the world abounds with.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than
me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth ſon or
daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. 38
And he that taketh not his croſs and followeth me,
is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life
ſhall loſe it: and he that loſeth his life for my ſake
ſhall find it.

Note here, That by worthineſs we are not to underſtand the meritoriouſneſs of the action, but the qualification of the perſon. He that cometh to Chriſt (that is, will be his diſciple) muſt by a deliberate act of the underſtanding, and well-adviſed choice of the will, prefer him before all the world, and his deareſt relations whatſoever; not that our Saviour by theſe expreſſions doth condemn natural love and affection, either to our relations or our own lives, but only regulates and directs it; and ſhews that our firſt and chief love muſt be beſtowed upon himſelf. We may have tender and relenting affections towards our dear relations; but then the conſideration of Chriſt's truth and religion muſt take place of theſe; yea, of life itſelf; nay, when theſe come in competition, we are to regard them no more than if they were the objects of our hatred. Luke xiv. 26. *If a man hate not his father*, &c. *Learn* hence, That all the diſciples of Chriſt ſhould be ready and willing, whenever God calls them to it, to quit all their temporal intereſts and enjoyments, even life itſelf, and to ſubmit to any temporal inconvenience, even death itſelf: And all this willingly, cheerfully, and patiently, rather than diſown their relation to Chriſt, and quit the preſeſſion of his truth and religion. 2. That ſuch as for ſecular intereſt, and the preſervation of temporal life, do renounce their profeſſion of Chriſt and his religion, they do not only hazard their temporal life, but expoſe their eternal life to the greateſt danger. *He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it*, &c.

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he
that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. 41
He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a pro-
phet, ſhall receive a prophet's reward; and he that
receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous
man, ſhall receive a righteous man's reward. 42
And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe
little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of
a diſciple, verily, I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe
loſe his reward.

Here, in the cloſe of the chapter, our bleſſed Saviour encourages his diſciples to faithfulneſs in their office, by aſſuring them, that he ſhould reckon and eſteem all the kindneſs ſhewn to them, as done unto himſelf: and, to encourage the world to be kind to his diſciples and miniſters, he aſſures them, that even a cup of cold water, ſhould meet with a liberal reward. How cold is their charity, who deny a cup of cold water to the miniſters and diſciples of Chriſt. *Learn*, 1. That there is ſome ſpecial and eminent reward due to the faithful prophets of God above other men. 2. That he that ſhall entertain a prophet, and do any good office for him, under that name, that is, for his office ſake, ſhall be partaker of that reward. 3. That the leaſt office of love and reſpect of kindneſs and charity, which we ſhew to any of the miniſters or members of Jeſus Chriſt for his ſake, he accounts it as done unto himſelf.

CHAP. XI.

AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had made an
end of commanding his twelve diſciples, he de-
parted thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Our bleſſed Saviour having ſent forth his twelve diſciples in the foregoing chapter, to plant and propagate the goſpel, we find him in this chapter following them himſelf, in that great and neceſſary work; *He departed to teach and to preach in their cities.* Chriſt, the great Biſhop and Shepherd of ſouls, ſent not forth the apoſtles as his curates, to labour and ſweat in the vineyard, whilſt he took his eaſe at home, but he followed them himſelf: his word of command to them was, *Præite, ſequar*; *Go ye before, I will follow after*. *Note*, 1. That preaching of the goſpel is a great and neceſſary work, incumbent upon all the miniſters of Jeſus, let their dignity and pre-eminence in the church be what it will. None of the ſervants are above their lord. 2. That if there be a diſtinction betwixt teaching and preaching (as ſome apprehend) they are both the work of Chriſt's miniſters, who are obliged from their maſter's example, to perform both: teaching is an order to the converſion of ſinners, and preaching in order to the edification of ſaints.

2 Now when John had heard in the priſon the works of Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples, 3 And ſaid unto him, Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?

It was not for John's information that he ſent his diſciples to Jeſus, but for their ſatisfaction, that he was the true and promiſed Meſſiah; John was aſſured of it himſelf, by a ſign from heaven, at our Saviour's baptiſm, chap. iii. 17. But John's diſciples, out of great zeal to him their maſter, envied our Lord himſelf, and were unwilling to believe any perſon greater than their maſter: therefore John, out of a pious deſign to confirm his diſciples in the belief of Jeſus being the true Meſſias, ſends them to our Saviour, to hear the doctrine which he taught, and to ſee the miracles which he wrought. *Learn* hence, What a pious deſire there is in ſuch as know Chriſt experimentally themſelves to bring all that belong to them to a ſaving acquaintance with him.

4 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee; 5 The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them.

Obſerve here, 1. The way and means which our Saviour takes for the conviction and ſatisfaction of John's diſciples, that he was the true Meſſias; he appeals to the miracles wrought by himſelf, and ſubmits the miracles wrought by him to the judgment of their ſenſe; *Go and ſhew John the miracles which you hear and ſee*. 2. The miracles themſelves: *The blind receive their ſight, the lame walk*, &c. Chriſt was all this in a literal ſenſe, and in a myſtical ſenſe alſo; he was an eye of underſtanding to the ignorant, a foot of power to the weak: he opened an ear in deaf hearts, to receive the word of life: and the poor are evangelized, that is, turned into the ſpirit and temper of the goſpel; the rich hear the goſpel, but the poor receive it; that is, they feel the powerful impreſſions of it; as we ſay, ſuch a one is Italianized, when his carriage is ſuch, as if he were a natural Italian. The Greek paſſive verb 'EVAGGELIYONTAI, denotes, *Non actum prædicationis, ſed effectum evangelii prædicati*; the good effect which the goſpel had upon the hearts and lives of the poor, transforming them into the likeneſs of itſelf. *Learn*, It is a bleſſed thing, when the preaching of the goſpel has ſuch a powerful influence upon the minds of men, that the temper of their minds, and the actions of their lives, are a lively tranſcript of the ſpirit and temper of the holy Jeſus. *Note*, That as it was propheſied of the Meſſias, that he ſhould preach the goſpel to the poor, *Iſa*. lxi. 1. accordingly they were the poor whom Chriſt preached unto; for the Phariſees and Rabbies neglected them as the people of the earth, *Job* vii. 49. And Grotius ſays, that they had a proverb, That the Spirit of God never reſts but upon a rich man. Beſides, the Phariſees and Rabbies doctrines, which they preached, were vain traditions, allegorical interpretations, and cabaliſtical deductions, which tranſcended the capacities of the vulgar, ſo that they could profit very little by repairing to their ſchools, and by hearing their interpretations of the law; and therefore, our Saviour, in the cloſe of this chapter, calls the people off from them, to learn of him, *Come unto me*, &c.

6 And bleſſed is *he* whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

Our Saviour here, by pronouncing them *Bleſſed that are not offended in him*, doth intimate the miſery of thoſe who ſtumble at him, and to whom he is the rock of offence.--- Some are offended at the poverty of his perſon, others are offended at the ſublimity and ſanctity of his doctrine. Some are offended at his croſs, others are offended at his free grace: but ſuch as, inſtead of being offended at Chriſt, believe in him, and bottom their expectations of heaven and ſalvation upon him, are in a happy and bleſſed condition.

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jeſus began to ſay unto the multitude, concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs to ſee? a reed ſhaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they that wear ſoft clothing are in king's houſes. 9 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

Our Saviour having given ſatisfaction to John's diſciples, next enters upon a large commendation of John himſelf: where *obſerve*, 1. The perſons whom he commended him before; not John's own diſciples, for they had too high an opinion of their maſter already, and were ſo much addicted to John that they envied Chriſt for his ſake, See John iii. 26. *Behold, Chriſt baptizeth; and all men come unto him*. It was a great eye-ſore that Chriſt had more hearers and followers than John; therefore not before John's diſciples but before the multitude, Chriſt commends John: For as John's diſciples had too high, ſo this multitude had too low an opinion of him; poſſibly becauſe of his impriſonment and ſufferings. There was a time when the people had high thoughts of John, but now they undervalued him. *Learn* thence, The great uncertainty of popular applauſe: the people contemn to-day whom they admired yeſterday; he who to-day is cried up, to-morrow is trodden down. The word and the miniſters are the ſame; but this proceeds from the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of the people: Nothing is ſo mutable as the mind of man, nothing is ſo variable as the opinion of the multitude.

2. The time when our Lord thus commended John; not in the time of his proſperity and greatneſs, when the people flocked after him, and Herod got him to court, and reverenced him; but when the giddy multitude had forſaken him, and he was fallen into diſgrace at court, and had preached himſelf into priſon: now Jeſus vindicates his innocency, maintains his honour, proclaims his worth, and tells the people, that the world was not worthy of ſuch a preacher as John was. *Learn* thence, That Chriſt will ſtand by, and ſtick faſt to his faithful miniſters, when all the world forſake them. Let the world ſlight and deſpiſe them at their pleaſure, yet Chriſt will maintain their honour, and ſupport their cauſe; as they bear a faithful witneſs to Chriſt, ſo will he bear witneſs to their faithfulneſs for him. 3. The commendation itſelf. Our Lord commends John, 1. For his conſtancy, he was not a *reed ſhaken with the wind*; that is a man of an unſtable and unſettled judgment, but fixed and ſtedfaſt. (2.) For his ſobriety and high meaſures of mortification; he was no delicate voluptuous perſon, but grave, ſober, and ſevere; he was mortified to the glory and honour, to the eaſe and pleaſures of the world. John wrought no miracles, but his holy converſation was as effectual as miracles, to prevail with the people. (3.) For his humility; he might have been what he would: the people were ready to cry him up for a Meſſiah, the Chriſt of God; but John's lowly ſpirit refuſes all; *He confeſſed and denied not, ſaying, I am not the Chriſt*; but a poor miniſter of his, willing, but not worthy, to do him ſervice. This will commend our miniſtry to the conſciences of our people, when we ſeek not our own glory, but the glory of our Lord. (4.) Our Saviour commends John for his clear preaching and revealing of Chriſt to the people: *He was more than a prophet*, becauſe he pointed out Chriſt more clearly and fully than any before him. The ancient prophets ſaw Jeſus afar off; John beheld him face to face: they propheſied of him; he pointed at him, ſaying, *This is he.* Whence *learn*, That the clearer any miniſtry is in diſcovering of Chriſt, the more excellent it is.

11 Verily I ſay unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt: notwithſtanding, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Our Lord having highly commended John in the foregoing verſes, here he ſets bounds to the honours of his miniſtry, adding, That though John was greater than all the prophets that went before him, ſeeing more of Chriſt than all of them, yet he ſaw leſs than them that came after him. The meaneſt evangelical miniſter that preaches Chriſt come, is to be preferred before all the old prophets, who propheſied of Chriſt to come. The miniſter who ſets forth the life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, *is greater in the kingdom of heaven*, that is, has an higher office in the church, and a more excellent miniſtry than all the prophets, yea, than John himſelf. The excellency of a miniſtry conſiſts in the light and clearneſs of it. Now though John's light did exceed all that went before him, yet it fell ſhort of them that came after him: and thus he that was *leaſt in the kingdom of grace* on earth, much more he that is the leaſt in the kingdom of glory in heaven, *was greater than John.* Not that the meaneſt chriſtian, but the meaneſt evangelical prophet, or preacher of the chriſtian doctrine, is greater than John; partly in reſpect of his doctrine, which is more ſpiritual and heavenly; partly in reſpect of his office, which was to preach Chriſt crucified and riſen again; and partly in reſpect of divine aſſiſtance, for John did no miracle, but the apoſtles that ſucceeded him *went forth, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with ſigns following.* Add to this, that the Holy Spirit fell not upon John, and he ſpake not by any extraordinary inſpiration of the Holy Spirit ſent down from heaven, as the apoſtles did; and thus he that was leaſt in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John.

12 And from the days of John the Baptiſt until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Our Saviour goes on in commending John's miniſtry from the great ſucceſs of it: it had that powerful influence upon the conſciences of men, that no ſoldiers were ever more violent and eager in the ſtorming and taking a ſtrong hold, than John's hearers were in purſuing the kingdom of heaven. Never any miniſter diſcovered the Meſſiah and his kingdom ſo clearly as John did; and therefore never was there ſuch zeal to preſs into the kingdom of heaven amongſt any, as the hearers of John had. *Learn* hence, 1. That the clearer knowledge any people have of the worth and excellency of heaven, the more will their zeal be inflamed in the purſuit of heaven. 2. That all that do intend and reſolve for heaven, muſt offer violence in the taking of it; none but the violent are victorious: *they take it by force.* Which words are both reſtrictive and promiſſive. They are the violent, and none other that take it; and all the violent ſhall take it. Though careleſs endeavours may prove abortive, vigorous proſecution ſhall not miſcarry. There is alſo another expoſition of theſe words: *The violent take the kingdom of heaven by force*; that is, the publicans and ſinners, and poorer ſort of people, who were looked upon by the Scribes and Phariſees as perſons who had no right to the bleſſings of the Meſſiah; theſe, as violent invaders, and bold intruders, embrace the goſpel, and do as it were take it by force from the learned Rabbies, who challenge the chiefeſt place in this kingdom: and accordingly our Saviour tells them, St. Mat. xxi. 31. The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you; for you believed not John coming to you in the way of righteouſneſs, but the publicans and harlots believed him, when at the ſame time the Phariſees and lawyers rejected, &c. being not baptized of him.

13 For all the prophets and the law propheſied until John. 14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Here is ſtill a farther commendation of John. The law and the prophets, till the coming of John, did foretel the Meſſiah, but not ſo determinately, not ſo nearly, not ſo clearly as John did: and accordingly, he was that Elias which Iſaias and Malachi foretold ſhould be the harbinger and forerunner of Chriſt. But why hath John the Baptiſt the name of Elias? Poſſibly becauſe they were alike zealous in the work of God, they were alike ſucceſsful in that work, and they were alike perſecuted for their work, the one by Jezebel, the other by Herodias.

16 But whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? It is like unto children ſitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners. But wiſdom is juſtified of her children.

Our Saviour, in theſe words, deſcribes the perverſe humour of the Phariſees, whom nothing could allure to the embracing of the goſpel, neither John's miniſtry, nor Chriſt's. This our Saviour ſets forth two ways: 1. *Allegorically*, ver. 16, 17. 2. *Properly*, ver. 18, 19. By way of allegory, he compares them to ſullen children, whom nothing would pleaſe, neither mirth nor mourning: if their fellows piped before them, they would not dance; if they ſung mournful ſongs to them, they would not lament: That is, the Phariſees were of ſuch a cenſorious and capricious humour, that God himſelf could not pleaſe them, though he uſed variety of means and methods in order to that end. Neither the delightful airs of mercy, nor the doleful ditties of judgment, could affect or move their hearts. Next, our Lord plainly interprets this allegory, by telling them, That *John came* to them *neither eating nor drinking*; that is, not ſo freely and plentifully as other men, being a very auſtere and mortified man both in his diet and in his habit: and all this was deſigned by God, that the auſterity of his life, and ſeverity of his doctrine, might awaken the Phariſees to repentance; but inſtead of this, they cenſure him for having a devil; becauſe he delighted in ſolitude, and avoided converſe with men; according to the ancient proverb, that every ſolitary perſon is either an angel or a devil, either a wild beaſt or a god. John being thus rejected, Chriſt himſelf comes to them, who being of a free and familiar converſe, not ſhunning the ſociety of the worſt of men, even of the Phariſees themſelves, but complying with their cuſtoms, and accompanying with them at their feaſts, yet without the leaſt compliance with them in their ſins: but the freedom of our Saviour's converſation diſpleaſed them as much as John's reſervedneſs of temper; for they cry, *Behold a man gluttonous*. Chriſt's affability towards ſinners they call approbation of their ſins; and his ſociable diſpoſition, looſeneſs, and luxury. *Learn* hence, That the faithful and zealous miniſters of God, let their temper and converſe be what it will, cannot pleaſe the enemies of religion, and the haters of the power of godlineſs; neither John's auſterity, nor Chriſt's familiarity, would gain upon the Phariſees. It is our duty, in the courſe of our miniſtry, to ſeek to pleaſe all men for their good: but after all our endeavours to pleaſe all, we ſhall pleaſe but very few; but if God and conſcience be of the number of thoſe few, we are ſafe and happy. *Obſerve*, 2. That it has been the old policy of the devil, that he might hinder the ſucceſs of the goſpel, to fill the minds of perſons with an invincible prejudice againſt the miniſters and diſpenſers of the goſpel. 3. That after all the ſcandalous reproaches caſt upon religion, and the miniſters of it, ſuch as are wiſdoms's children, wiſe and good men, will juſtify religion; that is, approve it in their judgments, honour it in their diſcourſes, and adorn it in their lives. *Wiſdom is juſtified of her children.*

20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not. 21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin; wo unto thee, Bethſaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. 22 But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.

Our Saviour having gone through the cities of Galliee, preached the doctrine of repentance, and confirming his doctrine with miracles, and finding multitudes, after all his endeavours, remain in their impenitence, he proceeds to upbraid them ſeverely for that their contempt of goſpel-grace: *Then began he to upbraid the cities*, &c. Where *obſerve*, 1. The cities upbraided, Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum; in their pulpits he daily preached, and thoſe places were the theatres upon which his miracles were wrought; other cities only heard, theſe ſaw; but where he preached moſt, he prevailed leaſt; like ſome fiſhermen, he catched leaſt in his own pond. 2. What he upbraids them for; not for diſreſpect to his perſon, but for diſobedience to his doctrine; becauſe they repented not. The great deſign of Chriſt, both in the doctrine which he preached, and in the miracles which he wrought, was to bring men to repentance; that is, to forſake their ſins, and live well. 3. Whom he upbraids them with; Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, nations rude and barbarous, out of the pale of the church, ignorant of a Saviour, and of the ways to ſalvation by him. *Learn*, That the higher a people riſe under the means, the lower they fall if they miſcarry. They that have been neareſt to converſion, and not yet converted, ſhall have the greateſt condemnation when they are judged. Capernaum's ſentence ſhall exceed Sodom's for ſeverity, becauſe ſhe exceeded Sodom in the enjoyment of means and mercy. The caſe of thoſe who are impenitent under the goſpel, is of all others the moſt dangerous, and their damnation ſhall be heavieſt and moſt ſevere. Sodom, the ſtain of mankind, a city ſoaked in the dregs of villany: yet this hell upon earth ſhall have a milder hell at the laſt day of judgment, than unbelieving Capernaum, as the next verſe informs us.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

This city lying under greater guilt than the reſt, Chriſt names it by itſelf, without the reſt; nay, he doth not only name it, but notify it, as being lifted up to heaven by ſignal favours and privileges, namely, Chriſt's preſence, Chriſt's preaching and miracles. *Obſerve*, 1. Capernaum's privileges enjoyed; though a poor obſcure place in itſelf, yet ſhe was, by the perſon, miniſtry, and miracles of Chriſt, lifted up to heaven. *Learn* thence, That goſpel-ordinances and church-privileges enjoyed, are a mighty honour and advancement to the pooreſt perſons and obſcureſt places. 2. An heavy doom denounced, *Thou ſhalt be brought down to hell*; that is, thy condition ſhall be as ſad as that of the worſt of men, for thy nonproficiency under the means enjoyed. *Learn* thence, That goſpel-ordinances and church-privileges enjoyed, but not improved, provoke almighty God to inflict the ſoreſt of judgments upon the people. *Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, ſhall be brought down to hell.*

24 But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.

Obſerve here, 1. That there ſhall be a day of judgment. 2. That in the day of judgment ſome ſinners ſhall fare worſe than others. There are degrees of puniſhment among the damned. 3. That the worſt of heathens, who never heard of a Saviour, nor ever had an offer of ſalvation by him, ſhall fare better in the day of judgment than thoſe that continue impenitent under the goſpel. Chriſt here avouches, that Capernaum's ſentence ſhall exceed Sodom's for ſeverity.

25 ¶ At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I
thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe
and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes;
26 Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy
ſight.

In theſe verſes our Saviour glorifies his Father for the wiſe and free diſpenſation of his goſpel-grace to the meaneſt and moſt ignorant; whilſt the great and learned men of the world undervalued and deſpiſed it. By *wiſe* and *prudent*, Chriſt means worldly wiſe men, particularly Scribes and Phariſees, from whom God in judgment did hide the myſteries of the goſpel, and ſaid ye ſhall not ſee; becauſe they had cloſed their eyes, and ſaid we will not ſee. By *babes* underſtand ſuch as are at the greateſt diſtance in natural conſideration from a capacity of ſuch rich and heavenly manifeſtations. By *hiding theſe things from the wiſe and prudent*, we are not to underſtand God's putting darkneſs into them, but his leaving them to their own darkneſs, or denying them that light which they had no deſire to ſee; plainly intimating, that God judicially hides the myſteries of heavenly wiſdom from worldly wiſe men. *Learn*, 1. That till God reveals himſelf, his nature and will, no man can know either what he is, or what he requires; *Thou haſt revealed.* 2. That the wiſe men of the world have in all ages deſpiſed the myſteries of the goſpel, and therefore been judiciouſly given up by God to their own wilful blindneſs; *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent.* 3. That the moſt ignorant and moſt humble, not the moſt learned, if proud, do ſtand ready to receive and embrace the goſpel revelation; *Thou haſt revealed them unto babes.* 4. That this is no leſs pleaſing to Chriſt, than it is the pleaſure of the Father; *Even ſo, Father, as it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Father, thy election and choice pleaſes me, as being the choice and good pleaſure of thy wiſdom.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, and *he* to whomſoever the Son will reveal *him*.

In this verſe our Saviour opens his commiſſion, and declares, 1. His authority; that all power is committed to him, as Mediator from God the Father. 2. His office; to reveal his Father's mind and will to a loſt world. *No man knoweth the Father, but the Son*; that is, the eſſence and nature of the Father, the will and counſel of the Father, only as the Son reveals them *Learn*, That all our ſaving knowledge of God is in and through Jeſus Chriſt; he, as the great prophet of the church, reveals the mind and will of God unto us for our ſalvation; and no ſaving knowledge without him.

28 ¶ Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

Here we have a ſweet invitation, backed with a gracious encouragement; Chriſt invites ſuch as are weary of the burden of ſin, of the ſlavery of Satan, of the yoke of the ceremonial law, to come unto him for reſt and eaſe; and, as an encouragement, aſſures them, that upon their coming to him they ſhall find reſt. *Learn*, 1. That ſin is the ſoul's laborious burden; *Come unto me, all ye that labour.* Labouring ſuppoſes a burden to be laboured under; this burden is ſin's guilt. 2. That ſuch as come to Chriſt for reſt, muſt be laden ſinners. 3. That laden ſinners not only may, but ought to come to Chriſt for reſt; they may come, becauſe invited; they ought to come, becauſe commanded. 4. That the laden ſinner, upon his coming, ſhall find reſt. *Come*, &c. *Note* here, That to come to Chriſt, in the phraſe of the new Teſtament, is to believe in him, and to become one of his diſciples, John vi. 35. *He that cometh unto me ſhall not hunger, he that believeth on me ſhall not thirſt.*

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.

Here *note*, That the phraſe of *taking the yoke* is Judaical: the Jewiſh doctors ſpeak frequently of the yoke of the law: the yoke of the commandments; and the ceremonies impoſed upon the Jews are called a *yoke*, Acts xv. 10. Now as Moſes had a yoke, ſo has Chriſt; and accordingly, *obſerve*, 1. Chriſt's diſciples muſt wear Chriſt's yoke. This yoke is two-fold; a yoke of inſtruction, and a yoke of affliction; Chriſt's law is a yoke of inſtruction; it reſtrains our natural inclinations, it curbs our ſenſual appetites; it is a yoke to corrupt nature; this yoke Chriſt calls *his* yoke, *Take my yoke upon you*; 1. Becauſe he, as a Lord, lays it upon our necks. 2. Becauſe he, as a ſervant, bore it upon his own neck firſt, before he laid it upon ours. *Obſerve*, 2. That the way and manner how to bear Chriſt's yoke muſt be learnt of Chriſt himſelf. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me*; that is, learn of me, both what to bear, and how to bear. 3. That Chriſt's humility and lowly-mindedneſs, is a great encouragement to chriſtians to come unto him, and learn of him, both how to obey his commands, and how to ſuffer his will and pleaſure. *Learn of me, for I am meek.*

30 For my yoke is eaſy and my burden is light.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's authority and greatneſs; he has power to impoſe a yoke, and inflict a burden. *My yoke*; *my burden.* 2. His clemency and goodneſs, in impoſing an eaſy yoke, and a light burden. *My yoke is eaſy, my burden is light*; that is, my ſervice is good and gainful, profitable and uſeful; not only tolerable, but delightful; and as is my yoke, ſuch is my burden: The burden of my precepts, the burden of my croſs, both light, not abſolutely, but comparatively; the weight of my croſs is not comparable with the glory of my crown. *Learn*, That the ſervice of Chriſt, though hard and intolerable to corrupt nature, yet is a moſt deſirable and delightful ſervice to grace, or renewed nature; Chriſt's ſervice is eaſy to a ſpiritual mind. 1. It is eaſy, as it is a rational ſervice; conſonant to right reaſon, though contradictory to depraved nature. 2. Eaſy, as it is a ſpiritual ſervice; delightful to a ſpiritual mind. 3. Eaſy, as it is an aſſiſted ſervice; conſidering that we work not in our own ſtrength, but in God's. 4. Eaſy, when once it is an accuſtomed ſervice; though hard to beginners, it is eaſy to progreſſors; the farther we walk, the ſweeter is our way. 5. Eaſy, as it is the moſt gainful ſervice; having the aſſurance of an eternal weight of glory, as the reward of our obedience. Well therefore might our holy Lord ſay to his followers; *My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.*

CHAP. XII.

Our bleſſed Saviour in this chapter takes occaſion to inſtruct his diſciples in the doctrine of the Sabbath: ſhewing, that works of neceſſity and mercy may be performed upon that day, without any violation of the divine command.

AT that time Jeſus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn; and his diſciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Obſerve here, The poor eſtate and low condition of Chriſt's own diſciples in this world; they wanted bread, and are forced to pluck the ears of corn to ſatiſfy their hunger. God ſometimes ſuffers his deareſt children in this world to fall into ſtraits, and to taſte of want, for the trial of their faith, and dependence upon his power and providence.

2 But when the Phariſees ſaw *it*, they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy diſciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the ſabbath-day.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons finding fault with this action of the diſciples, the Phariſees; many of whom, accompanied our Saviour, not out of any good intentions, but only with a deſign to cavil at, and quarrel with every thing that either Chriſt or his diſciple ſaid or did. 2. The action which they found fault with: *The diſciples plucking off the ears of corn on the ſabbath-day.* Where *note*, It is not theft which the diſciples are accuſed of by the Phariſees: For, to take in our neceſſity ſo much of our neighbour's goods, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that if he were preſent, and knew our circumſtances, he would give us, is no theft; but it was a ſervile labour on the ſabbath, in gathering the corn, that the Phariſees ſcrupled; plucking the ears was looked upon as a ſort of reaping. *Learn* thence, how zealous hypocrites are for the leſſer things of the law, whilſt they neglect the weightier; and how ſuperſtitiouſly addicted to the outward ceremonies, placing all holineſs in the obſervance of them.

3 But he ſaid unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him, 4 How he entered into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the prieſts? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the ſabbath-days the prieſts in the temple profane the ſabbath, and are blameleſs? 6 But I ſay unto you, that in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

In theſe words our Saviour defends the action of his diſciples in plucking the ears of corn in their neceſſity, by a double argument: 1. From David's example; neceſſity freed him from fault in eating the conſecrated bread, which none but the prieſts might lawfully eat; for in caſes of neceſſity, a ceremonial precept muſt give place to a moral duty; works of mercy and neceſſity, for preſerving our lives, and the better fitting us for ſabbath ſervices, are certainly lawful on the ſabbath-day. 2. From the example of the prieſts in the temple, who upon the ſabbath do break the outward reſt of the day, by killing their ſacrifices, and many other acts of bodily labour, which would be accounted ſabbath-profanation, did not the ſervice of the temple require and juſtify it. Now, ſaith our Saviour, if the temple-ſervice can juſtify labour on the ſabbath, I am greater than the temple, and my authority and ſervice can juſtify what my diſciples have done. From the whole we *learn*, That acts of mercy, which tend to fit us for works of piety, not only may, but ought to be done on the ſabbath-day.

7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs.

Learn hence, That the law of mercy is much more excellent than the law of ceremonies; and where both cannot be obſerved, the leſs muſt give place to the greater. God never intended that the ceremonies of his ſervice in the firſt table ſhould hinder works of mercy preſcribed in the ſecond table. All God's commands are for man's good. Where both cannot be obeyed, he will have the moral duty performed, and the ceremonial ſervice omitted: *He will have mercy and not ſacrifice*; that is, he will have mercy rather than ſacrifice, where both cannot be had.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "I, who am Lord of the ſabbath, declare to you, that I have a power to diſpenſe with the obſervation of it; and as it is my will that the ſabbath, which was appointed for man, ſhould yield to man's ſafety and welfare." Jeſus the Son of man was really the Son of God; and, as ſuch, had power over the ſabbath, to diſpenſe with it, yea, to abrogate and change it at his pleaſure.

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their ſynagogue. 10 ¶ And behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered: and they aſked him, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? that they might accuſe him. 11 And he ſaid unto them, What man ſhall there be among you, that ſhall have one ſheep, and it fall into a pit on the ſabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? 12 How much then is a man better than a ſheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the ſabbath-days.

Here we have another diſpute betwixt our Saviour and the Phariſees concerning the ſabbath; whether it be a breach of that day, mercifully to heal a perſon having a withered hand? Chriſt confutes them for their own practice, telling the Phariſees, that they themſelves judged it lawful to help out a ſheep or an ox, if fallen into a pit on that day: How much more ought the life of a man to be preferred? Here we may remark, how inveterate a malice the Phariſees had againſt our Saviour; when they could find no crime to charge him with, they blame him for working a merciful and miraculous cure upon the ſabbath-day. When envy and malice (which are evermore quick-ſighted) can find no occaſion of quarrel, they will invent one againſt the innocent.

13 Then ſaith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand: and he ſtretched *it* forth; and *it* was reſtored whole, like as the other. 14 ¶ Then the Phariſees went out, and held a council againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 15 But when Jeſus knew *it*, he withdrew himſelf from thence; and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, 16 And charged them that they ſhould not make him known:

Obſerve, 1. The merciful and miraculous cure wrought by our Saviour's power upon the impotent man; *He ſaid unto him, Stretch out thine hand, and his hand was reſtored.* 2. What a contrary effect this cure had upon the Phariſees; inſtead of convincing them, they conſpire againſt him; our Saviour's enemies, when arguments fail, fall to violence. 3. The prudent means which our Saviour uſes for his own preſervation, *He withdrew himſelf.* Chriſt's example teaches his miniſters their duty; to avoid the hands of perſecutors, and prudently to preſerve their lives, unleſs when their ſufferings are like to do more good than their lives. 4. The great humility of Chriſt in concealing his own praiſes; he had no ambition that the fame of his miracles ſhould be ſpread abroad, for he ſought not his own glory; neither would he, by the noiſe of his miracles enrage the Phariſees againſt him to take away his life; knowing that his time was not yet come, and he had much work to do before his death.

17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 18 Behold, my ſervant whom I have choſen; my beloved, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed: I will put my ſpirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry; neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets. 20 A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

That is, our bleſſed Saviour did thoſe good acts before ſpoken of, that it might appear that he was the true Meſſias propheſied of by Iſaias the prophet, chap. xlii. 1, 2. Behold my ſervant whom I have ſet apart for accompliſhing the work of *ſalvation* for a loſt world; he, by the fulneſs of my Spirit ſhall teach the nations the way to truth and righteouſneſs: he ſhall not ſubdue men by force and violence, but, as the Prince of peace, ſhall deal gently with the weak, and cheriſh the leaſt meaſures of grace, and degrees of goodneſs. *Obſerve* here, 1. A deſcription of Chriſt as Mediator; he is God the Father's *ſervant*, employed in the moſt noble ſervice, namely that of inſtructing and ſaving a loſt world. 2. With what meekneſs and gentleneſs Chriſt ſets up his ſpiritual kingdom in the world; he doth not with noiſe and clamour, with force and violence, ſubdue and conquer, but with meekneſs and gentleneſs, gains perſons conſent to his government and authority. 3. The gentle carriage of Chriſt in treating thoſe of infirmer grace; he doth and will graciouſly preſerve, and tenderly cheriſh the ſmalleſt beginnings, the weakeſt meaſures, and the loweſt degrees of ſincere grace, which he obſerves in any of his children and people. By the bruiſed reed and ſmoking flax, underſtand ſuch as are broken with a ſenſe of ſin, ſuch as are weak in faith, ſuch as are ſo much overpowered by corruption, that they do rather ſmoke than burn or ſhine; ſuch as are thus low and mean in ſpirituals, Chriſt will not break with his power, nor quench with his rebukes, till he has perfected their converſion, and their weak grace is become victorious.

22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed

with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this the Son of David? 24 But when the Phariſees heard *it*, they ſaid, This *fellow* doth not caſt out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

As a farther inſtance of Chriſt's miraculous power, he healeth one whom the devil had caſt into a diſeaſe which deprived him both of ſpeech and ſight: at this miracle the multitude wonder, ſaying, *Is not this the ſon of David?* that is, the promiſed Meſſias. The Phariſees hearing this, with great bitterneſs and contempt ſaid, *This fellow caſteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. Obſerve* from hence, How obſtinacy and malice will make men miſconſtrue the actions of the moſt holy and innocent; Chriſt *caſteth out devils*, ſaid the Phariſees, *by the help of the devil.* There never was any perſon ſo good, nor any action ſo gracious, but they have been ſubject both to cenſure and miſconſtruction. The beſt way is to ſquare our actions by the right rule of juſtice and charity, and then let the world paſs their cenſures at their pleaſure. When the holy and innocent Jeſus was thus aſſaulted, what wonder is it, if we, his ſinful ſervants, be branded on all ſides, by reviling tongues? Why ſhould we expect better treatment than the Son of God?

25 And Jeſus knew their thoughts, and ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation; and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf ſhall not ſtand. 26 And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf; how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt *them* out? therefore they ſhall be your judges. 28 But if I caſt out devils by the ſpirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or elſe, how can one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 30 He that is not with me is againſt me; and he that gathereth not with me ſcattereth abroad.

Our bleſſed Saviour, to clear his innocence, and to convince the Phariſees of the unreaſonableneſs of their calumny and falſe accuſations, offers ſeveral arguments to their conſideration. 1. That it was very unlikely that Satan ſhould lend this power to uſe it againſt himſelf. As Satan has a kingdom, ſo he has wit enough to preſerve his kingdom, and will do nothing to weaken his own intereſt. Now if I have received my power from Satan, for deſtroying him and his kingdom, then is Satan divided againſt himſelf. 2. Our Saviour tells them, they might, with as much reaſon, attribute all miracles to the devil, as thoſe that were wrought by him. There were certain Jews among themſelves, who caſt out devils in the name of the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob: Chriſt aſks the Phariſees, by what power theſe their children caſt them out? They acknowledged, that thoſe did it by the power of God; and there was no cauſe, but their malice, why they ſhould not acknowledge that what he did was by the ſame power. *If I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you*; that is, the Meſſias is come; becauſe he wrought theſe miracles to prove that he was the Meſſias. Another argument to prove, that the miracles which Chriſt wrought were by the power of God, and not by the help of Satan, is this: the devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and there is no power but God's only, that is ſtronger than his: Now ſays Chriſt, if I were not aſſiſted by a divine power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong man, who reigns in the world as in his houſe: it muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong man that ſhall bind Satan; and who is he but the God of ſtrength?

31 ¶ Wherefore I ſay unto you, All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy *againſt* the *holy* Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

Obſerve, 1. How our Saviour makes a difference betwixt ſpeaking againſt the Son of man, and ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt. *By ſpeaking againſt the Son of man*, is meant all thoſe reproaches which were caſt upon our Saviour's perſon as man, without reflecting upon his divine power as God, which he teſtified by his miracles. Such were their reproaching him with the meanneſs of his birth, their cenſuring him for a wine-bibber, and a glutton, and the like. But *by ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, is meant, their reproaching and blaſpheming that divine power whereby he wrought his miracles; which was an immediate reflection upon the Holy Spirit, and a blaſpheming of him. 2. The nature of this ſin of ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt: it conſiſteth in this, that the Phariſees ſeeing our Saviour work miracles, and caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, contrary to the conviction of their own minds, they maliciouſly aſcribed his miracles to the power of the devil, charging him to be a ſorcerer and a magician, and to have a familiar ſpirit, by whoſe help he did thoſe mighty works; when in truth he did them by the Spirit of God. 3. That this ſin, above all others, is called unpardonable, and upon that account it is ſo. The caſe of ſuch blaſphemers of the Holy Spirit, is not only dangerous, but deſperate; becauſe they reſiſt their laſt remedy, and oppoſe the beſt means for their conviction. What can God do more to convince a man that Jeſus Chriſt is the true Meſſiah, than to work miracles for that purpoſe? Now, if when men ſee plain miracles wrought they will ſay it is not God that works them, but the devil; as if Satan would conſpire againſt himſelf, and ſeek the ruin of his own kingdom, there is no way left to convince ſuch perſons, but they muſt and will continue in their oppoſition to truth, to their inevitable condemnation.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

Theſe words may either refer to the Phariſees, or to Chriſt himſelf. If to the Phariſees, the ſenſe is, You hypocritical Phariſees, ſhew yourſelves what you are by your words and actions, even as the fruit ſheweth what the tree is. If they refer to Chriſt, then they are an appeal to the Phariſees themſelves, to judge of our Saviour and his doctrine by the miracles which he wrought. If he wrought them by the devil, his works would be as bad as the devil's, but if his works were good, they muſt own them to be wrought by the power of God. The expreſſion implies, that a man may be known by his actions, as a tree may be known by its fruit; yet not by a ſingle action, but a ſeries of actions: not by a particular act, but by our general courſe.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, ſpeak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.

Note here, 1. The fervency and zeal of our Saviour's ſpirit, in the compellation given to the Phariſees; he calls them a *generation of vipers*; intimating, that they were a venomous and dangerous ſort of men. *Learn* hence, That it is not always railing and indiſcreet zeal, to call wicked men by ſuch names as their ſin deſerves. *Obſerve* farther, From our Saviour's ſaying, that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*; that the heart is the fountain both of words and actions; according as the heart is, ſo is the current of men's words and actions, either good or evil.

35 A good man, out of the good treaſure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treaſure, bringeth forth evil things.

Obſerve here, A double treaſure diſcovered in the heart of man. 1. An evil treaſure of ſin and corruption, both natural and acquired, from whence proceed evil things.—Now this is called a *treaſure*, not for the preciouſneſs of it, but for the abundance of it; a little doth not make a treaſure: and alſo for the continuance of it; though it be perpetually overflowing in the life, yet doth the heart continue full; this treaſure of original corruption in man's nature may be drawn low in this life, by ſanctifying grace, but it can never be drawn dry. 2. Here is a good treaſure of grace diſcovered in a ſanctified and renewed man; which is the ſource and ſpring from whence all gracious actions do proceed and flow. For as the heart of man by nature is the fountain from whence all ſin ſprings, ſo the heart, renewed by grace, is the ſource and ſpring from whence all gracious actions do proceed and flow.

36 But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

I ſay unto you; I, that have always been in my Father's boſom, and fully know his mind; I, that am conſtituted Judge of quick and dead, and underſtand the rule of judgment; I, even I, do aſſure you, that every word that has no tendency to promote the glory of God, or ſome way the good of others, will fall under cenſure at the great day, without an intervening repentance. *Note* here, That there are two ſorts of words for which we muſt be judged; ſinful words, and idle words. Sinful words are blaſphemous words, cenſorious words, lying and ſlandering words. Idle words are ſuch as ſavour nothing of wiſdom and piety; that have no tendency to make men either wiſer or better: How light ſoever men make of their words now, yet in God's balance another day, they will be found to weigh very heavy. What a bridle ſhould this text be to extravagant tongues! ſee *Col.* iv. 6. *Let your ſpeech be always ſeaſoned with ſalt*, that is, with wiſdom, *&c.* for our words may miſchief others a long time after they are ſpoken; how many years may a frothy or filthy word, a profane ſcoff, an atheiſtical jeſt, ſtick in the minds of them that hear it, after the tongue that ſpake it is dead! A word ſpoken is phyſically tranſient, but morally permanent.

37 For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

Obſerve here, The argument which our Saviour uſes to move us to watchfulneſs over our words: *By our words we ſhall be juſtified*; not meritoriouſly, but declaratively: Good words declare goodneſs in ourſelves, and we ſhall be declared good to others by our words, if our words and actions do correſpond and agree with one another. *Death and life are in the power of the tongue*; that is, according to the right or wrong uſing of the tongue, we may judge and gather whether men are dead or alive as to God; and bound for heaven or hell. Doubtleſs juſtification or condemnation will paſs upon men at the day of judgment, according to the ſtate of the perſon, and frame of the heart; now our words will juſtify or condemn us in that day as evidences of the ſtate and frame of the ſoul. We uſe to ſay, ſuch witneſſes hanged a man; that is, the evidence they gave, caſt and condemned him. O think of this ſeriouſly; if words evidence the ſtate of thy ſoul, what an helliſh ſtate muſt thy ſoul be in, who haſt inured thyſelf to the language of hell, to oaths and curſes; ſins whereby the devil cheats men more than by any ſins whatſoever! They are damned for them, yet get nothing by them, neither profit nor pleaſure.

38 ¶ Then certain of the ſcribes and of the Phariſees anſwered, ſaying, Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee. 39 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe up in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. 42 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for ſhe came from the uttermoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

Obſerve here, 1. The requeſt which the Phariſees make to Chriſt; *Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee.* But had not Chriſt ſhewed them ſigns enough already? What were all the miracles wrought in their ſight, but convincing ſigns that he was the true Meſſias? But infidelity, mixed with obſtinacy, is never ſatisfied. 2. Our Saviour's anſwer to the Phariſees requeſt: He tells them that they ſhould have one ſign more, to wit, that of his reſurrection from the dead: *For as Jonas lay buried three days in the whale's belly*, and was then wonderfully reſtored, ſo ſhould (and did) our Saviour continue in the grave part of three natural days, and then riſe again. 3. How Chriſt declares the inexcuſableneſs of their ſtate, who would not be convinced, by the former miracles he had wrought, that he was the true Meſſiah; nor yet be brought to believe in him by his laſt ſign or miracle of his reſurrection. The Ninevites ſhall condemn the Phariſees: *They repented at the preaching of Jonas*; but theſe would not be convinced by the preaching and miracles of Jeſus. *The queen of Sheba, who alſo came from the ſouth to hear and admire the wiſdom of Solomon, ſhall riſe up in judgment* againſt thoſe that reject Chriſt, who is the wiſdom of the Father; and the doctrine delivered by him, which was the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. *Learn*, That the ſins of infidelity and impenitency are exceedingly heightened, and their guilt aggravated, from the means afforded by God to bring a people to faith and obedience. The ſin of the Phariſees, in rejecting Chriſt's miracles and miniſtry, was by far greater than that of the Ninevites, had they rejected Jonas's meſſage and miniſtry ſent by God amongſt them.

43 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none. 44 Then he ſaith, I will return into my houſe from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, ſwept, and garniſhed. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable is to ſhew, that the Phariſees, by rejecting the goſpel, and refuſing to believe in Chriſt, were in a ſevenfold worſe condition than if the goſpel had never been preached to them, and a Saviour had never come among them; becauſe, by our Saviour's miniſtry, Satan was in ſome ſort caſt out; but for rejecting Chriſt and his grace, Satan had got a ſeven-fold ſtronger poſſeſſion of them now than before. From this parable *learn*, 1. That Satan is an unclean ſpirit; he has loſt his original purity, his holy nature, in which he was created, and is become univerſally filthy in himſelf; no means being allowed him by God for purging of his filthy and unclean nature. Nay, he is a perfect enemy to holineſs, maligning all that love it and would promote it. 2. That Satan is a reſtleſs and unquiet ſpirit; being caſt out of heaven, he can reſt no where: when he is either gone out of a man through policy, or caſt out of a man by power, he has no content or ſatisfaction, until he returns into a filthy heart, where he delights to be as the ſwine in miry places. 3. That wicked and profane ſinners have this unclean ſpirit dwelling in them: their hearts are Satan's houſe and habitation; and the luſts of pride and unbelief, malice and revenge, envy and hypocriſy, theſe are the garniſhings of Satan's houſe. Man's heart was God's houſe by creation, it is now Satan's by uſurpation and judiciary tradition. 4. That Satan, by the preaching of the goſpel, may ſeem to go out of perſons, and they become ſober and civilized; yet may he return to his old habitation, *and the laſt end of that man may be worſe than the beginning.*

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren ſtood without, deſiring to ſpeak with him. 47 Then one ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee. 48 But he anſwered and ſaid unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he ſtretched forth his hand toward his diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother, and my brethren. 50 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.

Obſerve here, 1. The verity of Chriſt's human nature: he had affinity and conſanguinity with men, perſons near in blood to him, called his brethren, that is, his couſin-germans. 2. That the holy Virgin herſelf was not wholly free from failings and infirmities; for here ſhe does untimely and unſeaſonably interrupt our Saviour when he was preaching to the people, and employed about his Father's buſineſs. 3. That Chriſt did not neglect his holy mother, nor diſregard his near relations; only ſhewed that he preferred his Father's ſervice before them. *Learn*, 4. How dear believers are to Jeſus Chriſt; he prefers his ſpiritual kindred before his natural. Alliance in faith, and ſpiritual relation to Chriſt, is much nearer and dearer than alliance by blood: to bear Chriſt in the heart, is much better than to bear him in the womb. Bleſſed be God, this greateſt privilege is not denied to us even now: though ſee Chriſt we cannot, yet love him we may: his bodily preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his ſpiritual preſence is not denied us. Though Chriſt be not ours, in houſe, in arms, in affinity, in conſanguinity, yet in heart, in faith, in love, in ſervice, he is or may be ours. Verily, ſpiritual regeneration brings men into a more honourable relation to Chriſt, than natural generation ever did. *Whoſoever ſhall do the will of my father, he is my brother, ſiſter, and mother.*

CHAP. XIII.

THE ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſat by the ſea-ſide. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, ſo that he went into a ſhip, and ſat; and the whole multitude ſtood on the ſhore. 3 And he ſpake many things unto them in parables, ſaying,—

The foregoing chapter gave us an account of an awakening ſermon preached by our Saviour to the Phariſees. In this chapter we are acquainted with the continuance of his preaching to the multitude: where three things are *obſervable*, 1. Our Lord's aſſiduity and unwearied diligence in preaching of the goſpel; for this ſermon was made the ſame day with that in the former chapter, ver. 1. *The ſame day went Jeſus out, and ſat by the ſea-ſide.* A good pattern for the preachers of the goſpel to follow. How aſhamed may we be to preach once a week, when our Lord preached twice a day! 2. The place our Lord preached in, a ſhip; not that he declined the temple or the ſynagogue, when he had the opportunity: But in the want of them, Chriſt thought an houſe, a mountain, a ſhip, no unmeet place to preach in. It is not the place that ſanctifies the ordinance, but the ordinance that ſanctifies the place. 3. The manner of our Lord's preaching; it was by parables and ſimilitudes: which was an ancient way of inſtruction among the Jews, and a very convincing way; at once working upon mens minds, memories, and affections; making the mind attentive, the memory retentive, and the auditors inquiſitive after the interpretation of the parable. Some are of opinion that our Saviour's parables were ſuited to his hearers employments, ſome of whom being huſbandmen, he reſembles his doctrine to ſeed ſown in the field: For thus he ſpeaks:

—Behold a ſower went forth to ſow. 4 And when he ſowed, ſome *ſeeds* fell by the way's ſide, and the fowls came and devoured them up. 5 Some fell upon ſtony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they ſprung up, becauſe they had no deepneſs of earth; 6 And when the ſun was up, they were ſcorched; and becauſe they had not root, they withered away. 7 And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns ſprung up, and choked them. 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty-fold, ſome thirty-fold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The ſcope of this parable is to ſhew that there are four ſeveral ~~ſorts of hearers~~ of the word, and but one ſort only that hear to a ſaving advantage; Alſo to ſhew us the cauſe of the different ſucceſs of the word preached. Here *obſerve*, 1. The ſowers, Chriſt and his apoſtles; he the prime and principal ſower, they the ſecondary and ſubordinate ſeedſmen. Chriſt ſows his own field, his miniſters ſow his field; he ſows his own ſeed, they ſow his ſeed. Wo unto us, if we ſow our own ſeed, and not Chriſt's. 2. The ſeed ſown, the word of God. Fabulous legends, and unwritten traditions, which the ſeedſmen of the church of Rome ſow, theſe are not ſeed, but chaff: or their own ſeed, not Chriſt's. Our Lord's field muſt be ſown with his own ſeed, not mixed grain. *Learn*, 1. That the word of God preached, is like ſeed ſown in the furrows of the field. As ſeed has a fructifying virtue in it, by which it increaſes and brings forth more of its own kind, ſo has the word of God a quickening power, to regenerate and make alive dead ſouls. 2. That the ſeed of the word, where it is moſt plentifully ſown, is not alike fruitful. As ſeed doth not thrive in all ground alike, ſo neither doth the word fructify alike in the hearts of men. There is a difference, both from the nature of the ſoil, and from the influence of the Spirit. That the cauſe of the word's unfruitfulneſs is very different, and not the ſame in all: in ſome, it is the policy of Satan, that bird of prey, which follows God's plough, and ſteals away the precious ſeed. In others, it is a hard heart of unbelief: in others the cares of the world, like thorns, choke the word, overgrow the good ſeed, draw away the moiſture of the earth, and the heart of the ſoil, and hinder the influences of the ſun. The far greater part of hearers are fruitleſs and unprofitable hearers. 4. That the beſt ground doth not bring forth fruit alike: ſome good ground brings forth more, and ſome leſs; *Some thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred-fold.* In like manner, a perſon may be a profitable hearer of the word, although he doth not bring forth ſo great a proportion of fruit as others, provided he brings forth as much as he can.

10 And the diſciples came, and ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in parables? 11 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Here we have the diſciples queſtion, and our Saviour's anſwer. Their queſtion is, *Why ſpeakeſt thou to the people in parables* which they do not underſtand? They cannot ſee the ſoul of thy meaning, through the body of thy parables. Chriſt anſwers, "*To you*, my diſciples, and ſuch as you are, who love the truth, and deſire to obey it, the Spirit *gives* you an effective, operative, and experimental knowledge, not barely to know theſe things, but to believe them, and feel the power of them, in and upon your hearts: but the generality of hearers do content themſelves with a bare notional knowledge of what they hear; a parable therefore is well enough for them." *Learn*, 1. That the doctrines of the goſpel are myſteries. 2. That it is a matchleſs and invaluable privilege, practically and ſavingly to underſtand and know goſpel myſteries. 3. That this privilege all are not ſharers in, nor partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given: *Unto you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given.*

12 For whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance; but whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away even that he hath.

That is, whoſoever improves the meaſures of grace received, ſhall obtain farther meaſures and degrees of it: *But from him* that doth not improve what he has already received, *ſhall be taken away that which* to himſelf or others *he ſeemed to have*, his common gifts and moral endowments. *Learn*, That where there are beginnings of true grace, and a right and wiſe improvement of it, God will make rich additions of more grace to the preſent ſtock which we have received.

13 Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables: becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they underſtand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias, which ſaith, By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive. 15 For this people's heart is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and ſhould underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

Theſe words of our bleſſed Saviour, as I conceive, have a peculiar reference and relation to the Phariſees, who attended upon Chriſt's miniſtry, not with an honeſt ſimplicity of mind, to be inſtructed by it, but to carp and cavil at it. Our Saviour tells them, he had formerly ſpoken things very plainly and clearly to them, and alſo wrought miracles before them, to convince them of the divinity of his perſon, and of the verity of his doctrine: But they would not believe either his perſon or his doctrine to be from God: and therefore he would not ſpeak to them in dark parables, that they may be judicially blinded; they ſinfully ſhut their eyes againſt the cleareſt light, and ſaid they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their eyes judicially, and ſays they ſhall not ſee. *Learn* hence, To acknowledge the divine juſtice, which ſpeaks darkly to them that deſpiſe the light: Such who ſee and yet ſee not, they ſhall ſee the ſhell, but not the kernel; they ſhall hear the parable, but not underſtand the ſpiritual ſenſe and meaning of it. When wilful blindneſs of mind is added to natural blindneſs, it is a juſt and righteous thing with God to ſuperadd judicial blindneſs, and give them obſtinacy of heart, his curſe unto them.

16 But bleſſed *are* your eyes; for they ſee: and your ears; for they hear. 17 For verily I ſay unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

Here our Saviour pronounces ſuch of his diſciples and followers bleſſed, who receive the truths of the goſpel, ſo far as they were already taught them; he aſſures them that they ſhall receive farther light, and further meaſures of ſpiritual illumination: *Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee. Learn,* That ſuch as have received the leaſt meaſures of ſpiritual knowledge and ſaving illumination, and do improve it, are in a happy and bleſſed condition; for as they are capable of farther meaſures of divine knowledge, ſo ſhall they be partakers of them.

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the ſower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and underſtandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart: this is he which received ſeed by the way ſide. 20 But he that receiveth the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He alſo that receiveth ſeed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that receiveth ſeed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and underſtandeth *it*; which alſo beareth fruit, and bringeth forth ſome an hundred fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty.

As if our Lord had ſaid, "You, my diſciples, who are not ſatisfied with a ſound of words, I will explain to you the ſenſe and ſignification of this parable: The ſcope of which is, to ſhew the different effects which the word of God has upon mens hearts and the reaſon of that difference. The *ſeed* is the *word*, the *ſower* is the *preacher*, the *ſoil* is the *heart* and the *ſoul* of man." Now our Saviour aſſures us, that the hearts of ſome hearers, are like *highway ground*, in which the ſeed is not covered with the harrow of meditation; others are like *ſtony ground*, in which the word has no root; no root in their underſtandings, memories, conſcience, will, or affections: But *they are offended*, either at the depth and profoundneſs of the word, or at the ſanctity or ſtrictneſs of it, or at the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it. Again, ſome hearers our Lord compares to *thorny ground*. Thorns are covetous deſires, which choke the good ſeed, ſhadow the blade when ſprung up, keep off the influences of the ſun, and draw away the fatneſs of the ſoil from the ſeed. All theſe effects have thorns in and among the ſeed. And the like effects have worldly affections and covetous deſires in the heart of man, rendering the word unfruitful and unprofitable. But the good Chriſtian hears the word attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, practiſes it univerſally, and *brings forth fruit with patience and perſeverance*; fruit that will redound to his account, in the great day of account. *Learn*, 1. That no hearers are in Chriſt's account good hearers of the word, but ſuch as bring forth the fruits of an holy, humble, and peaceable converſation. 2. That a perſon may be a good hearer of the word, if he brings forth the beſt fruit he can, though it be not in ſo great a proportion as others do: As ſome ground brings forth thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred fold: In like manner do all the ſincere hearers of the word, they all bring forth fruit, though not all alike; all in ſincerity and reality, though not all to the ſame degree, and none to perfection. *Obſerve*, laſtly, Satan is here compared to the fowls of the air, which pick up the ſeed before it takes any root in the earth. The devil is very jealous of the ſucceſs of the word, and therefore labours all he can to deſtroy the word before it comes to operate upon the heart; which he doth ſometimes by the cares of the world, ſometimes by vain companions, who prove mere quench-coals unto early convictions; if he can ſteal away the word, or choke it, he has his deſire and deſign.

24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which ſowed good ſeed in his field: 25 But while men ſlept, his enemy came and ſowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was ſprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares alſo. 27 So the ſervants of the houſholder came and ſaid unto him, Sir, didſt thou not ſow good ſeed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He ſaid unto them, An enemy hath done this. The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up; 29 But he ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt, I will ſay to the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable is, to ſhew that there is no expectatiou of univerſal purity in the church of God in this life; but as the tares and wheat grow together in the ſame field, ſo hypocrites and ſincere chriſtians are and will be intermixed in the ſame church, and can hardly be diſcerned one from the other. St. Jerom obſerves, That in the eaſtern countries, the tares and the wheat were ſo like one another, whilſt they were in the blade, that there was no knowing them aſunder. *Learn* 1. That in the outward and viſible church, there ever has been, and will be a mixture of good and bad, of ſaints and ſinners, of hypocrites and ſincere chriſtians, *until the day of judgment.* 2. That in that day Chriſt will make a thorough and perfect ſeparation, and divide the tares from the wheat; that is, the righteous from the wicked. 3. That in the mean time, none ought to be ſo offended at this mixture in the church, as to ſeparate from church-communion on that account: until the harveſt, it is not to be expected, that the tares and the wheat ſhould be perfectly ſeparated.—Yet *obſerve*, 4. That though the tares are forbidden to be plucked up when ſown, yet it is the church's duty, all ſhe can, to hinder their ſowing. Though we muſt not root the wicked up, yet we muſt prevent the rooting of wickedneſs all we can. Our Saviour, that forbad to pluck up the tares, did not forbid to hinder their ſowing. *Note* here, How vain is the collection of the Eraſtians from hence, that the wicked are not to be cut off by excommunication from the communion of the church; nor doth this text prove, that the magiſtrates may not cut off evil doers, ſeeing this was not ſpoken to them, but to the miniſters of the church.

31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field. 32 Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it is grown it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree; ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 ¶ Another parable ſpake he unto them; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All theſe things ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable ſpake he not unto them; 35 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world.

Our Saviour's deſign in this parable is, to ſhew how the goſpel, from ſmall and little, from unlikely and contemptible beginnings, ſhall ſpread and increaſe, fructify and grow up; like as a muſtard-ſeed, one of the ſmalleſt of grains, grows up to a conſiderable tallneſs; and as a little leaven turns a great heap of meal into its own nature; ſo the goſpel ſhall ſpread and increaſe, nations and countries becoming chriſtian. *Learn*, That how ſmall beginning ſoever the goſpel had in its firſt plantation, yet by the fructifying bleſſing of God it has had and ſhall have a wonderful increaſe.

36 Then Jeſus ſent the multitude away, and went into the houſe: and his diſciples came unto him, ſaying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, He that ſoweth the good ſeed, is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that ſowed them is the devil; the harveſt is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And he ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 43 Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The parable of the tares of the field, Chriſt is pleaſed to explain to his diſciples after this manner. The perſon ſowing good ſeed was himſelf, *the Son of man*; who firſt planted the goſpel: the field in which the ſeed was ſown was the world; that is, the church in the world: the *good ſeed*, called, *The children of the kingdom*, are ſincere chriſtians: the *tares*, called, *The children of the wicked one*, are profane ſinners, and unſound hypocrites: the *enemy* is the devil, the *harveſt* is the end of the world, and the *angels* are the reapers. *Learn*, 1. That the mixture of the tares and the wheat, of the righteous and the wicked, muſt and ſhall remain in the church unto the end of the world. 2. That in the end of the world the angels ſhall perform the work of ſeparation, gathering the righteous from among the wicked; when every one's harveſt ſhall be according to his fruit; *The righteous ſhining in the kingdom of their Father, the wicked caſt into a furnace of fire.*

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof, goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field. 45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, ſeeking goodly pearls: 46 Who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.

By the treaſure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price are underſtood, Chriſt, the grace of the goſpel, and the way to life and ſalvation therein diſcovered: he that is thoroughly convinced of the worth and excellency of Chriſt's grace, will part with all that he has to purchaſe and obtain it. *Learn*, That the ſinner who will have intereſt in Chriſt, and a part in goſpel grace, muſt part with all that he has to purchaſe and obtain them, even with his goods and lands, with his wife and children; for Chriſt and his grace are a real good, a ſubſtantial good, a durable good; he outbids all the offers that the world can make, and therefore it is our wiſdom to part with all for him, and eſpecially our ſins, dearer to us than all the reſt.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away. 49 So ſhall it be at the end of the world: the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, 50 And ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable alſo is to ſet forth the ſtate of the goſpel-church, which is like a floor, where chaff is mixed with wheat; a field, where tares are mixed with good corn; a net, where bad fiſhes are involved with the good. As the wheat muſt not be removed out of the floor before the time of winnowing; nor the tares gathered out of the field before the time of reaping; nor the good fiſhes break through the net, to get from the bad, before the time of ſeparation; ſo muſt not chriſtians forſake a church's communion, becauſe of the preſent mixture of good and bad in the church. For a mixed communion in the church, and the good chriſtians communicating with the bad, doth neither defile the ordinances of Chriſt, nor pollute thoſe that ſincerely join in them.

51 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Have ye underſtood all theſe things? They ſay unto him, Yea, Lord. 52 Then ſaid he unto them, Therefore every ſcribe which is inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſure things new and old.

Obſerve here, 1. The title which our Saviour puts upon goſpel-miniſters; they are houſhold-ſtewards. 2. He points out the office of thoſe ſtewards; and that is, to provide for the houſhold both with plenty and variety. *He muſt bring forth out of his treaſure* in plenty; and *things new and old* for their variety. There are two eſſential qualifications in a ſteward, faithfulneſs and prudence: he muſt be honeſt and faithful, in bringing out of his own treaſure, not another's; and he muſt be prudent, in bringing things new as well as old; not new truths in a new dreſs; leſt the houſhold, by always feeding upon the ſame diſh, do nauſeate it, inſtead of being nouriſhed by it.

53 ¶ And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, Whence hath this man this wiſdom and theſe mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's ſon? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his ſiſters, are they not all with us? whence then hath this man all theſe things? 57 And they were offended in him.—

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's tender and compaſſionate regard to his own countrymen, the people of Galilee and Nazareth; he preached to them in their ſynagogue. 2. The effect which his doctrine had upon them; *They were aſtoniſhed at it*, but not converted by it; they admire, but did not believe. 3. The cauſe of their rejecting Chriſt's miniſtry, was the meanneſs of his perſon, the contemptibleneſs of his outward condition, the poverty of his relations; *Is not this the carpenter's ſon?* Mark vi. 3. he is called *the carpenter:* whence the fathers conclude, that our Saviour, during the time of his obſcure privacy, wrought at the trade of Joſeph his reputed father; and Juſtin Martyr ſays, he made ploughs and yokes. Sure we are, our Lord ſpent no time in idleneſs, though we are not certain how he employed his time before he entered upon his public miniſtry. *Note*, That the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's condition was that which multitudes ſtumbled at; and which kept many, yea moſt, from believing on him. None but a ſpiritual eye can diſcern beauty in an humble Saviour: *Is not this the ſon of the carpenter?* 2. That it is no impediment to, nor hindrance of our faith, that we never ſaw Chriſt's perſon in the fleſh, nor knew his parentage and education; for here are his own countrymen, who daily ſaw his perſon, heard his doctrine, and were witneſſes of his holy converſation, yet inſtead of believing in him they were offended at him.

—But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour ſave in his own country, and in his own houſe.

Our Saviour tells them, he doth not wonder that ſo many of his own countrymen, to whom he had been ſo familiarly known, did deſpiſe his perſon and reject his doctrine; for a prophet generally has leaſt eſteem where he has been brought up; becauſe perhaps the follies of his childhood, and indecencies of his youth, are remembered and reported to his diſparagement. *Learn*, 1. That there is a real tribute of honour due and payable to every prophet or faithful miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt, for the moſt part, have leaſt honour from their own countrymen, to whom they are beſt known. 3. That although it be ſo, yet this may not be through their own fault, for Chriſt was ſo among his.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.

This ſin not only locks up the heart of a ſinner, but alſo binds up the hands of a Saviour. Unbelief obſtructed Chriſt's miraculous works when on earth, and it obſtructs his gracious works now in heaven. Ah! curſed unbelief! which ſhuts up, O ſinner, thy heart, and ſhuts out thy Saviour, and will effectually ſhut thee out of heaven, and not only procure damnation, but no damnation like it! *Mark* xvi. 16. Chriſt was unable, becauſe they were unwilling; his impotency was occaſioned by their infidelity; he did not becauſe he would not; And that he would not proceeded from a defect in their faith, not from any deficiency in Chriſt's power: Their unbelief bound his hands, and hindered the execution of his power.

CHAP. XIV.

The former part of this chapter gives us an account of the death of John the Baptiſt, together with the occaſion of it, which was his plain and faithful reproving of Herod, for the uncleanneſs he lived in.

AT that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus. 2 And ſaid unto his ſervants, This is John the Baptiſt: he is riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.

Obſerve here, 1. How ſtrange it was that Herod ſhould not hear of the fame of Jeſus till now; all the country and adjoining regions had rung of his fame, only Herod's court hears nothing. Miſerable is that greatneſs which keeps princes from the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. How plain is it from hence, that our Saviour came not at court? He once ſent, indeed, a meſſage to that fox (Herod) whoſe den he would not approach; teaching us by his example, not to affect, but to avoid outward pomp and glory. The courts of princes are often a very bad air for piety and religion to thrive in. 2. The miſconſtruction of Herod, when he heard of our Saviour's fame; This, ſays he, is John the Baptiſt, whom I beheaded. His conſcience told him he had offered an unjuſt violence to an innocent man; and now he is afraid that he is come again to be revenged on him for his head. A wicked man needs no worſe tormentor than his own mind. O the terrors and tortures of a guilty conſcience! How great are the anxieties of guilt, and the fears of divine diſpleaſure, than which nothing is more ſtinging and perpetually tormenting.

3 ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in priſon for Herodias's ſake, his brother Philip's wife. 4 For John ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, becauſe they counted him as a prophet.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon that put the holy Baptiſt to death; it was Herod, it was Herod the king, it was Herod that invited John to preach at court, and heard him gladly. 1. It was Herod Antipas, ſon to that Herod who ſought Chriſt's life, chap. ii. Cruelty runs in a blood. Herod, the murderer of John, who was the forerunner of Chriſt, deſcended from that Herod who would have murdered Chriſt himſelf. 2. It was Herod the king. Sad! that princes, who ſhould always be nurſing fathers to, ſhould at any time be the bloody butchers of, the prophets of God. 3. It was Herod that heard John gladly; John took the ear and the heart of Herod, and Herod binds the hand and feet of John. O how inconſtant is a carnal heart to good reſolutions! The word has oft-times an awakening influence, where it doth not leave an abiding impreſſion upon the minds of men. *Obſerve*, 2. The cauſe of the Baptiſt's death; it was for telling a king of his crime. Herod cut off that head whoſe tongue was ſo bold to tell him of his faults. The perſecution which the prophets of God fall under, is uſually for telling great men of their ſins: Men in power are impatient of reproof, and imagine that their authority gives them a licence to tranſgreſs. 3. The plain dealing of the Baptiſt, in reproving Herod for his crime, which, in one act, was adultery, inceſt and violence. Adultery that he took another's wife; inceſt, that he took his brother's wife; violence, that he took her in ſpite of her huſband. Therefore John doth not mince the matter, and ſay, It is not convenient; but, *It is not lawful for thee to have her:* It was not the crown and ſceptre of Herod that could daunt the faithful meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in God's miniſters, both courage and impartiality. Courage in fearing no faces; impartiality, in ſparing no ſins. For none are ſo great but they are under the authority and command of the law of God.

6 But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleaſed Herod. 7 Whereupon he promiſed with an oath to give her whatſoever ſhe would aſk. 8 And ſhe, being before inſtructed of her mother, ſaid, Give me here John Baptiſt's head in a charger. 9 And the king was ſorry: nevertheleſs, for the oath's ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. 10 And he ſent, and beheaded John in the priſon. 11 And his head was brought in a charger and given to the damſel: and ſhe brought *it* to her mother.

Several *obſervables* are here to be taken notice of. 1. The time of this execrable murder: It was upon Herod's birth-day. It was an ancient cuſtom among the eaſtern kings to celebrate their birth-days: Pharoah's birth-day was kept *Gen.* xl. Herod's here; both with blood: Yet theſe perſonal ſtains do not make the practice unlawful. When we ſolemnize our birth-day with thankfulneſs to our Creator and Preſerver, for life and being, for protection and preſervation to that moment, and commend ourſelves to the care of his good providence for the remainder of our days, this is an act of piety and religion. But Herod's birth-day was kept with revelling and feaſting, with muſic and dancing. Not that dancing (which in itſelf is a ſet, regular, harmonious motion of the body) can be unlawful, any more than walking or running; although circumſtances may make it ſinful. But from this diſorderly banquet on Herod's birth-day, we *learn*, That great mens feaſts and frolics are too often a ſeaſon of much ſin. 2. The inſtigator and promoter of the holy Baptiſt's death, *Herodias and her daughter:* That good man falls a ſacrifice to the fury and malice, to the pride and ſcorn of a luſtful woman, for being a rub in the way of her licentious adultery. Reſolute ſinners, who are mad upon their luſts, run furiouſly upon their gainſayers, though they be the prophets of God themſelves; and reſolve to bear down all oppoſition they meet with in the gratification of their unlawful deſires. 3. With what reluctancy Herod conſented to this villainy; the *king was ſorry.* Wicked men ofttimes ſin with a troubled and diſturbed conſcience; they have a mighty ſtruggle with themſelves before they commit their ſins; but at laſt their luſts get the maſtery over their conſciences. So did Herod's here; For, 4. Notwithſtanding his ſorrow, he commands the fact: *He ſent and beheaded John in the priſon.* And a threefold cord tied him to this performance: (1.) The conſcience of his oath. See his hypocriſy; he made conſcience of a raſh oath, who made no ſcruple of real murder. (2.) Reſpect to his reputation: *Them that ſat with him* heard him promiſe, and will be witneſſes of his levity, if he do not perform. Inſiſting upon punctilios of honour has hazarded the loſs of millions of ſouls. (3.) A loathneſs to diſcontent Herodias and her daughter. O vain and fooliſh hypocrite, who dreaded the diſpleaſure of a wanton miſtreſs, before the offending God and conſcience! 5. Theſe wicked women not only require the Baptiſt to be beheaded, but that his head be brought in a charger to them. What a diſh is here to be ſerved up at a prince's table on his birth-day! A dead man's head ſwimming in blood! How prodigiouſly inſatiable is cruelty and revenge! Herodias did not think herſelf ſafe till John was dead; ſhe could not think him dead till his head was off; ſhe could not think his head off till ſhe had it in her hand. Revenge never thinks it has made ſure enough. O how cruel is a wicked heart, that could taſte pleaſure in a ſpectacle of ſo much horror! How was that holy head toſt by impure and filthy hands! That true and faithful tongue, thoſe ſacred lips, thoſe pure eyes, thoſe mortified cheeks, are now inſultingly handled by an inceſtuous harlot, and made a ſcorn to the drunken eyes of Herod's gueſts. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That neither the holieſt of prophets, nor the beſt of men, are more ſecure from violence, than from natural death. He that was ſanctified in the womb, conceived and born with ſo much miracle, lived with ſo much reverence and obſervation, is now at midnight obſcurely murdered in a cloſe priſon. 2 That it is as true a martyrdom to ſuffer for duty, as for faith: He dies as truly a martyr that dies for doing his duty, as he that dies for profeſſing the faith, and bearing witneſs to the truth.

12 And his diſciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jeſus. 13 ¶ When Jeſus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ſhip into a deſart place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the city.

The diſciples of John, hearing that their holy maſter was thus baſely and barbarouſly murdered, took up his dead body and buried it. Whence we *learn*, That the faithful ſervants of God are not aſhamed of the ſufferings of the ſaints, but will teſtify their reſpect unto them both living and dead. *Obſerve*, farther, how our bleſſed Saviour, upon the notice of John's death, flies into the deſart for the preſervation of his own life. Jeſus knew that his hour was not yet come, and therefore he keeps out of Herod's way. It is no cowardice to fly from perſecutors, when Chriſt our captain both practiſes it himſelf, and directs us to it, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one city, flee,* &c.

14 And Jeſus went forth and ſaw a great multitude, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, and he healed their ſick.

Obſerve here, With what condolency and tender ſympathy the compaſſionate Jeſus exerciſed acts of mercy and compaſſion towards the miſerable and diſtreſſed. *He was moved with compaſſion*; that is, touched with an inward ſenſe and feeling of their ſorrow; *and he healed their ſick.* Thoſe that came to Chriſt for healing, found three advantages of cure, above the power and performance of any earthly phyſician; to wit, certainty, bounty, and eaſe. Certainty, in that all comers were infallibly cured; bounty, in that they were freely cured, without charge; and eaſe, in that they were cured without pain.

15 And when it was evening, his diſciples came to him, ſaying, This is a deſart place, and the time is now paſt: ſend the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themſelves victuals.

Note here, 1. The diſciples' pity towards the multitude that had long attended upon Chriſt's miniſtry in the barren deſart; they, preſuming the people hungry, having faſted all the day, requeſt our Saviour to diſmiſs them, that they may procure ſome bodily refreſhment. *Learn* hence, That it well becomes the miniſters of Chriſt to reſpect the bodily neceſſities, as well we to regard the ſpiritual wants of his people. As the bodily father muſt take care of the ſoul of his child, ſo muſt the ſpiritual father have reſpect to the bodily neceſſities of his children.

Obſerve, 2. The motion which the diſciples make on the behalf of the multitude, *Send them away, that they may buy victuals.* Here was a ſtrong charity, but a weak faith. A ſtrong charity, in that they deſire the people's relief; but a weak faith, in that they ſuppoſe they could not otherwiſe be relieved, but by ſending them away to buy victuals; Forgetting that Chriſt, who had healed the multitude miraculouſly, could as eaſily feed them miraculouſly, if he pleaſed: All things being equally eaſy to Omnipotency.

16 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, They need not depart: give ye them to eat.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour's ſtrange anſwer to the diſciples motion; *They need not depart*, ſays Chriſt. *Need not!* Why? the people muſt either feed or famiſh. Victuals they muſt have, and this being a deſart place, there was none to be had. Surely then there was need enough. But, 2, Chriſt's command was more ſtrange than is aſſertion; *Give ye them to eat.* Alas, poor diſciples! They had nothing for themſelves to eat, how then ſhould they give the multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us what of ourſelves we are unable to perform, it is to ſhew us our impotency and weakneſs, and to provoke us to look to him *that worketh all our works in us and for us.*

17 And they ſaid unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fiſhes.

Note here, What a poor ſlender proviſion the Lord of the whole earth has for his houſhold and family; five loaves, and thoſe barley; two fiſhes, and they ſmall: Teaching us, that theſe bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pampered. Our belly muſt not be our maſter, much leſs our god. We read but twice that Chriſt made any entertainments, and both times his gueſts were fed with loaves and fiſhes, plain fare and homely diet. The end of food is to ſuſtain nature, we ſtifle it with a gluttonous variety: Meat was ordained for the belly, the belly for the body, the body for the ſoul, and the ſoul for God. *Obſerve* farther, As the quality of the victuals was plain and coarſe, ſo the quantity of it was ſmall and little: *Five* loaves and *two* fiſhes. Well might the diſciples ſay, *What are theſe among ſo many?* The eye of ſenſe and reaſon ſees an impoſſibility of thoſe effects which faith can eaſily apprehend, and divine power more eaſily produce.

18 He ſaid bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs, and took the five loaves and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed and brake, and gave the loaves to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

Obſerve, 1. How the maſter of the feaſt marſhals his gueſts; he commands them *all to ſit down*: None of them reply, "Sit down, but to what? Here are the mouths, but where is the meat! we can ſoon be ſet, but whence ſhall we be ſerved?" Nothing of this, but they obey and expect. O how eaſy is it to truſt God, and rely upon Providence, when there is corn in the barn, and bread in the cupboard! But when our ſtores are all empty, and nothing before us, then to depend upon an inviſible bounty, is a true and noble act of faith. The actions performed by our bleſſed Saviour, *He bleſſed and brake, and gave the loaves to his diſciples, and they to the multitude.* 1. *He bleſſed*; Teaching us by his example, in all our wants to look up to heaven for a ſupply, to wait upon God for his bleſſing, and not to ſit down to our food as a beaſt to his forage. (2.) He *brake* the loaves. He could have multiplied them whole, why would he rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us, that we are to expect his bleſſings in the diſtribution, rather than in the reſervation of what he gives us. Scattering is the way to increaſing: Not grain hoarded up in the grainary, but ſcattered in the furrows of the field, yields increaſe. Liberality is the way to riches, and penurioufneſs the road to poverty. 3. Chriſt gave the bread thus broken to his diſciples, that they might diſtribute it to the multitude. But why did not our Lord diſtribute it with his own hand, but by the hands of his diſciples? Doubtleſs to win reſpect to his diſciples from the people. The ſame courſe doth our Lord take in ſpiritual diſtributions. He that could feed the world by his immediate hand, chuſes rather by the hands of his miniſters to divide the bread of life to all hearers.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baſkets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thouſand men, beſides women and children.

They did all eat, not a crumb or a bit, but to ſatiety and fulneſs: *They did eat, and were filled*, yet twelve baſkets remained: More is left than was at firſt ſet on. So many bellies, and yet ſo many baſkets filled. The miracle was doubled by an act of boundleſs omnipotency. It is hard to ſay which was the greater miracle, the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they ate, we may juſtly wonder that they left any thing; if what they left, that they ate any thing. *Obſerve* farther, Theſe fragments, though of barley-bread and fiſh-bones, muſt not be loſt; but by our Saviour's command gathered up. The liberal houſekeeper of the world will not allow the loſs of his orts. O how fearful then will the account of thoſe be, who have large and plentiful eſtates to anſwer for as loſt, being ſpent upon their luſts in riot and exceſs!

22 ¶ And ſtraightways Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples to get into a ſhip, and to go before him unto the other ſide, while he ſent the multitudes away.

Jeſus conſtrained them; that is, he commanded them to *go away before him.* No doubt but they were very loath to leave him, and go without him; both out of the love which they bare to him and themſelves. Such as have once taſted the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, are hardly drawn away from him; however, as deſirous as the diſciples were to ſtay with Chriſt, yet at his word of command, they depart from him. Where Chriſt has a will to command, his diſciples and followers muſt have a will to obey.

23 And when he had ſent the multitudes away,

he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt diſmiſſes the multitude, and then retires to pray; teaching us by his example, when we have to do with God, to diſmiſs the multitude of our affairs and employments, of our cares and thoughts. O how unſeemly it is to have our tongues talking to God, and our thoughts taken up with the world! 2. The place Chriſt retires to for prayer, a ſolitary mountain; not ſo much for his need for he could be alone when he was in company, but to teach us, that when we addreſs ourſelves to God in duty, we are to take all the helps, furtherances, and advantages we can for the doing of it. When we converſe with God in duty, O how good it is *to get upon a mountain*, to get our hearts above the world, above worldly employments and worldly cogitations! 3. The occaſion of Chriſt's prayer; he had ſent the diſciples to ſea, he foreſaw the ſtorm ariſing, and now he gets into a mountain to pray for them, that their faith might not fail them when their troubles were upon them. *Learn* hence, That it is the ſingular comfort of the church, that in all her difficulties and diſtreſſes Chriſt is interceding for her; when ſhe is on the ſea conflicting with the waves, Chriſt is upon the mountain praying for her preſervation.

24 But the ſhip was now in the midſt of the ſea toſſed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

Note here, the great danger the diſciples were in, and the great difficulties they had to encounter with; they were in *the midſt of the ſea*, they were *toſſed with the waves, the wind was contrary*, and Chriſt was abſent. The wiſdom of God often ſuffers his church to be toſſed upon the waves of affliction and perſecution, but it ſhall not be ſwallowed up by them: often in this ark of the church upon the waters; ſeldom off them, but never drowned.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jeſus went unto them walking on the ſea.

Chriſt having ſeen the diſtreſs of his diſciples on the ſhore, he haſtens to them on the ſea. It was not a ſtormy and tempeſtuous ſea, that could ſeparate betwixt him and them: he that waded through a ſea of blood, and through a ſea of wrath to ſave his people, will walk upon a ſea of water to ſuccour and relieve them. But *obſerve*, The time when Chriſt came to help them; not till the fourth watch, a little before the morning. They had been many hours upon the waters, conflicting with the waves, with their fears and dangers. God oft-times lengthens out the troubles of his children before he delivers them; but when they are come to an extremity, that is the ſeaſon of his ſuccours. As God ſuffers his church to be brought into extremities before he helps her, ſo he will help her extremity. *In the fourth watch Jeſus came*, &c.

26 And when the diſciples ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit. And they cried out for fear.

See how the diſciples take their deliverer to be a deſtroyer: their fears were higheſt when their deliverer and deliverance were neareſt. God may be coming with ſalvation and deliverance for his church, when ſhe for the preſent cannot diſcern them.

27 But ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them, ſaying, be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid.

Obſerve, When the diſciples were in the ſaddeſt condition, how one word from Chriſt revives them: it is a ſufficient ſupport, in all our afflictions, to hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to us, and to enjoy his favourable preſence with us. Say but, O Saviour, *It is I*, and then let evils do their worſt: That one word, *It is I*, is enough to lay all ſtorms, and to calm all tempeſts.

28 And Peter anſwered him and ſaid, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he ſaid, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ſhip, he walked on the water to go to Jeſus. 30 But when he ſaw the wind boiſterous, he was afraid; and beginning to ſink, he cried, ſaying, Lord, ſave me.

Obſerve here, 1. The mixture of Peter's faith and diſtruſt: it was faith that ſaid, *Maſter*: it was diſtruſt that ſaid, *If it be thou*. It was faith that ſaid, *Bid me come to thee*; it was faith that enabled him to ſtep down on the watery pavement; it was faith that ſaid, *Lord ſave me*: but it was diſtruſt that made him *ſink*. O the imperfect compoſition of faith and fear in the beſt of ſaints here on earth! Sincerity of grace is found with the ſaints here on earth; perfection of grace with the ſaints in heaven.—Here the ſaints look forth, fair as the moon, which hath ſome ſpots in her greateſt beauties; hereafter they ſhall be clear as the ſun, whoſe face is all bright and glorious. 2. That whilſt Peter believes, the ſea is as firm as braſs under him; when he begins to fear then he begins to ſink. Two hands upheld Peter; the hand of Chriſt's power, and hand of his own faith. The hand of Chriſt's power laid hold on Peter, and the hand of Peter's faith laid hold on the power of Chriſt. If we let go our hold on Chriſt, we ſink; if he lets go his hold on us we drown. Now Peter anſwered his name Cepas, and ſunk like a ſtone.

31 And immediately Jeſus ſtretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ſhip, the wind ceaſed. 33 Then they that were in the ſhip came, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Obſerve 1. The mercy of Chriſt is no ſooner ſought, but found: *Immediately Jeſus put forth his hand, and caught him*. O with what ſpeed and with what aſſurance, ſhould we flee to that ſovereign bounty, from whence never any ſuitor was ſent away empty. 2. Though Chriſt gave Peter his hand, yet, with his hand, he gave him a check; *O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Though Chriſt likes believing, yet he diſlikes doubting. A perſon may be truly believing, who, nevertheleſs, is ſometimes doubting; but his doubting eclipſes the beauty of his believing.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genneſaret. 35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diſeaſed; 36 And beſought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

Obſerve, 1. Our Saviour's unwearied diligence in going about to do good: he no ſooner landeth, but he goeth to Genneſaret, and healeth their ſick. 2. The people's charity to their ſick neigbours, in ſending abroad to let all the country know that Chriſt, the great phyſician, was come amongſt them. 3. Where lay the healing virtue: not in their finger, but in their faith; or rather in Chriſt, whom their faith apprehended.

CHAP. XV.

THEN came to Jeſus Scribes and Phariſees, which were of Jeruſalem, ſaying, 2 Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with a great conteſt, between our Saviour and the Phariſees, about their traditions and old cuſtoms, which they valued more than the commandments of God: they accuſed the diſciples for eating bread with unwaſhed hands, which, though it were in itſelf but a decent cuſtom, the Phariſees made it a religious rite; for which reaſon our Saviour and his diſciples would not obſerve it. Whence we *learn*, That what is in itſelf, and may without offence be done as a civil cuſtom, ought to be diſcountenanced and oppoſed, when men require it of us as a religious act, or place religion in it. The Phariſees placed ſo much religion in waſhing their hands before meat, that they looked upon it as highly criminal to neglect it as to lie with a whore. One of them being in priſon, and not having water enough to drink and to waſh his hands too, choſe rather to die with thirſt, than to tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders.

3 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why do ye alſo tranſgreſs the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, ſaying, Honour thy father and mother: and, he that curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me, 6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he ſhall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Note here, 1. The heavy charge which our Saviour brings in againſt the Phariſees; namely, for violating an expreſs command of God, preferring their own traditions before it: You make void *the commandments of God by your traditions*. 2. The command which our Saviour inſtances in, as violated by them; it is the fifth commandment, which requires children to relieve their parents in their neceſſity. Now, though the Phariſees did not deny this in plain terms, yet they made an exception from it, which, if children had a mind, rendered it void and uſeleſs. For the Phariſees taught, that in caſe any would give a gift to the temple, which gift they called *corban*, and of which they themſelves had a great ſhare, that then children were diſcharged from making any farther proviſion for their poor, aged, or impotent parents; and might ſay unto them, after this manner, *That which thou aſkeſt for thy ſupply, is given to God, and therefore I cannot relieve thee*. So that covetous and graceleſs children looked upon it as the moſt frugal way, once for all, to give to the temple, rather than pay the conſtant rent of duty relief to their poor parents. *Learn*, That no duty, gift, or offering to God is accepted, where the duty of charity is neglected. It is more acceptable to God to refreſh the bowels of his ſaints, who are the living temples of the Holy Ghoſt than to adorn material temples with gold and ſilver.

7 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worſhip me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

Our Saviour reproves the hypocritical Phariſees for theſe things: 1. That they preferred human traditions before the divine precepts. 2. That by their human traditions they made void the worſhip of God. It is God's undoubted prerogative to preſcribe all the parts of his own worſhip; and whoever preſumes to add thereunto, they worſhip him in vain. Our Saviour farther ſhews, that all this proceeded from the inſincerity of their hearts: *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*. Whence *learn*, 1. That the removing of the heart far from God in worſhip is a great ſin, and a high degree of hypocriſy. 2. That whatever outward ſhew an dproſeſſion of religion men make, if their hearts be not right with God, and what they do proceeds not from an inward principle of love and obedience to God, they are under the reign and power of hypocriſy, *Ye hypocrites, in vain do ye worſhip me*. 3. That we muſt not be forward, from Chriſt's example, to pronounce men hypocrites; becauſe we have neither the authority nor knowledge of the heart which Chriſt had, to authorize us ſo to do. Chriſt here called the Phariſees hypocrites. 1. Becauſe they placed holineſs and religion in ceremonies of human invention. 2. Becauſe being ſo ſuperſtitiouſly careful to avoid bodily pollutions, they left their hearts within full of hypocriſy and iniquity.

10 ¶ And he called the multitude, and ſaid unto them, Hear, and underſtand. 11 Not that which goeth

goeth into a mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of a mouth, this defileth a man.

Our bleſſed Saviour leaving the Phariſees with ſome diſlike, applies himſelf to the multitude, and ſhews them the true ſpring and original fountain of all ſpiritual pollution and uncleanneſs; namely, the filthineſs and impurity of man's heart and nature; which boiling in the heart, the ſcum runs out at the mouth: thereby informing the multitude, that not that which is eaten, but that which is ſpoken, defiles a man; not the meat eaten with the mouth, but the wickedneſs of the heart vented by the mouth, pollutes a perſon in God's account.

12 Then came his diſciples, and ſaid unto him, Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended after they heard this ſaying? 13 But he anſwered and ſaid, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted ſhall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind both ſhall fall into the ditch.

Obſerve here, 1. How the diſciples wonder that our Saviour did ſo little regard the diſpleaſure of the Pharaſees: *Knoweſt thou not that the Phariſees were offended?* Although nothing vexed the Phariſees more than the diſcovery of their falſe doctrine before the multitude, yet our Saviour did not ſtick to detect their errors, and to declare the truth, let the effect of their diſpleaſure be what they would: ſinful man-pleaſing is fruitleſs and endleſs. 2. Our Lord's anſwer, which ſhews a double reaſon why he thus ſlighted the offence taken by the Pharaſees. (1.) He compares the Pharaſees doctrine and tradition to noiſome weeds in the church, planted there not by God, but by themſelves; and conſequently ſhall therefore be rooted up. In matters of religion if men will act according to the dictates of their own fancies, and not walk by the rule of God's word, they may pleaſe themſelves perhaps, but they can never pleaſe their Maker. Divine inſtitution is the only ſure rule of religions worſhip. (2.) Chriſt compares the Phariſees themſelves to blind-guides. *They are blind leaders of the blind:* leaders and followers both blind, who will certainly and ſuddenly *fall into the ditch* of temporal and eternal deſtruction. *Learn,* 1. The ignorant erroneous, and unfaithful miniſters, are the heavieſt judgments that can befal a people. 2. That the following of ſuch teachers and blind guides will be no excuſe to people another day, much leſs free them from the danger of eternal deſtruction.

15 Then anſwered Peter and ſaid unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16 And Jeſus ſaid, Are ye alſo yet without underſtanding? 17 Do not ye yet underſtand that whatſoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is caſt out into the draught? 18 But thoſe things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies. 20 Theſe are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwaſhen hands defileth not a man.

The diſciples deſiring the interpretation of the foregoing parable, our Saviour gives it them; but withal expoſtulates with them, that they did not underſtand a thing ſo obvious and plain: *Are ye yet without underſtanding?* As if he had ſaid, "Have ye ſat thus long under my miniſterial teaching, and enjoyed the benefit of my company and converſation, and yet are no farther proficients in knowledge?" Whence *learn,* That our Lord expects a proficiency in knowledge from us, anſwerable to the opportunities and means of knowledge enjoyed by us. Next he gives them the ſenſe and ſignification of the parable; telling them, that it is out of a ſinful heart that all ſin proceeds: the heart is the cage or neſt, which is full of theſe unclean birds, and from whence they take their flight.---Though the occaſions of ſin are from without, yet the ſource and original of ſin is from within. *Learn,* That the heart of man is the ſink and ſeed-plant of all ſin, and the fountain of all pollution; the life could not be ſo bad, if the heart were not worſe: all the irregularity of our lives flows from the impurity of our hearts and natures.

21 ¶ Then Jeſus went thence, and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto him, ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* ſon of David: my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil.

Obſerve here, The conſtant employment of our Saviour, *He went about doing good,* from place to place. In the borders of Tyre and Sidon he finds a faithful woman of the race of the Canaanites, who becomes an humble ſupplicant to Chriſt, while the Jews neglected ſo great ſalvation. Yea, ſhe not only ſpeaks but cries unto him.---Were we duly affected with our ſpiritual wants, we could ſpeak to God in no other language than that of cries and tears; nothing but cries can pierce heaven. 2. Though all Iſrael could not example the faith of this Canaanite, yet was her daughter tormented with a devil. *Learn,* That neither truth, nor ſtrength of faith, can ſecure us either againſt Satan's inward temptations, or outward vexations; and conſequently, the worſt of bodily afflictions are no ſufficient proof of divine diſpleaſure. 3. The daughter did not come to Chriſt for herſelf, but the mother for her. Perhaps the child was not ſenſible of its own miſery, but the good mother feels both the child's miſery and her own. True goodneſs teaches us to appropriate the affliction of others to ourſelves; it cauſes us to bear their griefs, and to ſympathize with them in their ſorrows.

23 But he anſwered her not a word. And his diſciples came, and beſought him, ſaying, Send her away; for ſhe crieth after us.

Strange! that a miſerable ſupplicant ſhould cry and ſue, whilſt the God of mercy is ſpeechleſs. What! is the fountain of mercy dried up? O Saviour! we have oft found cauſe to wonder at thy words, but never till now at thy ſilence. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt doth ſometimes delay to return an anſwer to a well qualified prayer. Sometimes his people do not pray earneſtly enough, ſometimes they pray too earneſtly, for ſome outward and temporal mercy: ſometimes the mercy they pray for, is not good for them, or it may be it is not yet good for them. Let us not then judge of God's hearing our prayer by his preſent anſwer.

24 But he anſwered and ſaid, I am not ſent but unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

Obſerve, When our Saviour doth anſwer, he gives not one word of comfort, but rather a repulſe. Chriſt has oftentimes love in his heart to his people, when they can read none in his countenance, nor gather it from his diſcourſe. Alſo, The anſwer itſelf, Chriſt ſays *I am not ſent unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Adam*, but *to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*. The Jews are compared unto *ſheep*, the Gentiles unto *dogs*. Chriſt inſinuates, that though ſhe were a loſt ſheep of Adam, yet not being one of the loſt ſheep of Iſrael, he could do nothing for her. It was a common ſaying among the Jews, "That the nations of the world were likened to dogs, whereas they were God's ſons and daughters."

25 Then came ſhe, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, help me.

Yet hath not this poor woman done: Chriſt's former ſilence, and his preſent denial cannot ſilence her. She comes, ſhe worſhips, ſhe cries, *Lord, help me.* O what an undaunted grace is the grace of faith! It has a ſtrong heart and a bold forehead; peremptory denials cannot diſmay it. This woman will not deſpond, though her prayer of faith from her knees of humility, ſucceed not.

26 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to caſt *it* to dogs.

Obſerve here, The ſeeming ſeverity of Chriſt to this poor woman; he calls her not a woman, but a dog: and, as it were, ſpurns her from his feet with an harſh repulſe. Did ever ſo ſevere a word drop from thoſe mild lips? What ſhall we ſay? Is the lamb of God turned a lion? That a woman in diſtreſs imploring pity, yet a good woman, and an humble ſupplicant, ſhould be thus raſed out of Chriſt's preſence for a dog! *Learn* hence, that Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt faith of his own children upon the ſevereſt trials: The trial had never been ſo ſharp, if her faith had not been ſo ſtrong. Uſually where God gives much grace, he tries grace much.

27 And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the maſter's table.

Obſerve, How her humility grants all, her patience overcomes all, ſhe meekly deſires to poſſeſs the dog's place; not to croud *to* the table, but to creep *under* it, and to partake of the crumbs of mercy that fall from thence. Indeed ſhe ſhewed one of the beſt qualities of a dog, in keeping her hold where ſhe had once faſtened, not letting go or giving over, until ſhe had gotten what ſhe deſired. *Learn* hence, That nothing is ſo pleaſing unto Chriſt, as to ſee his people following him with faith and importunity, when he ſeems to withdraw from them.

28 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

The diſciples obſerving her behaviour, might have been ready to ſay, O woman great is thy patience, great is thy humility: But, ſays Chriſt, *Great is thy faith*; he ſees the root, we the branches. Nothing but faith could thus temper the heart, thus ſtrengthen the ſoul, thus charm the tongue. O powerful grace of faith, which Chriſt himſelf could no longer withſtand, but cries out as a perſon overcome by the prevalency of it, *O woman great is thy faith*. *Note*, That no grace ever goes away from Chriſt uncrowned: though we daily wait long for mercy, yet the hand of faith never knocked in vain at the door of heaven.—Mercy is as ſurely ours, as if we had it, if we have but faith and patience to wait for it. This good woman found it ſo, to her unſpeakable comfort: and the ſame ſhall we find, in the exerciſe of the ſame grace. *Queſt.* But how doth this poor woman's faith appear to be great faith? *Anſ.* Becauſe having no faith to rely upon, and ſuffering ſo many repulſes with ſeeming contempt, ſhe ſtill retained a good hope of Chriſt's kindneſs and mercy. *Learn* hence, 1. That the faith of thoſe who depending on God's goodneſs, do place an humble confidence in God, and are not by great temptations or diſcouragements removed from that their confidence; ſuch faith is deſervedly ſtyled great faith. 2. That the faith of believing Gentiles was not only praiſe-worthy and well-pleaſing to God, but more excellent and better pleaſing than that of the Jews, to whom the promiſes did belong.

29 ¶ And Jeſus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the ſea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and ſat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *thoſe that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and caſt them down at Jeſus' feet; and he healed them; 31 Inſomuch that the multitude wondered when they ſaw the dumb to ſpeak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to ſee: and they glorified the God of Iſrael.

Obſerve here, The charity, 2. The faith of the multitude in bringing the blind, the deaf, and the dumb to Chriſt. Their charity in bringing eyes to the blind, and a tongue to the dumb; who could neither come to Chriſt themſelves, nor ſpeak for themſelves. Every man has not a tongue to ſpeak for himſelf; happy is he that has a tongue to pray and intercede for others. This charity did the people exerciſe here. Alſo, Their faith; they laid the lame and blind down at Jeſus' feet, relying upon his power, and believing his willingneſs to help and heal them. Farther the effect of this miracle upon the multitude; it was twofold: 1. They were ſtruck with admiration and wonder, to ſee ſuch cures wrought as exceeded the courſe of nature, and the power of art. 2. *They glorified the God of Iſrael*; that is, they acknowledged it to be a wonderful work of power and mercy wrought by that God whom Iſrael worſhipped. Whence we *learn*, That the miraculous works of Chriſt, which he wrought before the multitude, were obvious to their ſenſes: and did conſtrain the beholders (if not blinded with Phariſaical obſtinacy) to acknowledge the power of God communicated to Chriſt, and to praiſe him for it: *The multitude marvelled and glorified God.*

32 ¶ Then Jeſus called his diſciples unto him,
and ſaid, I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe
they continue with me now three days, and have
nothing to eat: and I will not ſend them away faſting,
leſt they faint in the way. 33 And his diſciples
ſay unto him, whence ſhall we have ſo much
bread in the wilderneſs as to fill ſo great a multitude?
34 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, How many loaves
have ye? and they ſaid, Seven, and a few little fiſhes,
35 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down
on the ground. 36 And he took the ſeven loaves
and the fiſhes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and
gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

Here we have the ſecond miracle of Chriſt's compaſſionate feeding the hungry multitude. Chap. xiv. we read of five thouſand fed *with five loaves and two fiſhes*; here Chriſt feeds four thouſand *with ſeven loaves and a few ſmall fiſhes*. Where *obſerve*, That Chriſt fed feweſt, when he had moſt proviſion; when he had *ſeven* loaves, he fed but four thouſand; whe he had *five* loaves he fed five thouſand. Thus the wiſdom and power of Chriſt is glorified by him as he pleaſes. The feeding *one* thouſand with *one* loaf, was as true a miracle as the feeding ſeven thouſand. Our ſaviour did put forth the power of his Godhead in working miracles after what manner ſeemed beſt to his own wiſdom. *Oſberve* farther, A double action performed by our Saviour. 1. *He gives thanks*; that is, he prayed for a bleſſing upon the food. Teaching us our duty, That if the Son of God did look up to heaven, and bleſs his food, we ſhould not ſit down to our food as a beaſt to his fodder, without craving a bleſſing upon it. The next action was, *He gave to his diſciples*. But why did he diſtribute the loaves by the hands of his diſciples? Becauſe the diſciples queſtioned through the weakneſs of their faith, whether ſuch a multitude as four thouſand could be fed with ſo ſmall a proviſion as ſeven loaves. Now our Saviour, to convince them how eaſily he could do that thing which they had judged impoſſible, diſtributes the bread by them; making uſe of their own eyes and hands, for their conviction and ſatisfaction. Thus Chriſt, to ſhame the unbelief of his diſciples, make them not only ſpectators but actors in that work, which they judged impoſſible to be effected.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they
took up of the broken meat that was left ſeven
baſkets full. 38 And they that did eat were four
thouſand men, beſides women and children. 39
And he ſent away the multitude and took ſhip,
and came into the coaſts of Magdala.

They did all eat, not a crum or a bit, but to fulneſs and ſatisfaction; yet *ſeven* baſkets remain; anſwering the number of the *loaves*, as the *twelve* baſkets in the former miracle anſwered the *twelve* apoſtles: In both, more is left than was at firſt ſet on: It is hard to ſay which was the greater miracle, the miraculous eating, or miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they ate, we may juſtly wonder that they left any thing. If what they left, that they ate any thing. *Note*, laſtly, Chriſt would not have theſe fragments loſt, but gathered up; the great houſe-keeper of the world will not allow the loſs of his orts. O how dreadful will the accounts of thoſe be, who have large and plentiful eſtates to anſwer for as loſt, being ſpent upon their luſts in riot and exceſs.

CHAP. XVI.

THE Phariſees alſo and the Sadduces came, and
tempting, deſired him that he would ſhew
them a ſign from heaven. 2 He anſwered and ſaid
unto them, when it is evening, ye ſay it *will be* fair
weather: for the ſky is red. 3. And in the morning,
It will be foul weather to day: for the ſky is red
and lowering, *O ye* hypocrites, ye can diſcern the
face of the ſky; but can ye not *diſcern* the ſigns of
the times? 4 A wicked and adulterous generation
ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given
unto it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. And
he left them and departed.

Note, here 1. The perſons demanding of our Saviour a ſign, the Phariſees and Sadduces, perſons of contrary opinions and intereſts; yet both agree in tempting and oppoſing Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That wicked men, how oppoſite ſoever they are to one another, yet can agree together in oppoſing Chriſt, and undermining his truth. 2. The ſign demanded, *Shew us a ſign from heaven*: As if they had ſaid, put us not off with ſuch earthly ſigns as we have ſeen, in multiplying loaves: But let us ſee a miracle from heaven; ſuch as Moſes and Elias wrought. This they deſired, not ſo much for their ſatisfaction, as out of curioſity, nay wicked treachery. *Learn* thence, that to demand a ſign, not to confirm our faith, but to harden ourſelves in our unbelief, is a dangerous tempting of Chriſt. 3. Our Saviour's rejection of this demand of the Phariſees to give them a ſign: *O ye hypocrites*, ſays he, *ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, but ye cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Did not malice and obſtinacy blind your eyes, ye might as eaſily ſee and diſcern that theſe are the times of the Meſſias, and that I am he, by the miracles wrought by me, as you can make a judgment of the weather by looking upon the ſky." *Learn* That to pretend more ignorance and uncertainty in diſcerning the ſigns of goſpel times, than the ſigns of the weather, is great hypocriſy: *Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, but can ye not diſcern the ſigns of the times?* *Note*, laſtly, That our Saviour doth not condemn the ſtudy of nature, or making obſervations of the ſtate of the weather, from the face of the ſky: all that our Saviour blamed was, that they were better ſkilled in the ſigns of the weather, than in the ſigns of the times. As God by natural ſigns gives us warning of a change in natural things: ſo by his providential diſpenſations he gives us warning of a change in civil things. *He that is wiſe will obſerve theſe things*: and by their obſervation *will* come *to underſtand the* pleaſure of the Lord.

5 ¶ And when his diſciples were come to the other ſide, they had forgotton to take bread. 6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have taken no bread. 8. *Which* when Jeſus preceived, he ſaid unto them, O ye of little faith, why reaſon ye among yourſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up? 10 Neither the ſeven loaves of the four thouſand and how many baſkets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not underſtand, that I ſpake *it* not to you concerning bread, that he ſhould beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then underſtood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees.

Note, here, 1. How dull the diſciples of Chriſt were under Chriſt's own teaching, how apt to put a carnal ſenſe upon his words; they apprehended he had ſpoken to them of the leaven of bread, what he intended of the leaven of the Phariſees doctrine. 2. The ſmart and ſharp reproof which Chriſt gave his diſciples, for not underſtanding the ſenſe and ſignification of what he ſpake. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is much diſpleaſed with his own people, when he diſcerns blindneſs and ignorance in them, after more than ordinary means of knowledge enjoyed by them; *How is it that ye do not yet underſtand?* 3. The metaphor which Chriſt ſets forth the corrupt doctrine of the Phariſees by; he compares it to leaven, partly for its ſourneſs, and partly for its diffuſiveneſs. Leaven is a piece of ſour dough, that diffuſes itſelf into the whole maſs or lump of bread with which it is mixed. From whence our Saviour intimates, that the Phariſees were a ſour and proud ſort of people; and their doctrines like themſelves, poiſonous and pernicious in their conſequences; the contagion of which our Lord warns his diſciples to avoid and ſhun. Whence *learn*, That error is as damnable as vice; perſons erroneous in their judgments are to be avoided, as well as thoſe that are lewd and wicked in their converſations. He that has a due care of his ſoul's ſalvation, muſt as well beware of erroneous principles as of debauched practices. 4. Our Saviour does not command his diſciples to ſeparate from communion with the Phariſees, and oblige them not to hear their doctrine, but only to beware of the errors that they mixed with their doctrine. We may and ought to hold communion with a church, though erroneous in doctrine, if not fundamentally erroneous. Separation from a church is not juſtifiable upon any other ground, than that which makes a ſeparation between God and that church: which is either the apoſtacy of that church into groſs idolatry; or, in point of doctrine, into damnable hereſy, or impoſing ſinful terms of communion.

13 ¶ When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Cæſarea Philippi, he aſked his diſciples, ſaying, Whom do men ſay, that I, the Son of man, am? 14 And they ſaid, Some *ſay that thou art* John the Baptiſt; ſome Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt the Son of the living God. 17 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon-Barjona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Note here, 1. Our Saviour's queſtion, and the diſciples anſwer. Our Saviour's queſtion is two-fold: 1. *Whom do men ſay that I am?* Not that the Son of God was ignorant what men ſaid of him; but he had an intention more firmly to ſettle and eſtabliſh his diſciples in the belief of his being the promiſed Meſſias. And therefore, 2. He puts the queſtion to them, *Whom do you*, my diſciples, *ſay that I am?* "You, that have heard the holineſs of my doctrine, and ſeen the divinity of my miracles— What ſay you to me? And what confeſſion do you make of me?" Chriſt expects greater meaſures of grace and knowledge, and higher degrees of affiance and faith, from thoſe that have enjoyed the greateſt means of grace and knowledge. The diſciples were eye and ear-witneſſes of his doctrine and miracles, and accordingly he expects from them a full confeſſion of his divinity. 2. The anſwer returned, (1.) By the apoſtles in general; *and they ſaid, Some ſay that thou art John the Baptiſt; ſome Elias; ſome Jeremias.* It is no new thing, it ſeems, to find diverſity of judgments and opinions concerning Chriſt and the affairs of his kingdom. We find, that when our Saviour was amongſt men, who daily both ſaw and heard him, yet there was then a diverſity of opinions concerning him. (2.) Peter, in the name of the reſt and as the mouth of all the apoſtles, makes a full and open confeſſion of his being the Son of God; *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God.* Whence *note*, That the vail of Chriſt's human nature did not keep the eye of his diſciples faith from ſeeing him to be the Son of God as well as the ſon of man: *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God.* 3. How highly our Saviour was pleaſed with this confeſſion; he pronounces Peter and the reſt in him, *bleſſed*, who had by him made this chriſtian confeſſion; *Bleſſed art thou, Simon*; and tells him, 1. What did not enable him to make that confeſſion, *not fleſh and blood*; that is, not man, nor the wiſdom and reaſon of man. 2. But poſitively, *God the Father*, by the operation of the Spirit, and the diſpenſation of the goſpel, has wrought this divine faith in you, and drawn forth this glorious confeſſion from you, that I am indeed the Son of God. Thence *learn*, That no man can ſavingly believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world, but he in whom God himſelf, by his Holy Spirit, has wrought ſuch a perſuaſion, by the miniſtry of the goſpel.

18 And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

Note, here, 1. As Peter confeſſed Chriſt, ſo Chriſt confeſſes him; Peter ſaid, *Thou art Chriſt*; Chriſt ſays, *Thou art Peter*, alluding to his name, which ſignifies a *rock*; he having made good that title by the ſtrength, ſtability, and firmneſs of his faith. 2 A double promiſe made by Chriſt to Peter. (1.) For the building. 2. For the upholding of his church. For the *building* of his church; (1.) *Upon this rock will I build my church.* Upon what rock? "Upon Peter, the rock confeſſing," ſay the Papiſts: but if ſo, no more is ſaid of Peter here, than of all the apoſtles elſewhere. Gal. ii. 9. James and John are called pillars as well as Peter. So that his ſuperiority over the reſt of the apoſtles, can with no reaſon be from hence inferred. "Upon Chriſt, the rock confeſſed," ſay the Proteſtants; for Chriſt is the foundation-ſtone, upon which his church is built; Eph. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone.* So then, not upon Peter the rock confeſſing, but upon Chriſt the rock confeſſed; and upon the rock of Peter's confeſſion, that fundamental truth, That Chriſt is the Son of the living God, is the church built. *Upon this rock will I build my church*; *Super hanc confeſſionis tuæ Petram edificabo eccleſiam meam.* Yet Chriſt may here be ſaid to build his church upon Peter, becauſe he uſed St. Peter's miniſtry in laying the foundation of a church among the Jews and Gentiles; he being the firſt preacher of that faith which he here confeſſed firſt to the Jews, Acts ii. and then to the Gentiles, Acts x. And accordingly St. Peter's converſion of three thouſand ſouls by his miniſtry, Acts ii. 41. is looked upon by ſome as a punctual fulfilling of this promiſe here made to him. He was ſtiled the rock, becauſe he laid the foundations of faith among the nations, that is, the firſt foundations of a chriſtian church in the world. Whence it appears, that in this matter St. Peter neither had nor can have a ſucceſſor; but if the Pope will pretend to be his ſucceſſor in this affair, he muſt not ſit at Rome, lording it over God's heritage, but muſt go in perſon to the unbelieving Jews, and unconverted heathens, as Peter did; and labour by his preaching to bring over the Turk, the Jew, and the infidel, to chriſtianity. *Note* alſo, Our Saviour's promiſe for the upholding, as well as the building of his church; *The gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*: That is, all the policy and power of the devil and his inſtruments ſhall neither deſtroy my church, nor extinguiſh the light of this divine truth, which thou now haſt made confeſſion of, namely, "That I am the true Meſſias, the Son of the living God." *Note* 1. That Jeſus Chriſt is the builder, and will be the upholder of his church. 2. That the church upheld by Chriſt's power and promiſe, ſhall never be vanquiſhed by the devil's policy or ſtrength: *Upon this rock*, &c. *and the gates*, &c. By the gates of hell, underſtand, (1) The wiſdom of hell, gates being the ſeat of council. (2.) The cenſures and ſentence of hell, gates being the place of judicature. (3.) By the gates of hell, underſtand the arms and power of hell; gates being a place of ſtrength and guards. So that when Chriſt ſecures againſt hell, he ſecures againſt all that receive their commiſſion from hell; neither hell, nor any invenomed by hell, ſhall prevail againſt my church.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhall bind on earth ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth ſhall be looſed in heaven.

Note here, 1. The perſon to whom this promiſe is made, namely, to Peter, with the reſt of the apoſtles; the confeſſion being made by him in the name of the reſt. Elſewhere, we find the ſame authority and power given to them all, which is here committed unto Peter, John, xx. 23. *Whoſe ſins ſoever ye remit, they are remitted.* Although there might be a priority of order among the apoſtles, yet no ſuperiority of power was founded in any one of them over and above the reſt. 2. The power promiſed; *I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*; that is, the key of doctrine, and key of diſcipline, or full power and authority to preach the goſpel, to adminiſter ſacraments, and execute church-cenſures. The ſpeech is metaphorical, and alludes to the ſtewards and officers of great houſes, to whoſe truſt the keys of the houſhold are committed.—Chriſt's miniſters are the ſtewards of his houſe, into whoſe hands the keys of his church are committed by Chriſt; the Pope would ſnatch them out of all hands, and keep them in his own; he ſnatches at Peter's keys, but makes ſhipwreck of Peter's faith, arrogating Peter's power, but abrogating his holy profeſſion. *Learn*, 1. That the power and authority which the miniſters of the goſpel do exerciſe and execute, is from Chriſt: *I will give thee the keys of the kingdom.* 2. That this power of the keys Chriſt diſpenſed promiſcuouſly to all his apoſtles, and never deſigned it as a peculiar for St. Peter. As they all made the ſame profeſſion of faith by Peter, ſo they all received the ſame authority and power with Peter. And accordingly the apoſtles exerciſed their office independently of Peter, in converting thoſe of the circumciſion as well as he. And St. Paul, who was the apoſtle of the Gentiles, opened the kingdom of heaven to far more Gentiles, than ever Peter did; and therefore, had this key of the kingdom of heaven given to him, as much as to St. Peter.

20 Then charged he his diſciples that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.

That is, till after his reſurrection. It may ſeem ſtrange, that our Saviour ſhould charge his diſciples to tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt, ſeeing the knowledge of it was ſo neceſſary. The reaſon is conceived to be, 1. Becauſe the glory of his Godhead was not to be fully manifeſted till after his reſurrection, and then to be publiſhed by himſelf, and confirmed by his own miracles. 2. Leaſt the knowledge of it ſhould have hindered his death: For, *Had the rulers known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* *Learn*, That Chriſt has his own fit times, and proper ſeaſons, in which he reveals his own myſteries to the world. 3. That Chriſt was ſo intent upon laying down his life for ſinners, that he would not have his death hindered by an untimely declaration of his being truly and really God: after his death it was, that *he declared himſelf to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead.*

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his diſciples how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the elders and chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day.

Note 1. The wiſdom of our Saviour, in acquainting his diſciples with the near approach of his death and ſufferings. This he did for ſeveral reaſons. 1. To let them underſtand that he was really God (as they had juſt before confeſſed him to be) by his foreknowing, and foretelling things to come. 2. To convince them of their error, in apprehending that his kingdom was of this world, and that he was to reign here as a temporal prince. (3.) To prevent their being offended at his ſufferings, and to prepare them for their own; that they might neither ſhrink at them, nor ſink under them. 2. The perſons foretold by Chriſt, that ſhould be the bloody actors in the tragedy of his death; namely, the rulers and chief prieſts: it was the poor that received Chriſt, and embraced the goſpel; it was the great ones of the world that rejected him, and ſet him at nought; and the rulers both in church and ſtate condemned and crucified him.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee.

No doubt Peter ſpake all this out of a ſincere intention, and with a ſingular affection towards our Saviour; but pious intentions, and good affections, will not juſtify unwarrantable actions. From this council of St. Peter to Chriſt, we *learn*, 1. How ready fleſh and blood is to oppoſe all that tends to ſuffering; *Maſter, ſpare thyſelf.* 2. What need we have to be fortified againſt the temptations of friends as well as of enemies; for Satan can make good men his inſtruments to do his work, when they little think of it. Peter little ſuſpected that Satan ſet him on to work to hinder the redemption of mankind, by diſſuading Chriſt from dying. But obſerve, in the next verſe, with what indignation Chriſt rejects Peter's advice.

23 But he turned and ſaid unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou favoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.

Chriſt looked upon Peter with anger and diſpleaſure; Chriſt heard Satan ſpeaking in Peter. It was Peter's tongue, but Satan tuned it; therefore Chriſt calls Peter by Satan's name: They that will do the devil's work, ſhall have the devil's name too. He that would hinder the redemption of mankind, is Satan, an adverſary to mankind. From our Saviour's ſmart reproof given to Peter, *learn*, That no love or reſpect to mens perſons or piety muſt draw us to flatter them in their ſins, or cauſe us to ſpeak lightly of their ſins. From our Saviour's reſolution not to favour himſelf, notwithſtanding Peter's advice, *learn*, That ſo intent was the heart of Chriſt upon the great work of man's redemption, that he could not bear the leaſt word that ſhould obſtruct him in it, or divert him from it.

24 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.

Note here, 1. How our Saviour recommends his religion to every man's choice; not attempting by force and violence to compel any to the profeſſion of it. *If any man will come after me*, that is, if any man chuſe and reſolve to be a chriſtian. 2. Our Saviour's terms propounded: 1. Self-denial. *Let him deny himſelf.* By which we are not to underſtand the denying and renouncing of our ſenſes in matters of faith, nor yet the renouncing of our reaſon in matters of religion; but by ſelf-denial is meant, that we would be willing to part with all our earthly comforts, and quit all our temporal enjoyments, for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion. 2. Goſpel-ſuffering, *He muſt take up his croſs*: An illuſion to a roman cuſtom, that the malefactor, who was to be crucified, took his croſs upon his ſhoulder, and carried it to the place of execution. Where *note*, Not the making of the croſs for ourſelves, but the patient bearing of it, when God lays it upon our ſhoulder, is the duty enjoined: *Let him take up his croſs.* 3. Goſpel-ſervice, *He muſt follow me*: that is, obey my commands, and follow my example: He muſt ſet my life and doctrine continually before him, and muſt be daily correcting and reforming his life by that rule and pattern. See on *Luke* ix. 23.

25 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.

Note here, 1. That the love of this temporal life, is a great temptation to men to deny Chriſt, and to renounce his holy religion. 2. That the ſureſt way to attain eternal life, is cheerfully to lay down a mortal life, when the glory of Chriſt and his ſervice calleth us thereunto.

26. For what is a man profited, If he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in enchange for his ſoul?

Learn, 1. That God has intruſted every one of us with a ſoul of ineſtimable worth and preciouſneſs, capable of being ſaved or loſt, and that to all eternity. 2. That the gain of the whole world is nor comparable with the loſs of one precious ſoul. The ſoul's loſs is an incomprehenſible and irrecoverable loſs.

27 For the ſon of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.

There is a two-fold judgment ſpoken of by this evangeliſt St. Matthew, namely, a particular coming of Chriſt to execute vengeance on the Jews, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and a general coming at the day of judgment. If we underſtand this place of the latter, we have then, 1. The judge deſcribed, *The Son of Man*, he who was and is both God and man, ſhall judge both angels and men. 2. The ſplendour of that day declared, *He ſhall come in glory with his holy angels.* The attendance of angels ſhall be required by Chriſt, not for neceſſity, but for Majeſty. 3. The work and buſineſs of that day demonſtrated, and that is, *To render to every man according to his work.* *Learn*, That the judgment of the great day will be moſt glorious and righteous: Chriſt will be glorious in his perſon, and glorious in his attendance; and the judgment will be according to righteouſneſs, *Without reſpect of perſons, according to what has been done in the body.*

28 Verily I ſay unto you, There be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not taſte of death till they ſee the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

A three-fold ſenſe and interpretation is given of theſe words. 1. Some will have them refer to our Saviour's transfiguration, mentioned in the next chapter: As if he had ſaid, "Some of you, as Peter, James, and John, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon mount Tabor in ſuch glory as I will come in to judgment." 2. Others underſtand the words, of Chriſt's exerciſing his kingly power, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the Jewiſh nation, which John did live to ſee. 3. Others refer the words to the time of the goſpel after Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion, when the goſpel was propagated and ſpread far and near, according to St. Mark ix. 1. *There are ſome ſtanding here, that ſhall not taſte of death till they ſee the kingdom of God come with power*; that is, till they ſee the increaſe and enlargement of the church by the goſpel. Thence *note*, that where the goſpel is powerfully preached, and cheerfully obeyed, there Chriſt cometh moſt glorioufly in his kingdom.

CHAP. XVII.

AND after ſix days Jeſus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light.

The former part of this chapter gives us an account of our Saviour's glorious transfiguration: He laid as it were, the garments of frail humanity and mortality aſide for a little time, and aſſuming to himſelf the robes of majeſty and glory, the rays of his divinity darted forth, his face ſhined with a pleaſing brightneſs, and his raiment with ſuch a glorious luſtre, as did at once both dazzle and delight the eyes of the beholders. Here *note*, 1. The reaſons of our Lord's transfiguration: (1.) To demonſtrate and teſtify the truth of his divinity; that *he was Chriſt the Son of the living God*, according to St. Peter's confeſſion juſt before: This divine glory was an evidence of his divine nature. (2.) Chriſt was thus transfigured, to prefigure the glory of his ſecond coming to judgment, *when he ſhall be admired of his Saints.* 2. The choice which our Saviour makes of the witneſſes of his transfiguration, his three diſciples. Peter, James, and John. But why diſciples? why three diſciples? why theſe three? (1.) This transfiguration was a type and ſhadow of the glory of heaven: Chriſt therefore, vouchſafes the earneſt and firſt-fruits of that glory only to ſaints; upon whom he intended to beſtow the full harveſt. (2.) Three diſciples were witneſſes ſufficient to teſtify this miracle. Judas was unworthy of this favour; yet, leaſt he ſhould murmur or be diſcontented at his being left out, others are alſo left out beſides him. 3. Theſe three, rather than others; becauſe, 1. Theſe diſciples are more eminent for grace, zeal, and love to Chriſt; and, conſequently, are moſt highly dignified and honoured by him. The moſt eminent manifeſtations of glory, are made by God to thoſe that are moſt eminent in grace. 2. Theſe three were witneſſes of Chriſt's agony and paſſion; to prepare them for which, they are here made witneſſes of his transfiguration. This glorious viſion from mount Tabor fitted them to abide the terrors of mount Calvary. *Learn*, That thoſe whom God ſingles out for the greateſt trials, he will fit beforehand with the beſt enablements.

3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him.

Note here, The glorious attendants upon our Saviour at his glorious transfiguration; they were two, two men; and theſe two men, Moſes and Elias. This being but a glimpſe of Chriſt's glory, not a full manifeſtation of it, only two of the glorified ſaints attend upon Chriſt at it: When he ſhall come in his full glory, ten thouſand of thouſands ſhall attend him. Theſe two attendants were two men, not two angels; becauſe men were more nearly concerned in what was done; they were not only ſpectators but partners. Man's reſtoration was Chriſt's principal aim; the angel's confirmation his leſs principal deſign. But why Moſes and Elias? 1. Moſes the giver of the law, and Elias the chief of the prophets, attending both upon Chriſt, did ſhew the conſent of the law and the prophets with Chriſt, and their fulfilling and accompliſhment in him. 2. Becauſe theſe two were the moſt laborious ſervants of Chriſt, both adventured their lives in God's cauſe, and therefore are highly honoured by Chriſt. *Such as honour him, he will honour.*

4 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon ſupplicating, Peter. No doubt the other two, James and John, were much affected ed, but Peter is more fervent and forward; yet there is no arguing with the Papiſt from his fervency to his ſuperiority: his perſonal prerogatives were not hereditary. 2. The perſon ſupplicated, Jeſus; not Moſes, nor Elias; the diſciples make no prayer, no ſuit to them, but to Chriſt only. Prayers to ſaints departed are both vain and unlawful.—3. The ſupplication itſelf, and that was for their continuance where they were. *It is good for us to be here.* O what a raviſhing comfort is the fellowſhip of the ſaints! but the preſence of Chriſt among them, renders their joys tranſporting. 4. Their proffer of ſervice to farther this continuance, *Let us make three tabernacles.* This motion was well meant and devout. St. Peter will ſtick at no coſt or pains for the enjoyment of Chriſt's preſence and his ſaints company, yet was the motion unadviſed and raſh. St. Peter erred in deſiring a perpetuity of that condition which was but tranſient and momentary. This viſion was only a taſte of glory, not a full repaſt. He errs, in that he would bring down heaven to earth, and take up with Tabor inſtead of heaven. He errs, in that he would enter upon the poſſeſſion of heaven's glory without ſuffering, and without dying. *Peter would be clothed upon, but was not willing to be unclothed. Learn,* 1. That a glimpſe of glory is enough to wrap a ſoul into ecſtaſy, and to make it out of love with worldly company. 2. That we are apt to deſire more of heaven upon earth than God will allow. We would fain have the heavenly glory come down to us, but we are unwilling to go by death to that; we know not what we ſay when we talk of felicity, in tabernacles upon earth.

5 While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed: hear ye him.

Obſerve here, 1. A cloud was put before his diſciples eyes, for two reaſons. (1.) To allay the luſtre and reſplendency of that glory which they were ſwallowed up with. As we cannot look upon the ſun in its full brightneſs, but under a cloud by reflection; ſo the glory of heaven is inſupportable, till God veils it, and ſhelters us from the ſurcharge of it. (2.) A cloud overſhadows them, to hinder their farther prying and looking into the glory. We muſt be content to behold God here through a cloud, *darkly, ere long we ſhall ſee him face to face.* 2. The teſtimony given by God the Father out of the cloud concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son, *This is my beloved Son,* &c. Here *note,* 1. The dignity of his perſon, he is a *Son,* therefore, for nature coeſſential, for dignity co-equal, for duration co-eternal with the Father; and a beloved Son, becauſe of his likeneſs and conformity to him. A father's likeneſs is the cauſe of love, a union of wills cauſes a mutual endearing of affections. 2. The excellency of his mediation, *in whom I am well pleaſed.* Chriſt in himſelf was moſt pleaſing to God the Father, and in and through him he is well pleaſed with all believers. Chriſt's mediation for us, makes God appeaſable to us. 3. The authority of his doctrine, *Hear him:* Not Moſes and Elias, who were ſervants, but Chriſt my Son, whom I have commiſſioned to be the great Prophet and Teacher of my church; therefore adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Lawgiver. He honours Chriſt moſt, that obeys him beſt. The obedient ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing eye, the adoring knee, or the applauding tongue.

6 And when the diſciples heard *it,* they fell on their face, and were ſore afraid. 7 And Jeſus came and touched them, and ſaid, Ariſe, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they ſaw no man, ſave Jeſus only. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jeſus charged them, ſaying, Tell the viſion to no man, until the ſon of man be riſen again from the dead.

Obſerve here, 1. The effect which this voice from heaven had upon the apoſtles, it caſt them into a paſſion of horror and amazement, *they were ſore afraid, and fell on their face. Learn* thence, That ſuch is the majeſty and glory of God, that man in his ſinful ſtate cannot bear ſo much as a glimpſe of it, without great conſternation and fear. How unable is man to hear the voice of God! and yet how ready to deſpiſe the voice of man! If God ſpeaks by himſelf, his voice is too terrible; if he ſpeaks by his miniſters, it is too contemptible. 3. The perſon by whom the diſciples were recovered out of theſe amazing fears into which they were caſt; namely, by Chriſt, *Jeſus came and ſaid, Be not afraid.* It is Chriſt alone who can raiſe and comfort thoſe whom the terrors of the Almighty have dejected and caſt down. 3. The manner Chriſt recovered them out of this paſſionate amazement, it was three-fold. 1. By his gracious approach, *he came unto them.* Chriſt will come with comfort unto his children when they are diſabled from coming to him with comfort. 2. By his comfortable touch, *he came and touched them.* Chriſt comforts believers by a real and cloſe application of himſelf unto them. An unapplied Chriſt ſaves none, comforts none. 3. By his comforting voice, *he ſaid, Be not afraid.* It is a word of aſſurance, that there is no ground nor cauſe of fear; and it is a word of aſſiſtance. It is *verbum operatorium;* he that ſaid unto them, *Ariſe, be not afraid,* did by his Spirit breathe life, and convey ſtrength into their ſouls, to enable them to ariſe. 4. The ſtrict injunction given by Chriſt to his diſciples, not to publiſh or proclaim this viſion till after his reſurrection for two reaſons (1) Leſt it ſhould hinder his paſſion: for had the *rulers of the world known him to be the Lord of life and glory, they would not have crucified him:* therefore Chriſt purpoſely concealed his deity, to give way to his paſſion. (2.) Chriſt being now in a ſtate of humiliation, would have his majeſty veiled, his glory concealed, and conſequently forbids that the glorious viſion of his transfiguration ſhould be publiſhed, and accordingly charges his diſciples, *That they tell the viſion to no man till he was riſen.* As if he had ſaid, Tell no man the things which you have ſeen, not the reſidue of the diſciples, that they be not troubled that they were not admitted to ſee with you; nor thoſe believers which now follow me, that they be not ſcandalized at my ſuffering ſo glorious a transfiguration.

10 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, Why
then ſay the Scribes, that Elias muſt firſt come?
11 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Elias
truly ſhall firſt come, and reſtore all things. 12
But I ſay unto you, that Elias is come already, and
they knew him not, but have done unto him what-
ſoever they liſted: likewiſe ſhall alſo the Son of man
ſuffer of them. 13 Then the diſciples underſtood
that he ſpake unto them of John the Baptiſt.

Here we have the diſciples queſtion, and our Saviour's anſwer. They aſk our Saviour, how the obſervation of the Jewiſh doctors hold good, that Elias muſt come before the Meſſias come? We ſee the Meſſias, but we ſee no Elias; our Saviour anſwers, that Elias was come already: Not Elijah in perſon, but one in the ſpirit and power of Elias; one of his ſpirit and temper, to wit, John the Baptiſt, who was propheſied of under the name of Elias. And indeed great was the reſemblance between the Elias of the Old Teſtament and of the New, namely, John the Baptiſt: They were both born in bad times; they were both zealous for God and religion; they were both undaunted reprovers of the faults of princes; and they were both hated and implacably perſecuted for the ſame. *Learn*, That hatred and perſecution even unto death, has often been the lot and portion of ſuch as have had the zeal and courage to reprove the faults of princes.

14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude,
there came to him a *certain* man kneeling down to
him, and ſaying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my
ſon, for he is lunatic, and ſore vexed: for oft-times
he falleth into the fire, and into the water. 16 And
I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not
cure him.

Note here, 1. A ſick patient brought to Chriſt, the great Phyſician for cure and healing. A *lunatic*, that is, a perſon at certain times of the moon afflicted with the falling-ſickneſs. 2. This ſickneſs of his was aggravated by Satan, who bodily poſſeſſ'd him, and cruelly caſt him into the fire and into the water, but rather for torture than diſpatch. O how does Satan, that malicious tyrant, rejoice in doing hurt to mankind! Lord, abate his power, ſince his malice will not be abated. 3. The perſon that brought him forth for cure, his compaſſionate father, who kneeled down and cried out. Need will make a perſon both humble and eloquent. Every one has a tongue to ſpeak for himſelf; happy is he that keeps a tongue for others. 4. The phyſicians that he was brought unto: Firſt, *To the diſciples*, and when they could not cure him, then to Jeſus. We never apply ourſelves importunately to the God of power, till we begin to deſpair of the creature's help.

17 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, O faithleſs and
perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you?
how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him hither to me.

These words are a ſevere rebuke given by Chriſt to his own diſciples. Where *obſerve*, The perſons upbraided, his diſciples: and the ſin upbraided with, unbelief. *O faithleſs generation!* Yet was it not the total want of faith, but the weakneſs and imperfection of faith that they were upbraided with and reproved for. Hence *learn*, 1. That ſecret unbelief may lie hid and undiſcerned in a perſon's heart, which neither others nor himſelf may take any notice of, until ſome trial doth diſcover it. The diſciples were not ſenſible of that unbelief which lay hid in them, till this occaſion did diſcover it. 2. That the great obſtacle and obſtruction of all bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, coming to us, is our unbelief; *O faithleſs generation!* Others conceive, that theſe words were not ſpoken to the diſciples, but to the Scribes, which St. Mark chap. ix. ſays, at this time were diſputing with Chriſt's diſciples, and perhaps inſulting over them, as having found out a diſtemper which could not be cured by Chriſt's name and power; and theſe he called now, as he had done heretofore, *a generation of vipers.*

18 And Jeſus rebuked the devil; and he departed
out of him: and the child was cured from that very
hour.

Note here, With what facility and eaſe our Saviour cured this poor man, who was bodily poſſeſſed by Satan. With one word ſpeaking, he delivered the diſtreſſed perſon from the malice and power of Satan. Thence *learn*, that how long ſoever, and how ſtrong ſoever Satan's poſſeſſion has been in a perſon, Chriſt can eject and caſt him out both eaſily and ſpeedily.

19 Then came the diſciples to Jeſus apart, and
ſaid, Why could not we caſt him out? 20 And
Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe of your unbelief: for
verily I ſay unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of
muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Re-
move hence to yonder place, and it ſhall remove;
and nothing ſhall be impoſſible unto you. 21 How-
beit this kind goeth not but by prayer and faſting.

Obſerve here, How aſhamed the diſciples were of this open rebuke given by their maſter; they privately aſk him the cauſe of their ill-ſucceſs, *Why they could not caſt out Satan*, according to the power promiſed them to work miracles? Our Saviour tells them, that their power to work this miracle now failed them for a double reaſon. 1. For their unbelief, by which we are to underſtand the weakneſs of their faith, not the total want of faith. 2. Becauſe they neglected the ſpecial means appointed by God in order to that end; to wit, *faſting* and *prayer*: That is, a fervour of devotion, joined with faith and faſting. Thence *learn*, that faſting and prayer are two eſpecial means of Chriſt's appointment, for the enabling us victoriouſly to overcome Satan, and to caſt him out of ourſelves and others. We muſt ſet an edge upon our faith by prayer, and upon our prayer by faſting. But what are we to underſtand by faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed? 1. Some do thereby underſtand a faith that groweth and increaſeth as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, or a faith as ſtrong and active in heart as muſtard-ſeed is on the palate. And by *removing mountains*, underſtand the performing things that are moſt difficult; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Did your faith increaſe as a grain of muſtard-ſeed grows, it would enable you to ſurmount all difficulties whatſoever. 2. Others, by faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed, underſtand the leaſt degree of ſincere faith on God, it being a proverbial ſpeech among the Jews, uſed *pro re minima*, for the leaſt thing; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Had you the leaſt meaſure of that faith which caſts out fear and doubting of ſucceſs in the diſcharge of your office, you might perform things moſt difficult, and even this faith in its effects would be moſt mighty." Dr. *Whitby*.

22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid unto them, The Son of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of man. 23 And they ſhall kill him, and the third day he ſhall be raiſed again. And they were exceedingly ſorry.

Obſervable it is, how frequently our Saviour forewarned his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings. All was little enough to arm them againſt the ſcandal of the croſs, and to reconcile them to the thoughts of what he was to ſuffer for them, and they were to ſuffer with him. *Learn*, That we can never hear too much of the doctrine of the croſs; nor can we be too often inſtructed in our duty to prepare for a ſuffering condition. As Chriſt went by his croſs to his crown, from a ſtate of abaſement to a ſtate of exaltation, ſo muſt all his diſciples and followers likewiſe.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-*money*, came to Peter, and ſaid, Doth not your maſter pay tribute? 25 He ſaith, Yes. And when he was come into the houſe, Jeſus prevented him, ſaying, What thinkeſt thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom or tribute? of their own children, or of ſtrangers? 26 Peter ſaith unto him, Of ſtrangers. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithſtanding, leſt we ſhould offend them, go thou to the ſea, and caſt an hook, and take up the fiſh that firſt cometh up; and when thou haſt opened his mouth, thou ſhalt find a piece of money: that take and give unto them for me and thee.

Note here, 1. The queſtion put to St. Peter; *Doth your maſter pay tribute?* This tribute money originally was a tax paid yearly by every Jew to the ſervice of the temple, to the value of fifteen pence a head. But when the Jews were brought under the power of the Romans, this tribute money was paid to the emperor, and was changed from an homage penny to God, to a tribute penny to the emperor. The collectors of this tribute money aſk Peter, whether his maſter would pay it or not. 2. The anſwer returned, poſitively and ſuddenly, *He does pay*. Peter conſults not firſt with our Saviour, Whether he would pay; but knowing his readineſs to render to all their due, he ſays, *Yes*. There was no truer paymaſter of the king's dues, than he that was king of kings. He preached it, and he practiſed it: *Give unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*. 3. Our Saviour inſinuates his own exemption, and privilege, from paying this tribute-money, as he was the Son of God, the univerſal King; ſubjects pay tribute, but kings children are free. Though Chriſt was free from paying tribute by a natural right, yet he would not be free by a voluntary diſpenſation. Therefore *note*, To prevent all ſcandal and offence, he works a miracle, rather than the tribute-money ſhould be unpaid. Whether Chriſt by his almighty word created this piece of money, in the mouth of the fiſh (which was half a crown for himſelf and Peter, who had a houſe in Capernaum, and was there to pay his poll) or whether Chriſt cauſed the fiſh to take up this piece of money at the bottom of the ſea, is not neceſſary to enquire, nor poſſibly to determine. Our duty is, 1. Reverentially to adore that Omnipotent Power, which could command the fiſh to be his treaſurer to keep his ſilver, and purveyor to bring it to him. 2. Induſtriouſly to imitate his example, in ſhunning all occaſions of offence, eſpecially towards thoſe whom God has placed in ſovereign authority over us. *Laſtly*, The poverty of our holy Lord, and his contempt of worldly wealth and riches: he had not ſo much as fifteen pence by him to pay his toll. Chriſt would not honour the world ſo far as to have any part of it in his own poſſeſſion. The beſt man that ever lived in the world had not a penny in his purſe, nor an houſe to hide his head in, which he could call his own.

CHAP. XVIII.

AT the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?

Notwithſtanding our bleſſed Saviour had ſo often told his diſciples that his kingdom was not of this world, yet they ſtill dreamt of a temporal and earthly kingdom, which he, as the Meſſias, ſhould ſhew forth the glory of; in which there ſhould be diſtinct places of honour and offices, one above another; and accordingly at this time, the ambition of the diſciples led them to enquire of our Saviour who ſhould have the chief place of honour and dignity under him in that his kingdom, who ſhould be the principal officers of ſtate; concluding it muſt be ſome of them, though they could not agree who were fitteſt for thoſe high poſts of honour and ſervice. *Learn* hence, That the beſt and holieſt of men are too ſubject to pride and ambition, to court worldly dignity and greatneſs, and to affect a precedency before, and a ſuperiority above others: the diſciples themſelves were tainted with the itch of ambition, which prompted them to enquire of their Maſter, *Who ſhould be the greateſt in his kingdom of the church?*

2 And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, 3 And ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Our Saviour, intending to cure this pride and ambition in his diſciples, firſt preaches to them the doctrine of humility; and, to enforce his doctrine, he ſets before them *a little child*, the proper emblem of humility; aſſuring them, that unleſs they be converted, or turned from this ſin of pride and ambition, and become as a little child in lowlineſs of mind, and contempt of worldly greatneſs, they cannot be ſaved. *Learn* hence, 1. That no ſins are more odious and abominable in the ſight of God, than pride and ambition, eſpecially amongſt the miniſters of the goſpel. 2. That perſons already converted do ſtand in need of farther converſion: they that are converted from a ſtate of ſin, may want to be converted from a particular act of ſin. This was the diſciples caſe here; they were turned from a courſe of ſin, but they wanted converſion from a particular act of ſin; to wit, from ambition. 3. That converſion though ſincere, may be very imperfect. Converts ſtill have remains of corruption, ſome luſt often breaking forth, which they muſt take ſpecial care to reſiſt and ſubdue.

4 Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.

As if our Lord had ſaid, "That apoſtle, or that miniſter, who thinks as meanly of himſelf as a little child, and is humble and lowly in his own eſteem, he deſerves the higheſt place of dignity and honour in my church." *Note*, That the truly humble perſon, who is freeſt from affecting pre-eminency, is moſt worthy of the higheſt dignity and eminency in the church of God; and in the account of Chriſt, the way to be honourable is to be humble. "Before honour is humility."

5 And whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little child in my name, receiveth me. 6 But whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millſtone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

Our Saviour having declared, that the humbleſt perſons ſhould be always higheſt in his eſteem; he next declares how exceeding dear and precious ſuch chriſtians are to him, who reſemble little children in humility of heart, and innocency of life: Aſſuring the world, that whatever kindneſs and reſpect is ſhewn to ſuch for his ſake, he reckons ſhewn to himſelf; and all the diſreſpect and unkindneſs which is offered to them, he accounts as done unto himſelf; So near is the union, and ſo dear the relation betwixt Chriſt and his members, that whatever good or evil is done unto them, he reckons as done unto himſelf.

7 ¶ Wo unto the world becauſe of offences; for it muſt needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.

Two things are here *obſervable:* 1. The neceſſity of ſcandalous offences: *It muſt needs be that offences come.* 2. The miſery and miſchief that comes by them; *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences.* Wo unto ſuch as give offence; this is *væ indignantis*, the wo of one denouncing: and wo to ſuch as ſtumble at offence given, this is *væ dolentis*, the wo of one lamenting. From the whole, *note*, 1. That ſcandals, or offenſive actions in the church of Chriſt, will certainly fall out amongſt thoſe that profeſs religion, and the name of Chriſt; *Offences will come:* Their neceſſity is partly from the malice of Satan, partly from the wickedneſs and deceitfulneſs of mens own hearts and natures, God permitting thoſe to have their natural effects. 2. That ſcandalous and offenſive actions from ſuch as profeſs religion and the name of Chriſt, are baneful and fatal ſtumbling blocks to wicked and worldly men. 3. That the offence which wicked men take at the falls of the profeſſors of religion, to the hardening of themſelves in their wicked practices, is matter of juſt and great lamentation; *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences.*

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and caſt *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be caſt into everlaſting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be caſt into hell-fire.

This command of Chriſt is not to be underſtood literally, as if it were our duty to maim our bodily members; but the exhortation is, to cut off all occaſions that may betray us into ſin; and to mortify our darling and beloved luſts, though as dear to us as our right eye. *Learn*, 1. That ſin may be avoided: it is our duty to avoid whatever leads unto it, or may be the inſtrument or occaſion of it. 2. The beſt way to be kept from the outward acts of ſin, is to mortify our inward affection and love to ſin. If our love and affection to ſin be mortified, our bodily members may be preſerved, for they will no longer be weapons of ſin, but inſtruments of holineſs.

10 Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones: for I ſay unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. A cautionary direction given by Chriſt to the men of the world concerning his members, *Take heed that ye do not offend one of my little ones*; that is, that ye do not undervalue and neglect, much leſs injure and afflict them. 2. A reaſon aſſigned, *Becauſe their angels being conſtantly and immediately in the preſence of God*, are perpetually ready to execute his will, by revenging any wrongs and injuries done unto his friends and children. *Learn*, 1. What is the office and employment of the glorious angels; namely, to be the immediate attendants upon the royal perſon of the ſupreme King and Sovereign of the world. 2. In what eſteem good men are with God, and what a mighty regard he has for the meaneſt of his children, that he commits the care and preſervation of them to the holy angels, who are neareſt to him, and in higheſt favour and honour with him. It is St. Jerom's note upon this place, That great is the dignity of theſe little ones, ſeeing every one of them from his birth hath an angel delegated to preſerve him. But though others think that the opinion of a tutelary angel, or of one particular angel's having the cuſtody of one particular ſaint, as his continual charge, has not a ſufficient foundation in the holy ſcriptures; yet all the angels in heaven are miniſtering ſpirits unto them; and though they do not always attend upon their perſons (for they ſtand before the face of God) yet it is to receive his commands, either to help them in their exigencies, or puniſh thoſe that injure them.

11 For the Son of man is come to ſave that which was loſt. 12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred ſheep, and one of them be gone aſtray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and ſeeketh that which is gone aſtray? 13 And if ſo be that he find it, verily I ſay unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *ſheep* than of the ninety and nine which went not aſtray. 14 Even ſo it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh.

Here our Saviour continues his argument againſt giving offence to his children and members: he came into the world to redeem and ſave them; therefore none ought to ſcandalize and offend them. And to illuſtrate this, he compares himſelf to a good ſhepherd, who regards every one of his ſheep; and if any wander or go aſtray, he ſeeks to recover it with deſire and joy. *Learn*, 1. That the natural condition of mankind is like to that of wandering ſheep; they err and go aſtray from God, their chief good, and the object of their complete happineſs. 2. That it was the work and buſineſs, the care and concern of Jeſus Chriſt, to ſeek and recover loſt ſouls, as the ſhepherd does his loſt ſheep. 3. That the love and care of Chriſt towards his ſheep, in ſeeking to ſave and to preſerve them, is a forcible argument unto all not to ſcandalize and offend them, much leſs to perſecute and deſtroy them.

15 Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. 17 And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

In theſe words our Saviour gives us an excellent rule for the duty of fraternal correction, or brotherly admonition. Whence *note*, 1. That brotherly reproof and admonition is a duty incumbent upon church-members. 2. That it may be adminiſtered ſucceſsfully, it muſt be adminiſtered privately and prudently. 3. When private admonition prevails not, Chriſt has appointed church-governors to execute church-cenſures on the obſtinate and irreclaimable. 4. Perſons juſtly falling under the cenſures of the church, and rightly excommunicate, are to be looked upon as contumacious and ſtubborn offenders, and the members of the church ſhould ſhun their ſociety, and all converſation with them: *If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and as a publican was among the Jews*; wholly neglected, and not thought fit to be converſed with.

18 Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.

That is, whomſoever the officers of my church ſhall juſtly excommunicate upon earth, ſhall, without repentance, be ſhut out of heaven; and whoſoever, upon their true repentance, ſhall be abſolved on earth, ſhall be abſolved in heaven. *Learn*, That Chriſt will ratify in heaven, whatſoever the church aſſembled doth in his name upon earth; whether to the cenſuring of the guilty, or the abſolving of the penitent. This power of binding and looſing is by Chriſt committed to his church.

19 Again I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.

Here we have a gracious promiſe made by Chriſt of his preſence with all his members in general, and with his miniſters in ſpecial; whenever they meet *together in his name*, that is, by his authority, in obedience to his command, and with an eye to his glory. Whenever they celebrate any ſacred inſtitution of his, or execute any church-cenſures, he will be in the midſt of them, to quicken their prayers, to guide their counſels, to ratify their ſentence, to accept their endeavours. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt will be graciouſly preſent with and amongſt his people, whenever they aſſemble and meet together in his name, be it never ſo ſmall a number. 2. That Chriſt will in a ſpecial manner be preſent with the guides and officers of his church, to direct their cenſures, and to confirm the ſentence paſſed in his name, and pronounced by his authority, upon obſtinate offenders.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and ſaid, Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven times? 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times: but, Until ſeventy times ſeven.

Here St. Peter puts a queſtion to our Saviour, how often chriſtians ſhould forgive offences to their brethren, profeſſing repentance? Chriſt anſwers, that there ſhould be no end of our mutual forgiving one another, but we are to multiply our pardon as our brother manifeſts his repentance. Not that we are hereby obliged to take the frequent offender into our boſom, and to make him our intimate; but to lay aſide all malice, and all thoughts and deſires of revenge, and to ſtand ready to do him any office of love and friendſhip. *Learn*, 1. That to fall often into the ſame offence againſt our brother, is a great aggravation of our offence. 2. That as the multiplication of ſin is a great aggravation of ſin, ſo the multiplication of forgiveneſs is a great demonſtration of a godlike temper in us. He that multiplies ſin, doth, like Satan, ſin abundantly; and he that multiplies pardon, doth, like God, pardon abundantly.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his ſervants; 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thouſand talents. 25 But foraſmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be ſold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The ſervant therefore fell down and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the Lord of that ſervant was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the ſame ſervant went out, and found one of his fellow-ſervants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt. 29 And his fellow-ſervant fell down at his feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not; but went and caſt him into priſon, till he ſhould pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow-ſervants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: 33 Shouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.

Our bleſſed Saviour, to enforce the foregoing doctrine of mutual forgiveneſs, propounds a parable; the main ſcope of which is to ſhew, that unleſs we do actually forgive and paſs by injuries done to us, we cut ourſelves off from all intereſt in God's pardoning mercy, and muſt expect no forgiveneſs at the hands of God. From the whole, *note*, 1. That as we all ſtand in need of forgiveneſs from God, ſo likewiſe of forgiveneſs from one another. 2. That we all ſtand bound by the laws of our holy religion, to forbear and forgive one another. 3. That almighty God has made the forgiving one another, the certain and neceſſary condition of his forgiving us. 4. That ſuch as are inexorable towards their brethren, ſhall find almighty God hard to be intreated towards themſelves. We may expect the ſame rigour and ſeverity from God, which we ſhew to men. That the freeneſs of God's love in forgiving us, ought to be both an argument to excite us, to forgive one another, and alſo a rule to direct us in the manner of forgiving each other. Doth God forgive us when he has power in his hand to puniſh us? So muſt we when we have ability and opportunity for revenge. Doth God forgive univerſally all perſons? So muſt we all provocations. Doth he forgive freely and willingly, heartily and ſincerely? So muſt we; we muſt be as forward in forgiving, as they in provoking. *Learn* from the whole, The equity of unlimited forgiveneſs of our brother, becauſe our God and Saviour forgives us more numerous and heinous ſins than our brother is capable of commiting againſt us. Let all unmerciful and unchriſtian creditors remember this text, who caſt poor men into priſon for debt, who have nothing to pay: Surely he who bids us lend, *looking for nothing again*, will not allow us to *impriſon* where nothing can be hoped for. It is to be feared, ſuch will find but little mercy hereafter, who have ſhewed no mercy here! For if at the great day ſuch ſhall be condemned as did not viſit chriſtians in priſon, what will their condemnation be, who caſt them into priſon?

CHAP. XIX.

AND it came to paſs, *that* when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe ſayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coaſts of Judea beyond Jordan: 2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

The country of the Jews was divided into three provinces, namely, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. In Galilee, were ſituated the cities of Nazareth, Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum; in theſe places, our Saviour dwelt and ſpent a conſiderable part of his time, preaching to them, and working miracles among them. But now comes the time in which our holy Lord takes his leave of this province of Galilee, and returned no more to it: Wo to that people, whoſe unthankfulneſs for Chriſt's preſence and miniſtry amongſt them, cauſes him finally to forſake them. Having left Galilee, our holy Lord paſſes through Samaria, (the Samaritans being prejudiced againſt him, and refuſing to receive him) and comes into the coaſts of Judea, where multitudes of people flocked after him. But *obſerve*, the qualities of his followers, not the great ones of the world, not many mighty, not many noble; but the poor and deſpiſed multitude, the ſick and weak, the deaf and blind, the diſeaſed and diſtreſſed. Thence *note*, That none but ſuch as find their need of Chriſt, will ſeek after him, and come unto him. None will apply to him for help, till they feel themſelves helpleſs. *Great multitudes* of the ſick and diſeaſed came unto him, *and he healed them all*.

3 ¶ The Phariſees alſo came unto him, tempting him, and ſaying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe?

Note here, 1. That whereſoever our bleſſed Saviour went, the Phariſees followed him; not out of a ſincere intention, but with a deſign to inſnare him: And accordingly they propound a queſtion to him concerning divorce, Whether a man might put away his wife on any occaſion, as the manner of the Jews was! Concluding that they ſhould intrap him in his anſwer, whatever it was. If he denied the lawfulneſs of divorce, they would charge him with contradicting Moſes, who allowed it. If he affirmed it, then they would condemn him for contradicting his own doctrine, chap. v. for favouring mens luſts, and for complying with the wicked cuſtom of the Jews, who upon every ſlight and frivolous occaſion put away their wives from them. *Learn* thence, 1. That whereſoever our Lord went, as he had diſciples and ſincere followers, ſo the devil ſtirred him up bitter and malicious enemies, who ſought to render his perſon unacceptable, and his doctrine unſucceſsful. 2. That of all Chriſt's enemies, none had ſuch a bitter hatred and enmity againſt his perſon, miniſtry, and miracles, as the Phariſees. Men of great knowledge, who rebelled againſt the light of their own conſciences, and the clear convictions of their own mind. 3. That ſuch was the wiſdom of our Saviour in all his anſwers to his enemies, that neither their wit nor malice could lay hold upon any thing to inſnare him: but obſerve the piety and prudence of his anſwer to the Phariſees in the next words.

4 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read that he which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female? 5 And ſaid, For this *cauſe* ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife: and they twain ſhall be one fleſh. 6 Wherefore they are no more twain but one fleſh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder.

Obſerve here, Chriſt gives no direct anſwer to the Phariſees inſnaring queſtion, but refers them to the firſt inſtitution of marriage, when God made them one, to the intent that matrimonial love might be both incommunicable and indiſſoluble. Whence *learn*, 1. The ſacred inſtitution of marriage: it is an ordinance of God's own appointment, as the ground and foundation of all ſacred and civil ſociety. *What God has joined together.* 2. The antiquity of this inſtitution, it was from the beginning: *He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female.* Marriage is almoſt as old as the world, as old as nature; there was no ſooner one perſon, but God divided him into two; and no ſooner was there two, but he united them into one. 3. The intimacy and nearneſs of this endeared and endearing relation; the conjugal knot is tied ſo cloſe, that the bonds of matrimonial love are ſtronger than thoſe of nature: ſtricter is the tie betwixt huſband and wife, than that betwixt parent and children, according to God's own inſtitution. *For this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife.*

7 They ſay unto him, Why did Moſes then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He ſaid unto them, Moſes, becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, ſuffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not ſo. 9 And I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

Obſerve here, The Phariſees demand, and our Saviour's reply. They demand, *Why Moſes commanded to put away the wife by a bill of divorce?* Where *note*, The wicked abuſe which the Phariſees put upon Moſes, as if he had commanded them, whereas he only permitted to put them away. Moſes *ſuffered it for the hardneſs of their hearts*, that is, he did not puniſh it; not allowing it as good, but winking at it as a leſſer evil, becauſe the Jews were ſo barbarouſly cruel to their wives, as to turn them away upon every diſguſt. Now our Saviour in his reply, refers them again to the primitive inſtitution of marriage, bidding them compare the precept and their practice together; *for in the beginning it was not ſo.* *Learn*, That according to the word and will of God, nothing can violate the bonds of marriage, and juſtify a divorce between man and wife, but the defiling of the marriage-bed by adultery and uncleanneſs: This is the only caſe in which man and wife may lawfully part. *Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except for fornication, committeth adultery.*

10 His diſciples ſay unto him, If the caſe of the man be ſo with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

That is, if a man be ſo ſtrictly tied by marriage, it is beſt for him not to marry. A very raſh ſaying of the diſciples, diſcovering both their carnality, and alſo the tyranny of a ſinful practice, grown up into cuſtom. *Learn*, 1. That the beſt of men have their weakneſſes and infirmities; and the fleſh takes its turn to ſpeak as well as the Spirit in them. 2. How impatient nature is of reſtraint, and how deſirous of ſinful liberty, and to be freed from the ties and bonds which the holy and wiſe laws of God put upon it.

11 But he ſaid unto them, All *men* cannot receive this ſaying, ſave they to whom it is given. 12 For there are ſome eunuchs which were ſo born from *their* mother's womb: and there are ſome eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs which have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

As if our Lord had ſaid, "You, my diſciples, do not conſider what you ſay. All men, without ſinning againſt God, cannot abſtain from marriage, but thoſe only to whom God has given the gift of continency, and grace of chaſtity. Some indeed by nature, or natural impotency, are unfit for marriage. Others wickedly are made unfit by cruelty; others by religious mortification, bring under their bodies, that being free from the incumbrances that attend the marriage-ſtate, they may give up themſelves the better to the exerciſes of a holy life." *Learn*, 1. That Almighty God has given to divers perſons, different tempers and conſtitutions: ſome can ſubdue their impure deſires and affections, without the remedy of marriage, others cannot. 2. That continency, or an ability to live chaſtely, without the uſe of marriage, is the ſpecial gift of God: not common to all, but beſtowed only upon ſome. A gift it is, worthy of our fervent prayers, worthy of our beſt endeavours. 3. That a vow of chaſtity is not in our power; to quench a natural affection, requires a ſupernatural gift. *All have not received it:* that is, all men cannot live ſingle, and abſtain from matrimony. From whence it follows, that men and women are not by monaſtical vows, to be obliged to live a ſingle life, which ſome cannot perform without ſin. *Note* farther, When Chriſt ſays, that ſome *have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake*: the meaning is, that ſome have abſtained from matrimony, that they might be more expedite in preaching the goſpel, if miniſters; or more prompt, fit, and ready to regard only the things of the Lord, if private chriſtians.

13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the diſciples rebuked them. 14 But Jeſus ſaid, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

Note here, A ſolemn action performed. Children are brought to Chriſt to be bleſt by him. Where *note*, 1. The perſons brought, children, young children, ſucking children, as the word imports: St. Luke xviii. 15. *They brought them in their arms*, not led them by the hand. 2. The perſon they are brought unto, Jeſus Chriſt; but for what end? Not to baptize them, but to bleſs them: the parents looking upon Chriſt as a prophet, a great prophet, *the* great Prophet, do bring their infants to him, that they may receive the benefit of his bleſſings and prayers. *Learn*, 1. That infants are ſubjects capable of benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt office that parents can perform unto their children, to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made partakers of that benefit. 3. If infants be capable of benefit by Chriſt; if capable of his bleſſing on earth, and preſence in heaven; if they be ſubjects of his kingdom of grace, and heirs of his kingdom of glory, then they may be baptized: for they that are in covenant have a right to the ſeal of the covenant. If Chriſt denies not infants the kingdom of heaven, which is the greater, what reaſon have his miniſters to deny them baptiſm, which is the leſs? But ſay ſome, Chriſt did neither baptize them, nor commanded his diſciples ſo to do? That is not to be wondered at, if we conſider that they had already entered into covenant with God by circumciſion; and Chriſtian baptiſm was not yet inſtituted: John's baptiſm was was the baptiſm of repentance, of which infants were incapable.

16 ¶ And behold, one came and ſaid unto him, Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Obſerve here, A perſon addreſſing himſelf to Chriſt, and propounding a great and important queſtion to him; viz. What he ſhould do to gain eternal life? Where *note*, 1. He believes the certainty of a future ſtate. 2. He profeſſes his deſire of an eternal happineſs in that ſtate. And, 3. He declares his readineſs to do ſome good thing, that he may obtain that happineſs. *Learn*, That the light of nature, or natural religion, directs and teaches men, that good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, or that ſome good things muſt be done by men that at death expect eternal life. *What good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life?* It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, and living well, that entitles us to eternal life.

17 And he ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is* God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

The perſon thus addreſſing himſelf unto Chriſt, was either a Phariſee, or a diſciple of the Phariſees, who did not own Chriſt to be God, or to come from God; but taught, that eternal life was attainable, by fulfilling of the law in that imperfect ſenſe which the Phariſees gave of it. And accordingly, 1. Chriſt reproves him for calling him good; *Why calleſt thou me good?* When thou wilt neither own me to be God, nor to come from God; *For there is none good*, that is, eſſentially and originally good, *but God only*: Nor any derivatively good, but he that receives his goodneſs from God alſo. From this place the Socinians argue againſt the divinity of Chriſt; thus, "He to whom the title of *good* doth not belong, cannot be God moſt high. But by our Lord's words, this title belongs not to him, but only to God the Father; therefore God the Father muſt be God alone." Chriſt may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to this young man thus, "Thou giveſt me a title which was never given to the moſt renowned Rabbins, and which agrees to God alone; now thou oughteſt to believe that there is ſomething in me more than human, if thou conceiveſt that this title of good doth belong to me." 2. That our Saviour might convince him of the error of the Phariſees, who believed that they might, without the knowledge of him, the true Meſſias, enter into life, by keeping the law of God according to that lax and looſe interpretation which they, the Phariſees, had given of it; he bids him, *Keep the Commandments*. Where *note*, Chriſt calls him off from outward ceremonies, which the Phariſees abounded in, to the practiſe of moral duties; yet withal lets him underſtand, that if he expected ſalvation by the moral law, he muſt keep it perfectly and exactly, without the leaſt deficiency, which is an impoſſibility to man in his lapſed ſtate. *Learn*, 1. That ſuch as ſeek juſtification and ſalvation by the works of the law only, muſt keep the whole law, or covenant of works, perfectly and exactly. 2. That the beſt way to prepare men for Jeſus Chriſt, is to let them ſee their own impotency to keep and fulfill the covenant of works.

18 He ſaith unto him, Which? Jeſus ſaid, Thou ſhalt do no murder, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear

falſe witneſs. 19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 20 The young man ſaith unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: What lack I yet?

Obſerve here, That the duties which our Saviour inſtances in, are the duties of the ſecond table, which hypocrites are moſt failing in; but the ſincere practice of our duty to our neighbour, is a ſingular evidence of our love to God. Theſe duties of the ſecond table, the young man ſays, he had kept from his youth, and perhaps might ſay it truly according to the Phariſees interpretation, which condemned only the groſs outward act, not inward luſt and motion of the heart. *Learn* hence, How apt men are to think well of themſelves, and have too high an opinion of their own goodneſs and righteouſneſs before God.

21 Jeſus ſaid unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go *and* ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

That is, Thou haſt been all thy days a Phariſee; if thou now wilt be a chriſtian, thou muſt maintain a readineſs and diſpoſition of mind to part with all that thou haſt in this world, at my call and at my command, and follow after me. *Learn*, That ſuch as enter themſelves diſciples of Chriſt, muſt be ready at his call, to part with all for his ſake that they have in this world. 2. All that profeſs themſelves to be Chriſt's diſciples, muſt be his followers; that is, that they muſt obey his doctrine, and imitate his example, his holineſs, his humility, his heavenly-mindedneſs, his patience, his meekneſs, his readineſs to forgive injuries, *and the ſame mind muſt be in us, which was in Chriſt Jeſus.*

22 But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions.

This parting with all for Chriſt ſeemed ſo hard a condition to the young man, that he went away ſorrowful from Chriſt. Whence *learn*, 1. That a man wedded to the world will renounce Chriſt rather than the world, when both ſtand in competition. 2. That unregenerate and carnal men are exceeding ſorrowful, and ſadly concerned, that they cannot have heaven upon their own terms, and win it in their own way.

23 ¶ Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Our bleſſed Saviour takes occaſion from what had paſt, to diſcourſe with his diſciples concerning the danger of riches, and the difficulties that attend rich men in their way to ſalvation. *A rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of God.* Whence *note*, 1. That rich men do certainly meet with more difficulties in their way to heaven, than other men. It is difficult to withdraw their affections from riches, to place their ſupreme love upon God, in the midſt of their abundance. It is difficult to depend upon God in a rich condition. *The poor committeth himſelf to God, but the rich man's wealth is his ſtrong tower.*— 2. That yet the fault lies not in riches, but in rich men; who, by placing their truſt, and putting their confidence in riches, do render themſelves incapable of the kingdom of God.

24 And again I ſay unto you, It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Theſe words were a proverbial ſpeech among the Jews, to ſignify a thing of great difficulty, next to an impoſſibility: and they import thus much: "That it is not only a very great difficulty, but an impoſſibility, for ſuch as abound in worldly wealth to be ſaved, without an extraordinary grace and aſſiſtance from God. It is hard for a rich man to become happy, even by God, becauſe he thinks himſelf happy *without God.*"

25 When his diſciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved?

The diſciples underſtanding how naturally and ſtrongly men love the world, and how idolatrouſly and inordinately their hearts run out upon it; they ſay unto Chriſt, *Lord, who then can be ſaved? Learn*, 1. That when the general difficulties which lie in the way to ſalvation, are laid forth and ſufficiently underſtood, we may juſtly wonder that any are, or ſhall be ſaved. 2. That ſuch are the ſpecial and peculiar difficulties in the rich man's way to heaven; that his ſalvation is matter of wonder and great admiration to the diſciples of Chriſt. *When the diſciples heard this, they were exceedingly amazed*, &c.

26 But Jeſus beheld *them*, and ſaid unto them, With men this is impoſſible; but with God all things are poſſible.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Were all men left to themſelves, no man, either rich or poor, would be ſaved; but God can bring men to heaven by the mighty power of his grace; he can make the rich in eſtate, poor in ſpirit; and them that are poor in this world, rich in grace." *Learn*, 1. That it is impoſſible for any man, rich or poor, by his own natural ſtrength to get to heaven. 2. That when we are diſcouraged with a ſenſe of our own impotency, we ſhould conſider the power of God, and act our faith upon it: *With God all things are poſſible.*

27 ¶ Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Behold, we have forſaken all, and followed thee: what ſhall we have therefore? 28 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Iſrael.

The apoſtles having heard our Saviour's command to the young man, to ſell all and give to the poor, St. Peter, in the name of the reſt, tells Chriſt that they had left all, and followed him; *Behold, we have left all.* Where *note,* How Peter magnifies that little which he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it in with a note of obſervation and admiration alſo, *Behold! we have forſaken all, what ſhall we have then?* *Learn* thence, That although it be a very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and leſs that we have to forſake upon his account, yet we are apt to magnify and extol it, as if it were ſome great matter. *Lord, we have forſaken all.* What all? His fiſher-boat, and nets; ſcarce worthy to be mentioned: yet how is it magnified! *Behold,* &c. But obſerve our Lord's kind and gracious anſwer; "You that have left all to follow me, ſhall be no loſers by me: for in the *regeneration,* that is, at the reſurrection, when believers ſhall be renewed, both in ſoul and body, and ſhall enjoy my kingdom, then, as I ſit upon the throne of my glory, ſo ſhall you ſit with me in a higher degree of dignity and honour, *judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael;* that is, the Jews firſt, for their unbelief, and then all other deſpiſers of goſpel grace and mercy." *Learn,* 1. That ſuch miniſters as do moſt ſervice for Chriſt, and forſake moſt to follow him, ſhall in his kingdom partake of moſt honour and dignity with him and from him. 2. That as the miniſters of Chriſt in general, ſo his twelve apoſtles in particular, ſhall ſit nearer the throne of Chriſt, and have an higher place in glory at the great day, than ordinary believers.

29 And every one that hath forſaken houſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's ſake, ſhall receive an hundred-fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.

The foregoing promiſe, ver. 28, reſpected the apoſtles; this, all chriſtians, who forſake their deareſt enjoyments for Chriſt: he aſſures them, that they ſhall be recompenſed in this life an hundred-fold: How? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter:* not *in ſpecie,* but *in valore;* not in *kind,* but in *equivalence;* not an hundred brethren, or ſiſters, or lands, but, *firſt,* He ſhall have that in God, which all creatures would not be to him, if they were multiplied an hundred times. *Secondly,* The gifts and graces, the comforts and conſolations of the Holy Spirit, ſhall be an hundred-fold better portion, than any thing we can part with for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel here. Though we may loſers *for* him, yet ſhall we never be loſers *by* him. Chriſt gives preſent recompenſes as well as future rewards; inſomuch that they who have ſuffered and loſt moſt for Chriſt, have never complained of their ſufferings or loſſes. Therefore never be afraid to loſe any thing for Chriſt, he will not only ſee you indemnified, but plentifully rewarded; in this world, an hundred-fold, in that to come, eternal life.

30 But many *that are* firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt *ſhall be* firſt.

A two-fold ſenſe and interpretation is given of theſe words: the *firſt* reſpects the Jews and Gentiles in general; the *ſecond,* all profeſſors of chriſtianity in particular. "The Jews (as if Chriſt had ſaid) look upon themſelves as firſt, and neareſt to the kingdom of heaven, but for their infidelity, they ſhall be laſt in it; that is, never ſhall come there. And the Gentiles, who were looked upon as dogs, and fartheſt from heaven, ſhall be firſt there, upon their converſion to me, and faith in me." As the words reſpect all profeſſors, the ſenſe is, "Many that are firſt in their own eſteem, and in the opinion of others, and forward in a profeſſion of religion, yet at the day of judgment they will be laſt, and leaſt in mine and my Father's eſtimation and account. And many that were little in their own, and leſs in the eſteem of others, who had leſs name and vogue in the world, ſhall yet be firſt and higheſt in my favour." *Learn* hence, That the day of judgment will fruſtrate a great many perſons expectations, both as touching others, and concerning themſelves. Many will miſs of heaven, and be laſt, who looked upon themſelves to be firſt. And many will find others in heaven, whom they leaſt expected there. *The Lord judgeth not as man judgeth.* We judge of man by outward appearances, *but we are ſure the judgment of God is according to truth.* He can neither be deceived, nor yet deceive.

CHAP. XX.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard. 3. And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market-place, 4 And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard; and whatſoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again he went out about the ſixth and ninth hour, and did likewiſe. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? 7 They ſay unto him, Becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard; and whatſoever is right, *that* ſhall ye receive.

A twofold ſenſe and interpretation is given of this parable; but both analogical. One of which relates to the calling of the Gentiles. The Jews were the firſt people that God had in the world; they were hired into the vineyard betimes in the morning, the Gentiles not till the day was far ſpent: yet ſhall the Gentiles, by the favour and bounty of God, receive the ſame reward of eternal life, which was promiſed to the Jews who bare the heat of the day, while the Gentiles ſtood idle. In the other analogical ſenſe we may underſtand all perſons indefinitely called by the goſpel into the viſible church, thoſe that are called laſt, ſhall be rewarded together with the firſt; and accordingly the deſign and ſcope of this parable is, to ſhew the freeneſs of divine grace in the diſtribution of thoſe rewards which the hand of mercy confers upon God's faithful ſervants. The *vineyard* is the church of God, the *huſbandman* is God himſelf: The *labourers* are particular perſons. God's going at divers times into his vineyard, imports the ſeveral ages of man's life; ſome are called early in the morning, ſome at noon, others at night. Now when God comes to diſpenſe his rewards, thoſe that entered firſt into the vineyard, and did moſt ſervice for God, ſhall be plentifully rewarded by him; and ſuch as came in later, but did faithful ſervice, ſhall not miſs of a merciful reward. *Learn*, 1. That ſo long as a perſon keeps out of Chriſt's vineyard and ſervice, he is *idle.* Every unregenerate man is an idle man. 2. That perſons are called by the preaching of the goſpel at ſeveral ages and periods of life into God's vineyard; that is, into the communion of the viſible church. 3. That ſuch as do come in, though late, into God's vineyard, and work diligently and faithfully, ſhall not miſs of a reward of grace at the hand of free mercy.

8 So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his ſteward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt. 9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more; and they likewiſe received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured againſt the good-man of the houſe, 12 Saying, Theſe laſt have wrought *but* one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he anſwered one of them, and ſaid, Friend, I do thee no wrong: Didſt thou not agree with me for a penny? 14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this laſt even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil becauſe I am good? 16 So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for many be called, but few choſen.

Here *note*, 1. That the time of God's full rewarding of his labourers, is the evening of their days; that is, when their work is done. *When the evening was come, the Lord of the vineyard called his labourers, and gave them their hire*; not but that they have part of their reward in hand, but it is chiefly laid up in hope. 2. That though God makes no difference in his ſervants wages for the time of their work, yet he will make a difference for the degrees of their ſervice. Undoubtedly they that have done moſt work, ſhall receive moſt wages. *He that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully; God will reward every man according to his works:* That is, not only according to the nature and quality, but the meaſure and degree of his works. All ſhall have equity, but all ſhall not have equal bounty. 3. That all inequality in the diſtribution of rewards, doth not make God an unjuſt accepter of perſons; he may diſpenſe both grace and glory, in what meaſure and degree he pleaſes, without the leaſt ſhadow of unrighteouſneſs, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* 4. When we have done much ſervice for God, by labouring longer than others in his vineyard, it is our duty to have a low eſteem both of our ſervices and of ourſelves, *for the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*; That is, they that are firſt and higheſt in their own eſteem, ſhall be the laſt and leaſt on God's account.

17 ¶ And Jeſus going up to Jeruſalem, took the twelve diſciples apart in the way, and ſaid unto them, 18 Behold we go up to Jeruſalem; and the Son of man ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts and unto the ſcribes, and they ſhall condemn him to death, 19 And ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to ſcourge and to crucify *him:* and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

This is now the third time that Chriſt had acquainted his diſciples very lately with his approaching ſufferings, and bloody paſſion. He did it twice before, chap. xvi. and chap. xvii. yet now he mentions it again, that they might not be diſmayed, and their faith might not be ſhaken to ſee him die, who called himſelf the true Meſſias, and the Son of God. The firſt time he told his diſciples of his death in general; the ſecond time he declares the means, by treaſon; now he tells them the manner, by crucifying; that he ſhould be ſcourged, mocked, ſpit upon, and crucified: All this he did, to prevent his diſciples dejection at his ſufferings. *Learn* thence, that it is highly neceſſary that the doctrine of the croſs be often preached to us; that ſo being armed with expectation of ſufferings before they come, we may be the leſs diſmayed and diſheartened when they come. Our Lord's frequent forewarning his diſciples of his death and ſufferings was to fore-arm them with expectation of *his* ſufferings, and with preparation for their *own*.

20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her ſons, worſhipping *him*, and deſiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he ſaid unto her, What wilt thou? She ſaid unto him, Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom.

To ſit on the right hand, and on the left, is to have the moſt eminent places of dignity and honour after Chriſt. This the mother might be encouraged to aſk for James and John, becauſe of their alliance to Chriſt, and becauſe Chriſt had admitted them with Peter to be with him at his transfiguration. However, the reſt of the diſciples hearing of this ambitious requeſt of the two brethren, and being as deſirous, and in their own opinion as deſerving, of the ſame honour, they had indignation againſt them. Whence *note*, That none of the diſciples did imagine that Chriſt had promiſed the ſupremacy to Peter, by theſe words, *Tu es Petrus*, thou art Peter; for then neither James nor John had deſired it, nor would the reſt have contended for it. *Obſerve* here, 1. The perſons making this requeſt to Chriſt, Zebedee's children; that is, James and John, by the mouth of their mother. They ſpake by her lips, and made uſe of her tongue to uſher in a requeſt which they were aſhamed to make themſelves. 2. The requeſt itſelf, *Grant that theſe two may ſit, the one on thy right, the other on thy left hand.* Where *note*, How theſe diſciples did ſtill dream of Chriſt's temporal kingdom (although he had ſo often told them, *That his kingdom was not of this world,*) and ambitiouſly ſeek to have the preference and pre-eminence in that kingdom. See here how theſe poor fiſhermen had already learned craftily to fiſh for preferment. Who can wonder to ſee ſome ſparks of ambition and worldly deſires in the holieſt miniſters of Chriſt, when the apoſtles themſelves were not free from aſpiring thoughts, even when they lay in the boſom of their Saviour! Ambition has all along infeſted churchmen, and troubled the church, even from the very firſt original and foundation of it. 3. Both the unſeaſonableneſs and unreaſonableneſs of this requeſt made by the diſciples. Chriſt ſpeaks of his ſufferings to them, and they ſue for dignity and great places from him, *in optimis non nihil eſt peſſimi:* the holieſt, the wiſeſt, and beſt of men, in their imperfect ſtate, are not wholly free from paſſionate infirmities. Who would have expected, that when our Saviour had been preaching the doctrine of the croſs to his diſciples, telling them that he muſt be mocked, ſcourged, ſpit upon, and crucified for them, that they ſhould be ſeeking and ſuing to him for ſecular dignity and honour, pre-eminence and power! But we plainly ſee the beſt of men are but men, and that none are in a ſtate of perfection on this ſide heaven.

22 But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye aſk: Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? they ſay unto him, We are able.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "You do but abuſe yourſelves with fond and idle dreams; there is other work cut out for you in the purpoſe of God, than ſitting upon thrones and tribunals: To think of ſuffering, would do you more ſervice." And accordingly our Saviour in his anſwer tells theſe diſciples, 1. That they were greatly ignorant of the nature and quality of his kingdom, which was not ſecular, but heavenly; but the carnal notion of a glorious earthly kingdom upon earth, in which they ſhould be delivered from the Roman power, was ſo deeply imprinted in their minds, that they frequently declared their expectation of it, notwithſtanding all the aſſurances which Chriſt had given them of the contrary. 2. The courſe which our Saviour takes to cool the ambition of his diſciples; he tells them, they muſt expect here, not crowns on their heads, but a croſs on their backs; they muſt firſt taſte of his ſufferings, before they talk of his glory, and patiently ſuffer for him, before they expect to reign with him; plainly intimating, that the croſs is the way to the crown, ſuffering the way to reigning, and that thoſe that ſuffer moſt for Chriſt, ſhall partake of higheſt dignity and glory from him. 3. The preſumptuous confidence which the diſciples had of their own ſtrength and ability for ſufferings. *Are ye able*, ſays Chriſt, *to drink of my cup?* They reply, *We are able.* Alas, poor diſciples! when it came to the trial, they all cowardly forſook him and fled. A bold preſumption makes us vaunt of our own ability; holy jealouſy makes us diſtruſtful of our own ſtrength. Thoſe that are leaſt acquainted with the croſs, are uſually the moſt confident undertakers.

23 And he ſaith unto them, Ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with: but to ſit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but *it ſhall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Note here, Our bleſſed Saviour's wonderful mildneſs and gentleneſs towards his diſciples; he doth not with paſſion, much leſs with indignation, reprehend them, either for their ambition or preſumption, but makes the beſt of their anſwer, and encourages their good intentions; he tells them, they ſhould have the honour to ſhare with him in his ſufferings, to pledge him in his own cup, and after a conformity to him in his ſufferings, they might expect to be ſharers with him in his glory. Yet *obſerve*, That when Chriſt ſays, *That to ſit at his right hand was not his to give*, he means, as he was man, or as he was Mediator; for elſewhere as God, we find him aſſerting his power to diſpoſe of the kingdom of heaven, *John* x. 28. *I give unto them eternal life.* However the Arians of old, and Socinians of late, do from this text infer, That God the Father has a power reſerved to himſelf, which he hath not committed to Chriſt his Son; from whence they would conclude, that he is not the ſame God which the Father is, becauſe he hath not the ſame power which the Father has. *Anſwer*, But if Chriſt be here ſuppoſed to deny this power to himſelf, he muſt then manifeſtly contradict himſelf, when he ſays, *I appoint unto you a kingdom*; and, *All power in heaven and earth is given to me.* When Chriſt therefore ſaith, he could only give this to them for whom it was appointed of his Father; this doth not ſignify any defect in his power, but a perfect conformity to his Father's will, and that he could not do this, unleſs the divine eſſence and nature abided in him. This the words rather ſhew, than that there is any want of power in Chriſt.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation againſt the two brethren. 25 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe authority upon them. 26 But it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your miniſter; 27 And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant.

Note here, 1. That Chriſt, by theſe words, doth not forbid the exerciſe of civil dominion, and lawful magiſtracy, for then all order, all defence of good men, and puniſhment of evil-doers, would be taken away. Magiſtracy is God's ordinance, and the magiſtrate is God's miniſter for the good of human ſociety, and conſequently not here cenſured or condemned by Chriſt. True, when Chriſt was here on earth, he refuſed to execute the magiſtrate's office, becauſe his kingdom was not of this world, and becauſe he would give no umbrage to Cæſar, or the Jews; and becauſe he would leave us an example of humility and contempt of wordly grandeur, and not becauſe the office of civil magiſtracy was unlawful. 2. That Chriſt, by this text, doth not condemn the exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical government, that being as neceſſary in the church, as the former in the ſtate. The welfare of the church neceſſarily depends on the exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. 3. Chriſt here forbids only the exerciſe of that dominion which is attended with tyranny and oppreſſion, and is managed according to mens wills and luſts: Now, ſays Chriſt, you ſhall have no ſuch government, you ſhall command nothing for mere will and pleaſure, but your whole office ſhall conſiſt in being miniſters to the good of others; and herein ye ſhall reſemble *me the Son of man, who came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter.* And accordingly, that Chriſt might effectually quench thoſe unhappy ſparks of ambition which were kindled in his apoſtles minds, he tells them, that ſupremacy and dominion belong to ſecular princes, not to evangelical paſtors, who ought to carry themſelves with humility towards one another; not that Chriſt directs to a parity and equality amongſt all his miniſters, and forbids the pre-eminence of ſome over others; but the affectation of ſuperiority, and the love of pre-eminency, is that which our Saviour diſallows. *Learn,* 1. That ſo far ought the miniſters of Chriſt to be from affecting a domination and ſuperiority of power over their fellow-brethren, that in imitation of Chriſt, their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves fellow-ſervants, *I am amongſt you,* ſaith Chriſt, *as one that ſerveth.* 2. That ſuch miniſters as do love and affect pre-eminency and ſuperiority, are moſt unfit for it; and they deſerve it beſt, who ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the dignity and honour which the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly and only affect, is in another world; and the way to be greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble here, mean in our own eyes, and little in our own eſteem. *Whoſoever will be chief,* ſays Chriſt, *let him be your ſervant.*

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

To encourage his diſciples to the forementioned condeſcending humility one towards another, our Saviour propounds to them his own inſtructive example, *I came not to be miniſtered unto,* ſays Chriſt, *but to miniſter* to the wants and neceſſities of others, both for ſoul and body. "O what a ſight will it be (as if our Lord had ſaid) to behold an humble God, and a proud creature; an humble Saviour, and an haughty ſinner!" Yea, our Lord urges his example farther, that as he laid down his life for us, ſo ſhould we be ready to lay down our lives for one another. Did Chriſt lay down his life for us, and ſhall we not lay down a luſt for him? our pride, our ambition, our affectation of dignity and ſuperiority over others. *Note* here two things, 1. Whereas it is ſaid, that Chriſt gave his life a ranſom for many; it is elſewhere affirmed, that he taſted death for every man, even for them that *denied the Lord who bought them.* The word *many,* in other places of ſcripture, is not excluſive of ſome, but incluſive of all. Thus, Dan. xii. 2. *Many that ſleep in the duſt ſhall ariſe;* anſwers St. John v. 28, 29. *All that ſleep in the grave ſhall hear his voice.* Thus Rom. v. 15. *Through the offence of one many died;* anſwers 1 Cor. xv. 22. *In Adam all died.* There is a virtual ſufficiency in the death of Chriſt for the ſalvation of mankind, and an actual efficacy for the ſalvation of them that repent, and believe, and obey the goſpel. 2. From theſe words, *He gave his life a ranſom;* That Chriſt ſuffered in our ſtead, and died in our place, and gave his life inſtead of ours. It was the conſtant opinion both of the Jews and Gentiles, that their piacular victims were ranſoms for the life of the offender, and that he who gave his life for another, ſuffered in his ſtead to preſerve him from death. And who can reaſonably ſuppoſe, but that our Lord intended by ſaying, he gave himſelf a ranſom, that he gave his life inſtead of the lives of thoſe for whom he ſuffered? Vain are the Socinians, when they ſay this price was to be paid to Satan, becauſe he detained us captive. True; the price is to be paid to him that detains the captive, when he doth this for gain to make money of him, as the Turks detain the Chriſtians captive at Algiers; but when a man is detained in cuſtody for a violation of a law, then it is not the goaler, but the legiſlator, to whom the price of redemption muſt be paid, or ſatisfaction be made. Accordingly, this price was paid to God; for Chriſt became our ranſom, as he offered up his life and blood for us: Now he offered himſelf without ſpot to God, Heb. ix. 14. he therefore paid the price of our redemption to God.

29 ¶ And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. 30 And behold two blind men ſitting by the way-*ſide,* when they heard that Jeſus paſſed by, cried out, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, becauſe they ſhall hold their peace: but they cried the more, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David. 32 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, What will ye that I ſhall do unto you? 33 They ſay unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jeſus had compaſſion *on them,* and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received ſight, and they followed him.

This chapter concludes with a famous miracle, wrought by Chriſt upon two blind men in the ſight of a great multitude which followed him. Where *obſerve,* 1. The blind mens faith, in acknowledging Jeſus the true Meſſias, for ſo much the title of *the Son of David* ſignifies. 2. Their fervency, in crying ſo earneſtly to Chriſt for mercy and healing; *Have mercy upon us thou Son of David.* A true ſenſe of want will make us cry unto Chriſt for help earneſtly, and with undeniable importunity. 3. The great condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards theſe poor blind men: *He ſtood ſtill, he called them, he had compaſſion on them, he touched their eyes, and healed them.* A mighty inſtance of Chriſt's divine power. He that can open blind eyes with a touch of his finger, and by his own power, is really God, his touch is an omnipotent touch. 4. Although Chriſt well knew the condition of theſe blind men, yet before he will reſtore them to ſight, they muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of ſight, and cry unto him for mercy and healing. *Learn* hence, That although Chriſt perfectly knows all our wants, yet he takes no notice of them till we make them known to him by prayer. 5. The beſt way and courſe which the blind men take to expreſs their thankfulneſs to Chriſt for recovered ſight, *they followed him. Learn* thence, That mercy from Chriſt is then rightly improved, when it engages us to follow Chriſt. This ſhould be the effect of all ſalvation wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt, that ſerveth and obeyeth him moſt; the life of thankfulneſs conſiſts in the thankfulneſs of the life.

CHAP. XXI.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jeruſalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then ſent Jeſus two diſciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over-againſt you, and ſtraightway ye ſhall find an aſs tied, and a colt with her: looſe *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3. And if any man ſay ought unto you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord hath need of them; and ſtraightway he will ſend them.

The former part of this chapter gives us an account of our Saviour's ſolemn and triumphant riding into the city of Jeruſalem. Where *obſerve*, That in all our Saviour's journeys and travels from place to place, he conſtantly went like a poor man *on foot*, without noiſe, and without train; now he goes up to Jeruſalem to die for ſinners; he *rides*, to ſhew his great cheerfulneſs in that ſervice, and his forwardneſs to lay down his life for us. But what doth he ride upon? *An aſs*, according to the manner of great perſons among the Jews; but eſpecially to fulfil the prophecy, Zech. ix. 9. that the Meſſias, a King of the Jews, *ſhould come riding upon an aſs.* But this *aſs was a colt*, *the foal of an aſs*, *on which man had never rode before*, ſays St. Mark, xi. 11. ſignifying thereby, that the moſt unruly and untamed creatures become obedient and obſequious to him: and upon a *borrowed aſs*, the uſe of which he demands, thereby manifeſting his ſovereign right to all the creatures; and accordingly, he bids his diſciples tell the owner of the aſs, *That the Lord hath need of him*; not *our* Lord, but *the* Lord, that is, he that is the Lord of all, *whoſe are the cattle upon a thouſand hills*; he that is Lord of all the beaſts, and the owners too. Farther, That notwithſtanding Chriſt's ſupreme right to the aſs and the colt, he will have neither taken without the owner's knowledge, or againſt his will; but the diſciples muſt acquaint him with it, and by a double argument move him to it. 1. Chriſt's right of dominion and ſovereignity over them; he is *the Lord* that ſends for them. 2. His preſent occaſion for them; the Lord has *need of them. Note* alſo here, a wonderful inſtance of Chriſt's preſcience or foreknowledge, even in the moſt minute and ſmalleſt matters. 1. *You ſhall find a colt.* 2. *On which no man ever ſat.* 3. *A colt tied and bound with its dam.* 4. *In the place where two ways met.* 5. *As they entered the village.* 6. *That the owners ſhould be willing to let him go.* Such an exact knowledge had Chriſt of perſons and actions, even of the circumſtances of actions.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt the foal of an aſs.

Here the reaſon is aſſigned why Chriſt rode upon the aſs into Jeruſalem; it was to fulfil an ancient prophecy, that the Meſſias, or King of the Jews, ſhould come riding upon that beaſt into Jeruſalem. There was not any prophecy of Chriſt more plainly fulfilled than this. The prophecy alluded to, is Zech. ix. 9. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is juſt, and having ſalvation; lowly, and riding upon an aſs; and upon a colt, the foal of an aſs.* Where *note*, The character given of the Meſſias; he is the ſupreme King and governor of his church, *thy King cometh.* The errand that he comes upon, *bringing ſalvation:* and the entertainment which his church was to give him; namely, to receive him with triumphs of joy, and univerſal acclamations.

6 And the diſciples went, and did as Jeſus commanded them. 7 And brought the aſs, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they ſet *him* thereon. 8 And a very great multitude ſpread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and ſtrawed *them* in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David: Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hoſanna in the higheſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The obedience of his diſciples, and the motions of the multitude; the diſciples never diſpute their Lord's commands, nor raiſe objections, nor are afraid of dangers, but ſpeedily execute their Lord's pleaſure, and find every thing according to their Lord's predictions. When our call is clear, our obedience muſt be ſpeedy. What God commands, we are not to diſpute, but to obey. *The diſciples did as Jeſus commanded.* 2. The actions of the multitude in acknowledging Chriſt to be their king: *they caſt their garments on the ground* for him to ride upon, according to the cuſtom of princes when they ride in ſtate; and they do not only diſrobe their backs, but expend their breath in joyful acclamations and loud hoſannas, wiſhing all manner of proſperity to this meek but mighty king.—In this princely, yet poor and deſpicable pomp, doth our Saviour enter into that famous city of Jeruſalem. O how far was our holy Lord from affecting worldly greatneſs and grandeur! He deſpiſed that glory which worldly hearts fondly admire; yet, becauſe he was a king, he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his kingdom confeſſed, applauded,

plauded, and bleſt; but that it might appear, *his kingdom was not of this world*, he abandons all worldly magnificence. O glorious, yet homely pomp! O meek but mighty prince!

10 And when he was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, ſaying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

This is not the firſt or only time that Jeruſalem was moved and troubled at the appearance of Chriſt; at his birth, Matt. ii. we read all Jeruſalem *was troubled*, together with Herod; and now that he rides into Jeruſalem, though in ſo mean a manner, yet there is a new commotion. Jeruſalem, inſtead of being thankful for his company, is troubled at his preſence. Thence *learn*, That ſuch perſons and places as have the greateſt helps and privileges afforded to them, are not always the moſt anſwerable in their returns of thankfulneſs. It is not Chriſt's preſence with us, but his welcome to us, that makes us happy.—*Chriſt is daily taught in our ſynagogues, and preached in our ſtreets*; yet, alas! multitudes are ignorant of him, and ſay with the men of Jeruſalem, when Chriſt was before their eyes, *Who is this?*

12 ¶ And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt out all them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves. 13 And ſaid unto them, It is written, My houſe ſhall be called the houſe of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Our bleſſed Saviour having entered Jeruſalem, *obſerve*, his firſt walk was not to the palace, but to the temple, and his work there was to purge and reform: all reformation of manners muſt begin firſt at the houſe of God. Our Lord's buſineſs was to reform the temple, not to ruin it. Places dedicated to the ſervice of God, if profaned and polluted, ought to be purged from their abuſes, not pulled down and deſtroyed, becauſe they have been abuſed. But what was the profanation of the temple which ſo offended our Saviour? Within the third or outward court of the temple, there was a public mart or market held, where were ſold oxen, ſheep, and doves, and ſuch things as were needful for ſacrifice: many of the Jews coming an hundred miles to the temple, it was burdenſome to bring their ſacrifices ſo far with them; wherefore order was taken by the prieſts, that ſheep and oxen, meal and oil, and all other requiſites for ſacrifice, ſhould be had for money cloſe by the altars to the great eaſe of the offerer. Nothing could be more plauſible than this plea. But the faireſt pretences cannot bear out a ſin with God; therefore our bleſſed Saviour, in indignation at ſo foul an abuſe, whips out theſe chapmen, caſts down their tables, and vindicates the honour and reputation of his Father's houſe. *Learn* thence, That there is a reverence due to God's houſe for the owner's ſake, and for the ſervice ſake. Nothing but holineſs can become that place, where God is worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The reaſon which our Saviour gives for this act of his; for, ſays he, *It is written, My houſe ſhall be called an houſe of prayer*. Where, by prayer, is to be underſtood the whole worſhip and ſervice of almighty God, of which prayer is an eminent and principal part. That which gives denomination to an houſe, is certainly the chief work to be done in that houſe. Now God's houſe, being called an houſe of prayer, certainly implies, that prayer is the chief and principal work to be performed in his houſe; yet muſt we take heed that we ſet not the ordinances of God at variance one with another; we muſt not idolize one ordinance, and vilify another; but pay an awful reſpect and regard to all the inſtitutions of our Maker.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. 15 And when the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna to the ſon of David; they were ſore diſpleaſed, 16 And ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe?

Note here, 1. That our bleſſed Saviour works his miracles, not ſecretly in a corner, but openly in the temple, and ſubmits them to the examination of all perſons ſenſes. A miracle is a ſupernatural action, which is obvious to ſenſe. Popiſh miracles are talked of by many, but ſeen by none. 2. That Chriſt's enemies are never more incenſed than when his divine power is moſt exerted, and his divine nature owned and acknowledged. *When the chief prieſts ſaw the miracles which Jeſus did, and heard the children crying, Hoſanna to the Son of David, they were ſore diſpleaſed.* 3. That Chriſt can glorify himſelf by the mouth of babes and ſucklings; he can form and fit up what inſtruments he pleaſes to ſhew forth his excellencies, and celebrate his praiſes. *Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe.*

17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there. 18 Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he ſaw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away.

Our bleſſed Saviour having driven the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, lodges not that night in Jeruſalem, but withdraws to Bethany, a place of retirement from the noiſe and tumult of the city. Where *note*, Our Lord's love of ſolitude and retiredneſs. How delightful is it to a good man, to dwell ſometimes within himſelf, *to take the wings of a dove, and fly away and be at reſt?* Yet the next morning our Lord returns to the city: he knew when to be ſolitary, and when to be ſociable; when to be alone, and when to converſe in company. In his paſſage to the city, he eſpied a fig-tree; and being an hungry (to ſhew the truth of his humanity) he goes to the fig-tree, and finds it full of leaves, but without any fruit. Diſpleaſed with this diſappointment, he curſes the tree which had deceived his expectation. This action of our Saviour, in curſing the barren fig-tree was typical; an emblem of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem in general, and of every perſon in particular, that ſatisfies himſelf with a withered profeſſion, bearing leaves only, but no fruit. As this *fig-tree* was, ſo are they, *nigh unto curſing*. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as content themſelves with a fruitleſs profeſſion of religion, are in great danger of having God's blaſting added to their barrenneſs.

20 And when the diſciples ſaw *it*, they marvelled,
ſaying, How ſoon is the fig-tree withered away!
21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay
unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye ſhall
not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but
alſo if ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed,
and be thou caſt into the ſea; it ſhall be
done. 22 And all things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk
in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.

The diſciples being filled with admiration at the ſudden withering of the fig-tree, thereupon our Saviour exhorts them to have *faith in God:* That is, firmly to rely upon the power of God, whereby he is able, upon the goodneſs of God whereby he is willing, to fulfil his promiſes to us. *Learn*, 1. That faith is a neceſſary ingredient in prayer. Praying without faith, is like ſhooting without a bullet; it makes a noiſe, but doth no execution. 2. That whatſoever good thing God has made the matter of a promiſe, ſhall be given to good men, praying in faith. *Whatſoever ye aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.* Yet *note*, That the faith here promiſed to root up mountains, muſt be reſtrained to that age of miracles, and to the perſons to whom this was ſpoken, namely, the apoſtles and firſt propagaters of the goſpel; it being certain from experience, that this is no ordinary and perpetual gift of chriſtians.

23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple,
the chief prieſts and the elders of the people came
unto him as he was teaching, and ſaid, By what authority
doeſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee
this authority? 24 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto
them, I alſo will aſk ye one thing, which if ye
tell me, I in likewiſe will tell you by what authority
I do theſe things. 25 The baptiſm of John, whence
was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reaſoned
with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From
heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then
believe him? 26 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men; we
fear the people: for all hold John as a prophet.
27 And they anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid, We cannot
tell. And he ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by
what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often queſtioned our Saviour's doctrine before, they call in queſtion his miſſion and authority now; although they might eaſily have underſtood his divine miſſion by his divine miracles. Almighty God never impowered any to work miracles that were not ſent by him. When the adverſaries of Chriſt can object nothing againſt his doctrine, they then quarrel with him about his commiſſion and calling, and demand, by what authority he doth teach and work miracles. Our bleſſed Saviour, well underſtanding their drift and deſign, anſwers them one queſtion by aſking them another. *The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven or men?* Was it of divine inſtitution, or of human invention? Implying, that the calling of ſuch as call themſelves the miniſters of God, ought to be from God. *No man ought to take this honour upon himſelf, but he that his called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. v. 4. The Phariſees reply, they could not tell whence John had his miſſion and authority. This was a manifeſt untruth: By refuſing to tell the truth, they fall into a lie. One ſin inſnares, and draws men into the commiſſion of more. Such as will not ſpeak exact truth, according to their knowledge, they fall into the ſin of lying againſt their conſciences. Our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.* He doth not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you; but I do not, I need not tell you, becauſe the miracles which I work before you, are a ſufficient demonſtration of my divine commiſſion, that I am ſent of God amongſt you; for God never ſet the ſeal of his omnipotence to a lie, or impowered an impoſtor to work real miracles.

28 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two
ſons: and he came to the firſt, and ſaid, Son, go
work to-day in my vineyard. 29 He anſwered and
ſaid, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went.
30 And he came to the ſecond, and ſaid likewiſe.
And he anſwered and ſaid, I *go*, ſir; and went not.
31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father?
They ſay unto him, The firſt. Jeſus ſaith unto
them, Verily I ſay unto you, that the publicans and
the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
32 For John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs,
and ye believed him not: but the publicans
and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye
had ſeen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might
believe him.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable is to ſhew, That *publicans and harlots*, that is, the vileſt, the profaneſt, and worſt of ſinners, who, upon the hearing of Chriſt's doctrine and miracles, did repent and believe, were in a much better condition than the proud Phariſees, who, though they pretended to great meaſures of knowledge, and high degrees of holineſs, yet did obſtinately oppoſe Chriſt, diſobey his doctrine, deny his miracles, and ſet at nought his perſon. *Learn* hence, That the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt of ſinners, upon their repentance and faith in Chriſt, ſhall much ſooner find acceptance with God, than proud Phariſaical judiciaries, who confidently rely upon their own righteouſneſs: *Publicans and harlots*, ſays Chriſt here to the Phariſees, *ſhall go into the kingdom of God before you.* Publicans were the worſt ſort of men, and harlots the worſt kind of women; yet did theſe repent ſooner, and believed in Chriſt before the proud Phariſees. The reaſon was, becauſe their hearts lay more open to the ſtrokes of conviction, than thoſe that were blinded by vain hopes, and preſumptuous confidence. Security fruſtrates all means of recovery.

33 ¶ Hear another parable; There was a certain houſholder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-preſs in it, and built a tower, and let it out to huſbandmen, and went into a far country. 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the huſbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the huſbandmen took his ſervants, and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another. 36 Again, he ſent other ſervants, more than the firſt: and they did unto them likewiſe. 37 But laſt of all he ſent unto them his ſon, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 38 But when the huſbandmen ſaw the ſon, they ſaid among themſelves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught *him*, and caſt him out of the vineyard, and ſlew *him*.

In this parable, God compares the Jewiſh church to a *vineyard*; himſelf to an houſholder: his planting, pruning, and fencing his vineyard, denotes his care to furniſh his church with all needful helps and means, to make it ſpiritually fruitful. His *letting it out to huſbandmen*, ſignifies his committing the care of his church to the prieſts and Levites, the public paſtors and governors of the church. His ſervants are the prophets and apoſtles, whom he ſent from time to time, to admoniſh them to bring forth fruit anſwerable to the coſt which God had expended on them. His Son is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the rulers of the Jewiſh church ſlew and murdered. The ſcope of the parable is to diſcover to the Jews, particularly to the Phariſees, their obſtinate impenitency under all means, their bloody cruelty to the prophets of God, their tremenduous guilt, in crucifying the Son of God; for all which, God would unchurch them finally, and ruin their nation, and ſet up a church among the Gentiles, that ſhould bring forth better fruit than the Jewiſh church ever did. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the church is God's vineyard, exceeding dear and precious to the planter and owner of it. 2. As dear as God's vineyard is unto him, in caſe of barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs, it is in great danger of being deſtroyed and laid waſte by him. 3. That the only way and courſe to engage God's care over his vineyard, and to prevent his giving it to other huſbandmen, is to give him the fruits of it. It is but a vineyard that God lets out, it is no inheritance; no people ever had ſo many promiſes of God's favour as the Jews had, or ever enjoyed ſo many privileges, whilſt they ſtood in his favour, as the Jews did; yet though they were firſt, *and the natural branches, they are broken off, and we Gentiles ſtand by faith*, &c. Rom. xi. 20.

40 When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe huſbandmen? 41 They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other huſbandmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in their ſeaſons.

Obſerve here, At the firſt mentioning of the parable, the Phariſees expreſs a bitter indignation againſt ſuch wicked ſervants, not conſidering what a dreadful ſentence they paſſed upon themſelves and their own nation. Little did they think, that thereby they condemned their temple to be burnt, their city to be deſtroyed, their country to be ruined; but in theſe words they vindicate God, condemn themſelves, and own the juſtice of God in inflicting the ſevereſt puniſhments on them.

42 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Did ye never read in the ſcriptures, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore I ſay unto you, The kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Which words are the application that our Saviour makes of the foregoing parable concerning the vineyard; which the chief prieſts and Phariſees did not apprehend themſelves to be concerned in, till he brought the application of it home unto them. *Therefore I ſay unto you, the kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you*, &c. *Note*, 1. The greateſt mercy that God can beſtow upon any people, is his giving his kingdom to them; that is, all goſpel-ordinances, and church-privileges leading to the kingdom of heaven. 2. Obſerve the terms upon which God either gives or continues his kingdom to a church and nation. And that is, *upon bringing forth the fruits thereof*. 3. That the greateſt judgment which can befal a people, is the taking away the kingdom of God from them. *The kingdom of God*, &c.

44 And whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Theſe words are taken out of the cxviiith Pſalm, which the Jews underſtood to be a prophecy of the Meſſiah, and accordingly Chriſt applies them to himſelf. The church is the *building* intended, Chriſt himſelf the *ſtone* rejected; the *rejecters*, or the *builders rejecting*, were the heads of the Jewiſh church; that is, the chief prieſts and Phariſees. *God*, the great maſter-builder of his church, takes this precious *foundation-ſtone* out of the rubbiſh, and ſets it in *the head of the corner*. Nevertheleſs there are ſome who ſtumble at this ſtone. Some through ignorance, others through malice, ſtumble at his perſon, at his doctrine, at his inſtitutions: *theſe ſhall be broken in pieces*, &c. That is, Chriſt himſelf will fall as a burdenſome ſtone upon all thoſe that knowingly and maliciouſly oppoſe him; and particularly upon the Jews, who not only rejected him, but perſecuted and deſtroyed him. Thus Chriſt tells the chief prieſts and Phariſees their own particular doom, and alſo declares what will be the fatal iſſue of all that oppoſition which is made againſt himſelf and his church. It will terminate in that inevitable and irreparrable deſtruction. *Whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone*, &c. That is, "He that ſtumbles on this ſtone, while Chriſt is here on earth, being offended at his doctrine, life and miracles, ſhall be broken by his fall upon it; as the perſon ſtoned is by the ſharp ſtone which he falls upon. But he on whom this ſtone ſhall fall, when Chriſt is elevated to his throne of glory, ſhall be more violently ſhattered by it, as is the perſon ſtoned, by the great ſtone as big as two men can liſt, thrown down violently upon his breaſt."

45 And when the chief prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpeak of them. 46 But when they ſought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, becauſe they took him for a prophet.

When the chief prieſts came to underſtand that theſe parables were all applied to them, that they were the *murderers of the king's ſon*, that they were the *builders that rejected the chief corner-ſtone*, they were enraged at the cloſe application made to themſelves; and had not fear reſtrained them, would have laid violent hands upon him. *Learn* thence, That nothing doth more provoke and exaſperate unſound hypocrites, than the particular application, and cloſe coming home of the word of God unto their hearts and conſciences. So long as the truths of God are generally delivered, ſinners are eaſy, looking upon themſelves as unconcerned: but when the word of God comes cloſe to them, and ſays, *Thou art the man*, this is thy wickedneſs; they are angry at the meſſage, and rage at the meſſenger.

CHAP. XXII.

AND Jeſus anſwered, and ſpake unto them again by parables, and ſaid, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his ſon, 3 And ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize: 6 And the remnant took his ſervants, and entreated them *ſpitefully*, and ſlew *them*. 7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city. 8 Then ſaith he to his ſervants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So thoſe ſervants went out into the *high*-ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts. 11 ¶ And, when the king came into ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: 12 And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was ſpeechleſs. 13 Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt *him* into utter darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable of the marriage ſupper, is to ſet forth that gracious offer of mercy and ſalvation, which was made by God in and through the preaching of the goſpel to the church of the Jews. The goſpel is here compared to a *feaſt*, becauſe in a feaſt there is plenty, variety, and dainties. Alſo to a *marriage-feaſt*, being full of joy, delight, and pleaſure. And to a *marriage-feaſt made by a king*, as being full of ſtate, magnificence, and grandeur. To this marriage-feaſt, or goſpel-ſupper, almighty God invited the church of the Jews; and the *ſervants* ſent forth to invite them, were the prophets and apoſtles in general, and John the Baptiſt in particular, whom they entreated ſpitefully, and ſlew. *The making light of the invitation*, ſignifies the generality of the Jews refuſal, and careleſs contempt of the offers of grace in the goſpel. By the *armies which God ſent forth to deſtroy thoſe murderers*, are meant the Roman ſoldiers, who ſpoiled and laid waſte the city of Jeruſalem, and were the ſevere executioners of God's wrath and judgment upon the wicked Jews. *The highways* ſignify the deſpiſed Gentiles, who, upon the Jews refuſal, were invited to this ſupper, and prevailed with to come in. *The king's coming in to ſee his gueſts*, denotes that inſpection which Chriſt makes into his church in the times of the goſpel. By the *man without the wedding garment*, underſtand ſuch as are deſtitute of true grace and real holineſs, both in heart and life. In the examination of him, Chriſt ſays, *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither?* not, Friends, why came ye along with him? Teaching us, that if unholy perſons will preſs in to the Lord's ſupper, the ſin is theirs; but if we come not, becauſe they will come, the ſin is ours. The preſence of an unholy perſon at the Lord's table, ought not to diſcourage us from our duty, or cauſe us to turn our back upon that ordinance. The command to *bind* the unqualified perſon *hand and foot, and to caſt him into utter darkneſs*, plainly intimates, that the condition of ſuch perſons, as live under the light, and enjoy the liberty of the goſpel, but walk not anſwerably to their profeſſion, is deplorably ſad and doleful: They not only incur damnation, but no damnation like it. *Bind him hand and foot and caſt him into utter darkneſs.* From the whole, *note*, 1. That the goſpel, for its freeneſs and fulneſs, for its varieties and delicacies, is like a marriage ſupper. 2. That goſpel-invitations are mightily diſeſteemed. 3. That the preference which the world has in man's eſteem, is a great cauſe of the goſpel's contempt. *They went, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize.* 4. That ſuch as are careleſs in the day of grace, ſhall undoubtedly be ſpeechleſs in the day of judgment. 5. That Chriſt takes a more particular notice of every gueſt that cometh to his royal ſupper, than any of his miniſters do take, or can take. There was but one perſon without the wedding garment, and he falls under the eye and view of Chriſt. 6. That it is not ſufficient that we come, but clothed we muſt be before we come, if ever we expect a gracious welcome to Chriſt's ſupper; clothed with ſincerity, clothed with humility, clothed with love and charity; if we be not thus clothed we ſhall appear naked to our ſhame, and hear that dreadful charge, *Bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into*, &c. See Luke xiv. 17.

14 For many are called, but few *are* choſen.

This is our bleſſed Saviour's application of the foregoing parable to the Jews; he tells them, that many of them, indeed all of them were called; that is, invited to the goſpel-ſupper, but with few, very few of them, was found that ſincere faith, and that ſound repentance, which doth accompany ſalvation. *Learn* thence, That amongſt the multitude of thoſe that are called by the goſpel unto holineſs and obedience, few, very few comparatively, do obey that call, and ſhall be eternally ſaved.

15 ¶ Then went the Phariſees, and took counſel how they might entangle him in *his* talk. 16 And they ſent out unto him their diſciples, with the Herodians, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for any *man*: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar, or not? 18 But Jeſus perceived their wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? 21 They ſay unto him, Cæſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, Render thereunto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard *theſe words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

Here we have another new deſign to entangle our bleſſed Saviour in his diſcourſe. Where *obſerve*, 1. The perſons employed to put the enſnaring queſtion to our Saviour; namely, *the Phariſees and Herodians.* The Phariſees were againſt paying tribute to Cæſar, looking upon themſelves as a free people, and the emperor as an uſurper. But the Herodians were for it. Herod being made by the Roman emperor king of the Jews, was zealous for having the Jews pay tribute to Cæſar, and ſuch of the Jews as ſided with him, and particularly his courtiers and favourites, were called Herodians. 2. The policy and wicked craft here uſed, in employing theſe two contrary ſects, to put the queſtion to our Saviour concerning tribute: thereby laying him under a neceſſity (as they hoped) to offend one ſide, let him anſwer how he would. If, to pleaſe the Phariſees, he denied paying tribute to Cæſar, then he is accuſed of ſedition; if, to gratify the Herodians, he voted for paying tribute, then he is looked upon as an enemy to the liberty of his country, and expoſed to a popular odium. It has been the old policy of Satan and his inſtruments, to draw the miniſters of God into diſlike, either with the magiſtrates or with the people, that they may either fall under the cenſure of the one, or the diſpleaſure of the other. 3. With what wiſdom and caution our Lord anſwers them; he firſt calls for the tribute-money, which was the Roman penny, anſwering to ſeven-pence halfpenny of our money, two of which they paid by way of tribute, or poll-money, for every head to the emperor. Chriſt aſks them, *Whoſe image or ſuperſcription* their coin bore? they anſwer, *Cæſar's. Render then*, ſays Chriſt, *to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's.* As if he had ſaid, "The admitting of the Roman coin amongſt you, is a teſtimony that you are under ſubjection to the Roman emperor, becauſe the coining and impoſing of money is an act of ſovereign authority. Now you have owned Cæſar's authority over you, by accepting of his coin as current amongſt you; give unto him his juſt dues, and *render unto Cæſar*, &c." *Learn* hence, That there was no truer paymaſter of the king's dues, than he that was King of kings; he preached it, and he practiſed it. As Chriſt is no enemy to the civil rights of princes, and his religion exempts none from paying their civil duties; ſo princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his divine honour, as he is not to wrong them of their civil rights. As Chriſt requires all his followers to render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, ſo ſhould princes oblige all their ſubjects *to render unto God the things that are God's.*

23 ¶ The ſame day came to him the Sadducees, which ſay that there is no reſurrection, and aſked him, 24 Saying, Maſter, Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having no children, his brother ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us ſeven brethren, and the firſt when he had married a wife, deceaſed, and having no iſſue, left his wife unto his brother. 26 Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third, unto the ſeventh. 27 And laſt of all the woman died alſo. 28 Therefore in the reſurrection whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her. 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob! God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine.

Our bleſſed Saviour having put the Phariſees and Herodians to ſilence, next the Sadducees encounter him. This ſect denied the immortality of the ſoul, and the reſurrection of the body; and, as an objection againſt both, they propound a caſe to our Saviour, of a woman that had ſeven brethren ſucceſſively to her huſbands: they demand, *Whoſe wife of the ſeven this woman ſhall be at the reſurrection?* As if they had ſaid, "If there be a reſurrection of bodies, ſurely there will be a reſurrection of relations too, and the other world will be like this, in which men will marry as here. And if ſo, whoſe wife of the ſeven ſhall this woman be, they all having an equal claim to her?" Now our Saviour, for reſolving of this queſtion, 1. Shews the different ſtate of men in this world, and in the other world. *The children of this world*, ſays Chriſt, *marry, and are given in marriage, but in the reſurrection they do neither.* As if our Lord had ſaid, "After men have lived a while in this world, they die, and therefore marriage is neceſſary, to maintain a ſucceſſion of mankind; but in the other world, men ſhould become immortal, and live for ever; and then the reaſon of marriage will wholly ceaſe. For when men can die no more, there will be no need of any new ſupplies of mankind." 2. Our Saviour having got clear of the Sadducees objection, by taking away the ground and foundation of it, he produceth an argument for a proof of the ſoul's immortality, and the body's reſurrection. *Thus*, "Thoſe to whom Almighty God pronounced himſelf a God, are alive; but God pronounced himſelf a God to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, many hundred years after their bodies were dead; therefore their ſouls are yet alive, fœderally alive unto God: Their covenant relation lives ſtill, otherwiſe, God could not be their God; *for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* If one relation fails, the other neceſſarily fails with it; if God be their God, then certainly they are in being, *for God is not the God of the dead*; that is, of thoſe that are utterly periſhed. Therefore it muſt needs be, that although their bodies be naturally dead, yet do their ſouls ſtill live, and their bodies ſhall alſo live again at the reſurrection of the juſt." From the whole, *note*, 1. That there is no opinion ſo abſurd, no error ſo monſtrous, that having had a mother, will die for the lack of a nurſe. The beaſtly opinion of the mortality of the ſoul, and the annihilation of the body, finds Sadducees to profeſs and propagate it. 2. The certainty of another life after this, in which men ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as they behave themſelves here, though ſome men live like beaſts, they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their laſt end be like theirs. 3. That glorified ſaints, in the morning of their reſurrection, ſhall be like unto the glorious angels: not like them in eſſence and nature, but like them in their properties and qualities, in holineſs and purity, in immortality, and incorruptibility, and in their manner of living; they ſhall no more ſtand in need of meat or drink than the angels do, but ſhall live the ſame heavenly, immortal, and incorruptible life, that the angels live. 4. That all thoſe that are in covenant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their ſouls do immediately paſs into glory, and their bodies at the reſurrection ſhall be ſharers in the ſame happineſs with their ſouls. If God be juſt, the ſoul muſt live, and the body muſt riſe; for good men muſt be rewarded, and wicked men puniſhed: God will moſt certainly, ſome time or other, plentifully reward the righteous, and puniſh the evil doers, but this being not always done in this life, the juſtice of God requires it to be done in the next.

34 ¶ But when the Phariſees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to ſilence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, aſked him a queſtion, tempting him, and ſaying, 36 Maſter, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the firſt and great commandment. 39 And the ſecond *is* like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 40 On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The Sadducees being put by Chriſt to ſilence, the Phariſees again encounter him; they ſend to him a lawyer, that is, one of their interpreters and expounders of the law of Moſes, who propounds this queſtion to him, *Which is the great commandment of the law?* Our Saviour tells them, *It is to love the Lord with all the heart, and with all the ſoul, and with all the mind.* That is, with all the powers, faculties, and abilities of the ſoul, with the greateſt meaſure and higheſt degrees of love. This is the ſum and ſubſtance of the duties of the firſt table. *And the ſecond is like unto it*, not equal with it, but like unto it. The duties of the ſecond table are of the ſame authority, and of the ſame neceſſity with the firſt. As a man cannot be ſaved without the love of God, ſo neither without the love of his neighbour. *On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets:* That is, the whole duty of man, required by Moſes and the prophets, is comprehended in, and may be reduced to theſe two heads, namely, the love of God and our neighbour. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the fervency of our affections, and particularly the ſupremacy of our love, is required by God as his right and due. Love muſt paſs through, and poſſeſs all the powers and faculties of the ſoul; the mind muſt meditate upon God, the will muſt chuſe and embrace him, and the affections muſt take complacency and delight in him; the meaſure of loving God, is to love him without meaſure. God reckons that we love him not at all, if we love him not above all. 1. We muſt love him above all, *appretiative*, ſo as to prize him in our judgment and eſteem above all, and before all things. 2. We are to love God above all things *comparative*, preferring his favours above all things, comparatively hating whatever ſtands in competition with him. 3. We are to love God above all things *intenſive*, That is, our longing deſires muſt run out after him, we muſt pant and thirſt for the enjoyment of him. 4. We muſt love every thing in ſubordination to God, and nothing co-ordinately, or equally with God. *Note* 2. That thus to love God, is the firſt and great commandment. *Great*, in regard of the object, which is God, the firſt cauſe, and the chief good.

Great, in regard of the obligation of it. To love God, is ſo indiſpenſible a command, that God himſelf cannot free us from the obligation of it; for ſo long as he is God, and we his creatures, we ſhall lie under a natural and neceſſary obligation to love and ſerve him. *Great*, in regard of the duration of it, when faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in viſion, and hope in fruition; love will then be perfected in a full enjoyment. 3. That every man may, yea, ought to love himſelf, not his ſinful ſelf, but his natural ſelf, and eſpecially his ſpiritual ſelf, the new nature in him. This it ought to be his particular care to encreaſe and ſtrengthen. Indeed there is no expreſs command in ſcripture for a man to love himſelf, becauſe the light of nature directs, and the law of nature binds and moves every man ſo to do. God has put a principle of ſelf-love and of ſelf-preſervation into all his creatures, but eſpecially into man. 4. As every man ought to love himſelf, ſo it is every man's duty *to love his neighbour as himſelf*. 1. Not as he *does love* himſelf, but as he *ought* to love himſelf. 2. Not in the ſame degree and meaſure that he loves himſelf, but after the ſame manner, and with the ſame kind of love that he loves himſelf. As we love ourſelves freely and readily, ſincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and perſeveringly; ſo ſhould we love our neighbour. Though we are not commanded to love our neighbour as much as we love ourſelves, yet we are to love him like as we love ourſelves. Laſtly, That the duties of the firſt and ſecond tables are inſeparable. The love of God and our neighbour muſt not be parted. *He that loveth not his neighbour whom he hath ſeen, never loved God whom he hath not ſeen.* A conſcientious regard to the duties of both tables, will be an argument of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion. Let it then be our prayer and daily endeavour, that *we may love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourſelves*. For this is the ſum of the law, and the ſubſtance of the goſpel.

41 ¶ While the Phariſees were gathered together, Jeſus aſked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe ſon is he? They ſay unto him, *The ſon* of David. 43 He ſaith unto them, How then doth David in ſpirit call him Lord, ſaying, 44 The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his ſon? 46 And no man was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any *man* from that day forth aſk him any more *queſtions*.

The Phariſees had often put forth ſeveral queſtions maliciouſly unto Chriſt, and now Chriſt puts forth one queſtion innocently unto them; namely, What they thought of the Meſſiah whom they expected? They reply, that he was to be *the ſon of David*, a ſecular prince deſcending from David, that ſhould deliver them from the power of the Romans, and reſtore them to their civil rights. This was the notion they had of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould be a man, *the ſon of David*, and nothing more. Our Saviour replies, Whence is it then that David calls the Meſſiah *Lord?* Pſal. cx. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord*: How could he be both David's lord, and David's ſon? No ſon is lord to his father; therefore, if Chriſt were David's ſovereign, he muſt be more than man, more than David's ſon. As man, ſo he was David's ſon; as God-man, ſo he was David's lord. *Note* hence, That although Chriſt was truly and really man, yet he was more than a bare man: He was Lord unto, and was the ſalvation of his own forefathers. 2. That the only way to reconcile the ſcriptures which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be God and man in one perſon. The Meſſiah, as a man, was to come forth out of David's loins, but as God-man he was David's ſovereign and ſaviour. As man, he was his father's ſon; as God, he was lord to his own father.

CHAP. XXIII.

THEN ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, 2 Saying, The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes' ſeat. 3 All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, *that* obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works: for they ſay, and do not.

The Scribes and Phariſees, ſo often mentioned in the goſpels, were the great doctors and ſpiritual guides amongſt the Jews. Scribe is the name of an office, Phariſee the name of a ſect. They were both learned in the law, and teachers of the law of Moſes. Our bleſſed Saviour, in the former part of this goſpel, held many conferences with theſe men, and uſed the moſt perſuaſive arguments to convince them both of their errors and wickedneſs. But their obſtinacy and malice being ſuch, that neither our Saviour's miniſtry nor miracles could convince them; hereupon our Lord denounces in this chapter eight ſeveral woes againſt them. But firſt he charitably warns his diſciples and the multitude againſt the pernicious practices of this ſort of men, ſaying, *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in Moſes's ſeat*; that is, they teach and expound the law of Moſes, which they were wont to do ſitting: *Whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do*; that is, "What they teach you conſonant to the word of God, and agreeable to the writings of Moſes and the prophets; if they go not out of Moſes's chair into their own unwritten traditions follow their doctrine, and obey their precepts; *But do not after their works*; follow not their example, take heed of their pride and hypocriſy, their ambition and vain-glory. Obey their doctrine wherein it is ſound; but follow not their example wherein it is corrupt." *Note*, 1. That the perſonal miſcarriages of miniſters muſt by no means beget a diſeſteem of their office and miniſtry. Charity muſt teach us to diſtinguiſh betwixt the calling and the crime. 2. That the infallible truths of God recommended to us by a vicious teacher, ought to be entertained and obeyed by us, without either ſcruple or prejudice. What the Phariſees themſelves, ſays Chriſt, bid you obſerve, *that obſerve and do*. 3. That no people are obliged to follow their teacher's pattern and example any farther than it is agreeable to ſcripture rule, and conformable to Chriſt's example: *Do not after their works, who ſay, and do not.*

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on mens ſhoulders; but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Theſe heavy burdens which the Phariſees laid upon the peoples ſhoulders, were counſels and directions, rules and canons, auſterities and ſeverities, which the Phariſees introduced and impoſed upon their hearers, but would not undergo the leaſt part of thoſe ſeverities themſelves. If we did not follow our own counſels, we muſt not think to oblige our people to follow them. No man ought to preſs upon others what he is unwilling to perform himſelf. It is very ſinful to give that counſel to others which we refuſe to take ourſelves.

5 But all their works they do for to be ſeen of men. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

In theſe words our bleſſed Saviour admoniſhes his diſciples and the multitude to take heed of imitating the Phariſees in their oſtentation and hypocriſy, in their ambition and vain-glory; and he inſtances in three particulars wherein they expreſſed it: 1. *All their works*, ſays Chriſt, *they do to be ſeen of men.* To do good works that men may ſee them, is a duty; but to do all or any of our works to be ſeen of men, is hypocriſy. 2. *They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.* Theſe phylacteries were certain ſcrolls and labels of parchment, in which were written the ten commandments, and ſome ſome ſections of the law; theſe they tied upon their foreheads, and pinned upon their left ſleeve, that the law of God might be continually before their eyes, and perpetually in their remembrance. This ceremony they judged God preſcribed them, Deut. vi. 8. *Thou ſhalt bind them for a ſign upon thine hand, and they ſhall be as frontlets upon thine eyes.* By enlarging the borders of their garments, our Saviour points at the fringes and blue ribbons which the Jews did wear upon their garments, in obedience to the command, Numb. xv. 37, 38. As the threads in thoſe fringes and ribbons cloſe woven together, did repreſent the connexion, complication, and inſeparable conjunction of God's commandments among themſelves; ſo the wearing of theſe fringes was to put them in mind of the laws of God; that which way ſoever they turned their eyes, they might meet ſome pious admonition to keep the law of God. The vain-glorious Phariſees, that they might be thought more mindful of the law of God than other men, did make their phylacteries broader, and their fringes thicker and longer than other men. 3. They fondly affected, and ambitiouſly contended for the firſt and uppermoſt ſeats in all conventions, as at feaſts, and in the ſynagogues, and loved to be reſpectfully ſaluted in open and public places, and to have titles of honour, ſuch as *Rabbi*, *Maſter*, *Father*, and *Doctor*, put upon them. Now that which our Saviour condemns, is the Phariſees fond affection of theſe little things, and unduly ſeeking their own honour and glory. It was not their taking, *but their loving the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts*, that Chriſt condemns. From the whole *note*, 1. That hypocrites are fond of affecting ceremonial obſervations, and outward parts of commanded duties, neglecting the ſubſtance of religion itſelf. Theſe Phariſees were for carrying a library of God's law on their clothes, ſcarce a letter of it in their hearts. They wore the law of God, as *frontlets*, before their eyes, but not engraven on the tables of their hearts. 2. That the nature of hypocriſy, is to ſtudy more to ſeem religious in the ſight of men, than to be religious indeed before God. The hypocrite is the world's ſaint, and not God's: he courts the worlds acceptation more than the divine favour and approbation.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called maſters: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt. 11 But he that is greateſt among you ſhall be your ſervant. 12 And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf ſhall be exalted.

The word *Rabbi*, ſignifies a *doctor* or *teacher*, eminently endowed with variety of knowledge, whoſe place it was to ſit in an exalted chair, or chief ſeat in the ſynagogue; their diſciples and ſcholars ſat upon lower forms at the feet of their teachers. Our Saviour doth not ſimply condemn the giving or receiving of theſe titles of *Rabbi*, *Maſter*, and *Father*; but the things forbidden are, 1. A vain-glorious affectation of ſuch titles as theſe, the ambitious ſeeking of them, and glorying in them. 2. He condemns that authority and dominion over the conſciences of men, which the Phariſaical doctors had uſurped; telling the people, that they ought to believe all their doctrines, and practiſe all their injunctions, as the commands of the living God.—They did in effect aſſume infallibility to themſelves.—*Learn* hence, 1. That there have been in all ages in the church, a ſort of teachers, who have uſurped authority and dominion over the faith and conſciences of men. 2. That chriſtians ought not to ſubmit their faith and conſciences in matters of religion to any human authority whatſoever, nor to give up themſelves abſolutely to the conduct of any man's judgment or opinion in matters of faith. 3. That Chriſt alone, the great prophet and infallible teacher of his church, is the only perſon to whoſe doctrine and precepts we owe abſolute faith and obedience: *One is your Maſter, even Chriſt.* 4. As God will abaſe, and men will deſpiſe the proud, eſpecially miniſters who are ſuch; ſo ſhall God exalt, and men will honour them that ſtoop to the meaneſt ſervices for the good of ſouls: *Whoſo exalteth hinſelf ſhall be abaſed.* This was a ſentence often uſed by our Saviour, and was a frequent ſaying among the Jews.

13 ¶ But wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees,

hypocrites; for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: for ye neither go in *yourſelves*, neither ſuffer ye them that are entering to go in.

From the thirteenth verſe to the thirtieth, the Phariſees have eight ſeveral woes denounced againſt them by our Saviour: the firſt is, for perverting the ſcriptures, and keeping the true ſenſe and knowledge of them from the people. This St. Matthew calls *the ſhutting up the kingdom of heaven againſt men.* St. Luke calls it, *A taking away the key of knowledge from men*, which is an illuſion to a known cuſtom among the Jews in admiſſion of their doctors; for thoſe that had authority given them to interpret the law and the prophets, were ſolemnly admitted into that office, by delivering to them a key and a table-book. So that by the key of knowledge, is meant the interpretation and underſtanding of the ſcriptures; and by *taking away the key of knowledge*, is ſignified, 1. That they arrogated to themſelves alone the underſtanding of the ſcriptures. 2. That they kept the true knowledge of the ſcriptures from the people, eſpecially the prophecies concerning the Meſſias, and ſo they hindered men from embracing our Saviour's doctrine, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it. *Learn* hence, 1. That the knowledge of the holy ſcriptures, is abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary in order to ſalvation. This our Saviour calls *the key*, which lets men into the kingdom of heaven. 2. That great is the guilt, and inexcuſable the fault of thoſe who deprive the people of the knowledge of the ſcriptures. *They ſhut the kingdom of heaven againſt men*, and do what in them lies to hinder their eternal ſalvation. Men may miſcarry with their knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh for want of knowledge.

14 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation.

The ſecond wo denounced againſt the Phariſees, is for their groſs hypocriſy, in colouring over their covetouſneſs with a pretence of religion; making long prayers in the temple and ſynagogues for widows, and thereupon perſuading them to give bountifully to the *corban*, or the common treaſure of the temple, ſome part of which was employed for their maintenance. *Learn*, 1. It is no new thing for deſigning hypocrites to cover the fouleſt tranſgreſſions with the cloke of religion. The Phariſees made long prayers a cover for their coveteouſneſs. 2. That to make uſe of religon in policy, for worldly advantage ſake, is the way to be damned with a vengeance for religion ſake: *Wo unto you ſcribes*, &c.

15 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourſelves.

The next wo denounced, is for their falſe-ended zeal and earneſtneſs in proſelyting heathens to the Jewiſh religion; not with a pious intention to ſave them, but to ſerve themſelves upon them, to have their conſciences and purſes under their power; and when you have poiſoned them, ſays our Saviour, by your corrupt doctrine, and hardened them in a courſe of ſin, by your wicked example, *they are more the children of hell than before* you practiſed upon them. *Learn*, 1. Great is the diligence, and indefatigable the induſtry which falſe teachers uſe in gaining proſelytes to their opinion and party: *they compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte.* 2. That ſuch as are proſelyted to error, are oftimes faſter riveted in their own opinions, than their teachers themſelves: *they are made two-fold more the children of hell than yourſelves.*

16 Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. 17 Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold? 18 And whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools, and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon.

The fourth wo which our Saviour denounceth againſt the Phariſees, is for their falſe and erroneous doctrine concerning oaths. 1. They taught men to ſwear by the creatures. 2. They taught that ſome oaths made by the creatures were obligatory and binding, others not. Particularly, they affirmed, that *if a man ſwear by the temple, or the altar, it is nothing*; that is, he was not bound by ſuch an oath: but *if a man ſwear by the gold of the temple and the altar*; that is, by the gifts offered to the *corban*, or treaſury of the temple, and by the ſacrifices and oblations on the altar; ſuch an oath they affirmed was binding, becauſe it was for their profit, that the gifts on the altar, and the gold brought into the treaſury ſhould be accounted moſt holy, ſeeing that would encourage the people to be more ready to contribute and offer. This horrid hypocriſy and covetouſneſs our bleſſed Saviour here ſharply reproves, and ſhews, that oaths made by the creatures, though unlawful, yet being once made, did oblige, as if the parties had ſworn by God himſelf. For he that ſwears by the temple, ſwears by it and him that dwelleth therein. *Learn*, 1. That ſwearing by the creatures, is no new ſin, but as old as the Phariſees. 2. That ſwearing by the creatures is a great profanation of the name of God, and a mighty provocation to him. 3. That this notwithſtanding, if the matter of ſuch oaths be not ſinful, they are obligatory and binding. He that ſweareth by the creatures, ſweareth by the God of the creatures: *For*, ſays our Saviour, *he that ſweareth by the heavens, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon.*

23 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel.

The next wo denounced, is for the Phariſees oſtentation of a preciſe keeping of the law in ſmaller matters, and neglecting weightier duties: *They paid tithe of mint, aniſe, and cummin*; but at the ſame time, *omitted judgment, mercy, and faith*; that is, juſt dealing with men, charity towards the poor, and faithfulneſs in their promiſes and covenants, one with another. *This*, ſays our Saviour, is *to ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel.* A proverbial expreſſion, intimating, that ſome perſons pretend great niceneſs and ſcrupuloſity about ſmall matters, and none or but little about duties of the greateſt moment. Hence *note*, 1. That hypocrites lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon the leaſt matters in religion, and place holineſs moſt in thoſe things where God places it leaſt. *Ye tithe mint*, &c. *but neglect the weightier matters of the law.* This is indeed the bane of all religion and true piety, to prefer ritual and human inſtitutions before divine commands, and the practice of natural religion. Thus to do, is a certain ſign of groſs hypocriſy. 2. That although ſome duties are of greater moment than others, yet a good man will omit none, but perform every duty, the leaſt as well as the greateſt, in obedience to the command of God. *Theſe things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

25 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outſide of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs. 26 *Thou* blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outſide of them may be clean alſo.

Our Saviour doth not here condemn their legal, or traditional waſhing of pots and cups, or any external decency and cleanlineſs in converſation: But his deſign is to ſhew them the vanity of outward purity, without inward ſanctity, and to convince them of the neceſſity of cleanſing the heart, in order to the purifying and reforming the life: Plainly intimating, 1. That mens lives could not be ſo bad, if their hearts were not worſe, all the obliquity of their lives proceeding from the impurity of their hearts and natures. 2. That an holy heart will be accompanied with an holy life. A man may be outwardly pure, and yet inwardly filthy; but he that has a pure heart, will live a pure and holy life. Cleanſe *that which is within the cup, that the outſide may be clean alſo.*

27 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *mens* bones, and of all uncleanneſs. 28 Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocriſy and iniquity.

Here we have a wo denounced againſt the Phariſees for cheating and deceiving the people with an outward ſhew, an external appearance of piety and religion: Their lives were ſeemingly very religious, but their hearts were full of hypocriſy and all impurity, like ſepulchres painted without, and full of rottenneſs within. Whence *learn*, That the great deſign of hypocriſy, is to cheat the world with a vain and empty ſhew of piety. The ambition of the hypocrite is to be thought good, not to be ſo; he is the world's ſaint, not God's.

29 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous, 30 And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers. 33 *Ye* ſerpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?

This is the eighth wo denounced by our bleſſed Saviour againſt the Phariſees for their grand hypocriſy, in pretending great honour to the ſaints departed, building their tombs, and garniſhing their ſepulchres, and declaring againſt their fathers impiety, That *had they lived in their days, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.* Now their hypocriſy appeared in three particulars. 1. In that they continued in their own wickedneſs, and yet recommended the ſaints departed; they magnify the ſaints, but multiply their ſins, and inſtead of imitating their virtues, they content themſelves with garniſhing their ſepulchres. 2. In profeſſing great reſpect to the dead ſaints, and at the ſame time perſecuting the living. Palpable hypocriſy! and yet, as groſs as it is, it prevails to this day. The church of Rome, who magnify martyrs, and canonize ſaints departed, have yet added to their numbers, by ſhedding of their blood. 3. In taking falſe meaſures of their love to the ſaints departed, from their building their tombs, and garniſhing their ſepulchres; whereas the beſt evidence of our love unto them, is the imitating their virtues, and cheriſhing their followers. It is groſs hypocriſy to pay reſpect to the relics of ſaints, and veneration to their images; and at the ſame time to perſecute and afflict their followers. *Learn* hence, 1. That the world all along loved the dead ſaints better than the living ones, *Mortui non mordent*. The dead ſaints example, how bright ſoever, is not ſo ſcorching and troubleſome at a diſtance; and he himſelf no longer ſtands in other mens light; whereas the living ſaints example is a cutting reproof to ſin and vice. 2. That there is a certain civility in human nature, which leads men to a juſt commendation of the dead, and to a due eſtimation of their worth. The Phariſees here, though they perſecuted the prophets whilſt alive, yet had they a mighty veneration for their piety and virtue after they were dead, and thought no honour too great to be done unto them. 3. That it is the groſſeſt hypocriſy to pretend to love goodneſs, and yet hate and perſecute good men. Theſe hypocritical Phariſees pretended highly to piety and religion, and at the ſame time killed the prophets, and ſtoned them that were ſent unto them. 4. That the higheſt honour we can pay to the ſaints departed, is not by raiſing monuments and building tombs to their memory; but by a careful imitation of their piety and virtue, following the holineſs of their lives, and their patience and conſtancy at their deaths.

34 ¶ Wherefore behold, I ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes: and *ſome* of them ye ſhall kill and crucify; and *ſome* of them ye ſhall ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and perſecute *them* from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the ſon of Barachias, whom he ſlew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I ſay unto you, All theſe things ſhall come upon this generation.

Note here, A prophetical prediction, and a ſevere denunciation. 1. A prediction foretelling what cruel uſage the apoſtles ſhould meet with from the Jews, killing, and crucifying ſome, ſcourging, and ſtoning others; which accordingly was fulfilled in the crucifying of St. Peter, the ſcourging of St. Paul, in the ſtoning of St. Stephen, and killing of St. James. The firſt planters and propagators of the goſpel, ſealed their doctrine with their blood, and the blood of the martyrs has always been the ſeed of the church. 2. A ſevere denunciation. *That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth from Abel to Zacharias the ſon of Jehoiada,* 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. who was the laſt prophet whoſe murder is related by name in the Old Teſtament. Theſe words are not to be underſtood as if the ends and intent of Chriſt's ſending the prophets were, that the Jews might put them to death, and bring their righteous blood upon themſelves. This was the conſequence and event indeed of their ſending, but by no means the deſign and intent of it. *Learn,* 1. That raging perſecutors have do regard either to the extraordinary miſſion, or eminent ſanctity of perſons who reprove them for their ſins.—*I ſend you prophets,* ſays our Saviour, *wiſe men and ſcribes, and ſome of them ye ſhall kill and crucify.* 2. That as the piety of the perſons, ſo neither can the ſanctity of the place diſcourage and deter bloody perſecutors from their rage and fury againſt the prophets of God. In the temple itſelf, in the court of the houſe of the Lord, *even betwixt the porch and the altar* was Zacharias ſlain. That it is a righteous thing with God to puniſh good men for the impieties of their parents: this is to be underſtood, 1. Where the children tread in their parents ſteps, and continue in their parents ſins; which they do, if they do not confeſs them, abhor them, and be humbled for them. 2. This is to be underſtood of temporal evils, not of eternal puniſhments. No man ſhall for his father's ſins lie down in everlaſting burnings. As our father's faith will not let us into heaven, ſo neither will their impiety ſhut us into hell. At the day of judgment, every man ſhall be ſeparately conſidered according to his deeds.

37 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *thou* that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate. 39 For I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Chriſt concludes this chapter with a pathetical lamentation over Jeruſalem. His ingemination, or doubling of the word, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* ſhews the vehemency of his affection towards them, and the ſincerity of his deſires for their ſalvation. *Obſerve,* 1. The great kindneſs and compaſſion of Chriſt to the Jews in general, and Jeruſalem in particular, ſet forth by a lively metaphor and ſimilitude; that of an *hen gathering her chickens under her wings.* As the hen doth tenderly cheriſh, and carefully hide and cover her young from the eye of the deſtroyer; ſo would Chriſt have ſhrouded and ſheltered his people from all thoſe birds of prey, and particularly from the Roman eagle, by which they were at laſt devoured.—Again, as the hen continueth her call to her young ones from morning till night, and holds out her wings for ſhelter to them all the day long, ſo did Chriſt wait for his people's repentance and converſion, for more than forty years after they had killed his prophets and murdered himſelf, before they met with a final overthrow. 2. The amazing obſtinacy and wilfulneſs of this people, in rejecting this grace and favour, this kindneſs and condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *I would have gathered you as an hen doth her chickens, but ye would not.* 3. The fatal iſſue of this obſtinacy, *Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate, Is left,* that is, certainly and ſuddenly ſo; the preſent tenſe put for the *paulo poſt futurum,* it denotes both the certainty and nearneſs of this people's ruin; which was verified by their total overthrow, and diſperſion. *Learn,* 1. That the ruin and deſtruction of ſinners is wholly chargeable upon themſelves; that is, on their own wilfulneſs and obſtinacy: *I would have gathered you,* ſays Chriſt, *but ye would not.* 2. How deplorably and inexcuſably they will periſh, who periſh by their own wilfulneſs under the goſpel. 3. That there is no deſire like unto God's deſire of a people's repentance; no longing like unto God's longing for a people's ſalvation: *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee? When ſhall it once be?* Chriſt did very ſeriouſly deſire the converſion of the Jews, who continued ſtill in their impenitency and unbelief; and conſequently, they whom he ſo ſeriouſly deſired to convert, might have been converted, but they would not be ſo:—*I would have gathered you, but you would not.* It is evident, from the long diſperſion of the Jews, that they are yet labouring under heavy marks of divine diſpleaſure; and will continue to be ſo, until they acknowledge Chriſt to be the promiſed Meſſias.

CHAP. XXIV.

AND Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple: and his diſciples came to *him* for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, See ye not all theſe things? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another that ſhall not be thrown down.

Our bleſſed Saviour had often acquainted his diſciples with his approaching death at Jeruſalem. *The Son of man muſt go up to Jeruſalem to be crucified.* Now in this chapter he acquaints them with the deſtruction that ſhould come upon Jeruſalem in general, and upon the temple in particular, for their putting him the Son of God to death. The diſciples looking upon the temple with wonder and admiration, were apt to think that the temple, in regard of its invincible ſtrength, could not be deſtroyed; or at leaſt, in regard of its incredible magnificence, it was great pity it ſhould be deſtroyed; and accordingly, they ſay to Chriſt, *See what goodly buildings are here.* As if they had ſaid, Maſter, what great pity it is, that ſuch a magnificent ſtructure ſhould become a ruinous heap? But hence we *learn*, 1. That ſin brings cities and kingdoms, as well as particular and private perſons, to their end. There are no places ſo ſtrong, but an almighty God is able to deſtroy them; and ſin is ſufficient to lay them waſte. 2. That the threatenings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing improbabilities there may be to the contrary. God had threatened Jeruſalem with deſtruction for her ſin, and now it is not all her ſtrength that can oppoſe his power. 3. That notwithſtanding magnificence, and worldly glory, doth mightily dazzle our eye, yet how little doth it affect Chriſt's heart. Even the temple itſelf, that magnificent ſtructure, Chriſt values no more than a heap of rubbiſh, when the impiety of the worſhippers had devoted it to deſtruction. *Not one ſtone ſhall be left upon another unthrown down.* This threatening was fulfilled forty years after Chriſt's death, when Titus, the Roman emperor deſtroyed the city, and burnt the temple, and Turnus Rufus the general of his army, ploughed up the very foundation upon which the temple ſtood. Thus was the threatning of God fulfilled, Jer. xxvi. 18. *Zion ſhall be ploughed as a field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become heaps.* The truth and veracity, the faithfulneſs and fidelity of God is as much concerned in the execution of his threatenings, as in the performance of his promiſes.

3 ¶ And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, the diſciples came unto him private, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? And what *ſhall* be the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt; and ſhall deceive many.

A double queſtion is here propounded by the diſciples to our Saviour. Firſt, as to the time of the temple's deſtruction. Secondly, As to the ſigns of that deſtruction. As to the former, the time when the temple ſhould be deſtroyed. See the curioſity of human nature, both in deſiring to know what ſhould be hereafter, and alſo when that hereafter ſhould be. Thence *learn*, That there is found with all of us an itching curioſity and deſire, rather to inquire and pry into the hidden counſels of God's ſecret will, than to obey the manifeſt declarations of God's revealed will; *Tell us when theſe things ſhall be.* As to their ſecond queſtion, *What ſhould be the ſign of his coming?* Our Saviour acquaints them with this among many others, *That there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts*, *falſe prophets*, and ſeducers, a multitude of impoſtors, that would draw many after them; therefore he bids them, *Take heed and beware.* Where *obſerve*, That Chriſt doth not gratify his diſciples curioſity, but acquaints them with their preſent duty, to watch againſt deceivers and ſeducers, who ſhould have the impudence to affirm themſelves to be Chriſt. Some, Chriſt perſonal, or the Meſſiah; others, Chriſt doctrinal, affirming their erroneous opinions to be Chriſt's mind and doctrine. From the whole, *note*, 1. That there will be many ſeducers, many erroneous perſons, and falſe opinions, before the end of the world: For Jeruſalem's deſtruction was a type and emblem of the world's deſtruction. 2. That ſuch ſeducers will come in Chriſt's name, and their errors and falſe opinions ſhall be given out to be the mind of Chriſt. 3. That many will be ſeduced and carried away by fair pretences and plauſible deceits. 4. That Chriſt's own diſciples had need to take heed, leſt they themſelves *being led away by the error of the wicked*, *do fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs.* *Take heed that no man deceive you*; &c.

6 And ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: ſee that ye be not troubled: for all *theſe things* muſt come to paſs; but the end is not yet. 7 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom, and there ſhall be famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8 All theſe are the beginning of ſorrows.

The next ſign which our Saviour gives his diſciples of Jeruſalem's deſtruction, is the many broils and commotions, civil diſcords and diſſenſions, that ſhould be found amongſt the Jews; *famines*, *peſtilences*, *and earthquakes*, *fearful ſights*, and *ſigns in the air*. And Joſephus declares, That there appeared in the air chariots and horſes, men ſkirmiſhing in the clouds, and encompaſſing the city; and that a blazing ſtar, in faſhion of a ſword, hung over the city for a year together. *Learn*, 1. That war, peſtilence, and famine, are judgments and calamities inflicted by God upon a ſinful people for their contempt of Chriſt and goſpel grace. *Ye ſhall hear of wars*, *famine*, *and peſtilence.* 2. That although theſe be mighty and terrible judgments, yet are they the forerunners of worſe judgments. *All theſe are the beginning of ſorrows.*

9 Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you: and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake. 10 And then ſhall many

be offended, and ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another. 11 And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall deceive many. 12 And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold. 13 But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

Our Saviour here goes on in giving farther ſigns of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. 1. He declares the ſharp perſecutions which ſhould fall upon the apoſtles themſelves; *They ſhall kill you.* Thence *learn*, That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt edge of perſecution is uſually turned againſt the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the miniſters of God. *You ſhall be hated and killed.* The next ſign is the apoſtacy of profeſſors upon the account of thoſe perſecutions: *Then ſhall many be offended, and ſhall betray one another, and hate one another.* *Learn* hence, That times of perſecution for chriſtianity are conſtantly times of apoſtacy from the chriſtian profeſſion. 2. That apoſtates are uſually the bittereſt perſecutors; *Omnis apoſtata eſt oſor ſui ordinis.* They ſhall betray one another and hate one another. A third ſign is the abounding of falſe teachers; *Many falſe prophets ſhall ariſe, and ſhall deceive many.* Where *note*, That the fair pretences and ſubtle practices of heretical teachers, have drawn off many from the truth, whom open perſecutions could not drive from it. A fourth ſign is the decay and abatement of zeal for God, and love one to another; *The love of many ſhall wax cold*, that is, both towards God and towards man. When iniquity abounds, trouble waxes hot; and when trouble waxes hot, falſe love waxes cold, and true love waxes colder than it was before: The cold blaſts of perſecution blow up the love of a few, but blow out the love of many more. Theſe are the ſigns laid down by our Saviour, foretelling the deſtruction of Jeruſalem: And foraſmuch as Jeruſalem's deſtruction was not only a forerunner, but a figure of Chriſt's coming to judgment, theſe are alſo the ſigns foretelling the approach of that dreadful day. Verſe 13. *He that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.* Our Saviour cloſes his diſcourſe with an exhortation to conſtancy and perſeverance; *Teaching* us, That there is no ſuch way to overcome temptation and perſecution, as by keeping our integrity, and perſevering in our fidelity to Chriſt. 2. That conſtancy and perſeverance in our integrity and fidelity towards Chriſt, is ſometimes attended with temporal ſalvation and deliverance in this life, but ſhall certainly be rewarded with eternal ſalvation in the next: *He that endureth unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.*

14 And this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world for a witneſs unto all nations; and then ſhall the end come.

Here our bleſſed Saviour comforts his diſciples with a threefold conſideration. 1. That his goſpel, how hated and perſecuted ſoever, ſhould be plainly and perſuaſively preached; *This goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached.* Therefore called the goſpel of the kingdom, becauſe it diſcovers the way to the kingdom of heaven. 2. The extent of the goſpel's publication, *it ſhall be preached unto all nations*, that is, to the Gentile world; not only among the Jews, but among the chief and principal nations of the Gentiles. 3. The deſign and end of the goſpel's publication, and that is, for a witneſs or teſtimony; namely, for a witneſs of God's grace and mercy offered to ſinners, and of their obſtinacy who reject it. *Learn* thence, That the preaching of the goſpel, wherever it comes, proves a teſtimony to them to whom it comes. To the humble and teachable it is a teſtimony for, to the ſcorners and deſpiſers, it is a teſtimony againſt; or, in the words of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. ii. 16. *To ſome it is the ſavour of death unto death, to others the ſavour of life unto life.*

15 When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, (whoſo readeth, let him underſtand.)

The ſenſe is, "When ye ſhall ſee the armies of the Romans, who are an abomination unto you, and an occaſion of great deſolation were they go; when you ſhall ſee that abominable diſſolute army begirting the holy city of Jeruſalem, then call to mind the prophecy of Daniel, which primarily belonged to Antiochus, but ſecondarily to Titus, and ſhall now be fully completed: For the ſiege ſhall not be raiſed, till both city and temple be razed to the ground." *Learn* thence, That God has inſtruments ready at his call to lay waſte the ſtrongeſt cities, and to ruin the moſt flouriſhing kingdoms which do oppoſe the tenders of his grace, and can make thoſe whom moſt men abhor, to be the occaſion of their deſtruction.

16 Then let them which be in Judea, flee unto the mountains. 17 Let him which is on the houſe-top not come down to take any thing out of his houſe: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

The meaning is, "As ſoon as you ſhall ſee the Roman army appear before the city of Jeruſalem, let every one that values his own ſafety, fly as far and as faſt as he can, even as Lot fled out of Sodom; and let ſuch as fly be glad if by flight they can ſave their lives, though they loſe their goods, their clothes, and all things beſide." From hence *learn*, 1. That when almighty God is pouring forth his fury upon a ſinful people, it is lawful, yea, a neceſſary duty, by flight to endeavour the hiding and ſheltering themſelves from the approaching calamity and deſolation: *When ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies, then flee to the mountains.* 2. That in the caſe of flight before a bloody enemy and army, if we loſe all that we have, and our lives be given us, we fare well, and the Lord deals very mercifully with us.

19 And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day.

Here our Saviour declares the doleful diſtreſs of thoſe that could not flee from the ſiege of Jeruſalem; as women big with child, and ſuch as give ſuck, who by that means are like to loſe their lives. And he farther adds, that it ſhould increaſe the calamity, if their flight ſhould happen to be in the winter, when none can fly either faſt or far; or if they ſhould be forced to flee on the ſabbath-day, when the Jews ſcrupled to travel farther than a ſabbath-day's journey, which was about two miles. From thence *learn*, That it is a great addition to the trouble and diſquiet of a good man's ſpirit, when the day of his ſpiritual reſt is interrupted; and inſtead of enjoying communion with God in his houſe, he is driven from houſe and home, and flees before the face of an enraged enemy. *Pray ye*, ſays our Saviour, *that your flight be not on the ſabbath-day*; that being a day of holy reſt.

21 For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever ſhall be. 22 And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortened, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved: but for the elect's ſake, thoſe days ſhall be ſhortened.

The doleful miſeries, and dreadful calamities which were coming upon the Jews in general, and upon Jeruſalem in particular, are here foretold by our Saviour, partly from the Roman army without, and partly from the ſeditions and factions of the zealots within, who committed ſuch outrages and ſlaughters, that there were no leſs than an hundred thouſand ſlain, and ninety-ſeven thouſand carried away captive, and made priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for thirty pence, were now themſelves ſold thirty for a penny. Now did the temple itſelf become a ſacrifice, a whole burnt-offering, and was conſumed to aſhes. Yet *note*, Chriſt promiſes, that theſe calamitous days ſhall be ſhortened, for the elect's ſake. God had a remnant which he determined ſhould ſurvive this deſtruction, to be an holy ſeed; and accordingly, the providence of God ſo ordered, that the city was taken in ſix months, and the whole country depopulated in eighteen. Whence *note*, How the Lord intermixes ſome mercy with the extremeſt miſery that doth befal a people for their ſin. On this ſide hell, no ſinner can ſay that they feel the ſtrokes of juſtice to the utmoſt, or that they have judgment without mercy.

23 Then if any man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or there; believe *it* not. 24 For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch, that, if it *were* poſſible, they ſhall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore, if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold he is in the deſert; go not forth: Behold, *he is* in the ſecret chambers; believe *it* not.

The Jews had all along cheriſhed in themſelves a vain expectation, that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a temporal deliverer, that ſhould ſet them at liberty from the power and ſlavery of the Romans; and accordingly Chriſt declares to his diſciples here, that immediately before Jeruſalem's deſtruction, ſeveral perſons, taking advantage of this expectation, would make themſelves heads of parties, and pretend that they were the true Meſſiah, who would ſave and deliver them from their enemies, if they would repair to them, and follow after them. Hereupon our Lord cautions his diſciples againſt ſuch falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and bids them *believe them not*, though they did never ſo many great ſigns and wonders, and promiſed them never ſuch glorious deliverances. *Learn* hence, that the church's great danger is from ſeducers that come in Chriſt's name, and pretend to work ſigns and wonders by his authority. 2. That ſuch is the power of ſeduction, that many are carried away with ſeducers and falſe teachers.— 3. That the elect themſelves, if left to themſelves, might be ſeduced; but divine power guards them againſt ſeduction, and deluſion; *they ſhall deceive, if it were poſſible, the very elect*. Which phraſe imports, not what the event would be upon the elect, but the vehemency of the endeavours of ſeducers; namely, that they would do the utmoſt they could to ſhock the chriſtian, and cauſe him to fall from his ſtedfaſtneſs.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.

There is a threefold coming of Chriſt ſpoken of in the New Teſtament. 1. His coming in his ſpiritual kingdom, by the preaching of the goſpel among the Gentiles. 2. His coming to deſtroy Jeruſalem forty years after his aſcenſion. 3. His final coming to judgment at the great day. All theſe comings of the Son of man, for their ſuddenneſs and unexpectedneſs, are compared unto lightning, which in a moment breaketh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth unto the weſt. *Learn* hence, That the coming and appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the judging of the wicked and impenitent ſinners, will be a very certain, ſudden, and unexpected appearance.

28 For whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

If the coming of Chriſt be underſtood, in the former verſe, of his coming to deſtroy Jeruſalem, then, by the carcaſe in this verſe, are to be underſtood the people of Jeruſalem, and the body of the Jewiſh nation: and by *eagles* are to be underſtood the Roman armies, who carried an eagle in their ſtandard. Theſe were the inſtruments which almighty God made uſe of, as his rod and ſcourge to chaſtiſe and puniſh the people of Jeruſalem. *Learn*, That the appointed meſſengers of God's wrath, and the inſtruments of his vengeance will certainly find out, and ſeverely puniſh and plague an impenitent people devoted to deſtruction. *Where the carcaſe is* (the body of the Jewiſh nation) *there will the eagles* (the Roman ſoldiers) *be gathered together*.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days ſhall the ſun be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light, and the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens ſhall be ſhaken.

30 And then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of
man in heaven:

Our Saviour goes on, in figurative expreſſions, to ſet forth the calamities that ſhould befal the Jewiſh nation, immediately after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem: *The ſun ſhall be darkened*; that is, all their glory and excellency ſhall be eclipſed, all their wealth and proſperity ſhall be laid waſte, the whole government, civil and eccleſiaſtical, deſtroyed; and ſuch marks of miſery found upon them, as never were ſeen upon a people. *By the ſign of the Son of man*, the Papiſts will have underſtood the ſign of the croſs; others underſtand it of thoſe prodigies which were ſeen a little before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which Joſephus mentions; namely, a comet in the form of a ſword hanging over the city for a year together: a light in the temple and about the altar, ſeen at midnight for half an hour: a cow led by the prieſt to be ſacrificed, calved a lamb: a voice heard in the temple ſaying, *Abeamus hinc*, "Let us go hence."—*Learn* hence, God premoniſhes before he puniſhes; he warns a people of deſtruction often, before he deſtroys them once.

—— And then ſhall all the tribes of the earth
mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of man coming
in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
31 And he ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound
of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect
from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the
other.

Then *ſhall the tribes mourn*; that is, then ſhall the Jews be convinced that their deſtruction was the puniſhment of their ſin, in rejecting and crucifying Chriſt; and accordingly they that pierced him, ſhall behold him, and mourn over him. Thus it was before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and thus will it be before the final judgment. They that pierced him ſhall be brought before him. Lord, how will the ſight of a pierced Chriſt pierce their ſouls with horror! they who have not ſeen a pierced Chriſt in the ſorrows of repentance, ſhall hereafter ſee him in the ſorrows of deſpair. To behold Chriſt with the eye of ſenſe hereafter, will be very dreadful and terrible to all thoſe that have not beheld him with the eye of faith here. *And he ſhall ſend his angels with the ſound of a trumpet.* Thoſe that apply this to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, by the angels underſtand the miniſters of the goſpel, who by the trumpet of the word did bring in believers throughout all Judea, who were ſaved from that deſtruction. Thoſe that underſtand it of the general judgment, take it literally, that Chriſt at the great day will ſend forth his holy angels, and gather all his elect to himſelf with the ſound of a trumpet. Probably, as there was an audible ſound of a trumpet at the giving of the law, ſo there ſhall be the like ſound of a trumpet, when Chriſt ſhall ſummon the world to judgment, for tranſgreſſing of that law. A joyful ſound will this be to the friends of Chriſt, a doleful dreadful ſound in the ears of his enemies.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When
his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves,
ye know that ſummer *is* nigh: 33 So likewiſe ye,
when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near,
even at the doors. 34 Verily I ſay unto you, This
generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled.
35 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but
my words ſhall not away. 36 ¶ But of that day
and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of
heaven, but my Father only.

Here our bleſſed Saviour declares two things with reference to his coming. 1. The certainty of the thing itſelf. 2. The uncertainty of the time. The certainty of his coming he ſet forth by the ſimilitude of the *fig-tree*, whoſe beginning to bud declares the ſummer at hand. Thus when they ſhould ſee the forementioned ſigns, they might conclude the deſtruction of their city and temple *to be nigh at hand*; and that ſome then living ſhould ſee all theſe predictions certainly fulfilled, what Chriſt foretells ſhall certainly be fulfilled, his word being more firm than the fabric of heaven, and earth. *Note*, The uncertainty, as to the preciſe time, when this judgment ſhould come. No angel in heaven, nor creature on earth, could determine the time, only the glorious perſons in the Godhead; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. *Learn* hence, 1. That all things are not revealed to the angels themſelves, but ſuch only as it concerns them to know, and the wiſdom of God thinks fit to reveal. 2. That the preciſe time of the day of judgment is kept by God as a ſecret to himſelf. He will not have us know that hour, to the intent that we may be upon our watch every hour.

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, ſo ſhall alſo the
coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the
days that were before the flood they were eating and
drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the
day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew
not until the flood came, and took them all away;
ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 40
Then ſhall two be in the field; the one ſhall be
taken, and the other left. 41 Two *women ſhall be*
grinding at the mill; the one ſhall be taken, and the
other left.

In theſe verſes our Saviour declares that Jeruſalem's deſtruction, and the world's final deſolation at the great day, would be much like the deſtruction of the old world; and that in two reſpects: 1. In regard of unexpectedneſs. 2. In regard of ſecurity and ſenſuality, How ſenſual and ſecure was the old world before the flood! *They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.* That is, wholly given up to ſenſuality and debauchery, and did not know of the flood's coming; that is, did not conſider it, till the *flood ſwept them away*. Thus it was in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and ſo will it be in the end of the world. *Learn* hence, 1. That as the old world periſhed by infidelity, ſecurity, and ſenſuality, ſo will the ſame ſins be prevailing before the deſtruction of this preſent world. *As it was in the days of Noah, ſo ſhall it be when the Son of man cometh.* 2. The reaſon why ſinners are drowned in ſenſuality, and given over to ſecurity, is, becauſe they do not believe the certainty, or conſider the proximity and nearneſs of an approaching judgment. The old world knew not of the flood's coming. Strange! When Noah had told them of it an hundred and twenty years together. The meaning is, they did not conſider it, and prepare for it. To ſuch as are unprepared, and unapprehenſive of death and judgment, thoſe evils are always ſudden, although men be never ſo often warned of them. But to ſuch as are prepared, it is never ſudden, let them die never ſo ſuddenly.

42 ¶ Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the good man of the houſe had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye alſo ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

Here we have the application made by our Saviour of the foregoing doctrine concerning the certainty and ſuddenneſs of a future judgment. *Watch therefore* always; not without intermiſſion, but without giving over; that ye may be not only in an habitual, but actual readineſs for my appearance. *Learn* thence, That it is the indiſpenſible duty, and ought to be the indefatigable endeavour of every chriſtian, to ſtand upon his watch in a prepared readineſs for Chriſt's appearance, both for his coming to us, and for our going to him. Watch always, *for ye know not the hour when your Lord cometh.*

45 Who then is a faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon? 46 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. 47 Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods.

Theſe words may be applied two ways. 1. To all the faithful ſervants of Chriſt in general. Thence *learn*, That for a perſon to ſpend and end his days in the ſervice of Chriſt, and doing his will, gives good aſſurance of a bleſſed condition. *Bleſſed is that ſervant.* 2. To the miniſters of the goſpel in ſpecial, may theſe words be applied. And here *obſerve*, 1. The character and duty of a goſpel miniſter: he is the *ſteward of Chriſt's houſhold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon.* 2. The qualifications requiſite in ſuch ſtewards, faithfulneſs and prudence. *Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward?* 3. The reward inſured to ſuch ſtewards as anſwer theſe qualifications: *Bleſſed is that ſervant. Learn* hence, That the miniſters of the goſpel are in a ſpecial ſenſe the ſtewards of Chriſt's houſhold. 2. That faithfulneſs and prudence are indiſpenſible qualifications of Chriſt's ſtewards. 3. That wherever theſe qualifications are found, Chriſt will graciouſly and abundantly reward them. Our faithfulneſs muſt reſpect God, ourſelves, and our flock, and includes our integrity of heart, purity of intention, induſtry of endeavour, and impartiality in our adminiſtrations. Prudence appears in the choice of ſuitable ſubjects, in the choice of fit language, in exciting our own affections in order to the moving of the affections of our people. Miniſterial prudence will teach us, by the ſtrictneſs and gravity of our deportment, to maintain our eſteem in the conſciences of our people. It will aſſiſt us to bear reproach, and direct us to give reproof; he that is ſilent cannot be innocent: reprove we muſt, or we cannot be faithful; but prudently, or we cannot be ſucceſsful.

48 But and if that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

Our Lord in theſe verſes deſcribes an unfaithful and negligent ſteward, and denounces the dreadful ſentence of wrath hanging over him. He is deſcribed, 1. By the character of infidelity; he believeth not Chriſt's coming to judgment, though he preaches it to others; he ſaith in his heart, *My lord delayeth his coming.* 2. He is deſcribed by his hatred, envy, and malignity againſt his fellow-ſervants, that were more painful and faithful than himſelf. He begins to ſmite, at leaſt with the virulence of his tongue, if not with the violence of his hand. 3. By his aſſociating with the wicked, and ſtrengthening their hands by his ill example, *He eateth and drinketh with the drunken*; that is, as their aſſociate and fellow-companion. Thus the unfaithful ſervant is deſcribed; next is judgment and ſentence is declared. *Note*, The tremendous judgment that ſhall come upon unfaithful ſtewards. 1. Chriſt will ſurprize them in their ſin and ſecurity, *by coming in an hour when they look not for him.* 2. He will execute temporal vengeance upon them: *he will cut them aſunder*, or hew them in pieces, as the Jews did their ſacrifices; that is, ſeparate their ſouls from their bodies by untimely death. God ſeldom ſuffers ſlothful, ſenſual, wicked and debauched miniſters to live out half their days. 3. Chriſt will puniſh them with eternal deſtruction alſo: *Appointing them their portion*, &c. that is, with the worſt of ſinners, they ſhall have a double damnation. As the hypocrite has a double tongue, a double heart, and is a double ſinner, ſo ſhall he undergo a double damnation. *Learn* hence, That ſuch miniſters as neglect the ſervice of God, and the ſouls of their people; as they are ranked amongſt the worſt of ſinners in this life, ſo ſhall they be puniſhed with them in the ſevereſt manner in the next. When Satan deſtroys the ſouls of men, he ſhall anſwer for it as a murderer only, not as an officer that was intruſted with the care of the ſoul. But if the ſteward doth not provide, if the ſhepherd doth not feed, if the watchman doth not warn, they ſhall anſwer not only for the ſouls that have miſcarried, but for an office neglected, for a talent hidden, and for a ſtewardſhip unfaithfully adminiſtered. Wo unto us, if at the great day we hear diſtreſſed ſouls roaring out their complaints, and howling forth that doleful accuſation againſt us, Lord! our ſtewards have defrauded us, our watchmen have betrayed us, our guides have miſled us.

CHAP. XXV.

Our bleſſed Saviour, in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, had exhorted all chriſtians to the great duty of watchfulneſs, and to be in readineſs againſt his coming. Which duty he again inculcates in this chapter, and accordingly he urges the neceſſity of it from two parables: the former, Of the ten virgins, *and the latter,* Of a man travelling into a far country.

THEN ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wiſe, and five *were* fooliſh.

By the kingdom of heaven here, is meant that ſtate of the viſible church on earth; it cannot be underſtood of the kingdom of glory, for there are no fooliſh virgins in that kingdom; nor yet of the inviſible kingdom of grace, for therein are no fooliſh virgins neither. But in the viſible church here on earth, there ever has been a mixture of wiſe and unwiſe, of ſaints and hypocrites. *Five of them were wiſe, and five were fooliſh.* Where *obſerve*, Our Lord's great charity, in ſuppoſing and hoping that amongſt the profeſſors of the goſpel, the number of ſincere chriſtians is equal with hypocritical profeſſors. Teaching us, that we ſhould not confine the church of Chriſt within a narrow compaſs, nor confine our charity to a few, and think none ſhall go to heaven but thoſe of our own party, and perſuaſion, but to extend our charity to all chriſtians that hold the foundation with us, and to hope well of them. Lord! let me rather err on the charitable hand, than be found on the cenſorious and damning ſide! This is to imitate my Saviour, whoſe charity ſuppoſed as many wiſe as fooliſh virgins, as many ſaints as hypocrites in the church. All theſe virgins are ſaid to *take their lamps*, and *go forth to meet the bridegroom.* For underſtanding which, we muſt know that our Saviour alludes to the ancient cuſtom of marriages, which were celebrated in the night; when uſually ten young men attended the bridegroom, and as many virgins attended the bride, with lamps in their hands, the bridegroom leading home his bride by the light of thoſe lamps. By theſe virgins are ſhadowed forth the profeſſors of chriſtianity. The fooliſh virgins are ſuch as ſatisfy themſelves with the bare profeſſion, with a profeſſion, without bringing forth fruits anſwerable thereunto. The wiſe virgins are ſuch as walked anſwerably to their profeſſion, perſevered and continued ſtedfaſt therein, and abounded in the graces and virtues of a good life. They are called wiſe virgins, for the purity of their faith, for the purity of their worſhip, and for the purity of their converſations.

3 They that were fooliſh took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps.

By the *lamps*, are meant an outward profeſſion of faith and holineſs. By the *oil in the lamps*, is to be underſtood that ſolemn profeſſion of repentance and faith, which all chriſtians make in baptiſm. By *oil in their veſſels*, is meant the ſanctifying and ſaving graces of the holy Spirit; the growth and improvement of them, with conſtancy and perſeverence in them. *Note* here, Wherein the wiſe and fooliſh virgins agreed, and wherein they differed;—they agreed this far, that both took their lamps, both lighted them, they both had oil in their lamps. The difference was not, that the wiſe had oil, and the fooliſh had none; but in this, that the wiſe took care of a future ſupply of oil to feed their lamps, when the firſt oil was ſpent. Some profeſſors, like fooliſh virgins, content themſelves with a blazing lamp of an outward profeſſion, without concerning themſelves to ſecure an inward principle of grace and love, which ſhould maintain that profeſſion, as the oil maintains the lamp. As the lamp will not hold burning without a ſtock of oil to feed it; ſo a profeſſion of religion, though never ſo glorious, will not be laſting nor perſevering without a principle of faith and love in the heart to ſupport and maintain it. *Learn* hence, That the true wiſdom of a chriſtian conſiſts in this, to take care, that not only the lamp of this life may ſhine by outward profeſſion, but that the veſſel of his heart may be furniſhed with the graces of the holy Spirit, as a prevailing and abiding principle.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumbered and ſlept.

That is, whilſt Chriſt delays his coming to perſons by death and judgment, they are not ſo diligent as they ought, to prepare themſelves for death and judgment. Inſtead of being upon their watch and guard, *they ſlumbered and ſlept. Note*, Not only viſible profeſſors, but the holieſt and beſt of chriſtians are very prone to ſpiritual ſlumber. Spiritual ſlumber conſiſts in this: when graces are not lively, and kept in exerciſe, particularly faith, hope, and love; when there is an abatement of our love and zeal, an intermiſſion of our care and watchfulneſs; this is a degree of ſpiritual ſlumber, yet the ſaints ſlumber is not a prevailing ſlumber, it is not an univerſal ſlumber, it is not in all the faculties of the ſoul; if there be deadneſs in the affections, yet there is not ſearedneſs in the conſcience. *I ſleep*, ſays the church, *but my heart awaketh*, Cant. v. 2. Still there is a principle in the ſoul which takes God's part, and the chriſtian groans under the burden of his dull and drowſy ſtate. But the greateſt wiſdom is, to maintain a conſtant watch, that we may at no time be ſurprized by the bridegroom's coming, or be in a confuſion when death and judgment ſhall overtake us. Bleſſed are thoſe virgins whoſe lamps always burn bright.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

At midnight, that is, at the moſt diſmal and unſeaſonable time, when all the virgins were faſt aſleep; and when, awakened in great affrightment, could not on a ſudden conſider what to do. Such is the caſe with thoſe who put off their repentance, and preparation for another world, till they are ſurprized by death and judgment. Lord, how will the midnight cry of the bridegroom's coming terrify and amaze the unprepared ſoul! What a ſurpriſing word will this be, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh!* *Learn* hence, That the bridegroom will certainly come, though at his own time; and then all ſhall be called upon, both prepared and unprepared, to go forth to meet him. Reaſon ſays he may come, becauſe there is a juſt God that will render to every one according to his deeds, and reward both body and ſoul for all the ſervices they have done for God. The body ſhall not always remain like a ſolitary widow in the duſt, but ſhall meet its old companion, the ſoul, again. And as reaſon ſays he may come, faith ſays he will come, and argues from the promiſe of Chriſt, John xiv. 3. and from the purchaſe of Chriſt; from Chriſt's affection to us, and from our affection to him: faith has ſeen him upon the croſs, and determines that ſhe ſhall ſee him in the clouds. The bridegroom will certainly come at his own time: happy they that are ready to *go forth to meet him.*

7 Then all thoſe virgins aroſe, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the fooliſh ſaid unto the wiſe, Give us of your oil: for our lamps are gone out.

The virgins ariſing and trimming their lamps, doth denote their actual preparation for Chriſt's coming and appearance, and their putting themſelves into a poſture of readineſs to receive him. Thence *learn*, That a believing apprehenſion of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of our Lord's coming and approach, will rouſe us out of our ſpiritual ſlumber, and prepare us to meet him with joy and aſſurance. *Then they aroſe, and trimmed their lamps. And the fooliſh ſaid to the wiſe, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.* *Obſerve* here, 1. A requeſt made, *Give us of your oil.* There is a time when the neglecters of grace will be made ſenſible of the worth of grace by the want of it. Such as now undervalue, yea, vilify the grace of God, will be heard to ſay, *O give us of your oil.* 2. The reaſon of the requeſt, *For our lamps are gone out.* Thence *learn*, That the lamp of profeſſion will certainly go out, which has not a ſtock of grace to feed and maintain it.

9 But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, *Not ſo*; leſt there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves.

Obſerve here, 1. The wiſe virgins denial, *Not ſo*; they will part with no oil. *Learn* thence, That it muſt be the care of every one to get grace of our own, otherwiſe the grace of others will do him good. It is not what others have done, nay, not what Chriſt himſelf has done, that will ſave us without our own endeavours. 2. The reaſon of their denial; *Leſt there be not enough for us and you.* Thence *note*, That ſuch chriſtians as have moſt grace, or the largeſt ſtock of grace, have none to ſpare; none to ſpare in regard of their occaſions for grace on earth, and in regard of their expectations of glory in heaven. 3. The advice and counſel given; *Go to them that ſell and buy for yourſelves.* Some take this for an exhortation, others for a mocking deriſion; *Go to them that ſell*; that is, ſay ſome, to the ſhop of the ordinances, where it may be had. Thence *note*, That ſuch as would have grace, muſt have timely recourſe to the ordinances and means of grace: *Go to them and buy.* Others underſtand the words ironically, and as ſpoken by way of deriſion, *Go to them that ſell*, if you know where to find them, and either buy or borrow for yourſelves. *Learn* thence, That it is the greateſt folly in the world, to have oil to buy when we ſhould have oil to burn: to have our grace to ſeek when we ſhould have it to exert and exerciſe. It is no time to get grace when the bridegroom is come, and the day of grace is paſt and over.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was ſhut.

Note here, 1. Chriſt will come at the great day to his people as a bridegroom, and to the wicked as a judge.—The relation now begun betwixt Chriſt and his church ſhall then be publicly ſolemnized. 2. The qualification of the perſons who ſhall enter with the bridegroom into heaven; *Such as were ready went in with him.* The readineſs is two-fold, habitual and actual: habitual readineſs conſiſts in the ſtate of the perſons (juſtified and pardoned) in the frame of the heart (ſanctified and renewed) and in the courſe of life, univerſally and perſeveringly holy and righteous, conſiſts our actual preparation. 3. The doleful condition of ſuch as were unready: the door is ſhut againſt them; the door of repentance, the door of hope, the door of ſalvation, all ſhut, eternally ſhut, *and by him that ſhutteth and none can open.* *Learn* hence, The utter impoſſibility of ever getting our condition altered by us, when the day of grace and ſalvation is once over with us. Wo to ſuch ſouls, who, by the folly of their own delays, have cauſed the door of converſion and remiſſion to be everlaſtingly ſhut againſt their own ſouls!

11 Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.

Note here, The virgins petition, and the bridegroom's reply. The petition, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* *Learn* hence, That how negligent ſoever men are of heaven and ſalvation here, there are none but will deſire it earneſtly and importunately hereafter: *Afterward*; that is, when too late.—*Note* farther, The bridegroom's reply, *I know ye not*; that is, I own and approve you not: there is a two-fold knowledge that Chriſt has; a knowledge of ſimple tuition, and a knowledge of ſpecial approbation; the former knowledge Chriſt has of all men, the latter only of good men. *Learn* hence, That it will be a dreadful miſery for any perſons, but eſpecially for ſuch as have been eminent profeſſors, to be diſowned by Chriſt at his coming, to hear that dreadful word from his mouth, *Verily I know you not.*

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Here we have our Lord's application of the foregoing parable, to be always upon our watch, continually upon our guard to meet the bridegroom in death and judgment, becauſe we know not the time of his coming and approach. *Learn* thence, That watchfulneſs and a prepared readineſs is a great duty that lies upon all thoſe that believe and look for Chriſt's coming and appearance. Happy ſouls!

who [illegible] found in a poſture of readineſs at the bridegroom's approach, ſtanding with *lamps trimmed*, *loins girded*, *lights burning!* that is, improving and exerciſing their graces, abounding in all the fruits of the Spirit, and in all the ſubſtantial virtues of a good life: ſuch and only ſuch ſhall have an entrance abundantly adminiſtered unto them in the everlaſting kingdom.

14 ¶ For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own ſervants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ſeveral ability; and ſtraightway took his journey.

Obſerve here, The perſon intruſting, Chriſt; the perſons intruſted, all chriſtians; the talents they are intruſted with, goods; that is, goods of providence, riches and honours; gifts of mind, wiſdom, parts, and learning; gifts of grace. All theſe goods Chriſt diſpenſes variouſly; more to ſome, fewer to others, but with expectation of improvement from all. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt is the Lord of the univerſe, and owner of all his ſervants goods and talents. 2. That every talent is given us by our Lord to improve and employ for our Maſter's uſe and ſervice. 3. That it pleaſes the Lord to diſpenſe his gifts variouſly among his ſervants, to ſome he commits more, to others fewer talents. 4. That to this Lord of ours every one of us muſt be accountable and reſponſible for every talent committed to us, and intruſted with us.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the ſame, and made *them* other five talents. 17 And likewiſe he that *had received* two, he alſo gained other two. 18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

The former verſes gave an account of the Lord's diſtribution; theſe acquaint us with the ſervants negociation. Some traded with, and made improvement of their talents, others traded not at all; yet it is not ſaid, they did embezzle their talent, but not improve it. *Learn*, It is not ſufficient to juſtify us, that we do not abuſe our talents; it is fault enough to hide them, and not improve them; the ſlothful ſervant ſhall no more eſcape puniſhment, than the waſteful ſervant.

19 After a long time the Lord of thoſe ſervants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And ſo he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, ſaying, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: Behold, I have gained beſides them five talents more. 21 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful ſervant: thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He alſo that had received two talents came, and ſaid, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beſides them. 23 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, good and faithful ſervant: thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Note here, 1. That the wiſdom of God diſpenſes his gifts and graces variouſly, as ſo many talents to his ſervants, to be employed and improved for his own glory, and his church's good. 2. That all ſuch ſervants as have received any talents, muſt look to reckon and account for them; that this account muſt be particular, perſonal, exact, and impartial. 3. That all ſuch ſervants as have been faithful in improving their talents, at Chriſt's coming, ſhall be both commended and rewarded alſo. *Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* Where *obſerve*, 1. The ſtate of the bleſſed is a ſtate of joy. 2. That the joy which the bleſſed partake of, is *the joy of their lord*; that is, the joy which he provides, and which he poſſeſſes. 3. That the way after which the ſaints partake of this joy, is, *by entering into it*, which denotes the higheſt and the fulleſt participation of it. The joy is too great to enter into them, they muſt enter into that; *Enter thou*, &c.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and ſaid, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou haſt *that is* thine. 26 His lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, *Thou* wicked and ſlothful ſervant, thou knoweſt that I reap where I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed: 27 Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury.

Obſerve here, 1. That he that had received but one talent, is called to an account as well as he that received five. Heathens that have but one talent, namely, the light of nature, muſt give an account of that one talent, as well as chriſtians that have five muſt account for five. 2. The ſlothful ſervant's allegation; *I knew thee to be an hard man, and I was afraid.* Where *note*, his prejudice againſt his maſter, and the effect of that prejudice, *he was afraid*; and the fruit of his fear, *he hid his talent in the earth.* Hence *learn*, That ſinners entertain in their minds very hard and unkind thoughts of God, they look upon him as an hard maſter, rigorous in his commands, and difficult to be pleaſed. 2. That ſuch hard thoughts of God do naturally occaſion ſlaviſh fear, which is a great hindrance to the fearful diſcharge of our duty to God, and alſo damps our zeal for the obſervance of ſocial duties to each other. 3. The maſter's reply to the ſlothful ſervant's allegation, which contains an exprobration, or upbraiding of him for his ſloth and negligence: *Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant.* *Note*, 1. The ſlothful ſervant is a wicked ſervant, as well as the unfaithful and unjuſt ſervant. 2. That wicked, and ſlothful ſervants, to excuſe themſelves, will not ſtick to charge their miſcarriages upon God himſelf: *Thou wert an hard man.* 3. That no excuſes whatſoever ſhall ſerve either the ſlothful or unfaithful ſervant at the bar of Chriſt.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath. 30 And caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

Theſe words contain the ſentence denounced by Chriſt upon the ſlothful ſervant: his puniſhment is firſt a puniſhment of loſs; *Take ye the talent from him.* *Learn* hence, That not improving the gifts of God given as talents to us, provokes God to take them from us, as well as miſimproving. *From him that hath not*; that is, from him that improveth not, *ſhall be taken that which he hath.* 2. Follows the puniſhment of ſenſe; *Caſt him into outer darkneſs, where is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* *Learn* thence, That hell is a place and ſtate of inexpreſſible miſery and torment: a diſmal place, as being deprived of the ſight and enjoyment of God, of Chriſt, of ſaints and of angels: a doleful place, full of overwhelming ſorrow and deſpairing grief. *The gnaſhing of their teeth* ſignifies their being full of rage and indignation againſt God, againſt the ſaints, and againſt themſelves.

31 ¶ When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. 32 And before him ſhall be gathered all nations: and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats: 33 And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

From hence to the end of the chapter, we have a draught and ſcheme of the general judgment. Where *obſerve*, The perſon judging, *the Son of man*; the perſons judged, *good and bad*; the one called *ſheep*, for their innocency and meekneſs; the other *goats*, for their unrulineſs and uncleanneſs. Alſo, The manner of his coming to judgment, moſt auguſt and glorious: glorious in his perſon, glorious in his attendance. *Learn*, That Chriſt's appearance at the great day to the judging of the world, will be a ſplendid and a glorious appearance: *He will come with power and in great glory*, in regard of the dignity of his perſon, and the quality of his office, and the greatneſs of his work. He will appear as a king in the midſt of his nobles, to take off the ſcandal and ignominy of the croſs; and, as a recompence for his abaſement and humiliation, to ſtrike the hearts of his enemies with dread and fear, and to fill the ſouls of his people with joy and confidence. Let us therefore propound it to our faith, to believe it; to our fear, to tremble at the thoughts of it; to our hope and love, that we may expect and wait, look and long for it. Farther, The work of this judge; he ſhall firſt *gather all nations.* *Learn*, That at the general judgment, all that have lived ſhall be ſummoned to the bar of Chriſt; perſons of all ſects, of all nations, of all conditions: having gathered them together, he ſhall next ſeparate them as a ſhepherd, his ſheep. *Learn* thence, That though there be a mixture and confuſion of the godly and the wicked here, yet at the day of judgment there will be a ſeparation made betwixt them, and they ſhall never come together more.

34 Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.

Here follows the ſentence which Chriſt will pronounce upon the righteous and the wicked at the great day: firſt, the ſentence of abſolution upon the righteous, then the ſentence of condemnation upon the wicked. *Learn*, That at the day of judgment the godly ſhall be abſolved before the wicked are condemned. The reaſons are, becauſe it is more delightful to God to reward than to puniſh, to ſave than to deſtroy; becauſe it is ſuitable to Chriſt's love to begin with his ſaints, and to be admired by them: alſo to put his ſaints out of fear as to their eternal condition, and to bring them near to himſelf, and to ſet them upon the throne with himſelf, as aſſeſſors and judges of the wicked world. 1 Cor. vi. 3. *Know ye not that the ſaints ſhall judge the world?* Laſtly, With reſpect to the wicked, that they may be the more affected with their loſs, and have a vexatious and tormenting ſenſe of that happineſs which they have refuſed. *Obſerve* next, The joyful ſentence pronounced, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father.* Where *note*, 1. The joyful compellation, *Ye bleſſed*: which term is oppoſed to theſe two things: 1. To the world's judgment of them, which accounts them vile and accurſed. Here is an abſolution from their unjuſt cenſures. 2. To the ſentence of the law, which pronounces all its tranſgreſſors accurſed, Gal. iii. 13. But, ſays Chriſt, I that have redeemed you from the curſe of the law, pronounce you *bleſſed.* But why *bleſſed of my Father?* 1. To point out the fontal cauſe of all our happineſs, the love of the Father, this *prepared the kingdom.* This expreſſion ſhews how the divine perſons glorify one another. As the Spirit glorifies the Son, ſo the Son glorifies the Father, and refers all to him. Therefore Chriſt ſays not, *Come, my redeemed ones*; but, *Come, ye bleſſed ones:* not, *Come, you that were redeemed by me*; but, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father*; *it is his good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.* *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his ſecond coming, will adjudge all his people into a ſtate of glorious and everlaſting happineſs, which his Father has prepared, and himſelf purchaſed for them.

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.

Here our Saviour ſets forth, not the meritorious cauſe of his ſaints happineſs, but the infallible ſigns of ſuch as ſhould inherit that happineſs, the character of the perſons that might expect it. Such as fed him, clothed and viſited him in his members. Where *note*, 1. That the godly having their ſins forgotten in this world, ſome would gather that there ſhould no mention be made of them in the day of judgment. For they obſerve, that Chriſt here only mentions the good works of his ſaints; *ye fed me*, *ye clothed me*, not a word of their failings. *Obſerve*, 2. That they are not the duties of the firſt, but of the ſecond table, which here Chriſt mentions, becauſe works of charity are more viſible to the world than works of piety. *Learn* hence, 1. That at the great day, every man's ſentence ſhall be pronounced according to his works. 2. That works of charity done out of love to Chriſt, ſhall be particularly obſerved, and bountifully rewarded by Chriſt at the great day. The queſtion then will be, not only how have you heard, prayed, or preached, but whom have you fed, clothed, and viſited? 3. That whatever good or evil is done to the poor members of Chriſt, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf; *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.* Chriſt perſonal is not the object of our pity and charity, but Chriſt myſtical is expoſed to want and neceſſity; he feels hunger and thirſt, cold and nakedneſs in his members, and is refreſhed and comforted in their refreſhments and comforts. He takes it as a courteſy, who might demand it by authority. How can we be cloſe-handed or hard hearted to the neceſſitous Chriſtians, did we ſteadily believe that in adminiſtering to them we miniſter refreſhments to Chriſt himſelf, who parted with the glory of heaven, yea with his heart's blood for us?

37 Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred and fed *thee?* or thirſty, and gave *thee* drink? 38 When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* 39 Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee? 43 And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, Inaſmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

Here we have a dialogue or interchangeable diſcourſe betwixt Chriſt and his faithful ſervants at the great day. Where *obſerve*, Their queſtion and his reply. Their queſtion, *Lord, when did we feed thee, clothe, or viſit thee?* We have forgot the time, though ſuch is thy goodneſs to remember it. *Learn* thence, That Chriſt keeps a faithful record of all our acts of pious charity, when we have forgotten them. If we remember to do good, Chriſt will be ſure to remember the good we have done; ay, and reward it as well as remember it. Again, this queſtion of theirs may proceed from admiration and wonder, and from an humble ſenſe of their own nothingneſs, and from the greatneſs of Chriſt's condeſcenſion, in taking notice of ſuch mean ſervices, and requiting them with ſuch a tranſcendent reward. *Learn* hence, That when Chriſt comes to reward his children and people, they will wonder and be aſtoniſhed at the poverty and meanneſs of their own ſervices, and at the tranſcendency and greatneſs of his rewards. *Obſerve* next, Our Lord's reply, *Inaſmuch as ye did it to the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye did it unto me.* Where *note*, 1. The title put by Jeſus Chriſt upon his pooreſt and meaneſt members, *My brethren.* 2. The reſentment of the kindneſs ſhewed to his brethren, *as ſhewn unto himſelf: Inaſmuch as ye did it to them, ye have done it unto me.* *Learn* thence, That ſuch is the endearing intimacy between Chriſt and his members, that whatſoever is done to any one of them, is eſteemed by him as done unto himſelf.

41 Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Here we have the ſentence of condemnation denounced againſt the wicked. Where *obſerve*, 1. The poſture in which they are found; *At Chriſt's left hand.* This doth not ſo much denote the ignominy of the place (though placing at the left hand is leſs honourable) as the impiety of their choice, they took up with left hand mercies, the mercies of the foot-ſtool, wealth and riches, dignity and honour. As for the good things, *which are at God's right hand for evermore*, they never ſought after theſe. Verily a man may know his future ſtate by his preſent choice. 2. The title given to wicked men, *Ye curſed.* Not curſed of my Father, becauſe curſing is God's ſtrange work; we force him to it, he delights not in it. 3. The ſentence itſelf. Where *note*, 1. The puniſhment of loſs, *Depart from me.* *Learn*, That it is the hell of hell to the damned, that they muſt everlaſtingly depart from, and loſe the comfortable fruition and enjoyment of God in Chriſt: it is to be deprived of an infinite good. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the ſun-ſhine of God's preſence never cometh. 2. The puniſhment of ſenſe, *Depart into everlaſting fire.* Where *note*, Its ſeverity, it is *fire*; its eternity, it is *everlaſting fire.* *Learn* thence, That there are everlaſting torments in hell prepared for the wicked; there is a ſtate of torment, and a place of torment provided by God. All princes have not only their palace, but their priſon. God has the palace of heaven, for the enjoyment of himſelf and his friends; and the priſon of hell for puniſhing his enemies. The nature of the damned's miſery is ſet out by *fire*; the whole man, body and ſoul, ſhall be tormented in it: (1.) The body in all its members; their eyes with affrighting ſpectacles, *the devil and his angels*, and their old companions in ſin: every time they behold theſe, it revives their guilt, and enrages their deſpair. Their ears are filled with yellings and howlings, and hideous cries. (2.) The ſoul ſhall ſuffer in hell by reflecting upon its own choice, by remembering time ſinfully waſted, ſeaſons of grace ſadly ſlighted, the mercies of God unworthily abuſed. Lord! how will the remembrance of paſt mercies aggravate preſent miſeries! *Note* farther, 1. That Chriſt ſaith not of the puniſhment, as he doth of the bleſſing, that it was prepared from the beginning of the world, leſt it ſhould be thought that God deſigned men's puniſhment before they ſinned. 2. That although Chriſt ſaith, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father*, he ſaith not, *Go, ye curſed of my Father*; becauſe God is the author and procurer of mens happineſs, but man only is the author of his own miſery. 3. That our Saviour ſpeaks of this eternal miſery by fire, as deſigned originally not for man, but for the devil and his angels; but man, by giving up himſelf to the power and thraldom of ſin and Satan, and working himſelf down to the infernal regions, becomes like unto him in torments, whom he ſo much reſembled in manners and qualities.

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; 43 I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. 44 Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? 45 Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily I ſay unto you, Inaſmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did *it* not to me.

Obſerve here, 1. How Chriſt lays the charge of the wicked's damnation upon themſelves alone, *Ye gave me no meat, ye took me not in*; man, and man alone, is the cauſe of his own deſtruction and damnation. 2. The kind of ſin charged on the wicked at the great day. Conſider it firſt in general, it is a ſin of omiſſion. Whence *learn*, That ſins of omiſſion are certainly damning, as well as ſins of commiſſion. Conſider it 2. In particular, it is a ſin of unmercifulneſs, or want of love to Chriſt and his members. *Learn* thence, That one reigning ſin, one prevailing corruption, is enough to damn a perſon, becauſe it deprives a man of the grace and goſpel, and excludes him from all the benefit of the promiſes. *Note*, laſtly, If ſuch as do not give to Chriſt in his members, ſhall be miſerable at the great day, what will the condition of them be that take from them, who ſtrip and ſtarve them, who perſecute and hate them, who impriſon or baniſh them? If the uncharitable ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved, yea ſhall certainly be damned; where ſhall the unmerciful and cruel appear!

46 And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Obſerve here, 1. That though the righteous are firſt judged, yet the ſentence is firſt executed on the wicked. *Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment.* 2. That mens ſtates and conditions in another world will be different, as their ways and doings have been in this world. 3. That everlaſting life ſhall be the porion of the godly, and everlaſting puniſhment the portion of the wicked. God grant that the horrors of eternal darkneſs, and the diſmal thoughts of a miſerable eternity, may effectually diſcourage every one of us from a wicked and impenitent courſe of life! *For who can dwell with devouring fire! Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings!*

CHAP. XXVI.

AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſhed all theſe ſayings, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is *the feaſt* of the paſſover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3 Then aſſembled together the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high prieſt, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And conſulted that they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and kill *him*. 5 But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-day, leſt there be an uproar among the people.

Several things are here *obſervable*; as, 1. The perſons conſpiring againſt our bleſſed Redeemer's life, namely, the *chief prieſts, and ſcribes and elders*, that is, the whole *ſanhedrim*, or general council of the Jewiſh church: Theſe lay their malicious heads together, to contrive the deſtruction of the innocent Jeſus. Here was a general council of them, conſiſting of prieſts, doctors, and elders, with the high prieſt their preſident, yet erring in a point of doctrine concerning the Meſſiah, not believing Jeſus to be the Son of God, notwithſtanding all the convincing miracles which he had wrought before them. 2. The manner of this conſpiracy againſt our Saviour's life; it was clandeſtine, ſecret, and ſubtile: *They conſulted how they might take him by ſubtilty and kill him.* *Learn* hence, That Satan makes uſe of the ſubtilty of crafty men, and abuſeth their parts as well as their power, for his own purpoſes. Satan never ſends a fool on his errand. *Obſerve*, 3. The time when this conſpiracy was managed; *at the time of the paſſover.* Indeed at firſt the chief prieſts did not incline to that time, *fearing a tumult and uproar among the people*; but Judas preſenting them with a fair opportunity to apprehend him, they changed their purpoſe; and accordingly, at the feaſt of the paſſover our Saviour ſuffered. This was not without a myſtery, that Chriſt, the true Lamb of God, whom the paſchal lamb typified and repreſented, ſhould be offered up at *the feaſt of the paſſover:* Signifying thereby, that he was the true paſchal lamb, and that the legal ſhadow ought to ceaſe in the exhibition of him. *Learn* hence, That not only the death of Chriſt in general, but all the circumſtances relating to it, were fore-ordained by God himſelf; as the place where, at Jeruſalem; the time when, *at the feaſt of the paſſover*; that time did God deviſe beſt for this Lamb to be a ſacrifice.

6 ¶ Now when Jeſus was in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alablaſter box of very precious ointment, and poured *it* on his head as he ſat at *meat*.

This woman, St. John ſays, was Mary, the ſiſter of Lazarus, who to ſhew her love to Chriſt, and put honour upon him, took a precious box of ointment, and poured it upon our Saviour's head, according to the cuſtom of the eaſtern countries, who uſed ſo to do at their feaſts and banquets; to which David alludes, *Pſal.* xxiii. 5. *Learn* hence, 1. That where true love to Chriſt prevails in the heart, nothing is adjudged too dear for Chriſt. This box of ointment murmuring Judas valued at three hundred pence; which, reckoning the Roman penny at ſeven-pence half-penny, makes of our money nine pounds ſeven ſhillings and ſixpence. Love (we ſee) ſpares for no coſt, but where the eſteem of Chriſt is high, the affection will be ſtrong. 2. That where ſtrong love prevails towards Jeſus Chriſt, it ſuffers not itſelf to be out-ſhined by any examples,

amples. The weakeſt woman that ſtrongly loved Jeſus Chriſt, will piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt apoſtle to expreſs the fervour of her love unto him. I do not find any of the apoſtles at ſo much coſt to put honour upon Chriſt, as this poor woman was at. Love knows no bounds, no meaſures.

8 But when his diſciples ſaw *it*, they had indignation, ſaying, To what purpoſe is this waſte? 9 For this ointment might have been ſold for much, and given to the poor.

That is, when Judas, and ſome other diſciples whom he had influenced, ſaw this action, they murmured; particularly, Judas blamed this holy woman for needleſs prodigality, and did tacitly reflect upon Chriſt himſelf, for ſuffering that waſteful expence. O! how doth a covetous heart think every thing too good for Chriſt: He that ſees a pious action well done, and ſeeks to undervalue it, ſhews himſelf poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of envy. Judas's invidious ſpirit makes him cenſure an action which Chriſt highly approved. *Learn* thence, That men who know not our hearts, may, through ignorance or prejudice, cenſure and condemn thoſe actions which God doth commend, and will graciouſly reward. Happy for this poor woman, that ſhe had a more righteous judge to paſs ſentence upon her action than wicked Judas!

10 When Jeſus underſtood *it*, he ſaid unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have poor always with you, but me ye have not always. 12 For in that ſhe hath poured this ointment on my body, ſhe did *it* for my burial.

Obſerve here, How readily our Lord vindicates this good woman: She ſays nothing for herſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſuch an advocate. 1. Chriſt rebukes Judas, *Why trouble ye the woman?* Plainly intimating, that it is no ſmall trouble to a gracious ſpirit, to find their good work miſinterpreted and miſrepreſented: Next, he defends the action, calling it a good work, becauſe done out of a principle of love to Chriſt; *ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me:* And laſtly, He gives the reaſon of her action, *ſhe did it for my burial.* As kings and great perſons were wont in thoſe eaſtern countries, at their funerals, to be embalmed with odours and ſweet perfumes; ſo, ſays our Saviour, this woman, to declare her faith in me as her King and Lord, doth with this box of ointment, as it were beforehand, embalm my body for its burial. True faith puts honour upon a crucified, as well as a glorified Saviour. The holy woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all honour in his death, believing it would be a ſweet ſmelling ſacrifice unto God, and the ſavour of life unto his people. *Note* farther, From theſe words, *But me ye have not always*, the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is overthrown: For if Chriſt be, as to ſoul, body and divinity, perpetually preſent in the hoſt amongſt thoſe of the church of Rome, then have they Chriſt always with them: Contrary to what our Saviour here declares; though his poor members would be always preſent with them, yet he himſelf ſhould not be ſo: *The poor ye have always, but me ye have not always.*

13 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached in the world, *there* ſhall alſo this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

Our Saviour having defended this holy woman from the calumny of Judas in the foregoing verſes, in this he declares, that ſhe ſhould be rewarded with an honourable memorial in all ages of the church; *Whereſoever the goſpel is preached, this ſhall be ſpoken of her.* O what care doth Chriſt take to have the good deeds of his children not buried in the duſt with them, but be had in *everlaſting remembrance!* Though ſin cauſes men to rot above ground, to ſtink alive; and when they are dead, leaves an inglorious memory upon their graves, yet will the actions of the juſt ſmell ſweet, and bloſſom in the duſt. *Learn* hence, That we may laudably proſecute that which will procure us a good name, and ſpread our reputation to future ages.

14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iſcariot, went unto the chief prieſts, 15 And ſaid *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of ſilver. 16 And from that time he ſought opportunity to betray him.

Note here, 1. The perſon betraying our bleſſed Redeemer, *Judas:* Judas, a profeſſor; Judas, a preacher; Judas, an apoſtle, *and one of the twelve* whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the world to be his deareſt friends, and his own family and houſhold. Shall we wonder to find friends unfriendly and unfaithful towards us, when our Saviour had a traitor in his own houſe? 2. The heinouſneſs of his ſin in betraying Chriſt: He betrayed Chriſt Jeſus, a man; Chriſt Jeſus his maſter; Chriſt Jeſus his maker: the firſt was murder, the ſecond treaſon. *Learn* thence, that it is no ſtrange or uncommon thing, for the vileſt of ſins, and moſt horrid impieties, to be acted by ſuch perſons as make the moſt eminent profeſſion of holineſs and religion. 3. What was the ſin occaſioning and leading Judas to the committing of this horrid ſin; it was covetouſneſs. I do not find that Judas had any particular malice againſt Chriſt's perſon, but a baſe and unworthy ſpirit of covetouſneſs poſſeſſed him; this made him ſell his maſter. Covetouſneſs is the root-ſin, an inordinate deſire and love of riches, an eager and unſatiable thirſt after the world, is the parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural ſins: Therefore remember we our Saviour's caution Luke xii. 15. *Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*; he doubles the caution, to ſhew us both the great danger of the ſin, and the great care we ought to take to preſerve ourſelves from it. 4. How ſmall a ſum tempted the covetous mind of Judas to betray his maſter, *thirty pieces of ſilver*; which amounted but to three pound fifteen ſhillings of our money. This was the price of a ſlave or common ſervant, Exod. xxi. As Chriſt took upon him the form of a ſervant, ſo his life was valued at the rate of an ordinary ſervant's life. It may ſeem a wonder, that the high prieſts ſhould offer no more for the life of our Saviour, and that Judas ſhould accept ſo little; ſeeing that his covetouſneſs was ſo great, and their rage ſo grievous, how comes it to paſs that he demands ſo little, and that they offer no more? Had the reward been proportioned to the greatneſs of their malice, it had been thirty thouſand rather than thirty pieces of ſilver. But the ſcripture muſt be fulfilled; accordingly the wiſdom of God over-ruled this matter, for fulfilling that prophecy, Zech. xi. 12. *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver.* Let not any chriſtian be concerned that he is deſpiſed and undervalued; he can never meet with ſo great a reproach, ſo low an abaſement for Chriſt, as Chriſt underwent for him. *Obſerve* laſtly, Judas's folly, as well as treachery; he that might have demanded what he pleaſed for this purchaſe, *he ſays unto the chief prieſts, What will ye give me?* As if he had ſaid, "I am reſolved to ſell him at any rate, give me what you will for him." Nay, farther, Judas covenanted, and they promiſed, but whether it was now paid, appeareth not. *Learn,* That ſuch a perſon as has a vile and baſe eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt, will part with him upon any terms. The bare expectation of a few ſhekels of ſilver, will make ſuch a one willing to part with the pearl of great price. Wonder not then to ſee ſome perſons ſelling their country, their friends, their God, and their religion, for money. Judas did ſo before them.

17 ¶ Now the firſt *day* of the *feaſt* of unleavened bread, the diſciples came to Jeſus, ſaying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the paſſover? 18 And he ſaid, Go unto the city to ſuch a man, and ſay unto him, The Maſter ſaith, My time is at hand; I will keep the paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples. 19 And the diſciples did as Jeſus had appointed them, and they made ready the paſſover.

The time for the celebration of the paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends two of his diſciples to Jeruſalem, to prepare things neceſſary, in order thereunto: Accordingly, they enter the city, and find the maſter of an houſe, whoſe heart Chriſt, by his divine power, had ſo inclined, that he willingly accommodated them upon this occaſion. Our bleſſed Saviour had not a lamb of his own, and poſſibly no money in his purſe to buy one, but he finds as excellent accommodations in this poor man's houſe, as if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory palace, and had had the proviſions of Solomon's table. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt has ſuch an influence upon, and command over the ſpirits of men, that he can incline them to do what ſervice ſoever he pleaſeth for him. When Chriſt has a paſſover to celebrate, he will prepare an houſe, and diſpoſe the heart to a free reception of himſelf. 2. That Chriſt being under the law, obſerves and keeps the law of the paſſover. Thus he fulfilled all righteouſneſs; and although the ceremonial law was to receive its aboliſhment in the death of Chriſt, yet all the time of his life he punctually obſerves it.

20 Now when the even was come, he ſat down with the twelve.

Note here, The impudent forehead of this bold traitor Judas, who preſumed, as ſoon as he had ſold his maſter, to ſit down at the table with him, and partake with the other diſciples of the ſolemn ordinance of the paſſover: Had the preſence of Judas polluted the ordinance to any beſide himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would never have permitted this bold intruſion. *Learn* hence, 1. That nothing is more ordinary, than for unholy perſons preſumptuouſly to ruſh in upon the ſolemn ordinances of God, which they have no right, whilſt ſuch, to partake of. 2. That the preſence of ſuch perſons pollutes the ordinances only to themſelves; holy perſons are not polluted by the ſins of ſuch: *For to the pure all things are pure.*

21 And as they did eat, he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me.

What an aſtoniſhing word was this! "One of you my diſciples ſhall betray me." Can any church on earth expect purity in all its members, when Chriſt's own family of twelve had a traitor and devil in it? Yet though it was very ſad to hear that one ſhould betray him, it was matter of joy that it was but one; one hypocrite in a congregation is too much, but there is a cauſe of rejoicing if there be no more. But why did not Chriſt name Judas, and ſay, "Thou art he that ſhall betray me?" Doubtleſs to draw him to repentance, and to prevent giving Judas any provocation. Lord, how ſad is it for ſuch as pretend friendſhip to Chriſt, and call themſelves of his family and acquaintance, *who eat of his bread, and yet lift up the heel againſt him!*

22 And they were exceeding ſorrowful, and began every one of them to ſay unto him, Lord, is it I?

Note here, 1. The diſciples ſorrow, and next the effect of that ſorrow. Their ſorrow was (as well it might) exceeding great. Well might innocent diſciples be overwhelmed with ſorrow, to hear that their Maſter ſhould die; that he ſhould die by treaſon; that the traitor ſhould be one of themſelves. But though their ſorrow was great, yet was the effect of their ſorrow very good; it wrought in them a holy ſuſpicion of themſelves, and cauſed every one to ſearch himſelf, and ſay, *Maſter, is it I?* Thence *learn,* That it is poſſible for ſuch ſecret wickedneſs to lurk in our hearts as we never ſuſpected, which time and temptation may draw forth in ſuch a manner as we could not believe; and therefore it is both wiſe and holy to ſuſpect ourſelves, and to be often ſaying, *Lord, is it I?* There is no better preſervative from ſin, than to be jealous over ourſelves with a godly jealouſy. *Note* farther, That though the diſciples fear and ſorrow made them jealous and ſuſpicious, yet was it of themſelves, not of one another, nay, not of Judas himſelf: Every one ſaid, *Maſter, Is it I?* Not, *Maſter, Is it Judas?* *Learn* hence, That true ſincerity and chriſtian charity will make us more ſuſpicious of ourſelves than of any other perſon whatſoever; it always hopes the beſt of others, and fears the worſt concerning ourſelves.

23 And he anſwered and ſaid, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, Is it I? He ſaid unto him, Thou haſt ſaid.

Here our Saviour acquaints his diſciples who it was that had deſigned his death, even he that dipped with him in the diſh, or he to whom he gave the ſop. *Obſerve*, The traitor whom Chriſt loved, he has the ſop given to him; the other diſciples, whom Chriſt loved better, had no ſuch particular boon. Outward good things are not always given to the children of men in love, but are ſometimes beſtowed in diſpleaſure; there is no meaſuring of Chriſt's affection by temporal bleſſings, no concluding either love or hatred by theſe things. Farther, How Judas could ſit ſtill, and hear the threats of judgment denounced againſt himſelf without concern; he hears Chriſt ſay, *Wo to the man by whom the Son of man is betrayed*, and is no more blanked than innocence itſelf: reſolved ſinners run on deſperately in their wicked courſes, and with open eyes ſee and meet their own deſtruction, and are neither diſmayed at it, nor concerned about it. *Note*, That this ſhameleſs man had the impudence to ſay to Chriſt, *Maſter, Is it I?* Our Saviour gives him a direct affirmation, *Thou haſt ſaid.* Did Judas, think ye, bluſh, and caſt down his guilty eyes, and let fall his drooping head at ſo galling an intimation? Nothing leſs. Lord, how does obduracy in ſin ſteel the brow, and make it incapable of all relenting impreſſions? Laſtly, How Chriſt prefers non-entity before damnation: *It had been better for that man if he had never been born.* A temporal miſerable being is not worſe than no being, but an eternal miſerable being is worſe than no being at all; eternal miſery is much worſe than non-entity. *It had been better for Judas if he had never been born*, than to commit ſuch a ſin, and lie under ſuch wrath, and that everlaſting. O better to have no being, than not to have a being in Chriſt;—for, through him alone we can only obtain ſalvation.

26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new teſtament which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins. 29 But I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Immediately after the celebration of the paſſover, follows the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper. In which *obſerve*, 1. The author of this new ſacrament, *Jeſus took bread.* *Note* thence, That to inſtitute a ſacrament is the ſole prerogative of Chriſt: it is the church's duty to celebrate the ſacraments, but ſhe has power to make none—this belongs only to Chriſt. 2. The time of the inſtitution, the night before his paſſion: *The night before he was betrayed*, &c. Thence *learn*, That it is very neceſſary, when ſufferings are approaching, to have recourſe to the table of the Lord, which affords both an antidote againſt fear, and is a reſtorative to faith. 3. The ſacramental elements, *bread and wine*; *bread* repreſenting his body, and *wine* his blood. 4. The miniſterial actions, *the breaking of the bread, and the bleſſing of the cup.* As to the bread, *Jeſus took it*; that is, ſet it apart from common uſe, and ſeparated it for holy ends and purpoſes. *He bleſſed it:* that is, prayed for a bleſſing upon it: *and brake it*, thereby ſhadowing forth his body broken upon the croſs: and he *gave it to his diſciples, ſaying*, "This broken bread ſignifies my body ſuddenly to be broken upon the croſs for your redemption and ſalvation, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and of my death." Thus the ſcriptures conſtantly ſpeak in ſacramental matters. So circumciſion is called the *covenant*, and the lamb *the paſſover*. In like manner here, the bread is called *Chriſt's body*, becauſe inſtituted to repreſent to all future ages his body broken. Moreover, how could the diſciples think they had eaten Chriſt's body, when they ſaw his body whole before them? And beſides, to eat human fleſh, and drink blood, was not only againſt the expreſs letter of the law, but abhorred by all mankind. True it is, that the heathens laid it to the chriſtians charge, that they eat human fleſh, but falſly, as it appears from the apology made for the primitive chriſtians; which apology had been falſe, had they daily eaten the fleſh of Chriſt in the ſacrament. The very heathens owned it a thing more deteſtable than death to eat human fleſh, and more to eat the God they worſhip, and to devour him whom they pretended to adore. Again, as to the cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by prayer and thankſgiving, he commands his diſciples *to drink all of it*, and ſubjoins a reaſon for it, for *this is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for remiſſion of ſins*: That is, the wine in this cup repreſents the ſhedding of my blood, by which the new covenant between God and man was ratified and confirmed. Whence we *learn*, That every communicant has as undoubted a right to a cup as to the bread, in the Lord's ſupper: *Drink ye all of it*, ſays Chriſt: therefore to deny the cup to the laity, is contrary to the inſtitution of Chriſt. After the celebration was over, our Saviour and his diſciples ſang an hymn, as the Jews were wont to do at the paſſover, the ſix euchariſtical pſalms, from the 113th to the 119th pſalm. *Learn* hence, How fit it is that God be glorified in his church, by ſinging of pſalms, and in particular when the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is celebrated. *When they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

31 Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad.

Here our Saviour acquaints his diſciples, that by reaſon of his approaching ſufferings, they ſhould all of them be ſo exceedingly offended, that they would certainly forſake and leave him: which accordingly came to paſs. Thence *learn*, That Chriſt's deareſt friends forſook him, and left him alone in the midſt of his greateſt diſtreſs and danger. 2. What was the cauſe of this their flight, it was the prevalency of their fear. Thence *note*, how ſad it is for the holieſt and beſt of men to be left under the power of their own fears in a day of temptation.

32 But after I am riſen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Obſerve here, The wonderful lenity of Chriſt towards his timorous and fearful diſciples; notwithſtanding their cowardly flight from him, he tells them he would not forſake them, but love them ſtill; and as an evidence of it, would meet them in Galilee: *I will go before you into Galilee*; there ſhall you ſee me. And when they did ſee him, he never upbraided them with their timorouſneſs, but was friends with them, notwithſtanding their late cowardice.—Chriſt's love to his diſciples is like himſelf, unchangeable and everlaſting. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.*

33 Peter anſwered and ſaid unto him, Though all *men* ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, *yet* will I never be offended. 34 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples.

See here what ſtrong purpoſes and ſettled reſolutions both Peter and all the apoſtles had to keep cloſe to Chriſt; but how did their ſelf-confidence fail them! Thence *learn*, That ſelf-confidence is a ſin, too, too incident to the holieſt and beſt of men. *Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I.* Good man, he reſolved honeſtly; but too, too much in his own ſtrength. Little, little did he think what a feather he ſhould be in the wind of temptation, if once God left him to the power and prevalence of his own fears.—*Note*, That the reſt of the apoſtles had the like confident opinion of their own ſtrength with St. Peter. *Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.* Alſo, That the holieſt men know not their own ſtrength till it comes to the trial. Little did theſe good men imagine what a cowardly ſpirit they had in them, till temptation put it to the proof.

36 ¶ Then cometh Jeſus with them unto a place called Gethſemane, and ſaith unto the diſciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two ſons of Zebedee, and began to be ſorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*. 40 And he cometh unto the diſciples, and findeth them aſleep, and ſaith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed *is* willing, but the fleſh *is* weak. 42 He went away again the ſecond time, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if this cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them aſleep again; for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame words.

Our bleſſed Saviour being now come with his diſciples into the garden, he falls there into a bitter and bloody agony, in which he prayed with wonderful fervency and importunity to his heavenly Father. His ſufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his knees, and would be found in a praying poſture. Thence *learn*, That prayer is the beſt preparative for, as well as the moſt powerful ſupport under the heavieſt ſufferings that can befal us. As to this prayer of our Saviour's in the garden, many things are very obſervable: as, 1. The place where he prayed, *in the garden*; but why went he thither? Was it to hide or ſhelter himſelf from his enemies? Nothing leſs; for, if ſo, it had been the moſt improper place, becauſe he was wont to retire thither to pray, John xviii. 2. *Judas knew the place, for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither*; ſo that Chriſt went thither not to ſhun, but to prepare himſelf by prayer to meet his enemies. 2. The time when he entered the garden for prayer, it was the evening; here he ſpent ſome hours in pouring out his ſoul to God; for about midnight Judas and the ſoldiers came, and apprehended him in a praying poſture. *Teaching* us by his example, that when imminent dangers are before us, eſpecially when death is apprehended by us, to be very much in prayer to God, and very fervent in our wreſtling with him. 3. The matter of our Lord's prayer, *that if poſſible the cup might paſs from him:* that is, thoſe bitter ſufferings which were then before him; particularly the inſupportable burden of his Father's wrath. He prays, if poſſible, that his Father would excuſe him from this dreadful wrath, his ſoul being amazed at it. But what! Did Chriſt then begin to repent of his undertaking for ſinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when it came to the pinch? No, no; as Chriſt had two natures, being God and man, ſo he had two diſtinct wills; as man, he feared and ſhunned death; as God-man, he willingly ſubmitted to it: the divine Spirit and the human nature of Chriſt did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing intereſts, till at laſt victory was got on the Spirit's ſide. Again, this prayer was not abſolute, but conditional, *If it be poſſible. Father*, if it may be, if thou art willing, if it pleaſe thee, *let it paſs*; if not, I will drink it. *Learn* hence, 1. That the cup of ſufferings is in itſelf conſidered as a very bitter and diſtaſteful cup, which human nature abhors, and cannot but deſire and pray may paſs from it. 2. That yet oft-times the wiſdom of God is pleaſed to put this bitter cup of affliction into the hands of thoſe whom he doth moſt ſincerely love. 3. That when God doth ſo, it is their duty to drink it with humble ſubmiſſion, and cheerful reſignation. *Not my will, but thine be done.* 4. The manner how our Lord prayed; and here we ſhall find it, 1. A ſolitary prayer; he went by himſelf alone, out of the hearing of his diſciples; he ſaid unto them, *Tarry ye here, while I go and pray yonder.* *Note,* Chriſt did neither deſire his diſciples to pray with him, or to pray for him. No, he muſt tread the wine-preſs alone; not but that Chriſt loved and delighted in his diſciples company; but there were occaſions when he thought fit to leave them, and go alone to God in prayer. Thence *learn,* That the company of our beſt friends is not always ſeaſonable. Peter, James, and John were three good men; but Chriſt bids them tarry, while he went aſide for private prayer. There are times and caſes when a chriſtian would not be willing that the deareſt friend he has in the world ſhould be with him, or underſtand and hear what paſſes betwixt him and his God. 2. This prayer of Chriſt was an humble prayer; that is evident, by the poſtures into which he caſt himſelf; ſometimes *kneeling,* ſometimes *lying proſtrate upon his face.* He lyes in the very duſt; lower he cannot fall; and his heart was as low as his body. And ſuch was the fervour of his ſpirit, that he prayed himſelf into an agony. O let us bluſh to think how unlike we are to Chriſt in prayer, as to our praying frame of ſpirit! Lord, what drowſineſs and deadneſs, what lazineſs and dulneſs, what ſtupidity and formality is found in our prayers? How often do our lips move and our hearts ſtand ſtill? 3. It was a repeated and reiterated prayer. *He prayed the firſt, ſecond, and third time.* He returns upon God over and over, plies him again and again, reſolving to take no denial. *Learn* thence, That chriſtians ought not to be diſcouraged, though they have beſought God again and again for a particular mercy, and no anſwer of prayer has come unto them. *Obſerve* alſo, How our Lord uſed the ſame prayer three times over, *ſaying the ſame words.* A perſon then may pray with and by a form of prayer, and yet not pray formally, but in a very acceptable manner unto God. Chriſt both gave a form of prayer unto his diſciples, and alſo uſed one himſelf. *Obſerve* next, The poſture in which our holy Lord found his own diſciples, when he was in his agony; *they were ſleeping,* when he was praying. O wonderful! that they could ſleep at ſuch a time. Hence we gather, That the beſt of Chriſt's diſciples may be ſometimes overtaken with infirmities, with great infirmities, when the moſt important duties are performing. *He cometh to his diſciples, and findeth them ſleeping.* *Obſerve* farther, The gentle reproof he gave the diſciples for ſleeping; *What! could you not watch with me one hour?* Could not you watch, when your Maſter is in ſuch danger? Could not you watch with me when I am going to deliver up my life for you? What, not one hour, and that the parting hour too? After this reprehenſion, he ſubjoins an exhortation; *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;* and ſuperadds a forcible reaſon, *For though the ſpirit is willing, yet the fleſh is weak.* Thence *learn,* That the holieſt and beſt reſolved chriſtians, who have willing ſpirits for Chriſt and his ſervice, yet in regard of the weakneſs of the fleſh, of the frailty of human nature, it is their duty to watch and pray, and thereby guard themſelves againſt temptations. *Watch and pray—for though the ſpirit is willing, yet the fleſh is weak;* though you have ſincerely reſolved rather to die with me than deny me, yet be aſſured, that when temptation actually aſſaults you, when fear and ſhame, pain and ſuffering, death and danger are before you, and preſent to your ſenſe, the weakneſs of your fleſh will prevail over theſe reſolutions, if you do not watch diligently and pray fervently for divine aſſiſtance.

45 Then cometh he to his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* reſt: Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 46 Riſe, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. 47 ¶ And while he yet ſpake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves from the chief prieſts and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he: hold him faſt. 49 And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid, Hail, Maſter; and kiſſed him. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and took him.

Our Saviour having poured out his ſoul in prayer to God in the garden, he is now ready, and waits for the coming of his enemies; being firſt in the field: Accordingly, *while he yet ſpake, came Judas, one of the twelve,* and under his conduct a band of ſoldiers, to apprehend him. It was the lot and portion of our bleſſed Redeemer to be betrayed into the hands of his mortal enemies, by the treachery of a falſe and diſſembling friend. *Note* here, The traitor, treaſon, the manner how, and the time when this treaſonable deſign was executed. *Note,* 1. The betrayer, Judas: All the evangeliſts carefully deſcribe him by his name Judas, by his ſirname Iſcariot; leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for Jude the brother of James. God is tender and careful of the names and reputations of his upright hearted ſervants. He is alſo deſcribed by office, *One of the twelve.* The eminence of his place and ſtation was an high aggravation of his tranſgreſſion: Nay, in ſome reſpect, he was preferred above the reſt, having a peculiar truſt repoſed in him; he bare the bag; that is, he was almoner and ſteward of Chriſt's family to take care for the neceſſary accommodations of Chriſt and his apoſtles; and yet this man, thus called, thus honoured, thus reſpectfully treated by Chriſt, for the lucre of a little money, perfidiouſly betrays him. O, whither will not a bad heart and a buſy devil carry a man? Hence *learn,* 1. That the greateſt profeſſors had need be jealous of their own hearts, and look well to the grounds and principles of their profeſſion. A profeſſion begun in hypocriſy, will certainly end in apoſtacy. 2. That perſons are never in ſuch imminent danger, as when the meet with temptations exactly ſuited to their maſter-luſt. Coveteouſneſs was Judas's maſter-ſin; the love of the world made him a ſlave to Satan, and the devil lays a temptation before him, which ſuits his temper, hits his humour, and it prevails imme diately. O pray, pray, that ye may be kept from a ſtrong and ſuitable temptation, a temptation ſuited to your predominent luſt and inclination. *Note* 2. As the betrayer Judas, ſo the treaſon itſelf with its aggraviting circumſtances: he led an armed multitude to the place where Chriſt was, gave them a ſignal to diſcover him, and encouraged them to lay hands upon him, and *hold him faſt*. This was the helliſh deſign Satan put into his heart, and it has theſe aggravating circumſtances attending it. He had ſeen the miracles which Chriſt wrought by the power of God, and could not but know him to be a divine perſon. He could not ſin out of ignorance or blind zeal: the love of money made him do what he did. Farther, what he did, was not done by the perſuaſions of any, but he was a volunteer in this ſervice. The high-prieſt neither ſent to him, nor ſent for him, but he offers his ſervice; and no doubt they were very much ſurprized to find one of our Lord's own diſciples at the head of a conſpiracy againſt him. Hence *learn*, That no man knows where he ſhall ſtop or ſtand when he firſt enters the way to ſin: ſhould any one have told Judas, that his love of money would at laſt ſo far prevail upon him, as to make him ſell the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, he would have anſwered, as Hazael did Eliſha, *Is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do this thing?* Wickedneſs, like holineſs, doth not preſently come to its full ſtrength in the ſoul, but grows up by inſenſible degrees. Men do not commence maſters in the art of villainy in an inſtant; they begin firſt with leſſer, then with greater ſins; firſt with ſecret, then with open ſins. Doubtleſs Judas was an old, though ſecret ſinner; ſurely he could not immediately attain to ſuch an height of impudence, and ſo great a degree of ſtupidity. Hear, ye profeſſors of religion, ye that partake of ordinances, frequent ſacraments; take heed of living as Judas did, in the allowed commiſſion of any ſecret ſin, to the waſting of your conſciences, and the deſtroying of your ſouls. 3. The manner this helliſh plot was executed; partly by force, and partly by fraud: By force, in that he came *with a multitude armed with ſwords and ſtaves*: And by fraud, *he gives him a kiſs, and ſays, Hail, Maſter*. Here was honey in the tongue, and poiſon in the heart. This treacherous kiſs enhanced his crime beyond expreſſion. O vileſt of hypocrites, how durſt thou approach ſo near thy Lord in the exerciſe of ſo much baſeneſs and ingratitude! But none ſin with ſo much impudence and obſtinacy as apoſtates. *Learn* we hence, To beware of men: when we ſee too, too glittering appearances, we may ſuſpect the inſide. Charity for others is our duty, but too great confidence may be our ſnare. There is ſo much hypocriſy in many, and ſo much corruption in all, that we muſt not be too confident. 4. The time when this treaſonable deſign was executed upon Chriſt, when he was in the garden with his diſciples, exhorting them to prayer and watchfulneſs, dropping heavenly and moſt ſeaſonable counſels upon them, Judas found our Saviour in the moſt heavenly and excellent employment, when he came to apprehend him. O how happy is it, when our ſufferings find us in God's way, engaged in his ſervice, and engaging his aſſiſtance by fervent ſupplication! Thus did our Lord's ſufferings meet him: may they ſo meet us.

51 And behold, one of them which were with Jeſus ſtretched out *his* hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtruck a ſervant of the high prieſt, and ſmote off his ear. 52 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Put up again thy ſword into his place: for all they that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword. 53 Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then ſhall the ſcriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?

The rude multitude laying hands upon Chriſt, the diſciples who had remitted their watch, do reſume their courage, and are willing to reſcue their maſter if they can; particularly, Peter draws his ſword, and cuts off the ear of Malchus, one of the forwardeſt to lay hold on Jeſus. *Note* here, St. Peter's zeal and ſincere love for his Lord and Maſter; it was in great ſincerity ſpoken, *Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* But why did not Peter draw his ſword upon Judas, rather than Malchus? Perhaps becauſe though Judas was more faulty, yet Malchus was more forward to arreſt and carry off our Saviour. How doth a pious breaſt ſwell with indignation at the ſight of any open affront offered unto Chriſt? *Note* here, That though St. Peter's heart was ſincere, yet his hand was raſh: Good intentions are no warrant for irregular actions; and accordingly Chriſt, who accepted his affection, reproves him for the action: *Put up thy ſword; for they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh by the ſword.* *Learn* hence, That Chriſt will thank no man to fight for him without a warrant and commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a lawful magiſtrate, even in Chriſt's own defence, is raſh zeal, and diſcountenanced by the goſpel. To a lawful power lawfully executed, there muſt be yielded due obedience. Laſtly, Our Lord's abſolute refuſal to be reſcued out of his enemies hands, with the reaſon of it: "Did I incline to be reſcued by force, as if our Lord had ſaid, I could demand all the troops of angels in heaven to ſhew themſelves upon that occaſion; but how can this ſtand with the decree of my Father, with the declarations of the ſcripture, with the demonſtration of my mercy, and with the ſalvation of miſerable mankind?" *Learn* thence, That Chriſt was infinitely more concerned for the ſalvation of loſt ſinners, than for his own death and ſufferings; more concerned for our eternal ſalvation, than for his own temporal preſervation—manifeſting the moſt unbounded love and benevolence towards mankind. Had he been reſcued by the power of angels, we had fallen a prey into the paw of devils.

55 In that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves for to take me? I ſat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56 But all this was done, that the ſcriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the diſciples forſook him, and fled.

We had an account of our Lord's apprehenſion in the former verſes, here the ſad effect of it upon his diſciples; *they all forſook him and fled.* Had this been done by the giddy multitude who followed him for the loaves, it had been no cauſe of wonder; but for thoſe who had already forſaken all to follow him, who were faithful though fearful friends; what an addition to his ſufferings muſt this be! No doubt but the ingratitude of his friends made deeper wounds in his ſoul, than the malice of enemies could make in his body. They that ſaid all to Chriſt, ver. 35. *Though we ſhould die with thee, yet we will not deny thee,* do here all of them deſert and forſake him; when it came to the puſh, not a man of them ſtands by him. *Learn* thence, That the holieſt of men know not their own hearts, when great temptations and trials are before them, till they come to grapple with them, and to be engaged in them. We know not our own ſtrength, till temptation puts us to the proof.

57 ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jeſus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high prieſt, where the ſcribes and the elders were aſſembled. 58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high prieſt's palace, and went in, and ſat with the ſervants to ſee the end. 59 Now the chief prieſts and elders and all the council ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many falſe witneſſes came, yet found they none. At the laſt came two falſe witneſſes, 61 And ſaid, This *fellow* ſaid, I am able to deſtroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high prieſt aroſe, and ſaid unto him, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what *is it which* theſe witneſs againſt thee? 63 But Jeſus held his peace.

Judas having made good his promiſe to the high prieſt, and delivered Jeſus a priſoner into their hands, theſe wolves of the evening no ſooner ſeize the lamb of God, but they thirſt, and long to ſuck his innocent blood. Yet leſt it ſhould look like a downright murder, they will allow him a mock-trial, by abuſing the law, and perverting it to injuſtice and bloodſhed: Accordingly they induſtriouſly ſuborne falſe witneſſes to take away his life, not ſticking at the groſſeſt perjury, ſo they might deſtroy him. *The chief prieſts and elders, and all the council, ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death.* Abominable wickedneſs! innocency itſelf cannot protect from ſlander and falſe accuſation. No man is ſo innocent or good, whom falſe witneſs may not condemn. Yet *obſerve* farther, Our Lord's meekneſs and patience, his ſubmiſſive ſilence under all theſe wicked ſuggeſtions and falſe accuſations. *Jeſus held his peace,* ver. 63. Guilt is clamorous and impatient; innocency is ſilent, and careleſs of miſreports. *Learn* hence, That to bear the revilings, contradictions, and falſe accuſations of men, with a ſilent and ſubmiſſive ſpirit, is an excellent and Chriſt-like temper. Jeſus ſtood before his unjuſt judges and falſe accuſers, as a *ſheep before his ſhearer, dumb, and not opening his mouth.* Although a trial for his life was managed moſt maliciouſly and illegally againſt him, *when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* O let the ſame humble mind be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.

—And the high prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God. 64 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid. Nevertheleſs I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, ſaying, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy: what further need have we of witneſſes? behold, now ye have heard his blaſphemy. 66 What think ye? They anſwered and ſaid, He is guilty of death. 67 Then did they ſpit in his face, and buffeted him, and others ſmote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Propheſy unto us, thou Chriſt, Who is he that ſmote thee.

We obſerved even now, that our Lord was ſilent, and did make no reply to the falſe witneſſes that evidenced againſt him at his trial; becauſe being ſo manifeſtly contradicting, they did fall to the ground of themſelves. But now when the queſtion was ſolemnly put by the high prieſt, *Art thou the Chriſt?* He ſaid, *I am.* Thence *learn,* That although we are not obliged to anſwer every cavilling or enſnaring queſtion, yet we are bound faithfully to own, and freely to confeſs the truth, when we are ſolemnly called thereunto. Chriſt, who in the former verſes was ſilent, *and as a deaf man that heard not,* now *witneſſes a good confeſſion:* Teaching us, both by his example and command, to confeſs and own both him and his truth, when lawfully required; when our ſilence will be a denying of the truth, a diſhonour to God, and a ſcandal to our brethren: Chriſt knew that his anſwer would coſt him his life, and yet he durſt not but give it. *Art thou the Son of the bleſſed? Jeſus ſaid, I am.* Yea, farther *obſerve,* That as Chriſt anſwered directly and plainly at his trial, ſo he did not refuſe to anſwer upon oath, *I adjure thee by the living God,* ſays the judge of the court, *that thou tell us whether thou art the Chriſt:* That is, I require thee to anſwer this queſtion upon oath; for adjuring a perſon, or requiring him to anſwer upon oath, was the manner of ſwearing among the Jews. Now to this adjuration our Saviour anſwered plainly and directly, *I am,* Mark xiv. 61. Hence *learn,* That ſwearing before a magiſtrate upon a juſt and great occaſion, is lawful: If Chriſt in the fifth of St. Matthew forbid all oaths, then here his practice was contrary to his own doctrine; but it is evident, that Chriſt anſwered the magiſtrate upon oath, and ſo may we. *Obſerve,* laſtly, The ſentence of condemnation which the council paſſed upon him for owning himſelf to be the Son of God; *He hath ſpoken blaſphemy,* and is worthy to die. Hereupon the unruly rabble affront him with the vileſt abuſes, and moſt horrid indignities: *They ſpit in his face, they blindfolded him, they ſmote him with their fiſts and palms of their hands;* and in the way of contempt and mockery, they bid him divine or prophecy, *who it was that ſmote him. Learn* hence, That there is no degree of contempt, no mark of ſhame, no kind of ſuffering, which we ought to decline or ſtick at for Chriſt's ſake, who hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting upon our account. O monſtrous impiety! how do they ſpit on that awful, lovely face? How do they revile and blaſpheme his noble office of a prophet of the moſt high God; propheſy, ſay they, in a mocking deriſion, *who was it that ſmote thee?* To ſuch acts of inhumanity did the barbarous rage of the bloody Jews carry them.

69 ¶ Now Peter ſat without in the palace: and a damſel came unto him, ſaying, Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, ſaying, I know not what thou ſayeſt. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* ſaw him, and ſaid unto them that were there, This *fellow* was alſo with Jeſus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that ſtood by, and ſaid to Peter, Surely thou alſo art *one* of them; for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.

The laſt paragraph of the chapter gives us an account of the fall and riſing of Peter, of his ſin in denying Chriſt, and of his recovery by a ſpeedy and ſevere repentance. Both muſt be conſidered diſtinctly. Firſt, as touching his ſin and fall, there are four particulars *obſervable*, namely, the ſin itſelf, the occaſion of that ſin, the reiteration and repetition of it, and the aggravating circumſtances attending it. 1. The ſin itſelf, the denial of Chriſt, *I know not the man*, a manifeſt untruth: Next he adds an oath to confirm that untruth; *he ſwore that he knew not the man.* And laſt of all, he wiſhed an horrid curſe and imprecation upon himſelf: that is, he wiſhed himſelf excommunicated and caſt out of the church ſay ſome: he wiſhed himſelf eternally ſeparated from the preſence of God, ſay others: he wiſhed in effect, that the devil might take him, if he were acquainted with Jeſus. The inordinate love of life, and ſlaviſh fear of ſufferings and death, may draw the beſt of men to commit the worſt of ſins. 2. The occaſions of this ſin, and they were three; his following Chriſt afar off, his being in bad company, amongſt Chriſt's enemies; and his preſumptuous confidence of his own ſtrength and ſtanding. 1. *His following of Chriſt afar off.* To follow Chriſt is the work of faith, and fruit of love; but to follow him, afar off, was the effect of fear and frailty. Wo unto us when a temptation comes, if we be far off from Chriſt's preſence and aſſiſtance. 2. His being in wicked company, amongſt Chriſt's enemies. O, Peter, thou hadſt better have been a-cold by thyſelf alone, than ſitting by a fire encompaſſed with the blaſphemies of the wicked; where thy conſcience, though not ſeared, was yet made hard.—The way to eſcape prevailing temptations to ſin, is to ſhun ſuch places, and to avoid ſuch companions, as in all probability will invite and draw us into ſin. 3. Confidence of his own ſtrength and ſtanding, was another occaſion of Peter's falling. Pride and preſumptuous confidence have been ever the forerunners and occaſions of a fall. O Lord! to preſume upon ourſelves is the ready way to provoke thee to leave us to ourſelves: if ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. Not only they who go forth in the ſtrength of nature, but alſo they who go forth in ſtrength of inherent grace, may quickly fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs. 3. The reiteration and repetition of his ſin. He denies him a firſt, a ſecond, and a third time. He denies him firſt with a lie, then with an oath, and after all, with an anathema and a curſe. O how dangerous is it not to reſiſt the firſt beginnings of ſin! If we yield to one temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more and ſtronger. Peter proceeded from a bare denial, firſt to perjury, then to curſing and imprecation. 4. The aggravating circumſtances attending this ſin of Peter, and they are theſe, (1.) The character of the perſon thus falling; a diſciple, an apoſtle, a chief apoſtle, a ſpecial favourite; who, with James and John, had the ſpecial honour to be with Chriſt upon mount Tabor; Peter, who had preached and propheſied in Chriſt's name, caſt out devils, and wrought miracles by Chriſt's power, yet he denies him. (2.) Conſider the perſon whom he denies; his Maſter, his Saviour, and Redeemer; he that had waſhed Peter's feet but a little before; that ate the paſſover with Peter, and gave the ſacrament to Peter; yet this kind and condeſcending Saviour was denied by Peter. (3.) Conſider before whom he denies him, in the company and preſence of the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, and their ſervants, who rejoiced at it, and were hardened by it; that one diſciple ſhould ſell him for money, and another diſciple deny him through fear. (4.) Conſider the time when he denied him: verily it was but a few hours after he had received the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper from Chriſt's own hand. How unreaſonable then is their objection againſt coming to the Lord's table, becauſe ſome that go to it diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it! Such examples muſt not diſcourage us from coming to the ordinance, but excite and encreaſe our watchfulneſs after we have been there, to take heed that the future conduct of our lives be ſuited to the ſolemnity of a ſacramental table. (5.) Conſider the ſmallneſs of his temptation to deny Chriſt; a damſel only put the queſtion to him, *Art thou not one of his diſciples?* If a band of armed ſoldiers had appeared to him, and affrighted him; had he been terrified by the high prieſt's threatenings, bound and led away to judgment, ſentenced to an ignominious painful death, ſome excuſe might have been made for him: But to diſown his relation to Chriſt at the queſtion of a maid-ſervant that kept the door only: the ſmallneſs of the temptation was an aggravation of the crime. "Ah, Peter, how unlike thyſelf art thou at this time! Not a rock, but a reed; a pillar blown down by a woman's breath. O frail humanity, whoſe ſtrength is weakneſs and infirmity!" *Note here*, That in moſt of the ſaints falls recorded in ſcripture, either

the

firſt enticers, or the accidental occaſions, were women. Thus in Adam's, Lot's, Sampſon's, David's, Solomon's, and Peter's. A weak creature may be a ſtrong tempter; nothing is too impotent or uſeleſs for the devil's ſervice. It was a great aggravation of Peter's ſin, that the voice of a maid, a door-keeper only, ſhould be ſtronger to overcome him than his faith in Jeſus to ſuſtain him. But what ſhall we ſay? Small things are ſufficient to caſt us down, if God doth not hold us up: We ſink under any burthen, if he ſuſtains us not, and yield to every temptation, if he leaves us to ourſelves. A damſel ſhall then make a diſciple ſhrink, and a door-keeper is enough to drive an apoſtle before her. *And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow,* &c. Here we have an account of St. Peter's riſing and recovery after his ſhameful fall, by a renewed act and exerciſe of repentance. Where *obſerve*, The ſuddenneſs of his repentance, the means of his repentance, and the manner of it. 1. The ſuddenneſs of his repentance: Although his ſin was great, yet his repentance was ſpeedy, and without delay. Here *note*, That ſins committed by the ſurpriſal of a ſudden temptation, are much ſooner repented of, than where the ſin is preſumptuous and deliberate. David's ſins of murder and adultery were preſumptuous and deliberate ſins: He continued a long time in them, and lived almoſt a twelvemonth without any ſolemn repentance of them. St. Peter's ſin was haſty and ſudden, under a violent paſſion of fear, contrary to his ſettled purpoſe and reſolution of conſtancy; and he takes the warning of the ſecond crowing of the cock, and goes forth to expreſs his repentanee. 2. The means of his repentance, which was twofold. Leſs principal, the crowing of the cock; more principal, Chriſt looking upon Peter, and Peter's remembering the words of Chriſt. (1. The leſs principal means of St. Peter's repentance, was the crowing of the cock: [*Bp.* Reynolds *on St.* Peter*'s fall.*] As the voice of the maid occaſioned him to ſin, ſo the voice of the cock occaſioned him to repent. That God who can work without means, does ſometimes work by weak and contemptible means, and when he pleaſes can open the mouth of a bird or beaſt for the converſion of a man. But why ſhould our Saviour chuſe the crowing of a cock as a means to bring St. Peter to repentance? There is ever ſome myſtery in Chriſt's inſtruments; the cock was a preacher to call Peter to repentance, there being ſomething of emblem between the cock and a preacher. A true miniſter muſt have the wings of a cock to rouſe up himſelf from ſecurity, and to awaken others to a ſenſe of their duty. He muſt have the watchfulneſs of a cock, to be ever ready to diſcover and forewarn danger. He muſt have the voice of a cock, to *cry aloud, and tell Iſrael of their ſin*, and terrify the roaring lion, and make him tremble. In a word, he muſt obſerve the hours of the cock, to crow at all ſeaſons of the night, *to preach in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*, the glad tidings of ſalvation. But, 2. The more principal means of St. Peter's recovery, was, (1.) Chriſt's looking upon Peter. Chriſt firſt looks upon Peter with an eye of mercy, grace, and pity, before Peter looks upon his ſin in order to repentance. Here take notice of the greatneſs of Chriſt's grace, of his wonderful love and mercy to this poor diſciple. When our Saviour was upon his trial for his life, a time when our thoughts are wholly taken up about ourſelves; even then did Chriſt find leiſure to think upon Peter, remember to turn about, and give him a pitiful but piercing look; a look that melted his heart,, and diſſolved it into tears. We never begin to lament for ſin, till we are firſt lamented by our Saviour. Jeſus looked upon Peter. That is the firſt more principal means of Peter's repentance. The ſecond is, Peter's remembering the words of Chriſt, *Before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.* This remembrance of Chriſt's words was an applicative and feeling remembrance of them. He remembered the prediction of Chriſt, and applies it ſenſibly to himſelf. *Teaching* us, That the efficacy of Chriſt's word, in order to the bringing of a ſoul into repentance, depends not upon the hiſtorical remembrance of it, but upon the cloſe application of it to every man's conſcience. A ſanctified remembrance of Chriſt's words, and our own ſins, is an excellent preparative to repentance. Laſtly, The manner of St. Peter's repentance; it was ſecret, *he went out*; it was ſincere, *he wept bitterly*; it was laſting and abiding all the days of his life, and attended with an extraordinary zeal and forwardneſs for the ſervice of Chriſt to the end of his life. 1. It was ſecret, *he went out*: *Vere dolet, qui ſine teſte dolet.* He ſought a place of retirement where he might mourn in ſecret; he cannot well be thought to diſſemble his grief, who chuſes no other witneſs but the omnipreſent God. Solitarineſs is moſt agreeable to an afflicted ſpirit; and as Peter's ſorrow cauſed him to go forth, ſo might alſo ſhame. Chriſt looked upon Peter, but how aſhamed muſt Peter be to look upon Chriſt, conſidering that he ſo lately denied to have ever ſeen him? 2. His repentance was ſincere, *he wept bitterly*; his grief was extraordinary, and his tears abundant. There is ever a weeping that follows ſin; ſin muſt coſt the ſoul ſorrow, either here or in hell; we muſt mourn a while, or lament for ever. Doubtleſs with Peter's tears there was joined hearty confeſſion of ſin to God, and ſmart reflections upon himſelf, after this manner: "Lord, what have I done! I that did once acknowledge my maſter *to be Chriſt, the Son of the living God*, have ſince denied him with oaths, curſes, and imprecations; I, that promiſed to lay down my life for his ſake, have yet diſowned and denied him at the voice of a damſel. O what unfaithfulneſs, what weakneſs, what wickedneſs! O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep all my days for the fault of this one night!" Bleſſed indeed are the tears of a converted revolter, and happy is the very miſery of a mournful offender. 3. This holy man's repentance was laſting and abiding; he had a lively ſenſe and remembrance of this ſin upon his ſoul all his life. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory reports, that ever after, when St. Peter heard the crowing of a cock, he fell upon his knees and mourned; others ſay, that he was wont to riſe at midnight, and ſpend the time in penitent devotion between cock-crowing and day-light. And the papiſts, who love to turn every thing into ſuperſtition, began that practice of ſetting a cock upon the top of towers, and ſteeples, and chimnies, to put the people in mind of this ſin of Peter, and his repentance by that ſignal. Laſtly, St. Peter's repentance was attended with an extraordinary zeal and forwardneſs for the ſervice of Chriſt, to the end of his life. He had an earneſt love towards Chriſt, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee:* And, as an evidence of it, he fed Chriſt's ſheep; for in the Acts of the apoſtles we read of his extraordinary diligence to ſpread the goſpel; and his travels in order thereunto, are compared to be nine hundred and fifty miles: And the wiſdom of God thought fit that this apoſtle ſhould preach the goſpel to the Jews, as St. Paul did to the Gentiles; that as he had joined with the Jews in denying and diſowning Chriſt, ſo he ſhould endeavour to perſuade them to join with him in repentance, as he had joined with them in their ſin. His ſin was in ſome reſpect like theirs, therefore he is ſent to preach the goſpel to them, and his diligence therein, is an undoubted proof and evidence of his repentance. Have any of us fallen with Peter, though not with a formal adjuring, yet by a practical denying of him, let us go forth and weep with him; let us be more vigilant and watchful over ourſelves for the time to come; let us expreſs more extraordinary love unto, and zeal for Chriſt, more diligence in his ſervice, and more concernedneſs for his honour and glory. This would be an happy improvement of this example. The Lord grant it may have that bleſſed effect. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXVII.

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief prieſts and elders of the people took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death. 2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

The foregoing chapter gave us an account of Judas's treaſon, in delivering our Saviour into the hands of the chief prieſts. In this chapter we find our holy Lord brought by the chief prieſts unto Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, in order to his arraignment and condemnation. Whence *obſerve*, That it has been the old policy of corrupt church governors to abuſe the power of the civil magiſtrate, in executing their cruel and unjuſt cenſures upon holy and innocent perſons. The chief prieſts and elders do not kill our Saviour themſelves, but they deliver him over to the ſecular power, and deſire Pilate, the civil magiſtrate, to ſentence and condemn him, which ſoon after we ſhall find he did. *They bound and led him away:* But what need was there of binding him, that never made any reſiſtance? And O, what ingratitude was it to bind him with cords, who came to unlooſe thoſe bands of ſin wherewith we were bound!

3 ¶ Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief prieſts and elders, 4 Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What *is that* to us? ſee thou *to that.* 5 And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himſelf.

Here we have a ſad relation of Judas's deſperate death, after an hypocritical life, as alſo of the horror of his mind and conſcience before his death. *Obſerve* here, 1. The time when Judas repented; after it was too late. *When he ſaw that he was condemned, he repented. Learn* thence, That they that will not ſee their ſins timely to their converſion, ſhall ſee them ſooner or later to their confuſion. 2. The repentance itſelf, in the ſeveral parts and branches of it: He was ſorrowful for the fact, he made confeſſion of his ſin, and made reſtitution for the wrong done. *He repented, ſaying, I have ſinned; and caſt down the thirty pieces of ſilver. Learn* thence, That a wicked man, when conſcience is thoroughly awakened, may make confeſſion of his ſin, expreſs ſome ſorrow for it, and endeavour alſo the making of ſome ſatisfaction and reſtitution for the wrong and injury done by it. They that mourn for ſin as ſin; they that mourn more for the intrinſic evil that is in ſin, than for the penal and conſequential evils that follow ſin; they that confeſs ſin voluntarily and freely, particularly, penitently, believingly, with an eye of ſorrow upon their ſin, and an eye of faith fixed upon their Saviour; they that make reſtitution as an act of obedience to the command of God, and as an act of juſtice and righteouſneſs to their neighbour; ſuch perſons repentance ſhall find acceptance with God. 3. The anſwer and reply which the wicked high prieſts and elders make to deſpairing Judas. 1. They excuſe themſelves, *What is that to us?* It is natural to all ſinners to ſhift ſin from themſelves, and to lay it at any door rather than their own. Thoſe that have had a ſhare in the pleaſure and profit of ſin, are yet very deſirous to throw the odium and guilt upon others. *What is that to us?* ſay theſe monſters in ſin. O wonderful ſtupidity! could they think it nothing to them to hire a man to betray innocent blood? Was not the money given, the price of blood? and the field they bought, the field of blood? yet do they impudently ſay, *What is that to us?* 2. As they excuſe and acquit themſelves, ſo they load and burden him; *Look thou to that.* Lord! what miſerable comforters are companions in ſin to one another, when diſtreſs and ſorrow comes upon them? When ſin comes to be queſtioned in order to its being puniſhed, every ſinner is for ſhifting for himſelf, and leaves his fellow in the lurch. Let us then remember the words of the Holy Ghoſt, *He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe, but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* How jolly ſoever ſinners are together, when in the height of their luſts, they are but miſerable comforters to one another upon a ſick-bed, or under the laſhes of an awakened conſcience. But though they may avoid each other now, there is a time coming when it will be impoſſible; at the great day, the ſinner ſhall ſee both his companions in ſin, and his ſins themſelves, to be what he would never believe them here, the vileſt of monſters. 4. The ſad and fatal end of Judas; *he went forth and hanged himſelf.* Horror and deſpair took hold upon him, and ſeized his conſcience; which was ſo intolerable, that he ran to the halter for a remedy. *Learn* thence, 1. That conſcience is a powerful, though inviſible executioner; the wrath of man may be endured, but the wrath of God is inſupportable, and the eruptions of conſcience are irreſiſtible. O how intolerable are thoſe ſcourges that laſh us in this tender and vital part! Judas, awakened with the horror of his fact, conſcience begins to rouſe, and the man is unable to bear up under the furious revenge of his own mind. There is an active principle in men's breaſts and boſoms, which ſeldom ſuffers daring ſinners to paſs in quiet to their graves. Guilt is naturally troubleſome and uneaſy; it diſturbs the peace and ſerenity of the mind, and fills the ſoul with ſtorms and thunder, both in life and death. How vainly did Judas hope to take ſanctuary in a grave, and to meet with that eaſe in another world, which he could not find in this! Thus ended this miſerable man, Judas. Behold! ye profeſſors of religion, the terrible example of God's juſtice on a deceitful hypocrite. Behold! a diſciple, an apoſtle, firſt a traitor, and then a ſelf-murderer. Behold! all ye covetous worldlings, to what the love of that accurſed idol has brought this wretched apoſtle. Behold! Judas, once ſhining in the robes of a glorious profeſſion, now ſhining in the flames of God's eternal wrath and vengeance. Lord! how earneſt ought we to be for thy preſerving grace, when neither the preſence, the miracles, the ſermons, the ſacraments of Chriſt, could preſerve and ſecure a profeſſor, a diſciple and apoſtle, from the fatal miſchief of a ruinous apoſtaſy! *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.*

6 And the chief prieſts took the ſilver pieces, and ſaid, It is not lawful for to put them into the treaſury, becauſe it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counſel, and bought with them the potters field, to bury ſtrangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood. (9 Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Iſrael did value; 10 And gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)

Note here, 1. The niceneſs and ſcrupuloſity of theſe hypocrites; they made no ſcruple to give money to ſhed blood, but they ſcruple the putting that money into the treaſury which was the price of blood. They are afraid to defile their treaſury, but are not afraid to pollute their ſouls. Thus hypocrites *ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel*; ſcruple a ceremony, but make no conſcience of murder and perjury. 2. The uſe which they put this money to, which Judas brought them; they bought with it a field to bury ſtrangers in. Thus Chriſt, who was himſelf a ſtranger in a borrowed grave, by the price of his blood (being thirty pieces of ſilver) conferred graves on many ſtrangers. Laſtly, How the wiſdom of God ordered it, that hereby a ſcripture-prophecy might be fulfilled, Zech. xi. 13. *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver, and I took and caſt them unto the potter.* Whence *learn*, That all the indignities and abaſing ſufferings which the Lord Jeſus underwent, were not only foreordained by God, but alſo foretold by the holy prophets: His being ſcourged, buffeted, ſpit upon, and here his being ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver.

11 And Jeſus ſtood before the governor: and the governor aſked him, ſaying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt. 12 And when he was accuſed of the chief prieſts and elders, he anſwered nothing. 13 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Heareſt thou not how many things they witneſs againſt thee? 14 And he anſwered him to never a word, inſomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

Note here, 1. That our Saviour readily anſwers Pilate, but refuſes to anſwer the chief prieſts before Pilate. Pilate aſks him, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* Jeſus readily anſwers, *Thou ſayeſt*; or, It is as thou ſayeſt. But to all the accuſations of the chief prieſts, and to all that they laid to his charge before Pilate, our Saviour anſwers never a word: Probably for theſe reaſons; becauſe his innocency was ſuch as needed no apology; becauſe their calumnies and accuſations were ſo notoriouſly falſe, that they needed no confutation; to ſhew his contempt of death, and to teach us by his own example patience and ſilence, when for his ſake we are ſlandered and traduced. *Learn* thence, That although we are not obliged to anſwer every captious and enſnaring queſtion, nor to refute every ſlander and falſe accuſation, yet are we bound faithfully to own and confeſs the truth, when we are ſolemnly called thereunto. Our Saviour, *as a deaf man, hears not*, anſwers not the calumnies of the chief prieſts; but when Pilate aſks him, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* or, as St. Mark has it, *Art thou the Son of the bleſſed?* Jeſus ſaid, *I am*; though he knew that anſwer would coſt him his life. Hence the apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* vi. 13. ſays, *That Chriſt before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion.* *Teaching* us, Sometimes to hold our peace when our reputation is concerned; but never to be ſilent when the honour of God, the glory of his truth, the edification and confirmation of others, may effectually be promoted by our open confeſſion: Then muſt we with Chriſt give a direct, plain, and ſincere anſwer. For whoever *denies him*, or any truth of his, knowingly and wilfully, *him will Chriſt deny in the preſence of his Father, and before all his holy angels.*

15 Now at *that* feaſt the governor was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable priſoner, called Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate ſaid unto them, Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you? Barabbas, or Jeſus which is called Chriſt? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Now *at the feaſt*, that is, at the feaſt of the paſſover, which by way of eminency, is called *the feaſt*, the governor uſed to releaſe a priſoner (poſſibly by way of memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt) accordingly Pilate makes a motion to them, that Chriſt may be the priſoner ſet at liberty in honour of their feaſt; for he was ſenſible that what they did was out of envy and malice. As covetouſneſs ſold Chriſt, ſo envy delivered him. Envy is a killing and murdering paſſion; *Envy ſlayeth the ſilly one*, Job v. 2.

that is, it ſlays the ſilly perſon who harbours this peſtilent luſt in his boſom, and is like a fire in his bones continually preying upon him, cauſing him to pine away, and die miſerably, becauſe another lives happily. To envy another man's proſperity, is an argument of the worſt ſimplicity; yea, as envy ſlayeth the ſilly one, ſo it prompts and provokes the ſinner to ſeek the ſlaying of innocent ones. Envy wiſhes the envied perſon out of the way, yea, out of the world; and if need be, not only wiſh it, but lend a lift towards it too; witneſs the chief prieſts here, whoſe envy was ſo conſpicuous, that Pilate himſelf takes notice of it, and ſays, *He knew that for envy they had delivered him.*

19 When he was ſet down on the judgment-ſeat, his wife ſent unto him, ſaying, Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man: for I have ſuffered many things this day in a dream becauſe of him.

There are ſeveral ſorts or kinds of dreams, natural, moral, diabolical, and divine. The queſtion is, What kind of dream this was? Not *natural*, all agree; ſome think it was *diabolical*, and that Satan hoped thereby to prevent the work of man's redemption by the death of Chriſt. But if ſo, Why had not Pilate the dream rather than his wife? Probably this dream was from God, for even our dreams are ordered by God; our ſleeping as well as our waking times are in his hand. *Learn* hence, How wonderfully the wiſdom and power of God is ſeen in this woman's teſtimony, which ſhe gave to the innocency of our Saviour. When all his diſciples were fled from him, when none of his friends durſt ſpeak a word for him, God raiſes up a woman, a ſtranger, a Pagan, to give evidence of his innocency. And it is obſervable, that at our Saviour's trial, not one mouth was opened to plead or ſpeak a word for him, in defence of innocency itſelf, but only Pilate's and his wife's; they both pronounce him righteous, though they were Gentiles and Pagans, whilſt his own kindred and countrymen, the Jews, thirſt after his righteous and innocent blood.

20 But the chief prieſts and elders perſuaded the multitude that they ſhould aſk Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus. 21 The governor anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I releaſe unto you? They ſaid, Barabbas. 22 Pilate ſaith unto them, What ſhall I do then with Jeſus, which is called Chriſt? *They* all ſay unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor ſaid, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, ſaying, Let him be crucified.

Obſerve here, 1. How exceedingly unwilling and averſe Pilate was to be the inſtrument of our Saviour's death; one while he bids the Jews take him themſelves, and judge him according to their own law; another while he offers to ſave Chriſt in honour of their feaſt, when by cuſtom he was to releaſe a priſoner, and this priſoner he deſired might be Jeſus. When this would not ſatisfy, he expoſtulates with them about our Saviour's innocency, *What evil has he done?* Nay, St. Luke ſays, chap. xxiii. *That Pilate came forth three times, and profeſſed that he found no fault in him.* Yet though Pilate was ſatisfied, the Jews would not be denied. Thence *learn*, That wicked men and hypocrites within the viſible church, may be guilty of ſuch tremendous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſcience of infidels and Pagans without the church may boggle at, and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, abſolves Chriſt, whilſt hypocritical Jews, which had heard his doctrine, and ſeen his miracles, condemn him. But, 2. Who influenced the main body of the Jews to deſire Barabbas, and to deſtroy Jeſus. It was the *chief prieſts and elders*, they *perſuaded the multitude.* Wo to the people when their guides and leaders are corrupt; for then they ſhall be tempted by wicked counſel; and wo unto them, much more, if they follow their wicked and pernicious counſels. Thus did the Jews follow their guides, the chief prieſts, till they had preſerved Barabbas, and deſtroyed Jeſus.

24 When Pilate ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and waſhed *his* hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon: ſee ye *to it.*

Two things are here *obſervable* in Pilate's waſhing of his hands. 1. By this action he pronounces our Saviour's innocency, and was willing thereby to teſtify his own, that he did not conſent to our Saviour's death; waſhing the hands being a uſual ceremony in proteſtation of a perſon's innocency. But, 2. It was great folly and madneſs in Pilate, to think that waſhing of his hands did or could free him from the guilt of innocent blood. "O Pilate! thou hadſt need rub hard, if thou meaneſt to ſcour from thy ſoul the guilt of that crimſon ſin which thou haſt committed; thy guilt cleaves ſo cloſe unto thee, that nothing can expiate it but the blood which thou haſt ſpilt." Neither was it any excuſe of Pilate's ſin, that what he did was to pleaſe the people, and to gratify their importunity. It is a fond apology for ſins, when perſons pretend they were not committed with their own conſent, but at others inſtigation and importunity.

25 Then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

That is, "Let the guilt and puniſhment of his blood reſt upon us and our poſterity." A moſt horrid and impious imprecation! The dreadful effects of it began to come upon them forty years after, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and has reſted and remained upon their poſterity to this day, near eighteen hundred years; the Jews being vagabonds over the earth, abhorred by all nations whereſoever they come. The juſt God has heard their wicked wiſh, and cauſed that blood to fall upon them in ſo ſevere, though righteous a manner, as muſt pierce the heart of thoſe that read and obſerve it. God has given them blood to drink, as indeed they were worthy. This ought to be a terror and a warning to all perſons, that they avoid all curſed imprecations, and wicked wiſhes upon themſelves or others. Wo to ſuch as wiſh damnation to themſelves, pox and plague upon others; how if God ſays *Amen*, and ratifies in heaven thy curſed imprecations made on earth, as he did this of the wicked Jews, *His blood be upon us, and on our children?* Yet what they with a wicked mind put up as a direful imprecation, we may with a pious mind offer up to God as an humble petition; Lord, let thy ſon's blood, not in the guilt and puniſhment, but in the efficacy and merit of it, be upon us, and upon our poſterity after us, for evermore.

26 Then releaſed he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ſcourged Jeſus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

As the death of the croſs was a Roman puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans, firſt to ſcourge and whip their malefactors, and then deliver them to be crucified. Now the manner of the Romans ſcourging is ſaid to be thus: They ſtripped the condemned perſon, and bound him to a poſt; two ſtrong men firſt ſcourged him with rods of thorns; then two others ſcourged him with whips of cords full of knots; and laſtly, two more with whips of wire, and therewith tore off the very fleſh and ſkin from the perſon's back and ſides. That our Saviour was thus cruelly ſcourged, ſeems to ſome not improbable, from that of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxxix. 3. *The ploughers ploughed upon my back, and made long furrows.* Which, if ſpoken prophetically of Chriſt, was literally fulfilled in the day of his ſcourging. But why was the precious body of our bleſſed Lord thus galled and torn with ſcourgings? Doubtleſs to fulfil that prophecy, *I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.—That by his ſtripes we might be healed.* And to *learn* us patience from his example: Why ſhould we think it ſtrange to be ſcourged either with the tongue or the hand, when we ſee our dear Redeemer bleeding by ſtripes and ſcourges before our eyes?

27 Then the ſoldiers of the governor took Jeſus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of ſoldiers*. 28 And they ſtripped him, and put on him a ſcarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail King of the Jews. 30 And they ſpit upon him, and took the reed and ſmote him on the head. 31 ¶ And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

The next part of our Lord's ſufferings conſiſted of cruel mockings. Our bleſſed Saviour had ſaid that he was the king of the Jews; not a temporal king, to reign over them with pomp and power, but a ſpiritual king, to rule in the hearts of his people; but the Jews, miſſing of their expectation of a temporal king in Chriſt, look upon him as an impoſtor; and accordingly they treat him as a mock king, putting a crown upon his head, but a very ignominious and painful one, *a crown of thorns*; *a ſceptre in his hand*, but it was of a *reed*; and a *robe of purple or ſcarlet*, both which were uſed by princes, and *bowed the knee before him*, as they were wont to do to princes. Thus all the marks of ſcorn imaginable are put upon our bleſſed Redeemer: yet that which they did in jeſt, God did in earneſt; for all theſe things were enſigns and marks of ſovereignty; and almighty God cauſed the regal dignity of his Son to appear and ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt abaſement. Whence was all this jeering and ſport, but to flout majeſty! And why did Chriſt undergo all this ignominy, diſgrace, and ſhame, but to ſhew us what was due unto us for our ſins, and to give us an example to bear all the ſcorn, reproach, and ſhame imaginable for his ſake, *Who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, aud deſpiſed the ſhame?*

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his croſs. 33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to ſay, A place of a ſkull, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had taſted *thereof*, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, caſting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots. 36 And ſitting down they watched him there.

The ſentence of death being paſſed by Pilate, who can with dry eyes behold the ſad pomp of our Saviour's bloody execution? Forth comes the bleſſed Jeſus out of Pilate's gates, bearing that croſs which was ſoon after to bear him. With his croſs on his ſhoulder he marches towards Golgotha: and when they ſee he can go no faſter, they force Simon the Cyrenian, not out of compaſſion, but from indignation, to be the porter of his croſs. This Cyrenian being a Gentile, not a Jew, who bare our Saviour's croſs, might ſignify and ſhew, that the Gentiles ſhould have a part in Chriſt, and be ſharers with the Jews in the benefits of his croſs. At length Chriſt comes to the place of execution, Golgotha, or mount Calvary. Here in a public place, with infamous company, betwixt two thieves, he is crucified; that is faſtened to a great croſs of wood, his hands ſtretched forth abroad, and his feet cloſe together, and both hands and feet faſtened with nails; his naked body was lifted up in the open air, hanging betwixt heaven and earth; thereby intimating, that the crucified perſon was unfit to live in either. This ſhameful, painful, and accurſed death, did the holy and innocent Jeſus undergo for ſinners. Some obſerve all the dimenſions of length, breadth, depth, and heighth in our Saviour's ſufferings. For length; his paſſion was ſeveral hours long, from twelve to three, expoſed all that time both to hunger and cold; the thieves crucified with him were not dead ſo ſoon; they endured but perſonal pain, he undergoing the miſeries of all mankind. But what his paſſion wanted in length, it had in breadth, extending over all the parts and powers of his ſoul and body, no part free but his tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his enemies: His ſight was tormented with the ſcornful geſtures of ſuch *as paſſed wagging their heads*; his hearing grieved with the taunts and jeers of prieſts and people; his ſmelling offended with noiſome ſavours in the place of ſkulls; his taſte with the gall and vinegar given him to drink: His feeling was wonderfully affected by the nails which pierced his hands and feet, and the crown of thorns which pierced his tender temples with a multiplicity of wounds. And for the depth of his paſſion, it was as deep as hell itſelf; enduring tortures in his ſoul, as well as torments in his body; groaning under the burden of deſertion, and crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Laſtly, for the height of his ſufferings, they were as high as heaven, his perſon being innocent and infinite, no leſs than the Son of God, which adds an infinite worth and value to his ſufferings. *Lord, let us be able to comprehend with all ſaints what is the breadth and length, depth and heighth, and let us know the love of Chriſt, which in ſuffering for us paſſeth knowledge:* So infinite every way were the dimenſions of it.

37 And ſet up over his head his accuſation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

It was the manner of the Romans, when they crucified any man, to publiſh the cauſe of his death in capital letters, placed over the head of the perſon. Now, ſee how the wiſdom and providence of God powerfully over-ruled the heart and pen of Pilate to draw this title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his croſs: Pilate is Chriſt's herald, and proclaims him, *King of the Jews. Learn* hence, That the regal dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt ſufferings and reproaches. Pilate did Chriſt a ſpecial honour, and an eminent piece of ſervice. He did that for Chriſt which none of his own diſciples durſt do; but he did it not deſignedly for his glory, but from the ſpecial over-ruling power of divine providence: But the higheſt ſervices performed to Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall never be accepted nor rewarded by God.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 ¶ And they that paſſed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And ſaying, Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days, ſave thyſelf: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs. 41 Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking *him*, with the ſcribes and elders, ſaid, 42 He ſaved others: himſelf he cannot ſave. If he be the king of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him. 43 He truſted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he ſaid, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves alſo which were crucified with him, caſt the ſame in his teeth.

Here we have ſeveral aggravations of our Lord's ſufferings upon the croſs. 1. From the company he ſuffered with, *two thieves.* It had been diſparagement enough to our bleſſed Saviour to have been ſorted with the beſt of men; but to be numbered with the ſcum of mankind, is ſuch an indignity as confounds our thoughts. This was intended by the Jews to diſhonour him the more, and to perſuade the world that he was the greateſt of offenders; but God over-ruled this, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, *He was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.* 2. Another aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings on the croſs, was the ſcorn and mocking deriſion which he met with in his dying moments from the common people, from the chief prieſts, and from the thieves that ſuffered with him. The common people both in words and actions expreſſed ſcorn and deteſtation againſt him: *They reviled him, wagging their heads.* The chief prieſts, though men of age and gravity, not only barbarouſly *mock him* in his extremeſt miſery, whom humanity obliged them to pity; but they ſcoff atheiſtically and profanely, jeering at his faith and affiance in God, tauntingly ſaying, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.* Where *obſerve,* That perſecutors are generally atheiſts, though they make a profeſſion of religion. The chief prieſts and elders here, though learned and knowing men, yet they blaſpheme God, mock at his power, and deride his providence, which was as bad as to deny his being. Hence we may gather, That thoſe who adminiſter to God in holy things by way of office, if they be not the beſt, they are the worſt of men. No ſuch bitter enemies to the power of godlineſs, as the miniſters of religion who were never acquainted with the efficacy and power of it in their own hearts and lives. Nothing on this ſide hell is worſe than a wicked prieſt, a miniſter of God devoted to the ſervice of the devil. A third aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings on the croſs, was, that the thieves that ſuffered with him reviled him with the reſt: That is, one of them, as St. Luke has it, or perhaps both of them might do it at firſt: Which, if ſo, increaſes the wonder of the penitent thief's converſion. From the thief's impenitency we *learn,* That neither ſhame nor pain will change the mind of a reſolute ſinner, but even then when he is in the very ſuburbs of hell will he blaſpheme.

45 Now from the ſixth hour there was darkneſs over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani? that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 47 Some of them that ſtood there, when they heard *that*, ſaid, This *man* calleth for Elias. 48 And ſtraightway one of them ran, and took a ſpunge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The reſt ſaid, Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him. 50 ¶ Jeſus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghoſt.

Obſerve here, 1. How the rays of Chriſt's divinity, and the glory of his Godhead, break out and ſhine forth in the midſt of that infirmity which his human nature laboured under. He ſhews himſelf to be the God of nature, by altering the courſe of nature. The ſun is eclipſed, and darkneſs overſpreads the earth for *three hours;* namely, from twelve o'clock to three. Thus the ſun in the firmament becomes cloſe mourner at our Lord's death, and the whole frame of nature puts itſelf into a funeral habit. 2. That the chief of Chriſt's ſufferings conſiſted in the ſufferings of his ſoul; the diſtreſs of his ſpirit was more intolerable than the torments of his body, as appears by his mournful complaint. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Being the firſt words of the 22d pſalm; and ſome conceive that he repeated that whole pſalm, it being an admirable narrative of the colours of his paſſion. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ſuffering for our ſins, was really deſerted for a time, and left deſtitute of all ſenſible conſolation. *Why haſt thou forſaken me? Learn* farther, That under this deſertion Chriſt deſpaired not, but ſtill retained a firm perſuaſion of God's love unto him, and experienced neceſſary reports from him, *My God, my God:* Theſe are words of faith and affiance, ſtriving under temptation. Chriſt was thus forſaken for us, that we might never be forſaken by God; yet by God's forſaking of Chriſt, is not to be underſtood any abatement of divine love, but only a withdrawing from the human nature the ſenſe of his love, and a letting out upon his ſoul a deep afflicting ſenſe of his diſpleaſure againſt ſin. There is a total and eternal deſertion, by which God utterly forſakes a man, both of his grace and glory, being wholly caſt out of God's preſence, and adjudged to eternal torments; this was not compatible to Chriſt, nor agreeable to the dignity of his perſon. But there is a partial and temporary deſertion, when God for a little moment hides his face from his children: Now this was both agreeable to the dignity of Chriſt's nature, and alſo ſuitable to his office, who was to ſatisfy the juſtice of God for our forſaking of him, and to bring us near to him, that we might be received for ever. Laſtly, What a miraculous evidence Chriſt gave of his divinity inſtantly before he gave up the ghoſt. *He cried with a loud voice.* This ſhewed that he did not die according to the ordinary courſe of nature, gradually departing and drawing on, as we expreſs it. No, his life was whole in him, and nature as ſtrong at laſt as at firſt. Other men die gradually, and towards their end, their ſenſe of pain is much blunted; they faulter, fumble, and die by degrees: But Chriſt ſtood under the pains of death in his full ſtrength; his life was whole in him. This was evident by the mighty outcry he made when he gave up the ghoſt, contrary to the ſenſe and experience of all other perſons; this argued him to be full of ſtrength. And he that could cry with ſuch a loud voice *(in articulo mortis)* as he did, could have kept himſelf from dying if he would. Hence we *learn*, That when Chriſt died, he rather conquered death, than was conquered by death. He muſt voluntarily and freely lay down his life, before death could come at him. *He yielded up the ghoſt.* O wonderful ſight! the Lord of life hangs dead, dead on the accurſed tree! O ſevere and inexorable juſtice in God! O amazing and aſtoniſhing love in Chriſt! love beyond expreſſion, beyond conception, beyond all comprehenſion! with what compariſon ſhall we compare it! Verily with nothing but itſelf; never was love like thine.

51 And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent: 52 And the graves were opened: and many bodies of ſaints which ſlept aroſe, 53 And came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jeſus, ſaw the earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jeſus from Galilee, miniſtering unto him: 56 Among which was Mary Magdalane, and Mary the mother of James and Joſes, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

Here we have an account of ſeveral extraordinary and wonderful things which occurred and fell out about the time our Saviour died. 1. *The vail of the temple rent aſunder.* That is, the hanging which parted the holy from the moſt holy place, to hide the myſteries therein; namely, the ark of the covenant and mercy-ſeat, from the view of the ordinary prieſts. This vail was now rent from the top to the bottom, and the rending of it did import theſe great myſteries: 1. That now our great high prieſt was entering into the moſt holy place with his own blood, having made the atonement for us: Heb. ix. 12. *By his own blood he entered once into the moſt holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* 2. That the means whereby he entered into the moſt holy place, was by the rending of his humanity, his ſoul from his body, typified by rending of this vail; accordingly his body is called a vail, Heb. x. 20. *Conſecrated through the vail of his fleſh.* 3. That now by the death of Chriſt all thoſe dark myſteries vailed up formerly in the moſt holy place, as the ark of the covenant and mercy-ſeat, are now unfolded and laid open, and the uſe of the whole ceremonial law at an end, and the Jewiſh temple ſervice ceaſed, 4. That now the kingdom of heaven, the moſt holy place, is open to all believers. Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, is entered in with his own blood, and hath not cloſed the vail after him, but rent it aſunder, and made and left a paſſage for all believers to follow him, firſt in their prayers, and next in their perſons. See Heb. x. 19, 20. *Having therefore boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh; let us draw near with a true heart,* &c. 2. The earth quaked. As there was an univerſal eclipſe, ſo likewiſe an univerſal earthquake, at our Lord's crucifixion, which did awaken many of the ſaints (that died before our Saviour's incarnation) out of their dead ſleep. Theſe aroſe both as witneſſes of Chriſt's reſurrection, and alſo as ſharers in it. But none of them aroſe till Chriſt was riſen, *he being the firſt fruits of them that ſlept.* And thoſe holy perſons that aroſe with him, poſſibly attended him to heaven at his aſcenſion. From hence we learn, That Chriſt was the Saviour of thoſe who believed in him before his incarnation, as well as of thoſe that believed in him ſince his incarnation; and that the former are partakers of the fruit and benefit of his death and reſurrection, no leſs than the latter. Others conjecture, that thoſe who roſe out of their graves, were ſuch as believed in Chriſt, and died before him, as old Simeon, &c. Accordingly they underſtand St. John v. 25. *The hour is coming, and now is, that the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of man*, of his reſurrection here mentioned. And whereas it is ſaid they *went into the holy city and appeared to many*; it is probable they were known to them unto whom they did appear; and if ſo, they muſt have lived in the time of their knowledge. *Obſerve* next, What influence and effect the ſight of thoſe prodigious things had upon the centurion and the ſoldiers; it convinced them, that *verily this was the Son of God.* Here we ſee the heathen ſoldiers are ſooner convinced of the divinity of Chriſt, than the unbelieving Jewiſh doctors. Obſtinacy and unbelief filled their minds with an invincible prejudice againſt Chriſt; ſo that neither the miracles done by him in his life, nor wrought at his death, could convince the high prieſt, that Chriſt was any other than an impoſtor and deceiver. Laſtly, Who of Chriſt's friends were witneſſes of his death; *They are women who followed him from Galilee, and miniſtered unto him:* Not one of his dear diſciples, except St. John, who ſtood by the croſs with the Virgin Mary. What a ſhame was this for the apoſtles, to be abſent from a ſpectacle upon which the ſalvation of the whole world did depend? and what an honour was this to the female ſex in general, and to theſe women in particular, that they had the courage to follow Chriſt to the croſs, *when all the diſciples forſook him and fled?* God can make women glorious profeſſors of his truth, and arm them againſt the fears of ſufferings, contrary to the natural timorouſneſs of their tempers. Theſe women wait upon Chriſt's croſs, when apoſtles fly, and durſt not come near.

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arithmea, named Joſeph, who alſo himſelf was Jeſus' diſciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joſeph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre and departed. 61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary ſitting over-againſt the ſepulchre.

Here we have an account given of our Lord's funeral and interment in the grave: Such a funeral as never was ſince graves were firſt digged. Concerning which, we have theſe particulars obſervable; *Obſerve*, 1. The preparatives that were made for our Lord's funeral, namely, the begging and perfuming of his dead body; his body could not be buried, till by begging it was obtained of Pilate; the dead bodies of malefactors, being in the power and diſpoſal of the judge. Pilate grants it, and to manifeſt their dear affection to their dead Lord, they wrap the body in fine linen, wiih ſpices to perfume it. But what need of odours for that body which could not ſee corruption! Though his holy body did not want them, yet the affections of his friends could not withhold them. 2. The bearers that carried his body to the grave, or the perſons concerned in ſolemnizing his funeral, Joſeph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, two rich men, and two ſecret diſciples. 1. They were rich men, ſenators, honourable counſellors: and ſo that prophecy was fulfilled, *Iſa.* liii. 9. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.* 2. They were good men as well as rich men; diſciples, though ſecretly, for fear of the Jews. Grace doth not always make a public and open ſhew where it is. As there is much ſecret riches in the bowels of the earth which no eye ever ſaw, ſo there may be grace in the heart of a Chriſtian, which the world takes no notice of. We never heard any news of Joſeph of Arimathea, till now; yet was he eminently rich, wiſe and good: A worthy, though a cloſe diſciple. Much grace may be where little is ſeen. Some gracious perſons cannot put forward, and diſcover themſelves like others, and yet ſuch weak Chriſtians perhaps, when a trial comes, ſhall ſtand their ground, when ſtronger run away. We read of none of the apoſtles at Chriſt's funeral; fear had chaſed them away, though they profeſſed a readineſs to die with Chriſt: But Joſeph and Nicodemus appear boldly for him. Let it be a caution to ſtrong Chriſtians, neither to glory in themſelves, nor to glory over the weak. If God deſert the ſtrong, and aſſiſt the weak, *the feeble ſhall be as David, and the ſtrong as tow.* 3. The mourners that followed the hearſe; namely, the women that followed him out of Galilee, and particularly the two Mary's*:* A very poor train of mourners, a few ſorrowful women. Others are attended to their graves by their relations and friends; but Chriſt's diſciples were all ſcattered, and afraid to own him either dying or dead. Our bleſſed Lord affected no pomp or gallantry in his life, and it was no way ſuitable either to the end or manner of his death. Humiliation was deſigned in his death, and his burial was the loweſt degree of his humiliation. 4. The grave or the ſepulchre in which they buried him; *it was in a garden.* As by the ſin of the firſt Adam we were driven out of the garden of pleaſure, the earthly paradiſe: ſo by the ſufferings of the ſecond Adam, who lay buried in a garden, we may hope for an entrance into the heavenly paradiſe. It was in a *ſepulchre hewn out of a rock*; that ſo his enemies might have no occaſion to cavil, and ſay, that his diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret holes, or unſeen paſſages under ground. And it was in a new ſepulchre, in which never any man was laid, leſt his adverſaries ſhould ſay, it was ſome other that was riſen, or that he roſe from the dead by touching ſome other corpſe. 5. The manner of our Lord's funeral, haſtily, openly, decently celebrated. It was done in haſte, by reaſon of the ſtraits of time, the preparation for the paſſover cauſed them to be very expeditious; the ſabbath was approaching, and they lay all buſineſs aſide to prepare for that. *Learn* hence, How much it is our duty to diſpatch our worldly buſineſs as early as we can towards the end of the week, that we may be the better prepared to ſanctify the Lord's day, if we live to enjoy it. We ought to remember that day before it comes, and to ſanctify it when it is come. Again, our Lord was buried openly, as well as haſtily; all perſons had liberty to be ſpectators, that none might object there was any deceit uſed about his burial. He was alſo interred decently, his body wrapt in fine linen, and perfumed with odours, according to the Jewiſh cuſtom, which uſed not to unbowel, but embalm their dead. 6. The reaſon why our Lord was buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other men lie by the walls; and had his dead body remained a thouſand years unburied, it could have ſeen no corruption, having never been tainted with ſin. Sin is the cauſe of the body's corruption, it is ſin that makes our bodies ſtink worſe than carrion when they are dead. A funeral then was not neceſſary for Chriſt's body upon the ſame accounts that it is neceſſary for ours. But, 1. He was buried to declare the certainty of his death, and the reality of his reſurrection: and for this reaſon did the providence of God order it, that he ſhould be embalmed, to cut off all pretenſions. For in this kind of embalming, his mouth, his ears, and his noſtrils, were all filled with ſpices and odours, ſo that there could be no latent principle of life in him: being thus buried then, declares him to be certainly dead. 2. He was buried to fulfil the types and prophecies that went before concerning him. Jonas's being three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, was a type of Chriſt's being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and the prophet Iſaiah liii. 9. had declared the manner of his funeral long before he was born. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.* Pointing by that expreſſion at this tomb of Joſeph's, who was a rich man; and the ſcriptures cannot be broken. 3. He was buried to complete his humiliation; *They have brought me to the duſt of death,* ſays David, a type of Chriſt. This was the loweſt ſtep he could poſſibly deſcend in his abaſed ſtate: lower he could not be laid, and ſo low his bleſſed head muſt be laid, elſe he had not been humbled to the loweſt. 4. He went into the grave, that he might conquer death in its own territories and dominions. Chriſt's victory over the grave, cauſes his ſaints to triumph and ſing, *O grave where is thy deſtruction!* Our bleſſed Lord has perfumed the bed of the grave by his own lying in it: ſo that a pillow of down is not ſo ſoft to a believer's head, as a pillow of duſt. *Note* laſtly, Of what uſe the doctrine of our Lord's burial may be unto us. 1. For inſtruction; here we ſee the amazing depths of our Lord's humiliation. From what, to what his love brought him; even from the boſom of his Father, to the boſom of a grave. Now the depths of his humiliation ſhew us the fulneſs and ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, as well as the heinouſneſs of our tranſgreſſion. 2. For conſolation againſt the fears of death and the grave. The grave received Chriſt, but could not retain him. Death ſwallowed him up, as the fiſh did Jonas, but quickly vomited him up again; ſo ſhall it fare with Chriſt myſtical, as it did with Chriſt perſonal; the grave could not long keep him, it ſhall not for ever keep us; as his body reſted in hope, ſo ſhall ours alſo; and though they ſee corruption, which he did not, yet ſhall they not always lie under the power of corruption. In a word, Chriſt's lying in the grave, has changed and altered the nature of the grave; it was a priſon before, a bed of reſt now: a loathſome grave before, a perfumed bed now. He whoſe head is in heaven, need not fear to put his foot into the grave. *Awake and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the duſt,* for the enmity of the grave is ſlain by Chriſt. 3. For imitation; let us ſtudy and endeavour to be buried with Chriſt, in reſpect of our ſins, I mean, Rom. vi. 4. *Buried with him into death.*—Our ſins ſhould be as a dead body in ſeveral reſpects. Are dead bodies removed far from the ſociety of men? So ſhould our ſins be removed far from us. Do dead bodies in the grave ſpend and conſume away by little and little? So ſhould our ſins daily. Will dead bodies grow every day more and more loathſome to others? So ſhould our ſins be to ourſelves. Do dead bodies wax out of memory and are quite forgotten? So ſhould our ſins, in reſpect of any delight that we take in remembering of them. We ſhould always remember our ſins to our humiliation; but never think or ſpeak of them with the leaſt delight or ſatisfaction; for this, in God's account, is a new commiſſion of them, and lays us under an additional guilt.

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver ſaid while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again. 64 Command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, He is riſen from the dead. So the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt. 65 Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as ſure as you can. 66 So they went and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.

This laſt paragraph of the chapter acquaints us with the endeavours that the murderers of Chriſt uſed to prevent his foretold reſurrection: they aſk and obtain of Pilate, that his ſepulchre might be ſtrongly guarded till the third day was paſt and over, when probably they intended to have expoſed his dead body to the view of the people: and accordingly a three-fold guard is ſet about the grave; the ſtone, the ſeal, and the watch; concluding that Chriſt was ſafe enough either from riſing or ſtealing: The ſtone making the grave ſure, the ſeal making the ſtone ſure, and the watch or band of ſoldiers making all ſure. The ſtone being ſealed with the public ſeal, no perſon might meddle with it upon pain of death. Where *note*, 1. The wonderful wiſdom, the over-ruling power and providence of God: by this exceſſive care and extraordinary diligence, the high prieſts hoped to prevent our Saviour's reſurrection; but the truth and belief of it was hereby confirmed to all the world. How much evidence had Chriſt's reſurrection wanted, if the high prieſt and elders had not been thus maliciouſly induſtrious to prevent his riſing! 2. That the endeavours uſed to obſtruct our Lord's reſurrection, have rendered it more certain and undoubted: had not all this care and caution been uſed by his enemies, the grounds of our faith had not been ſo ſtrong, ſo evident, and ſo clear. It was very happy that the Jews were thus jealous and ſuſpicious, thus careful and diſtruſtful; for otherwiſe the world had never received ſo full and perfect an evidence of Chriſt's reſurrection as now, whereon all our comfort and ſalvation doth depend. Verily their ſolicitous care to ſuppreſs our Redeemer's reſurrection has rendered it more conſpicuous, and freed it from all ſuſpicion of forgery.

CHAP. XXVIII.

This laſt chapter of St. Matthew contains the hiſtory of our Saviour's reſurrection, and gives us an account of what he did on earth, between the time of his triumphant reſurrection and his glorious aſcenſion.

IN the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to ſee the ſepulchre.

The Lord of life was buried upon the Friday, in the evening of that day on which he was crucified; and his holy body reſted in the ſilent grave the next day, and a part of the morning the day following. Thus he aroſe again the third day, neither ſooner nor later; not ſooner, leſt the truth of his death ſhould have been queſtioned, that he did not die at all, and not later, leſt the faith of his diſciples ſhould have failed. And accordingly when the ſabbath was paſt, *and it dawned towards the firſt day of the week, in the morning very early*, before day, Mary-Magdalene, and other devout women, go to viſit the ſepulchre, intending with their ſpices and odours farther to embalm our Lord's body. But *obſerve*, Although the hearts of theſe good women did burn with an ardent love and zeal to their crucified Lord, yet the commanded duties of the ſabbath are not omitted by them; they ſtay till the ſabbath is ended; and then early in the morning they go with odours in their hands to perfume his ſacred corpſe; fearing neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the preſence of the watchmen: How great a tribute of reſpect and honour is due and payable to theſe women for their magnanimity and courage! They followed Chriſt, when his diſciples left him; they accompanied him to his croſs, and followed his hearſe to the grave, when none of his diſciples durſt appear. *Learn* hence, That courage is the ſpecial and peculiar gift of God; and where God gives courage, it is not in man to make afraid.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and came and rolled back the ſtone from the door, and ſat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow. 4 And for fear of him the keepers did ſhake, and became as dead *men.*

Obſerve here, 1. With what pomp and triumph doth our Lord ariſe. The earth that quaked before at his crucifixion, quakes now again at his reſurrection; it quaked then at the diſſolution, now at the reunion of his human nature, to tell the world that the God of nature then ſuffered, and now conquered. 2. How an angel is employed in Chriſt's reſurrection; *He rolls away the ſtone.* But could not Chriſt have riſen then without the angel's help? Yes ſure, he that raiſed himſelf, ſurely could have removed the ſtone: But God thinks fit to ſend an officer from heaven to open the priſon-door of the grave; and by ſetting our ſurety at liberty, proclaims our debt to the divine juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit that the angels, who had been witneſſes of our Saviour's paſſion, ſhould alſo be witneſſes of his reſurrection. 3. How unable the keepers of the grave were to bear the ſight and preſence of the angel; *they ſhook for fear, and became as dead men.* Angels being pure and perfect ſpirits, man is not able to bear the ſight of an angel, no not in human ſhape, without terror and affrightment; and if the ſight of an angel be ſo dreadful, what is the ſight of God himſelf?

5 And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he is riſen, as he ſaid. Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his diſciples that he is riſen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him. Lo, I have told you.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Lord's reſurrection aſſerted and declared, *He is riſen.* God never intended that the darling of his ſoul ſhould be loſt in an obſcure ſepulchre: *He is not here*, ſays the angel; that is, in the grave, where you laid him, where you left him. Death hath loſt its prey, and the grave her gueſt. 2. It is not ſaid, He is not here, for he is raiſed; but, *He is riſen.* The word imports the active power of Chriſt, or the ſelf-quickening principle by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the dead. Acts i. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion. Learn* hence, That it was the divine nature or Godhead of Chriſt which raiſed his human nature from death to life. Others were raiſed from the grave by Chriſt's power, he raiſed himſelf by his own power. 3. The teſtimony or witneſs given to our Lord's reſurrection; that of an angel; *The angel ſaid, He is not here, but riſen*: But why is an angel the firſt publiſher of our Lord's reſurrection? Surely the dignity of our Lord's perſon, and the excellency of his reſurrection, required that it ſhould be firſt publiſhed by an angel, and accordingly it is worthy our obſervation, how very ſerviceable and officious the holy angels were in attending upon our Saviour in the days of his fleſh: An angel foretels his *conception* to the bleſſed Virgin; an angel proclaims his *birth* to the ſhepherds; an angel ſuccours him *in his temptation in the wilderneſs*; an angel comforts him in his *agony* in the garden; and at his reſurrection *the angel rolls away the ſtone from the ſepulchre*, and brings the firſt tidings of it to the women: In his aſcenſion the angels *bore him company* to heaven; and when he comes again to judgment, *he ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.* 4. The perſons to whom our Lord's reſurrection was firſt made known; *to women*, to the *two Mary's*: But why to women? God will make choice of weak means for producing great effects, knowing that the weakneſs of the inſtrument redounds to the greater honour of the agent. In the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel, almighty God intermixes divine power with human weakneſs. Thus the conception of Chriſt was by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; but his mother, a poor woman, a carpenter's ſpouſe: So the crucifixion of Chriſt was in much meanneſs and outward baſeneſs, being crucified between two thieves; but the powers of heaven and earth trembling, the rocks rending, and the graves opening, ſhewed a mixture of divine power. God will honour what inſtruments he pleaſes, for the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes. But why to theſe two women, the two Mary's, is the diſcovery of Chriſt's reſurrection firſt made? Poſſibly it was a reward for their magnanimity and maſculine courage. Theſe women cleaved to Chriſt when the apoſtles fled from him, and forſook him; they aſſiſted at his croſs, they attended at his funeral, they watched his ſepulchre. Theſe women had more courage than the apoſtles, therefore God makes the women apoſtles to the apoſtles; he ſends them to tell the apoſtles of the reſurrection, and they muſt have the news at the ſecond hand. O what a tacit rebuke was thereby given to the apoſtles! A ſecret check, that they ſhould be thus outdone by poor women. Theſe holy women went before the apoſtles in the laſt ſervices that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the apoſtles here come after them in their rewards and comforts. 5. The evidence which the angel offers to the women, to evince and prove the verity and certainty of our Saviour's reſurrection; namely, by an appeal to their ſenſes: *Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay.* The ſenſes, when rightly diſpoſed, are the proper judges of all ſenſible objects; Chriſt himſelf did appeal to his diſciples ſenſes concerning the truth of his own reſurrection; *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf:* And indeed, if we muſt not believe our ſenſes, we ſhall want the beſt external evidence for the proof of the truth of the chriſtian religion; namely, the miracles wrought by Chriſt and his apoſtles: for what aſſurance can we have of the reality of theſe miracles, but from our ſenſes? therefore ſays our Saviour, *If ye believe not me, yet believe the works that I do:* That is, the miracles which I have wrought before your eyes. Now, as my ſenſes tell me that Chriſt's miracles were true, ſo they aſſure me, that the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is falſe. From the whole *note,* That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the omnipotent power of his godhead, revived and roſe again from the dead, to the terror and conſternation of his enemies, and the unſpeakable joy and conſolation of believers.

8 And they departed quickly from the ſepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his diſciples word. 9 ¶ And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold, Jeſus met them, ſaying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worſhipped him. 10 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there ſhall they ſee me.

Note here, 1. What haſte and ſpeed theſe holy women make to carry the news of Chriſt's reſurrection to the apoſtles; ſuch as find and feel their hearts grieved for the abſence and want of Chriſt, will be very ready to comfort ſuch as are in the ſame condition. O how glad are theſe holy women to carry the good news of their Lord's reſurrection to the heart-broken diſciples! 2. How they haſtened in obedience to the angel's command, to tell the diſciples to meet with Chriſt in the way. Such as obey the directions of God's miniſters, ſeeking Chriſt in his own way and means, ſhall find him to their comfort ſooner than they expected. Theſe holy women find Chriſt before they looked for him: *As they went to tell the diſciples, Jeſus met them.* O happy women! whilſt they were weeping for a dead Chriſt, they find a living Jeſus. 3. The affectionate and loving title which Chriſt puts upon his diſciples; *Tell my brethren.* He might have ſaid, "Go tell thoſe apoſtate apoſtles, that cowardly left me in my danger, that durſt not own me in the high-prieſt's hall, that durſt not come within the ſhadow of my croſs, nor within the ſight of my ſepulchre." Not a word of this, by way of upbraiding them for their late ſhameful cowardice, but all words of kindneſs, *Go tell my brethren.* *Note,* Chriſt calls his diſciples *brethren* after his reſurrection and exaltation, as he had done before in his ſtate of humiliation, to ſhew the continuance of his former affection towards them, and that the change of his condition had wrought no change in his affection towards his deſpiſed members; but thoſe that were his brethren before, in the time of his abaſement, are ſo ſtill after his exaltation and advancement. Laſtly, The place where Chriſt chuſes to meet and ſpeak to his diſciples, not in Jeruſalem, but in Galilee! *I go before them into Galilee, there ſhall they ſee me.* Jeruſalem was now a forſaken place, a people abandoned to deſtruction; Chriſt would not ſhew himſelf openly to them, but Galilee was a place where Chriſt's miniſtry was more acceptable. Such places wherein Chriſt is moſt welcome to preach, ſhall be moſt honoured with his preſence. *In Galilee ſhall they ſee me.*

11 Now when they were going, behold, ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done. 12 And when they were aſſembled with the elders, and had taken counſel, they gave large money unto the ſoldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His diſciples came by night, and ſtole him *away* while we ſlept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will perſuade him, and ſecure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this ſaying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Note here, 1. How the prieſts and elders endeavour by a notorious lie to hinder the belief of our Lord's reſurrection; they ſuborne and bribe the ſoldiers to ſay that his corpſe was ſtolen out of the grave: Lies have been an old refuge which the enemies of Chriſt have all along had recourſe unto; lying is an ancient device of Satan. But *note,* 2. What an improbable and unlikely lie this was, which they put into the ſoldiers mouths to vouch; *Say, His diſciples came and ſtole him away, while we ſlept.* Frivolous excuſe! carrying with it a moſt ſelf-evident contradiction. If the ſoldiers were aſleep, how could they diſcover the diſciples ſtealing away the body? If awake, why did they not prevent their ſtealing it? Beſides, how improbable was it that Chriſt's few and fearful diſciples ſhould attempt to open the ſepulchre guarded by ſoldiers? And as unlikely was it that the ſoldiers ſhould be all aſleep together, and ſo faſt aſleep too, that the great ſtone at the mouth of the ſepulchre ſhould be rolled away, and not one of the ſoldiers awakened with the noiſe. Infatuation is the certain conſequence of deſertion of God. Yet *obſerve* farther, That this incredible falſhood finds a faſt and firm rooting in the belief of the Jews to this day. *Note* thence, That it is a righteous thing with God to deliver up thoſe to ſtrong deluſions, even to the believing of notorious lies, who will not yield their aſſent to divine truths upon the cleareſt evidence, and moſt convincing demonſtration. How ſtrange is it that ſuch a falſehood as this ſhould find belief among the Jews to this day! But where truth is obſtinately rejected, a lie, though never ſo improbable, is received.

16 ¶ Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jeſus had appointed them. 17 And when they ſaw him, they worſhipped him: but ſome doubted.

The meeting of our Saviour and his apoſtles upon a mountain in Galilee, was an appointed and general meeting. The mountain is ſuppoſed to be that near Capernaum, where he made that famous ſermon called, *The ſermon on the mount:* And the meeting is ſuppoſed to be appointed as a general rendezvous, for confirming the faith of all his diſciples in the certainty of his reſurrection. Poſſibly our Lord appointed this place in Galilee, ſo far from Jeruſalem, that his diſciples might without danger come thither to ſee their Saviour alive again, after his crucifixion. This is judged to be that famous appearance of which St. Paul ſpeaks, 1 Cor. xv. 6. *When he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once.* And thoſe who ſaw him worſhipped him, who had before doubted. *Learn* hence, That when faith is once ſatisfied, and ſees Chriſt to be God, it engages the ſoul to worſhip him. Divine worſhip is due to Chriſt upon the account of his divine nature. No creature can be the object of divine worſhip; therefore they that worſhip Chriſt by praying to him, and yet deny him to be God, are certainly idolaters. If Chriſt had had an angelic nature, that had not made him capable of divine worſhip: For adoration is founded only on divinity, and what is but human or angelical, is not adorable.

18 And Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt; 20 Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Obſerve here, 1. A power aſſerted. 2. An authority delegated. 3. A command injoined. 4. A promiſe ſubjoined. *Note*, 1. A power and authority aſſerted by our Saviour, as belonging to himſelf: *All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth.* (1.) In *heaven*; which comprehends a power of ſending the Holy Ghoſt; a power over the angels, and all the hoſt of heaven, and a power to diſpoſe of heaven to all that ſhall believe in him. 2. In *earth*; which comprehends a power to gather a church out of all nations, and authority to rule, govern, and defend the ſame againſt all its enemies. *Learn* hence, That all power and authority concerning the church of God, was given unto Chriſt and conferred upon him, upon the account of his meritorious death and triumphant reſurrection. *All power is given unto me:* That is, as mediator; but this power was inherent in him, as God, from all eternity. *Note*, 2. This power delegated by Chriſt to his apoſtles; *Go ye therefore and teach, and baptize all nations; inſtructing them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Here is a threefold power delegated by Chriſt to his apoſtles: 1. To congregate and gather a chriſtian church, out of all the heathen nations throughout the world. Before, he had confined them only to Iſrael; now, they muſt travel from country to country, and proſelyte the heathen nations, which before had been taught of the devil, and were led away by his oracles and deluſions. *Go, and diſciple all nations*, without any diſtinction of country, ſex, or age whatſoever, and make the goſpel church as large as you can. Thence *note*, That the apoſtles and firſt planters of the goſpel had a commiſſion from Chriſt to go amongſt the Pagan Gentiles, without limitation; and were not to take up their ſettled reſidence in any one nation, but to travel from country to country, inſtructing them in the ſaving myſteries of the goſpel. The ſecond branch of their power was to baptize in the name of the whole Trinity; *baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Where *note*, That all adult and grown perſons are to be firſt taught and inſtructed before they be baptized. But it follows not from hence, that the children of ſuch parents may not be baptized before they are taught; for the apoſtles were to baptize all nations, of which children are a chief, if not the chiefeſt part. Beſides, thoſe that were proſelyted to the Jewiſh religion, though before they were circumciſed themſelves they were inſtructed in the law of God; yet when they were circumciſed themſelves, their children were not denied circumciſion at eight days old. In like manner, we have no reaſon to deny the children of baptized parents, who are in covenant themſelves, the ſign and ſeal of the covenant which is baptiſm. God having aſſured his people, *that he will be the God of them, and of their ſeed.* If this privilege be denied, the children of Chriſtian parents are in a worſe condition than the children of Jews; and conſequently infants are in a worſe condition ſince Chriſt's coming, than they were before, and the privileges of thoſe that live under the goſpel, are ſtraiter and narrower than of thoſe that lived under the law. *Obſerve* farther, In whoſe name perſons are to be baptized; *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* Where we have a profeſſion of our belief in the holy Trinity, a dedication of the perſon to the worſhip and ſervice of the holy Trinity, and a ſtipulation or covenant-promiſe that we will continue faithful in the ſervice of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to our life's end. The third branch of the power which Chriſt delegated to his apoſtles, was by their miniſtry to preſs upon all their converts an univerſal obſervance of, and obedience to all his commands; *teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Where *note,* 1. That preaching is the ordinary and inſtituted means to convert nations unto God. 2. That preaching muſt not only go before baptiſm, but follow after it. Obedience muſt be preſſed upon, and practiſed by all thoſe that enter into covenant with God; otherwiſe they lie under a great condemnation. 3. That preaching of the goſpel is a chief part of the miniſter's work, and no apoſtle thought himſelf above that duty. 4. As the apoſtles did not, ſo the miniſters of Chriſt ought not to teach any thing but what Chriſt commands them. 5. As they are to teach what Chriſt commands them, ſo they are to teach all things whatſoever Chriſt commands them: *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Laſtly, *note* the promiſe injoined; *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.* That is, I am and will be with you and your ſucceſſors, lawfully called by my power and authority, by the bleſſing and aſſiſtance of my Holy Spirit. I will be with you to uphold my own ordinance, to protect, encourage, and reward you, and all your ſucceſſors, in the faithful diſcharge of your truſt; and this not for a day, a year, or an age, but to the end and conſummation of all ages. *Learn* thence, That the miniſtry of the word, and adminiſtration of the ſacraments, are a ſtanding and perpetual ordinance, to continue in the chriſtian church throughout all ages. 2. That all the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, in what part of the world ſoever God ſhall caſt their lot, and in what time ſoever they ſhall happen to live, may comfortably expect Chriſt's gracious preſence with their perſons, and his bleſſing upon their endeavours. *Lo, I am with you,* I am *always* with you, *and to the end of the world I will be with you.* Thanks be to Chriſt for the gracious promiſe of his ſpiritual and perpetual preſence with his miniſters to the end of the world. May this promiſe cauſe us to gird up the loins of our minds, increaſe our diligence, zeal, and fervour, accounting no labour too great, no ſervice too much, no ſufferings too ſevere, ſo that we may *but finiſh our courſe with joy,* and fulfil the miniſtry we are engaged in. *Amen. Amen.*

THE END OF ST. MATTHEW's GOSPEL.

THE
GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
ST. MARK.

St. Mark, *the writer of this compendious Hiſtory of our bleſſed Saviour's Life and Death, was the diſciple and companion of St.* Peter; *and ſome affirm, that he wrote his goſpel from St.* Peter*'s mouth; it being dictated by St.* Peter, *and indited by the Holy Ghoſt. But ſince we are aſſured that the Spirit of God indited the book, we need not trouble ourſelves to find out whoſe hand it was that held the pen.*

CHAP. I.

THE beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God;

The word *goſpel* ſignifies a meſſage of glad tidings, and intimates to us, that the doctrine of the goſpel contains the moſt gladſome tidings, the moſt joyful meſſage that ever was ſent from God to mankind: Happy tidings concerning our reconciliation with God, and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. O how highly ſhould we prize, how ſtedfaſtly believe, how cordially embrace, theſe good tidings of great joy! *Note,* 2. This goſpel is called the *goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt,* becauſe, Chriſt, as God, is the author of this goſpel, and alſo the principal ſubject and matter of it: Indeed St. John the Baptiſt was the firſt publiſher and preacher of the goſpel-doctrine, but Chriſt himſelf was the firſt and principal author, and likewiſe the chief ſubject-matter of it: For whatever is taught in the goſpel, relates either to the perſon and offices of Chriſt, or to the benefits received by him, or the means of enjoying thoſe benefits from him. 3. How St. Mark ſtyles Chriſt *the Son of God,* as St. Matthew had ſtyled him before *the Son of David*; the one ſets forth the verity of his human nature, the other the reality of his divine nature; ſignifying to us, that the true and promiſed Meſſias was both God and man in two diſtinct natures, and one perſon for ever. He is true and real God, as well as the Father and the Holy Ghoſt; not a mere man, but God as well as man.

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

St. Mark begins his goſpel with an account of St. John the Baptiſt's preaching and miniſtry, and declares, 1. That the prophets of old, particularly Iſaiah and Malachi, did long before foretel the Baptiſt's meſſage and miniſtry: that he ſhould go before Chriſt as his harbinger to prepare the way for him: *Behold, I ſend my meſſenger to prepare thy way.* Where *note*, 1. The dignity and authority of the miniſters of Chriſt; they are his *meſſengers*, ſent by him to deliver his mind and will unto his people. This miniſterial miſſion is two-fold, extraordinary and ordinary; the former, when God immediately by himſelf calls men to the holy function; the latter, when he uſes the miniſtry of man in order thereunto. 2. The work and office of the miniſters of Chriſt declared, and that is, to prepare people to receive Jeſus Chriſt, offered and tendered to them in the goſpel. *Behold, I ſend my meſſenger,* &c. *Learn* thence, That the great deſign and end of the miniſtery of the word, is to prepare and fit men for entertaining the holy religion of Chriſt in their hearts, and to oblige them to walk according to the rules and directions of it in their lives.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

Here *note*, 1. The title given to John the Baptiſt: he is called a *voice*, in reſpect of his miniſterial office, which was to ſpeak forth, to promulge and publiſh the doctrine of ſalvation. 2. The quality or kind of this voice, a *crying* voice, *the voice of one crying*. This implies, 1. His earneſtneſs and vehemency, his zeal and fervency, in preaching. When we lift up our voice, and cry aloud, we ſpeak with earneſtneſs and fervour. When our hearts are warmly affected with what we preach, we may hope to affect the hearts of our hearers. Why has God commiſſioned men, rather than angels, to be the preachers and diſpenſers of his word, but becauſe we can ſpeak to, and treat with ſinners more feelingly and more affectionately than the angels can. 2. This crying of the holy Baptiſt in his preaching, implies his liberty and boldneſs, as well as his vehemency and earneſtneſs, in delivering of his meſſage. The lifting up of the voice in ſpeaking, argues boldneſs and courage in the ſpeaker; as, on the contrary, the depreſſing of the voice ſheweth timorouſneſs. *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of the word are to uſe both zeal and earneſtneſs, and alſo courage and boldneſs of ſpirit, in delivering the word and meſſage of God. Not forbearing to reprove ſin, not concealing any part of God's truth, for fear of men's diſpleaſure. 3. The ſum and ſubſtance of what he cried, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight:* that is, "Make ready yourſelves, prepare your own hearts, to entertain the doctrine of glad tidings of the goſpel." It is a metaphorical ſpeech, taken from the cuſtom of loyal and dutiful ſubjects, who, when their prince is coming to lodge in their city, they prepare and make ready the way for his coming, by removing every thing that may obſtruct or hinder his progreſs. *Learn* hence, That man's heart by nature is very unfit to embrace and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We have naturally no fitneſs, no diſpoſition, no inclination to believe in him, or to ſubmit unto him. 2. If ever we deſire to entertain Chriſt in our hearts, we muſt firſt prepare and make fit our hearts for the receiving and embracing of him. For though *the preparation of the heart be from the Lord*, yet he requires the exerciſe of our faculties, and the uſe of our endeavours. He prepares our hearts by enabling us to the preparations of our own hearts. This is done by getting a ſight of the evil of ſin, a ſenſe of our miſery without Chriſt, an hungering and thirſting deſire after him, a true faith in him. Chriſt will lodge in no heart that is not thus made ready to receive him.

4 John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins.

A two-fold account is here given of St. John's execution of his miniſtry and office; firſt, his baptizing; ſecondly, his preaching. *John did baptize*; that is, admit perſons into the church, by waſhing them with water: John baptized into the name of Chriſt, who was to come; the apoſtles baptized into the name of Chriſt already come. The ſecond part of his office was preaching. Where *note*, That preaching of the word, and adminiſtration of the ſacraments, are to go together, and belong only to the miniſters of the word, lawfully called. *John did baptize and preach*; but where and what did he preach? The place where, was the wilderneſs; a place not much frequented, though not altogether uninhabited; a ſolitary, mean, and obſcure place. Thither God had called him, and there he contents himſelf. *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of God muſt be content to execute their miniſtry, where God calls them, be the place never ſo mean and obſcure, and the people never ſo rude and barbarous; John was a preacher of great note and fame; Jeruſalem the chief city might ſeem more fit for him; but God had called him to preach in the wilderneſs, and he would not leave it. We muſt not leave our place becauſe it is mean and obſcure, nor deſert our people, thinking them too baſe to inſtruct; but where God has called us, we muſt there abide, till he that called us thither, remove us thence. Farther, As the place where the Baptiſt preached, *in the wilderneſs*, ſo the doctrine which he preached, namely, *the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*; that is, the doctrine of baptiſm, which ſealeth the remiſſion of ſins to the party baptized. *Learn* hence, That the preaching of the doctrine of repentance is abſolutely neceſſary, and the indiſpenſible duty of every goſpel miniſter. John the Baptiſt preached it, our Saviour preached it, his apoſtles preached it: *They went out preaching every where, that men ſhould repent.* The baptiſm of repentance (ſays the learned Lightfoot) belongs to children, though they know not what repentance means, becauſe it engages them to repentance when they come to years to underſtand that engagement. For thus it was with children circumciſed, they became debtors to obſerve the whole law, though they knew not what the law meant, yet circumciſion bound them to it, when they came to years of diſcretion.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

Here we have an account of the ſucceſs of St. John's miniſtry, 1. In the general concourſe and reſort of the people to it, *All Judea and Jeruſalem*: that is, a great many of all degrees and ranks, of all ages and ſexes. John was famed for a prophet, and a prophet was now a great rarity. Malachi was the laſt prophet before John, and he lived about five hundred years before John. Now the excellency of his perſon, the earneſtneſs of his preaching, the acceptableneſs of his doctrine, that the Meſſias was come, and the auſterity of his life and converſation, all theſe cauſed the people to flock unto him. *Learn* hence, That it is a great encouragement to the miniſters of Chriſt when people ſhew themſelves ready and forward to repair unto the places where the word and ſacraments are diſpenſed to them: *All Judea and they of Jeruſalem* attended upon John's miniſtry. The ſecond fruit of John's miniſtry, was, that the people were ready to receive at his hand the ſacrament of baptiſm: *They were all baptized of him in Jordan. Learn* hence, That the miniſters of Chriſt ought not only to preach the word, but alſo to diſpenſe the ſacraments to them, even to all that deſire them, and are fit to be partakers of them. A third fruit of John's miniſtry, was his hearers profeſſion of their true repentance, by the *confeſſion of their ſins*: as the profeſſion of repentance is requiſite in all that are baptized, ſo a free and voluntary, an ingenuous and impartial confeſſion of ſin, is a good evidence and teſtimony of the truth and ſincerity of our repentance.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a ſkin about his loins; and he did eat locuſts and wild honey;

This verſe acquaints us with the ſtrictneſs and auſterity of St. John's life in the wilderneſs; which is laid down in two things, in his mean and frugal apparel, and in his ſober and temperate diet. His apparel was rough and *hairy*, and his *girdle of leather*; as Elijah his forerunner was clad before him, 2 Kings i. 8. His diet was coarſe and ordinary, *locuſts and wild honey*; that is, ſuch plain and ordinary food as the wilderneſs afforded. His example teaches us, That the miniſters of the goſpel are not to affect either bravery in apparel, or delicacy in diet; but both by their habit and diet to ſet an example of gravity and ſobriety before their people; being in theſe, as well as in other things, an example unto their flocks.

7 And preached, ſaying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe.

Obſerve here, 1. The high opinion that the Baptiſt had of Chriſt. *He is mightier than I*; that is, a perſon of greater dignity and excellency by far than myſelf; whence may be gathered, that though Chriſt was man, he was not mere man, but more than man; even very God, equal with his Father, for *John the Baptiſt was the greateſt of them that were born of woman*, Matt. xi. 11. yet ſays he, *Chriſt is mightier or greater than I*. How ſo; but in regard to the dignity of his perſon, being both God and man in two diſtinct natures and one perſon? 2. The humble and low eſtimation that the Baptiſt had of himſelf: *his ſhoe latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe*: a proverbial ſpeech, implying that he was unworthy to do the baſeſt and meaneſt ſervice for Chriſt. O how well doth humility of mind, an humble apprehenſion, a low eſteem and opinion of themſelves, and their own gifts and abilities, become the meſſengers and miniſters of Chriſt! John was a man of eminent abilities, yet of exemplary humility; he thought himſelf unworthy to unlooſe Chriſt's ſhoe, or do the meaneſt office for him.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt.

John ſhewed the dignity of Chriſt's perſon above his own, in the former verſe; in this he declares the excellency of Chriſt's office, and the meanneſs of his own: I waſh the body with water, but Chriſt cleanſes the ſoul by the operation of his holy Spirit. Thence *learn*, That though the miniſters of Chriſt do by Chriſt's command diſpenſe the outward ordinance of baptiſm, yet it is Chriſt himſelf, that by the inward work of his Spirit doth make it effectual to ſuch as receive it. *I baptize with water, but he with the Holy Ghoſt.*

9 ¶ And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove deſcending upon him. 11 And there came a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

See the note on Matt. iii. 13. *Note* here, 1. The great condeſcenſion of Chriſt, in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the baptiſm of John; Chriſt, though he was John's Lord and Maſter, yea, Lord of heaven and earth, yet cometh to hear him preach, and will be baptized of his meſſenger. Thence *learn*, That the greateſt perſons ſhould neither think themſelves too great, nor too good, to come unto the miniſters of God, to hear the word from their mouth, or to receive the ſacrament at their hand. Chriſt, the Son of God, was content to be baptized of John, a mean perſon in compariſon of himſelf. How dare then the greateſt upon earth deſpiſe the miniſtry of man, being appointed by God? 2. The ſolemn inveſting of Chriſt into the office of Mediator, by a threefold miracle; namely, the opening of the heavens, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and God the Father's voice or teſtimony concerning his Son: *The heavens were opened*, to ſhew, that heaven, which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our ſins, is now opened to us by Chriſt's undertaking for us. As Chriſt opened heaven by his meritorious paſſion, ſo he keeps it open by his prevailing interceſſion. Next, *the Holy Ghoſt deſcends* *like a dove* upon our Saviour. Here we have a proof and evidence of the bleſſed Trinity. The Father ſpeaks from heaven, the Son comes out of the water, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcends in the likeneſs of a dove. But why did the Holy Ghoſt now deſcend upon Chriſt? Firſt, for the deſignation of his perſon, to ſhew that he was the perſon ſet apart for the work and office of a Mediator. Secondly, for the ſanctification of his perſon for the performance of that office. This was Chriſt's unction, the day in which he was anointed above his fellows to be the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his church: Iſa. lxi. ver. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath anointed me,* &c. *Note* 3. The voice of God the Father pronounced, 1. The nearneſs of Chriſt's relation to himſelf; *This is my Son.* 2. The endearedneſs of his perſon; *This is my beloved Son.* 3. The fruit and benefit of this near and dear relation unto us; *In whom I am well pleaſed.* Hence *learn,* 1. That there is no poſſibility for a perſon to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; neither our perſons nor our performances can find acceptance but through him, and for his ſake. 2. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the ground and cauſe of all that love which God the Father ſheweth to the ſons of men. In Chriſt God is well pleaſed with us, as a reconciled father; out of him, a conſuming fire.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderneſs. 13 And he was there in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beaſts; and the angels miniſtered unto him.

Immediately; That is, 1. After his baptiſm. Chriſt is no ſooner out of the water of baptiſm, but he is in the fire of temptation: Such as are baptized with Chriſt, and entered into the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, muſt look to be aſſaulted with Satan's temptations. Again, *immediately,* that is, 2. After the Father had declared his complacency in him, and being well pleaſed with him. *Learn* thence, That great manifeſtations of love from God, are uſually followed with great temptations from God. *The Spirit driveth him;* that is, the holy Spirit of God. For the devil is ſeldom, if ever, called the Spirit, but uſually ſome brand of reproach is annexed, as the *evil* ſpirit, or the *unclean* ſpirit, and the like; *Chriſt was led by the Spirit,* ſays St. *Matthew,* chap. iv. 1. *He was driven by the Spirit,* ſays St. *Mark;* that is, he was carried by a ſtrong impulſe of the Spirit of God to be tempted by Satan, and did not go of his own private motion to enter the liſts with Satan. *Teaching* us our duty, not to run into, or ruſh upon temptations, without a warrant and call from God. *Obſerve* next, The place where Satan aſſaulted Chriſt with his temptations: It was a ſolitary wilderneſs. No place whatever can privilege us from temptations, or be a ſanctuary from Satan's aſſaults. The ſolitary wilderneſs has a tempter in it; yea, Satan oftentimes makes uſe of mens ſolitarineſs to further his temptations; and ſuch as ſeparate themſelves from human ſociety, and give themſelves up to ſolitude and retirement, give great advantage to the tempter to tempt them. Next, The time and continuance of our holy Lord's temptations; not for an hour, a day, a week, or a month, but for *forty days and forty nights;* not all the time, but very often in that time. *Teaching* us, what we are to expect from Satan, temptations not a few: He will not ſolicit us once, but often, and follow us with freſh aſſaults; but the only way to overcome him is, as often to reſiſt him. *Obſerve* farther, A ſpecial aggravation of our Lord's temptations in the wilderneſs, *He was with the wild beaſts,* having no comfort from man, but only wild beaſts for his companions, which were more likely to annoy and hurt him, than any way to help and comfort him. Here we have an evidence of the divine power of Chriſt; who, as Lord of the creatures, can alter and change the nature of the creatures at his pleaſure; reſtraining the moſt ſavage and hurtful beaſts from hurting either himſelf or any of his people. Laſtly, The ſupply ſent in to Chriſt in the hour of temptation; *The angels came and miniſtered unto him;* food to his hungry body, and comfort to his tempted ſoul. *Learn* thence, That thoſe who, in the hour of temptation, do hold out in reſiſting Satan, ſhall find that the power and faithfulneſs of God will not be wanting to them, to ſend in ſuccour and relief at laſt. *Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and miniſtered unto him.*

14 ¶ Now after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God, 15 And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the goſpel.

In this our Saviour's firſt beginning to preach the goſpel, we have an account of the time when, the place where, and the ſum of what he preached. *Obſerve,* 1. The time when our Lord began to preach, and that was *after John the Baptiſt was caſt into priſon.* *Note,* (1.) The undue reward which the miniſters of God do ſometimes meet with from a wicked world: they are hated, perſecuted, and impriſoned for their courage in reproving ſin: John, for reproving Herod's inceſt, was put in priſon. (2.) John was no ſooner in priſon, and ſtopped, and hindered from preaching, but Chriſt began to preach. See the care and kindneſs of God towards his church, in that he never leaves it wholly deſtitute of the means of inſtruction: when ſome of his faithful miniſters are reſtrained from preaching, he ſtirreth up others in their rooms, not ſuffering all their mouths to be ſtopped at once. 2. The place where our Lord firſt preached, in Galilee. The land of Canaan, in our Saviour's time, was divided into three principal provinces: On the ſouth, Judea; on the north, Galilee; in the midſt Samaria. Galilee was divided into upper and lower Galilee; the higher was called *Galilee of the Gentiles,* becauſe it was the outmoſt part of the land, and ſo next unto the Gentiles. In this upper Galilee, Capernaum was the metropolis, or chief; and Chorazin a leſſer city. Now much of our Saviour's time was ſpent in Galilee; he was conceived and brought up at Nazareth, a city in Galilee; he firſt preached at Capernaum in Galilee; he wrought his firſt miracle at Cana in Galilee; his transfiguration was upon mount Tabor in Galilee; and our Saviour's ordinary reſidence was in Galilee. He came into Judea, and up to Jeruſalem, only at the feaſts; and after his reſurrection, he appoints his diſciples to meet him in Galilee. Only his nativity, his paſſion and aſcenſion, were proper to Judea. His nativity at Bethlehem, his paſſion at Jeruſalem, and his aſcenſion upon mount Olivet, hard by Jeruſalem. Now all this demonſtrates Chriſt to be the true and promiſed Meſſias; for, according to prophecy, the Meſſiah was to have his preſence and principal abode in the province of Galilee, Iſa. ix. 1, 2, 3, &c. Yet becauſe he was of Galilee, the Jews would not believe him to be the Meſſiah, ſaying in ſcorn, *Can any good thing come out of Galilee?* Whereas our Saviour's habitation and free converſation there, was a proof unto them, and ought to have perſuaded them, that, according to the prophecy, he was the very Chriſt. 3. The ſum of what our Lord preached; namely, a doctrine, and an exhortation. His doctrine is, *That the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand*: that is, that the time foretold by the prophets, when the kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhould begin, was now come.— The exhortation is, *Therefore repent, and believe the goſpel.* From the former *note*, That the Meſſiah's coming, or our Saviour's appearing in the fleſh, was exactly at the time foretold by the holy prophets: *The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of the Meſſiah is at hand.* 2. That the great doctrines of repentance and faith are taught only in and by the goſpel, and accordingly ought in a ſpecial manner to be preached and inſiſted upon by the miniſters of the goſpel. The doctrine of Chriſt, and his ambaſſadors, is and ought to be the ſame; they both teach the great doctrines of faith and repentance to a loſt world: *Repent, and believe the goſpel.*

16 ¶ Now as he walked by the ſea of Galilee, he ſaw Simon and Andrew his brother caſting a net into the ſea: for they were fiſhers. 17 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fiſhers of men. 18 And ſtraightway they forſook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he ſaw James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who alſo were in the ſhip mending their nets. 20 And ſtraightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ſhip with the hired ſervants, and went after him.

In this hiſtory of our Saviour's calling the four diſciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John, obſerve theſe particulars. 1. The meanneſs of the perſons whom he calls, illiterate fiſhermen;—Chriſt took hereby effectual care that his goſpel ſhould be known to be the power of God; not the wiſdom and device of man—that the inſtruments ſhould not carry away the glory of the work. 2. Chriſt called his apoſtles by couples, two and two; firſt Peter and Andrew, then James and John; thereby ſignifying to us, that the work of the miniſtry requires the concurrence of all hands that are called to it. All the miniſters of God ſhould join their hearts and hands, and ſet their ſhoulders as one man to this great work; and all little enough, God knows, to carry it on with advantage and ſucceſs. 3. The work which they are called from, and called to, from being *fiſhermen*, to be *fiſhers of men*; from catching fiſh with the labour of their hands, to catch men with the labour of their tongues. 4. Our Saviour's command: firſt to follow him, before they be ſent out by him: *Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men.* We muſt be Chriſt's diſciples before we are his miniſters; his followers, before we are his ambaſſadors: we muſt learn Chriſt before we preach him; otherwiſe we may fiſh for a livelihood, but not for ſouls. 5. The gracious promiſe which Chriſt gives his apoſtles for their encouragement; namely, to qualify them for, and to ſucceed them in their office; *I will make you fiſhers of men.* Faithfulneſs and care, diligence and endeavour, is our part; but the bleſſing and ſucceſs is Chriſt's; our labour is only in the caſt; Chriſt's power is wholly in the draught. Some fiſh cleave to the rocks, others play upon the ſands, more wallow in mud; and verily we ſhall labour all our days and catch nothing, if Chriſt do not bring our fiſh to net, and incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the throwing and caſting of it. 6. The apoſtles ready compliance with our Saviour's call. Straightway they forſook their father and friends, ſhip and nets, and followed Jeſus.— Whom Chriſt calls, he call effectually; and draws whom he calls, and works their hearts to a ready compliance with their duty. 7. That upon their call to the miniſtry they leave their trade, they forſake their ſhip and nets, and lie cloſe to their miniſterial employment. *Teaching* us, That the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould wholly give themſelves up to their great work, and not encumber themſelves with ſecular affairs and worldly buſineſs. Nothing but an indiſpenſible neceſſity, in providing for a family, can excuſe a miniſter's encumbering himſelf with worldly concerns and buſineſs

21 And they went into Capernaum; and ſtraightway on the ſabbath-day he entered into the ſynagogue, and taught. 22 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the ſcribes.

Our Saviour having called his diſciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John, to follow him, in order to their preaching of the goſpel; here we may obſerve how he went himſelf along with them, teaching perſonally in the ſynagogues wherever he came: he did not ſend his diſciples forth as his curates, and lie at home himſelf upon his couch of eaſe. What ſhall we ſay to thoſe lazy fiſhermen that ſet others to the drag, but care only to feed themſelves with the fiſh? not willing to wet their hands with the net, or take any pains themſelves? Our Saviour did not thus; but when he ſent forth his apoſtles, he ſtill preached himſelf, he went into their ſynagogues and taught. *Obſerve* farther, The ſucceſs of his preaching; the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine, ſtruck with admiration, apprehending and believing him to be an extraordinary prophet, ſent from God. *Learn* thence, That ſuch is the efficacy of Chriſt's doctrine, eſpecially when accompanied with the energy and operation of the Holy Spirit, that it makes all his auditors admirers; cauſing aſtoniſhment in their minds, and reformation in their manners. Laſtly, The reaſon of our Lord's ſucceſs in preaching, *He taught* *as one having authority.* He taught in his own name, as being Lord of his doctrine; not ſaying with the prophets, *Thus ſaith the Lord*; but, *I ſay unto you*: and he wrought powerful miracles, which accompanied his doctrine. As Chriſt was careful to preſerve the authority of his perſon and doctrine with the people: ſo it is the duty of his miniſters to demean themſelves amongſt their people, that neither their authority may be contemned nor their perſons deſpiſed, but their doctrine and themſelves reverenced and obeyed.

23 And there was in their ſynagogue a man with an unclean ſpirit: and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God. 25 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, inſomuch that they queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? What new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him.

St. Mark having given an account of our Saviour's doctrine which he preached, ver. 15. namely, the doctrine of faith and repentance, he now acquaints us in the remaining part of this chapter with the miracles which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine, and they are three. Firſt, The *caſting of a devil out of one poſſeſſed*, ver. 23. Secondly, The *curing of Peter's wife's mother of a fever*, ver. 29. Thirdly, The *cleanſing of a leper*, from verſe 40 to the end of the chapter. His firſt miracle was the caſting a devil out of one poſſeſſed: *There was a man with an unclean ſpirit*: that is, an unclean ſpirit did enter into him, and bodily poſſeſs him. Amongſt the many calamities which ſin has brought upon our bodies, this is one, that we are liable to be bodily poſſeſſed by Satan. The devil has an inveterate malice againſt mankind, ſeeking to ruin our ſouls by his ſuggeſtions and temptations, and to deſtroy our bodies by ſome means or other: but bleſſed be God, though his malice be infinite, yet his power is limited and bounded; as he cannot do all the miſchief he would, ſo he ſhall not do all he can. O, how much is it our intereſt, as well as our duty, by prayer, to put ourſelves morning and evening, under the divine protection, that we may be preſerved from the power and malice of evil ſpirits! 2. The tribute or title given to the devil, he is called an *unclean* ſpirit. The devils, whoſe wicked ſpirits of hell, are moſt impure and filthy creatures; impure by means of their original apoſtaſy; impure by means of their actual and daily ſins, ſuch as murder, malice, lying, and the like, by which they continually pollute themſelves; impure by means of their continual deſire and endeavour to pollute mankind with the contagion of their own ſin. Lord, how foul is the nature of ſin, which makes the devil ſuch a foul and unclean creature! 3. This unclean ſpirit no ſooner ſaw Chriſt, but *he cried out*. *Note*, That the greatneſs of Chriſt's power (being the Son of God) over devils and wicked ſpirits is ſuch, that it is very terrible and tormenting to them: It was terrible to them in a ſtate of humiliation on earth, and made them cry out; but, O how terrible will his power be to them at the great day, when *Chriſt ſhall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance both to men and devils!* *Obſerve*, 4. The ſubſtance of the devils outcry; *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to deſtroy us?* Where *note*, 1. That though the devils are now as full of ſin and diſcontent as they can be, yet are they not ſo full of miſery and torment as they ſhall be. *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* ſays St. Matthew, chapter viii. 29. *Art thou come to deſtroy us?* ſays St. Mark: That is, to bring upon us our full and final deſtruction. Implying, that the devil has not yet his full judgment and complete damnation. Therefore there is certainly a day of judgment to come, and the devils are in chains of darkneſs, reſerved to the judgment of that great day. But ſome, by theſe words, *Art thou come to deſtroy us?* underſtand as much as, "Art thou come to reſtrain us from the exerciſe of our power?" *Learn* we thence, That the devil thinks himſelf deſtroyed when he is reſtrained from doing miſchief. *Obſerve* 5. The title which the devil put upon our Saviour; *Jeſus of Nazareth, the holy One of God.* Although there was ground for the common people's calling Chriſt *Jeſus of Nazareth*, becauſe he was bred and brought up there, and lived there during his private life, till about thirty years of age; though he was not born there, but at Bethlehem; yet it is conceived that the devil gave this title to our Saviour in policy, to diſguiſe the place of Chriſt's nativity, that ſo the Jews might not believe him to be the true Meſſiah, becauſe he was of Nazareth, whereas the Meſſiah was to come out of Bethlehem. Therefore, to the intent that the Jews might be at the greater loſs concerning Chriſt, and in doubt of his being the true Meſſiah, the devil here calls him not Jeſus of Bethlehem, but *Jeſus of Nazareth*. But how comes the next title out of the devil's mouth; *the holy One of God?* Could an apoſtle, could Peter himſelf make a profeſſion beyond this? But how comes the devil to make it! For no good end or purpoſe we may be ſure; for he never ſpeaks truth for truth's ſake, but for advantage. Probably, 1. He made this profeſſion, that ſo he might bring the truth profeſſed into ſuſpicion, hoping that a truth which received teſtimony from the father of lies would be ſuſpected. 2. It might perhaps be done that the people might believe that our Saviour had ſome familiarity with Satan, and did work miracles by his help, becauſe he did confeſs him, and ſeem ſo much to honour him. From this inſtance and example *learn*, That it is poſſible for a perſon to own and acknowledge Chriſt to be the true and only Saviour, and yet to miſs of ſalvation by him. If a ſpeculative knowledge, and a verbal profeſſion of Chriſt were ſufficient to ſalvation, the devil himſelf would not miſs of happineſs. *Obſerve*, 6. How our Saviour rebukes the devil for his confeſſion, and commands him ſilence; *And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace.* But why was this rebuke given the devil when he ſpake the truth? *Anſwer*, 1. Becauſe Chriſt knew that the devil confeſſed this truth on purpoſe to diſgrace the truth. 2. Becauſe the devil was no fit perſon to make this profeſſion. A teſtimony of truth from the father of lies, is enough to render truth itſelf ſuſpected. Yet the devil's evidence, that Chriſt was the holy One of God, will riſe up in judgment againſt the wicked Phariſees, who ſhut their eyes againſt the miracles, and ſtopt their ears againſt the doctrine of *the holy One of God*. Laſtly, How the unclean ſpirit obeys the voice of Chriſt, though with great reluctancy and regret; *When the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out.* Chriſt is Lord over the wicked angels, and as an abſolute power and authority to over-rule them, and command them at his pleaſure; if Chriſt ſays to the evil ſpirit, *Come out*, out he muſt come. Yet *obſerve* the devil's ſpite at parting, *he tears the man*, tortures his body, throws him violently from place, ſhewing how loath he was to be diſpoſſeſſed. Where Satan has once gotten an hold, and ſettled himſelf for a time, how unwilling is he to be caſt out of poſſeſſion? yea, it is a torture and vexation to him to be caſt out; it is much eaſier to keep him out than to caſt him out. Satan may poſſeſs the body by God's permiſſion, but he cannot poſſeſs our hearts without our own conſent and approbation; it will be our wiſdom to deny him entrance into our ſouls at firſt, by rejecting his wicked motions and ſuggeſtions; for when once entered, he will, like the *ſtrong man armed, keep the houſe till a ſtronger than he caſts him out.*

28 And immediately his fame ſpread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee. 29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the ſynagogue, they entered into the houſe of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay ſick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up: and immediately the fever left her, and ſhe miniſtered unto them.

The ſecond miracle which our Saviour wrought in this chapter to confirm the truth and authority of his doctrine, was his raiſing up of *Peter's wife's mother* from her bed of ſickneſs. Where *note*, 1. That St. Peter, now a diſciple, and afterwards an apoſtle, was a married perſon. Neither the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the miniſters of the New, did abhor the marriage-bed, nor think themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their Maker. The church of Rome, by denying the lawfulneſs of prieſts marriage, makes herſelf wiſer than God, who ſays, Heb. xiii. 4. *Marriage is honourable amongſt all men. Note* 2. Peter, though a good man, and his wife's mother probably a gracious woman, yet is his family viſited with ſickneſs: Strength of grace, and dearneſs of reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail againſt diſeaſes. God's own children are viſited with bodily ſickneſſes as well as others. 3. The charitable care of St. Peter, and the other diſciples, forthwith to acquaint Chriſt with the condition of this ſick perſon: *Anon they tell him of her.* The care of our fellow chriſtians, eſpecially when of the number of our near and dear relations, in a time of ſickneſs, is not to be deferred or delayed. Outward help for their bodies, and the ſpiritual help of our prayers for their ſouls, are both ſtraightway to be afforded them. 4. Chriſt's divine power manifeſted in this miraculous cure: *He no ſooner took her by the hand, but the fever left her.* The miracle was not in curing an incurable diſtemper, but in curing an ordinary diſtemper after a miraculous manner; namely, 1. By a touch of the hand. 2. The recovery was inſtantaneous and ſudden; *immediately the fever left her.* 3. The viſible effects of her recovery inſtantly appeared; *She aroſe and miniſtered unto Chriſt and his diſciples.* That ſhe could ariſe, argued her cure miraculous; that ſhe did ariſe, and did adminiſter to Chriſt, argued her thankfulneſs. *Learn* thence, That after Chriſt hath graciouſly healed any of us, it ought to be our firſt work and care to adminiſter unto Chriſt: That is, to employ our recovered health in the ſervice of Chriſt, and to improve our renewed ſtrength to the honour and glory of Chriſt.

32 ¶ And at even, when the ſun did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with devils. 33 And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many that were ſick of divers diſeaſes, and caſt out many devils; and ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him.

The Evangeliſt here declares ſundry other miracles wrought by our Saviour before the door of St. Peter's houſe, where he now was: He healed all the diſeaſed that were brought unto him, and caſt devils out of them that were poſſeſſed with them. But how comes it to paſs, that we read of ſo many poſſeſſed with devils in our Saviour's time, and ſo few either before or ſince? *Anſwer*, 1. Probably Satan, perceiving that the Meſſiah was come in the fleſh to deſtroy his kingdom, did rage the more, and diſcover greater malice and enmity againſt mankind. 2. Perhaps almighty God permitted Satan at that time to poſſeſs ſo many, that Chriſt might have occaſion to manifeſt his divine power by caſting Satan out: And accordingly, we find our Saviour diſpoſſeſſing all that were poſſeſſed by Satan. It is added, *That he ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him.* That is, Chriſt would not be made known to be the Son of God by the preaching of the devil, to whom it belonged not to publiſh the goſpel, leſt the world ſhould take from thence an occaſion to think that our Saviour held a correſpondence with thoſe wicked ſpirits, and that the miracles he wrought were performed by the devil's aſſiſtance, as being one in combination with him. Poſſibly, from the devil's owning Chriſt to be the holy One of God, the Phariſees concluded that there was a compact and agreement betwixt them, and thereupon their affirmation was grounded, *He caſteth out devils by Beelzebub*, &c.

35 And in the morning, riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed.

Note here, 1. The duty performed by our Saviour, namely, prayer, ſolitary and private prayer. He went by himſelf alone, out of the hearing of his diſciples. The company of our beſt friends is not always ſeaſonable, nor acceptable;

there are times and caſes when a chriſtian would not be willing that his deareſt relations upon earth ſhould hear that intercourſe which paſſes betwixt him and his God. 2. Chriſt chuſes the opportunity of the morning for prayer, *He riſes a great while before day* to ſet about this work. *Teaching* us, That the morning is a fit ſeaſon, yea, the beſt ſeaſon, for private duties: Now our ſpirits are freſheſt and our minds freeſt, before the diſtractions of the day break in upon us. It is better to go from prayer to buſineſs, than from buſineſs to prayer.

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him. 37 And when they had found him, they ſaid unto him, All men ſeek for thee. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there alſo: for therefore came I forth. 39 And he preached in their ſynagogues throughout all Galilee, and caſt out devils.

Note here two things: Firſt, The great end of Chriſt in his incarnation and coming into the world, namely, as a prophet ſent from God to reveal his will, and to publiſh the doctrine of the goſpel. *Therefore came I forth*; that is, to preach, and plant the goſpel. Secondly, It being Chriſt's deſign not only to plant but to propagate the goſpel, he would not confine his miniſtry to any particular place, no, not to the great city of Capernaum, but reſolves to preach the word in the ſmalleſt towns and villages. Leaving his miniſters herein an inſtructive example, to be as willing to preach the goſpel in the ſmalleſt villages, as in the largeſt cities, if God calls them thereunto. Let the place be never ſo obſcure and mean, and the congregation never ſo ſmall and little, if God ſends us thither, the greateſt of us muſt not think it beneath us to go and inſtruct an handful of people.

40 And there came a leper to him, beſeeching him, and kneeling down to him, and ſaying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 41 And Jeſus moved with compaſſion put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and ſaith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42 And as ſoon as he had ſpoken, immediately the leproſy departed from him, and he was cleanſed. 43 And he ſtraitly charged him, and forthwith ſent him away; 44 And ſaith unto him, See thou ſay nothing to any man: but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing thoſe things which Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publiſh *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, inſomuch that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in deſert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

The laſt miracle of our Saviour's recorded in this chapter, is the healing of a leper; he came, beſeeching Chriſt to heal him, *Saying, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* Where *note*, 1. He doth not queſtion Chriſt's power, but diſtruſts Chriſt's willingneſs to heal him; *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt.* Chriſt's divine power muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly believed by all thoſe that expect benefit by him, and healing from him. 2. The great readineſs of Chriſt to help and heal this diſtreſſed perſon. *Jeſus touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean.* By the ceremonial law, the leper was forbidden to be touched, therefore Chriſt's touching this leper ſhewed him to be above the law, and that he was the Lord of it, and might diſpenſe with it; and his healing the leper by the word of his mouth, and touch of his hand, ſhewed him to be truly and really God. Leproſy among the Jews was an incurable diſtemper, called *the finger of God*, a diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing. Our Saviour, therefore, as a proof of his being the true Meſſiah, tells *John*'s diſciples, Matt. xi. 5. that *the lepers were cleanſed, and the dead raiſed* by him: which two being joined together, do imply that the cleanſing of lepers is as much an act of divine power as the raiſing of the dead. And accordingly, 2 Kings v. 7. it is ſaid, *Am I a God, that this man ſends to me to cure a man of his leproſy?* *Note* 3. The certainty and ſuddenneſs of the cure was a proof of Chriſt's divine power; *immediately his leproſy was cleanſed.* Chriſt not only cured him without means, but without the ordinary time required for ſuch a cure. Thus Chriſt ſhewed both power and will to cure him miraculouſly, who believed his power, but queſtioned his willingneſs. 4. The cauſe moving our Saviour to cure this leper; his bowels were moved with tender pity and compaſſion towards him. Chriſt's exerciſing acts of mercy and compaſſion, with ſuch condolency and ſympathizing pity, ſhould by way of example teach us to be inwardly moved with tender compaſſion and mercy towards ſuch as are in miſery. We are not only to draw out our bread, but to draw out our ſoul to the hungry. 5. A twofold charge and command given by Chriſt to the leper after his cure. 1. To conceal, and *tell it to no man.* Where the great modeſty, humility, and piety of Chriſt is diſcovered, together with the care of his own ſafety. His modeſty, in not deſiring his good deeds ſhould be publiſhed and proclaimed. His humility, in ſhunning vain glorious applauſe and commendation. His piety, in deſiring all honour and glory ſhould redound entirely to God. And the care of his own ſafety appeared, leſt the publiſhing of his miracles ſhould create him untimely danger from the Phariſees. The ſecond part of the charge given to the recovered leper, was, *to ſhew himſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift which Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them:* That is, to teſtify to the Jews, that he did not oppoſe the ceremonial law, which required a thank offering at his hand, and that he was the true and promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn* thence, That our Saviour would have the ceremonial law punctually obſerved, ſo long as the time for its continuance did endure; though he came to deſtroy that law, yet whilſt it ſtood, he would have it punctually obſerved. 6. Notwithſtanding our Saviour's ſtrict prohibition, the leper publiſhes the fame of this miracle. It is likely his intention might be good, in extolling his great benefactor, but his acting contrary to his command was a fault, a fault, and ſhews the corruption of human nature, it bebeing moſt forward to that which is moſt forbidden. It is a ſin to do any thing againſt the command of Chriſt, though with never ſo good a meaning, purpoſe, and intention to exalt and honour Chriſt. Laſtly, The inconveniences which attend our Saviour upon this indiſcreet publication of the miracle; and they were two: 1. Our Saviour *could no more enter into Capernaum*, and other cities, to preach in an open manner as he had done, by reaſon of the great concourſe of people after him. 2. The fame of this miracle brought the people about him *from all quarters*; not ſo much to hear, as to ſee; not ſo much to hear his holy and heavenly doctrine which he taught, as to gratify their curioſity with the ſight of the miracles which he wrought. O! how many thronged after Chriſt, more to have their bodily diſeaſes cured, than their ſouls healed. Chriſt deſired not their flocking after him upon this account; therefore he retires from the breath of popular applauſe: He would not *openly enter into the city, but was without in deſert places.* O great humility! How little did our bleſſed Redeemer regard the applauſe and commendation of men! Conſtantly we find him, as ſoon as his public preaching and working of miracles was over, withdrawing himſelf from the multitude into ſome private place apart: He doth not ſtay in the crowd with his ear open to liſten how men admire the preacher, and applaud the ſermon. Plainly ſhewing, that he ſought his father's glory, not his own praiſe, or the people's commendation; leaving his example as an inſtructive pattern to all his miniſters and ambaſſadors to take heed of vain-glory; not to affect popularity, or to ſeek the applauſe and commendation of men in what they do; reſolving that man's opinion ſhall be nothing with them, but that the pleaſing of God, and doing their duty to the ſouls of their people, ſhall always be their whole ſcope.

CHAP. II.

AND again he entered into Capernaum, after *ſome* days; and it was noiſed that he was in the houſe. 2 And ſtraightway many were gathered together, inſomuch, that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not ſo much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

In the laſt verſe of the foregoing chapter we find how induſtriouſly our bleſſed Saviour withdrew himſelf from the concourſe and throng of people which flocked after him from every quarter; and to ſhew how little he affected the applauſe and commendation of the multitude, *he left the cities, and was without in deſert places.* Hereby giving his miniſters an inſtructive example to decline vain glory, and to ſhun popular applauſe. But now the words before us ſhew that our Saviour having *entered* (privately, as is probable) *into the city of Capernaum*, it is preſently noiſed and reported *that he was in the houſe*, and a mighty concourſe and throng of people are after him; inſomuch, that neither the houſe, nor hardly the ſtreets could contain them. Thence *learn*, That ſuch as leaſt ſeek after honour and applauſe from men, are oft-times moſt famous and renowned. Our Saviour was ſo far from ſeeking the people's praiſe and commendation, that he came into Capernaum without obſervation, and betook himſelf to his dwelling-houſe there; but the more he ſought to lie hid, the more he was taken notice of. Honour flies from them that purſue it, and purſues thoſe that fly from it. The way to be honoured, is to be humble. God ſeldom honours a proud man, by making him either eminently ſerviceable or ſucceſsful. *Note* farther, the people being come together, our Saviour takes the opportunity to preach: *And he preached the word unto them.* Teaching his miniſters by his example, to embrace all opportunities, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, on the Lord's day, and on the week day, to edify our people by our miniſtry, by our public exhortations, by our private inſtructions, prudent admonitions, and holy examples. Being well aſſured, that we ſhall be abundantly rewarded by the Lord of life and ſalvation hereafter.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one ſick of the palſy, which was borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the preſs, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the ſick of the palſy lay. 5 When Jeſus ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, thy ſins be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the ſcribes ſitting there, and reaſoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this *man* thus ſpeak blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins but God only? 8 And immediately, when Jeſus perceived in his ſpirit that they ſo reaſoned within themſelves, he ſaid unto them, Why reaſon ye theſe things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it eaſier to ſay to the ſick of the palſy, Thy ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of palſy) 11 I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine houſe. 12 And immediately he aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, inſomuch, that they were all amazed, and glorified God, ſaying, We never ſaw it on this faſhion.

Here we have the relation of our Saviour's miraculous healing of one ſick of the palſy at Capernaum. Where *note*, 1. The diſeaſed and diſtreſſed perſon; *one ſick of the palſy*, which diſeaſe being a reſolution and weakneſs of the nerves, enfeebles the joints, and confines the perſon to his bed or couch. As a demonſtration of Chriſt's divine power, he was pleaſed to ſingle out the palſy and leproſy, incurable diſeaſes, to work a cure upon ſuch as were afflicted with them. Now, this perſon was ſo great a cripple, by reaſon of the palſy, that he was borne of four. He could not go, nor was he capable of being led, but was carried by four in his bed or couch. 2. As the grievouſneſs of the diſeaſe, ſo the greatneſs of their faith. The man and his friends had a firm perſuaſion that Chriſt was clothed with a divine power, and able to help him, and they hoped in his goodneſs that he was alſo willing to help him. Accordingly, the roof of the Jewiſh houſes, being flat, they uncovered ſome part of it, and let the bed down with the ſick man in it, into the room were Chriſt was. 3. No ſooner did they exerciſe their faith in believing, but Chriſt exerts his divine power in healing. And ſee the marvellous efficacy of faith, it obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected. They deſired only the healing of the body, but Chriſt heals body and ſoul too. *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* Thereby our Saviour ſhews them, that ſin is the original cauſe of all bodily diſeaſes; and conſequently, that in ſickneſs, the beſt way to find eaſe and deliverance from pain, is firſt to ſeek for pardon. The ſenſe of pardon in ſome degree will take away the ſenſe of pain. 4. The exception which the ſcribes took againſt our Saviour for pronouncing that this man's ſins were forgiven him. They accuſe him of the ſin of blaſphemy; urging, that it is God's peculiar prerogative to pardon ſin. Their doctrine was true, but their application falſe. Nothing more true, than that it is the greateſt degree of blaſphemy for any mere man to arrogate to himſelf the incommunicable prerogative of God, which conſiſts in an abſolute and authoritative power to forgive ſin. But then their denying this power to Chriſt of forgiving ſin, which he had as God from all eternity, and as Mediator, God and man in one perſon when here upon earth; this was blaſphemy in them; the challenging of it none in him. 5. Our Saviour gives theſe ſcribes a twofold demonſtration of his Godhead, 1. By letting them underſtand that he knew their thoughts: *Jeſus perceiving in the Spirit that they reaſoned within themſelves.* To ſearch the hearts, and to know the thoughts and reaſonings of men, is not in the power of angels or men, but the prerogative of God only. 2. By aſſuming to himſelf a power to forgive ſin: For our Saviour here, by aſſuming to himſelf a power to forgive ſins in his own name, and by his own authority, doth give the world an undeniable proof and convincing evidence of his Godhead: *For who can forgive ſins but God only?* 6. The effect of this miracle upon the minds of the people; they marvelled and were amazed, but did not believe. They admire our Saviour for an extraordinary man, but did not believe him to be God. *Learn* thence, that the ſight of Chriſt's miracles is not ſufficient to work faith in the ſoul, without the concurring operation of the Holy Spirit. The one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

13 And he went forth again by the ſea-*ſide*; and all the multitude reſorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 ¶ And as he paſſed by, he ſaw Levi, *the ſon* of Alpheus, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and ſaid unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe and followed him. 15 ¶ And it came to paſs, that as Jeſus ſat at meat in his houſe, many publicans and ſinners ſat alſo together with Jeſus and his diſciples; for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the ſcribes and Phariſees ſaw him eat with publicans and ſinners, they ſaid unto his diſciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and ſinners? 17 When Jeſus heard *it*, he ſaith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the phyſician, but they that are ſick: I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

Obſerve here, 1. The unwearied pains and diligence which our Saviour uſed in the execution of his miniſterial office and calling; no ſooner had he done preaching in Capernaum, and healing the ſick of the palſy, but he goeth out thence to the ſea-ſide, to preach there. O, bleſſed Saviour! how perpetually wert thou employed in the labours of thy calling, in the ſervice of thy Father, and for the good of mankind! Thou wenteſt about doing good, ſetting a pattern for all thy miniſters to follow. How doth the example of thy laborious diligence at once inſtruct and ſhame us! 2. The number of our Lord's diſciples not being filled up, obſerve what a free and gracious, unexpected and undeſerved choice he makes. Levi, that is Matthew (for he hath both names) a grinding publican, who gathered the taxes for the Romans, and was probably guilty, as others were, of the ſins of coveteouſneſs, extortion, and oppreſſion; yet he is called to follow Chriſt as a ſpecial diſciple. *Learn*, Such is the freeneſs of God's grace, that it calls and converts ſinners unto Chriſt, when they think not of him, nor ſeek unto him. Little did Levi now think of a Saviour, much leſs ſeek after him; yet he is at this time called by him. Matthew a publican, Zaccheus an extortioner, Saul a perſecutor; all theſe are brought home to God, as inſtances and evidences of the mighty power of converting grace. 3. Matthew's ready compliance with Chriſt's call; *He aroſe and followed him.*—When the inward call of the Holy Spirit accompanieth the outward call of the word, the ſoul readily complies, and preſently yields obedience to the voice of Chriſt. Chriſt oftimes ſpeaks by his word to our ears, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his Spirit efficaciouſly to our hearts, Satan ſhall not hold us down, the world ſhall not keep us back, but we ſhall with Levi inſtantly ariſe, and follow our Saviour. 4. Levi, or Matthew, to ſhew his thankfulneſs to Chriſt, makes him a great feaſt. Chriſt invited Matthew to a diſcipleſhip, Matthew invites him to a dinner. The ſervant invites his Maſter, a ſinner invites his Saviour. We do not find, that when Chriſt was invited to any table, that he ever refuſed to go; if a publican, if a Phariſee invited him, he conſtantly went; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good. Chriſt feaſts us, when we feaſt him. *Learn* hence, That new converts are full of affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive in their love unto him. Matthew, touched with a ſenſe of the rich love of Chriſt, makes him a royal feaſt. 5. The cavil and exception which the Scribes and Phariſees made at our Lord's free converſation. They cenſure him for converſing with ſinners; he juſtifies himſelf, telling them, that he converſed with them as their phyſician, not as their companion. *They that are whole need na phyſician*, ſays Chriſt, *but they that are ſick.* As if our Lord had ſaid, "With whom ſhould a phyſician converſe, but with his ſick patients? Now I am come into the world to do the office of a kind phyſician unto men; ſurely then I am to take all opportunities of converſing with them, that I may help and heal them, *for they that are ſick need the phyſician*: but as for you, Scribes and Phariſees, who are well and whole in your own opinion and conceit, I have no hopes of doing good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole, deſire no phyſician's help." From this aſſertion of our Saviour, theſe truths are ſuggeſted to us; 1. That ſin is the ſoul's malady, its ſpiritual diſeaſe and ſickneſs. 2. That Chriſt is the phyſician appointed by God for the cure and healing of this diſeaſe. 3. That there are multitudes of ſinners ſpiritually ſick, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. 4. That ſuch, and only ſuch, as find and feel themſelves ſpiritually ſick, are the ſubjects capable of Chriſt's healing. *They that are whole need not the phyſician, but they that are ſick. I came not to call the* (opinionatively) *righteous, but the* (ſenſible) *ſinner to repentance.*

18 And the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees uſed to faſt. And they come, and ſay unto him, Why do the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees faſt, but thy diſciples faſt not? 19 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber faſt while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot faſt. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 21 No man alſo ſeweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: elſe the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worſe. 22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: elſe the new wine doth burſt the bottles, and the wine is ſpilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine muſt be put into new bottles.

Obſerve here, 1. A great difference betwixt John's diſciples and Chriſt's in the matter of faſting. John's diſciples imitated him, who was a man of an auſtere life, and much given to faſting; therefore is ſaid *to come neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18. On the other ſide, Chriſt's diſciples follow him, who *came eating and drinking*, as other men did; and yet, though there was a great difference betwixt John's diſciples and Chriſt's in matters of practice, yet were they all of one faith and religion. Thence *learn*, That there may be unity of faith and religion among thoſe who do not maintain a uniformity in practice. Men may differ in ſome outward religious obſervances and cuſtoms, and yet agree in the fundamentals of faith and religion. Thus did John's diſciples and Chriſt's; the one faſted often, the other faſted not. 2. In that the diſciples of the Phariſees uſed to faſt as well as John's diſciples, we may *learn*, That hypocrites and wicked men may be, and ſometimes are, as ſtrict and forward in the outward duties of religion, as the holieſt and beſt of chriſtians: they pray, they faſt, they hear the word, they receive the ſacraments: they do, yea, it may be, they outdo and go beyond the ſincere chriſtian, in external duties and outward performances. 3. The defenſative plea which our bleſſed Saviour makes for the not faſting of his diſciples; he declares, that it was neither ſuitable to them, nor tolerable for them thus to faſt at preſent. Not ſuitable, in regard of Chriſt's bodily preſence with them. This made it a time of joy and rejoicing, not of mourning and faſting. Chriſt is the bridegroom, and his church the bride; whilſt therefore his ſpouſe did enjoy his bodily preſence with her, it was a day of rejoicing to her, and mourning and faſting were improper for her. But when Chriſt's bodily preſence ſhall be removed, there ſhall be cauſe enough to faſt and to mourn. Again, this diſcipline of faſting was not at preſent tolerable for the diſciples; for they were raw, green, and tender, not fit for auſterities; nor could bear as yet the ſeverities of religion, no more than an old garment could bear a piece of new ſtiff cloth ſet into it, which will make the rent worſe, if the garment comes to a ſtretch: or no more than old bottles can keep new wine. As if our Saviour had ſaid, "My diſciples at preſent are tender and weak, newly called and converted; they cannot therefore bear the ſeverities of religion preſently, but ere long I ſhall leave them, and go to heaven, from whence I will ſend down my holy Spirit upon them, which ſhall enable them to do all the duties which the goſpel enjoins." Now the intended leſſon of inſtruction from hence is this, That it is hurtful and dangerous for young converts, for weak chriſtians, to be put upon the ſeverer exerciſes of religion, or be urged to the performance of ſuch duties as are above their ſtrength; but they ought to be handled with that tenderneſs which becomes the mild and gentle diſpenſation of the goſpel. Our Saviour here commends prudence to his miniſters, in treating their people according to their ſtrength, and putting them upon duties according to their time and ſtanding.

23 ¶ And it came to paſs that he went through the corn-fields on the ſabbath-day, and his diſciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Phariſees ſaid unto him, Behold, why do they on the ſabbath day that which is not lawful? 25 And he ſaid unto them, Have ye never read what David did when he had need and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26 How he went into the houſe of God in the days of Abiathar the high prieſt, and did eat the ſhew bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the prieſts, and gave alſo to them which were with him? 27 And he ſaid unto them, The ſabbath was made for man, and not man for the ſabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

Note here, 1. The poverty, the low eſtate and condition of Chriſt's own diſciples in this world; they wanted bread, and are forced *to pluck the ears of corn* to ſatisfy their hunger. God may, and ſometimes doth ſuffer his deareſt children to fall into ſtraits, to taſte of want, for the trial of their faith and dependence upon his power and providence. 2. How the Phariſees (who accompanied our Saviour only with a deſign to cavil at, and quarrel with every thing that either he or his diſciples did) blame this action of the diſciples, namely, the plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath day. Yet *note*, 1. It was not any theft which the diſciples were charged with; for to take in our neceſſity ſo much of our neighbour's goods, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that, if he were preſent, and knew our circumſtances, he would give us, is no theft. But it is the ſervile labour on the ſabbath, in gathering the ears of corn, which the Phariſees ſcruple. Whence *note*, How zealous hypocrites are for the leſſer things of the law, whilſt they neglect the greater, and are ſuperſtitiouſly addicted to outward ceremonies, placing all holineſs in the obſervation of them, neglecting moral duties. Farther, 3. How our Saviour defends the action of his diſciples, in gathering the ears of corn in their neceſſity, by the practice and example of David. Neceſſity freed him from fault and blame in eating the conſecrated bread, which none but the prieſts might lawfully eat. For in caſes of neceſſity, a ceremonial precept muſt give way to a moral duty. Works of mercy and neceſſity for preſerving our lives, and for the better fitting us for ſabbath ſervices, are certainly lawful for the ſabbath-day. 4. A double argument which our Saviour uſes, to prove that the ſabbath's obſervation may be diſpenſed with in a caſe of abſolute neceſſity, 1. Drawn from the end of the *ſabbath*'s inſtitution: *The ſabbath was made for man*; that is, inſtituted of God for the good and benefit of mankind, both with reſpect to their ſouls and to their bodies. The outward obſerving and keeping of the ſabbath is ſubordinate to the good of man, and therefore the good of man is to be preferred before the outward keeping of the ſabbath. 2. Another argument is drawn from the authority which Chriſt, the inſtitutor of the ſabbath, has over it. *The Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath*; that is, he has authority and power, both as God and as Mediator, to inſtitute and appoint a ſabbath, to alter and change the ſabbath, to diſpenſe with the breach of it upon a juſt and great occaſion; and conſequently, acts of mercy, which tend to fit us for works of piety, not only may, but ought to be done upon the ſabbath-day: which was the propoſition which our Saviour undertook to prove.

CHAP. III.

AND he entered again into the ſynagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him whether he would heal him on the ſabbath-day, that they might accuſe him. 3 And he ſaith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he ſaith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the ſabbath-days, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill? but they held their peace.

The former part of this chapter reports to us a miraculous cure wrought by Chriſt upon a man who had a withered hand. The place where he wrought it, was the ſynagogue; the time when, was the ſabbath-day; the manner how, was by ſpeaking a word; the perſons before whom, were the envious and malicious Phariſees. Theſe men were always cavilling at our Saviour's doctrine, and ſlandering his miracles; yet our Saviour goes on with his work before their faces, without either interruption or diſcouragement. *Learn* thence, That the unjuſt cenſures and malicious cavils of wicked men againſt us for well-doing, muſt not diſcourage us from doing our duty, either towards God, or towards our neighbour. Though the Phariſees watched our Saviour, and when their envy and malice could find no occaſion of quarrel, they could invent and make one; yet ſuch was our Lord's courage and reſolution, that he bids *the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth:* To ſhew, that he was reſolved to heal him, notwithſtanding their malicious purpoſe to accuſe him for it, as a breaker of the ſabbath. Oppoſition met with in doing our duty, muſt not diſcourage us from doing good, if we will follow the example of our bleſſed Redeemer.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, he ſaith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched *it* out. And his hand was reſtored whole as the other.

Obſerve here, 1. The Phariſees ſinful and graceleſs diſpoſition, and that was hardneſs of heart. The heart of man is naturally hard, and full of obſtinacy and enmity againſt Chriſt; but there is an acquired hardneſs, which continuance in ſin occaſions; the Phariſees laboured under both. 2. A double affection which this hardneſs of heart found in the Phariſees did ſtir up in Chriſt; namely, anger and indignation, grief and commiſeration: *He was grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts*. *Learn* hence, 1. That human paſſions are not ſinful, and that chriſtian religion doth not deſtroy natural affections. 2. That anger at ſin, either in ourſelves or others, if kept within its due bounds, is not only lawful, but commendable. This paſſion of anger was found in him, in whom was no ſin. 3. That our anger againſt ſin, ought to be accompanied with grief and compaſſion towards ſinners. We ſhould pour out tears of compaſſion, when men pour out their abominations. 4. That of all ſins, hardneſs of heart, and unbelief are moſt grievous and offenſive, moſt diſpleaſing and provoking to Jeſus Chriſt: *He looked about with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts*. *Obſerve* 3. The ſudden and inſtantaneous cure which our Saviour wrought upon the man that had the withered hand: our Saviour did not touch him, but only ſaid to him, *Stretch forth thy hand*, and it was preſently cured. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's having abſolute power over diſeaſes and infirmities, to cure them miraculouſly without means, only by a word ſpeaking, is one argument that proves him to be truly and really God.

6 And the Phariſees went forth and ſtraightway took counſel with the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 7 But Jeſus withdrew himſelf with his diſciples to the ſea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, 8 And from Jeruſalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond from beyond Jordan: and about Tyre and

Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he ſpake to his diſciples, that a ſmall ſhip ſhould wait on him, becauſe of the multitude, leſt they ſhould throng him. 10 For he had healed many; inſomuch that they preſſed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, ſaying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he ſtraitly charged them that they ſhould not make him known.

Obſerve here, 1. What diſmal effect this famous miracle of Chriſt had upon the Phariſees and Herodians. Inſtead of being convinced by it, they conſpire againſt him for it. Theſe Herodians and Phariſees were of different opinions, enemies to one another, yet they join together in ſeeking the death of Chriſt. The Phariſees were againſt paying tribute to Cæſar, looking upon themſelves as a free people, and accounting the Roman emperor an uſurper. The Herodians were for it. Herod, being made by the Roman emperor king of the Jews, was zealous for having the Jews pay tribute to Cæſar; and ſuch of the Jews as ſided with him, particularly his courtiers and favourites, were ſtyled Herodians; but both Phariſees and Herodians take counſel againſt Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That unity and conſent is of itſelf alone far from being a mark and note of the true church. Unity in the faith and doctrine of Chriſt, and in the profeſſion and practice of the true religion, is a note indeed of the true church: but unity in oppoſing Chriſt, his perſon, his doctrine, his people, is ſo far from being a mark of the true church that it is the badge of the antichriſtian ſynagogue. 2. The prudent means which our Saviour uſes to preſerve himſelf from the rage of the Phariſees, *he withdrew himſelf from them.* Chriſt's example teaches his miniſters their duty in a time of danger to fly from perſecution, and to endeavour to preſerve their lives, unleſs when their ſufferings are like to do more good than their lives. 3. The great zeal and forwardneſs of the people in flocking after our Saviour's miniſtry; people come now at firſt from all places and countries, from Judea, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, from Tyre and Sidon, to hear his doctrine, and ſee his miracles. The people came from all parts when our Saviour firſt began to preach. His miniſters find it thus; at their firſt coming amongſt a people their labours are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt good; our people's affections are then warmeſt, and perhaps our own too. 4. What ſort of people they were which attended thus zealouſly upon our Saviour's miniſtry; they were the common and ordinary people; *the poor received the goſpel*, whilſt the Phariſees, and other men of moſt account, the mighty, the noble, and the wiſe men after the fleſh, deſpiſed our Lord's perſon, ſlighted his miniſtry, and ſought his life. The ordinary and meaneſt ſort of people have ever been more zealous and forward in embracing the goſpel, than ever the great, the rich, and the honourable part of the world have been. It is a ſad, but a certain truth, heaven is the place where few, comparatively, of the great men of the world are like to come; their temptations are many, their luſts are ſtrong, and their great eſtates, through their own abuſe, become fuel to their luſts. 5. The behaviour of theſe unclean ſpirits (the devils) towards our Saviour, and our Saviour's carriage towards them, *They fall down at the very ſight of him, and cry out, and confeſs him to be the Son of God:* but he *ſharply rebukes* them, *and charges them, that they ſhould not make him known.* Not that our Saviour would have the knowledge of his perſon ſuppreſt, but becauſe the devils were not fit perſons to preach Jeſus Chriſt. A truth out of the mouth of the father of lies, is enough to render truth itſelf ſuſpected. Beſides, the time appointed for the full and clear manifeſtation of the Godhead of Chriſt was not yet come. This was not be done till after his reſurrection; the divine nature was to be hid under the veil of Chriſt's fleſh, during his ſtate of humiliation and abaſement.

13 ¶ And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach, 15 And to have power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils. 16 And Simon he ſurnamed Peter. 17 And James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James: and he ſurnamed them Boanerges, which is, The ſons of thunder. 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite. 19 And Judas Iſcariot, which alſo betrayed him. And they went into an houſe.

As the Jewiſh church aroſe from *twelve* patriarchs, ſo the chriſtian church became planted by *twelve* apoſtles.— The perſon commiſſioning them was Chriſt: none may undertake the work and calling of the miniſtry, but thoſe whom Chriſt appoints and calls. The perſons commiſſioned were diſciples before they were apoſtles; to teach us, That Chriſt will have ſuch as preach the goſpel to be diſciples before they are miniſters, trained up in the faith and doctrine of the goſpel, before they undertake a public charge. Farther, The holy preparative which our Saviour uſes in order to this election of his apoſtles, he goeth up into a mountain to pray upon that great occaſion. So ſays St. Luke, chap. vi. 12. *He went up into a mountain to pray, and ſpent the night in prayer to God.* And *when it was day, he called his diſciples, and of them he choſe twelve.* In this prayer, no doubt, he pleaded with his Father to furniſh all thoſe that were to be ſent forth by him, with all miniſterial gifts and graces. *Learn* thence, That as prayer is a neceſſary preparative to all duties, ſo more eſpecially before the public election and ordination of the miniſters of the church, ſolemn prayer is to be uſed by ſuch as are to ordain and chuſe them; our Lord's practice is to be a ſtanding rule herein to all church-officers. Again, Though Chriſt called his apoſtles now, yet he did not ſend them forth now; *He ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him:* That is, that they might converſe with him, and be eye-witneſſes, and ear-witneſſes of his life, doctrine, and miracles. And having been thus with Chriſt, and fitted and prepared by him for their work, afterwards they went forth. Thence *learn*, That ſuch as are to take upon them the office of the miniſtry, ought firſt to be fitted and prepared for it, then ſolemnly called to it, before they enterprize and undertake the execution of it; if the apoſtles here, who were called and qualified extraordinarily, were to ſpend ſome time with Chriſt to receive direction and inſtruction from him before they went forth to preach; how much more needful is it for ſuch as are ordinarily called, to be well fitted and furniſhed for the miniſterial ſervice before they undertake it? Next, How the ſeveral names of the apoſtles are here regiſtered and recorded: God will honour thoſe that honour him, and are the ſpecial inſtruments of his glory. Of theſe apoſtles Peter is named firſt, becauſe probably elder than the reſt, or becauſe for order ſake he might ſpeak before the reſt. From whence may be inferred, a primacy, but no ſupremacy: a priority of order, not a ſuperiority of degree; as the foreman of a grand jury has a precedency, but no pre-eminency: he is firſt in order before the reſt, but has no authority or power over the reſt. Judas is named laſt, with a brand of infamy upon him; that he was a traitor, the perſon that betrayed his Lord and Maſter. Whence *learn*, That though the truth of grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a miniſter's ſalvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his office, nor hinder the lawfulneſs of his miniſtry. Judas, though a traitor, was yet a lawful miniſter. The miſſion of a perſon may be valid, though he be not ſanctified. Laſtly, That our Saviour ſurnamed James and John, Boanerges, the ſons of thunder. St. Jerome thinks this name was given them, becauſe, being with Chriſt in the mount at his transfiguration, they heard the Father's voice out of the cloud like thunder: Others think them ſo called, becauſe they were more vehement and earneſt than the reſt in preaching, and did with greater zeal and power ſound forth the doctrine of the goſpel like thunder. It is very probable, that Chriſt gave them this name from a foreſight of the heat and zeal of their temper, of which they ſoon gave an inſtance, in deſiring fire to come down from heaven to conſume the Samaritans.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, ſo that they could not ſo much as eat bread. 21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they ſaid, He is beſide himſelf. 22 ¶ And the ſcribes which came down from Jeruſalem, ſaid, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils caſteth he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and ſaid unto them in parables, How can Satan caſt out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided againſt itſelf, that kingdom cannot ſtand. 25 And if a houſe be divided againſt itſelf, that houſe cannot ſtand. 26 And if Satan riſe up againſt himſelf, and be divided, he cannot ſtand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he will firſt bind the ſtrong man, and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 28 Verily I ſay unto you, All ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme: 29 But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30 Becauſe they ſaid, He hath an unclean ſpirit.

Note here, 1. How truly our Lord's words were verified, John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me*; for he and his apoſtles going into an houſe to refreſh themſelves in their hunger, the people preſſed upon him ſo faſt to hear the word, that he regards not the ſatiſfying of his hunger, but applies himſelf to inſtruct the people. Lord! how exemplary was thy zeal and diligence in preaching the everlaſting goſpel to a loſt world! As it is inſtructive to, may it be imitated and followed by all thy ambaſſadors. 2. The raſh cenſure of our Saviour's friends, that is, his kinſmen, concerning this action, in neglecting to eat bread, and ſuffering the multitude thus unſeaſonably to preſs upon him: They conclude he is beſide himſelf, out of his right mind: and accordingly went out to lay hold upon him. *Learn* hence, 1. That the forward zeal and diligence of Chriſt and his miniſters in preaching the goſpel, is accounted madneſs and frenzy by a blind world. But they may ſay with the apoſtle, 2 Cor. v. 13. *If we be beſide ourſelves, it is unto God.* But who were the perſons that thus looked upon our Saviour as beſide himſelf? Verily his own kindred and relations according to the fleſh. *Learn* hence, That oft-times the ſervants of God meet with the ſtrongeſt temptations from, and are moſt diſcouraged and moleſted by, ſuch as are their neareſt relations by blood or alliance. This is a great trial, to find our relations ſetting us back, inſtead of helping us forward in the ways of religion; but we muſt bear it patiently, knowing that not only others of God's children, but Jeſus Chriſt, his own and only Son, did experience this trial. 3. The malicious and wicked ſlander which the ſcribes endeavoured to fix on our bleſſed Saviour; namely, That he was poſſeſſed of the devil, and by familiarity with him, and help from him, caſt forth devils out of others. Good God! how was thine own and only Son, the holy and innocent Jeſus, cenſured, ſlandered, and falſely accuſed of the worſt of crimes; of gluttony, of blaſphemy, of ſorcery! Can any of thy children expect freedom from the perſecution of the tongue, when innocency itſelf could not protect thy holy Son from ſlander and falſe accuſation? 4. Our Saviour's anſwer and juſt apology for himſelf; in which are contained, 1. A confutation of their calumny and ſlander. 2. A reprehenſion of the ſcribes for the ſame. Firſt, To confute this ſlander, our Saviour, by ſeveral arguments, ſhews how abſurd and unlikely it is that the devil ſhould caſt out himſelf, and any ways ſeek to oppoſe and deſtroy his own kingdom. As if our Saviour had ſaid, "Is it likely that Satan would lend me his power to uſe it againſt himſelf? Surely Satan will do nothing to weaken his own intereſt, or ſhake the pillars of his own kingdom: Now, if I have received any power from Satan, for deſtroying him and his kingdom, then is Satan like a family divided within itſelf, and like a kingdom divided againſt itſelf, which can never ſtand, but be brought to deſolation." Our Saviour having ſufficiently ſhewn that he did not work his miracles by the power of the devil, he next informs them from whence he had that power, even from God himſelf; and accordingly he compares Satan to a ſtrong man, well armed with weapons to defend his houſe; and he compares himſelf, clothed with divine power, to one that is ſtronger than the ſtrong man. So that the argument runs thus: The devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and there is no power but God's only that is ſtronger than his: If then, ſays Chriſt, I were not aſſiſted with a divine power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong man, who reigns in the bodies and ſouls of men as in his houſe; for it muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong man that ſhall bind Satan; and who is he but the God of ſtrength? *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's divine power only is ſuperior to Satan's ſtrength: he only can vanquiſh and over-rule him at his pleaſure, and drive him out of that poſſeſſion which he holds either in the bodies or in the ſouls of men. 5. The charge which our Saviour brings againſt the ſcribes and Phariſees blaſpheming his divine power in working miracles: He charges them with ſinning the unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; *All ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven, but he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "All the reproaches which you caſt upon me, as man, are pardonable; as when you check me with the poverty and meanneſs of my birth, when you cenſure me for a winebibber, a glutton, a friend and companion of ſinners, and the like unjuſt crime: But when you blaſpheme that divine power by which all my miracles are wrought, and, contrary to the conviction of your own enlightened minds, maliciouſly aſcribe all my miracles to the power of the devil, which were wrought indeed by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, this makes your condition not only dangerous but deſperate; becauſe you reſiſt the laſt remedy, and oppoſe the beſt means for your conviction: For what can be done more to convince you that I am the true and promiſed Meſſiah, than to work ſo many miracles before your eyes to that purpoſe? Now, if when you ſee theſe you will ſay, It is not the Spirit of God that works theſe, but the power of the devil (as if Satan would conſpire againſt himſelf, and ſeek the ruin of his own kingdom) there is no way or means left to convince you, but you will continue in your obſtinacy, and malicious oppoſition to truth, to your unutterable and inevitable condemnation."

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and ſtanding without, ſent unto him, calling him. 32 And the multitude ſat about him, and they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without ſeek for thee. 33 And he anſwered them, ſaying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he looked round about on them which ſat about him, and ſaid, Behold, my mother, and my brethren. 35 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my brother, and my ſiſter, and mother.

Obſerve here, 1. The verity and truth of Chriſt's human nature; he had affinity and conſanguinity with men, perſons near in blood to him by the mother's ſide, called here his brethren; that is, his kinſmen. 2. That the mother of Chriſt, though ſhe was a bleſſed and holy woman, yet ſhe was not free from ſin, but failures and infirmities are found with her: it was a fault to interrupt our Saviour unſeaſonably at this time, when he was preaching the goſpel to the people: the like we ſee in her at other times, St. Luke ii. 48. and St. John ii. 3. No ſaint here on earth ever was in a ſtate of ſinleſs perfection: Bleſſed be God, we are haſtening to ſuch a ſtate. 3. That Chriſt did not neglect his holy mother, or diſregard his poor kindred and relations, but only ſhewed that he preferred his Father's work and buſineſs before their company and acquaintance at this time. 4. How exceeding dear obedient chriſtians are to Jeſus Chriſt: he prefers his ſpiritual kindred before his natural; alliance by faith is more valued by our Saviour than alliance by blood: to bear Chriſt in the heart, is a greater honour than to bear him in the womb. Bleſſed be God, this great and gracious privilege is not denied us even now: although we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may: his bodily preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his ſpiritual preſence is not denied us: though Chriſt be not ours, in houſe, in arms, in affinity, in conſanguinity; yet, in heart, in faith, in love, in ſervice, he is, or may be ours. Verily, ſpiritual regeneration bringeth men into a more honourable relation to Chriſt than natural generation ever did.

CHAP IV.

AND he began again to teach by the ſea-*ſide:* and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, ſo that he entered into a ſhip, and ſat in the ſea; and the whole multitude was by the ſea on the land. 2 And he taught them many things by parables, and ſaid unto them in his doctrine,

The foregoing chapter acquainted us with the blaſphemous ſlander which the Scribes and Phariſees caſt upon our bleſſed Saviour, accuſing him of caſting out devils by the help of the devil. This they did, no doubt, to diſcredit his perſon, and hinder his miniſtry; yet for all this the people follow him in great multitudes, more than ever, to hear him, and be inſtructed by him. Thence *learn,* 1. That all the power and malice of Satan and wicked men ſhall not be able to ſuppreſs the goſpel, or hinder the free courſe of it; yea, the more it is oppoſed, the more it ſhall prevail: the more the Scribes and Phariſees diſgraced our Saviour, and vilified his doctrine, the more the people followed him in troops, to be partakers of his miniſtry. 2. The place where our Lord now preached; *in a ſhip.* Not that he declined the temple, or the ſynagogue, when he had an opportunity, but in want of them, Chriſt thought an houſe, a mountain, a ſhip, no unmeet place to preach in. It is not the place that ſanctifies the ordinance, but the ordinance that ſanctifies the place. 3. Our Saviour's geſtures in preaching, *he ſat,* it being the cuſtom of the Jewiſh church ſo to do, Matt. xxiii. 2. *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in Moſes's chair. Learn* thence, That in indifferent rites and orders, touching the outward worſhip of God, we are to conform ourſelves to the laudable cuſtom and practice of the church in which we live, and whereof we are members: this did our Saviour, and ſo ought we. 4. The manner of our Lord's preaching; it was by parables and ſimilitudes, which was an ancient way of inſtruction among the Jews, and a very convincing way; working upon men's minds, memories, and affections, all at once; making the mind attentive, the memory retentive, and the auditors inquiſitive after the interpretation of the parable. Some are of opinion that our Saviour's parables were ſuited to his hearers employments; and accordingly many of his hearers being huſbandmen, he reſembles his doctrine to ſeed ſown in the field. For thus he ſpeaks:

3 Hearken: Behold, there went out a ſower to
ſow: 4 And it came to paſs as he ſowed, ſome
fell by the way-*ſide*, and the fowls of the air came
and devoured it up. 5 And ſome fell on ſtony
ground, where it had not much earth; and immedi-
ately it ſprang up, becauſe it had no depth of earth.
6 But when the ſun was up, it was ſcorched; and
becauſe it had no root it withered away. 7 And
ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and
choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And other
fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that ſprang
up and increaſed, and brought forth ſome thirty, and
ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred. 9 And he ſaid
unto them, He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

Several things are here *obſervable*; As 1. How Chriſt begins and ends the parable with an admonition to diligent and ſerious attention. *Hearken*, ſays Chriſt, ver. 3. and *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*, ver. 9. This ſhews us at once the people's backwardneſs and negligence in applying their minds to hear and receive the word of God, and alſo ſhews the miniſters duty to excite and ſtir up their people's diligence and attention in hearing God's word. 2. What is the general ſcope and deſign of this parable; namely, to ſhew that there are four ſeveral ſorts of hearers of God's word, and but one good one, but one ſort only who hear to ſaving advantage. Now as to the matter of the parable. *Note*, 1. *The ſower* is Chriſt and his apoſtles; he the principal ſower, they the ſubordinate ſeedſmen. Chriſt ſows his own field, his miniſters ſow his field. He ſows his own ſeed, they his ſeed, Wo unto us if we ſow our own ſeed, not Chriſt's. 2. *The ſeed* ſown, the word of God: Fabulous legends and unwritten traditions, which the ſeedſmen of the church of Rome ſow, theſe are not ſeed, but chaff, or their own ſeed, and not Chriſt's. Our Lord's field muſt be all ſown with his own ſeed, with no mixt grain. *Learn*, 1. That the word preached is like ſeed ſown in the furrows of the field. As ſeed has a fructifying virtue in it, by which it increaſes and brings forth more of its own kind, ſo has the word of God a quickening power to regenerate and make alive dead ſouls. 2. From this parable, that the ſeed of the word, where it is moſt plentifully ſown, is not alike fruitful. Seed doth not thrive in all ground alike, neither doth the word fructify alike in the ſouls of men. There is a difference both from the nature of the ſoil, and from the influence of the Spirit. For though no ground be naturally good, yet ſome is worſe than other. 3. That the cauſe of the word's unfruitfulneſs is very different; not the ſame in all. In ſome it is an hard heart of unbelief, in others the diſtracting cares of the world choke the word; like thorns, which hinder the corn's growth, by overſhadowing it, by drawing away the moiſture and heat of the earth from it, and by hindering the influences of the ſun from cheriſhing it. Unto which may be added the policy of Satan, that bird of prey, which follows God's plough, and ſteals away the precious ſeed of the word out of the furrows of their ſouls. 4. That the beſt ground doth not bring forth increaſe alike. Some good ground brings forth more, others leſs; ſome thirty, ſome ſixty, ſome an hundred fold. In like manner, a perſon may be a profitable hearer of the word, although he doth not bring forth ſo great a proportion of fruit as others, provided he brings forth as much as he can.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about
him with the twelve aſked of him the parable. 11
And he ſaid unto them, Unto you it is given to know
the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them
that are without, all *theſe* things are done in parables;
12 That ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive; and
hearing they may hear, and not underſtand; leſt at
any time they ſhould be converted, and *their* ſins
ſhould be forgiven them. 13 And he ſaid unto
them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will
ye know all parables?

Obſerve here, The diſciples queſtion, and our Saviour's reply. Their queſtion is about the ſenſe and meaning of the parable. They own their ignorance, and deſire better information. It is no ſhame for the beſt of miniſters, yea, the beſt of men, to acknowledge their own ignorance in the myſteries of religion, and to attend upon the means of inſtruction, in order to their further information. In our Saviour's anſwer, *To you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of God*, &c. *obſerve*, 1. That the doctrines of the goſpel are great myſteries. 2. That it is a matchleſs and invaluable privilege practically to underſtand goſpel myſteries. 3. That this privilege all are not ſharers in, and partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given. 4. That it is a righteous thing with God to give ſuch perſons over to farther blindneſs and ignorance in ſpiritual things, who wilfully reject the truth, and ſhut their eyes againſt the light and evidence of it. The Phariſees had all along ſhut their eyes, and ſaid, they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their eyes judicially, and ſays, they ſhall not ſee. *Seeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive; and hearing ye ſhall hear, and not underſtand.*

14 ¶ The ſower ſoweth the word. 15 And
theſe are they by the way-*ſide*, where the word is
ſown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh im-
mediately, and taketh away the word that was ſown
in their hearts. 16 And theſe are they likewiſe
which are ſown on ſtony ground; who when they

have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladneſs: 17 And have no root in themſelves, and ſo endure but for a time; afterward when affliction or perſecution ariſeth for the word's ſake, immediately they are offended. 18 And theſe are they which are ſown among thorns; ſuch as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the luſts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And Theſe are they which are ſown on good ground; ſuch as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, ſome thirty-*fold*, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

Here our Saviour applies himſelf to interpret and explain the foregoing parable: *The ſeed* is the word, *the ſower* is the preacher, the *ſoil* is the heart and ſoul of man. Some hearers Chriſt compares to the *highway* ground, in which the ſeed lyes uncovered for want of the harrow of meditation. Others to *ſtony* ground, in which the word has no root. No root in their underſtandings, in their memories, wills, and affections; but they are inſtantly offended, either at the depth and profoundneſs of the word, or at the ſanctity and ſtrictneſs of the word, or elſe at the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it. Again, ſome hearers our Lord compares to *thorny* ground; worldly and covetous deſires are as thorns choking the good ſeed; they ſhadow the blade when ſprung up, keep off the influences of the ſun, and draw away the fatneſs of the ſoil from the ſeed. All theſe miſchievous effects have thorns among the ſeed. And the like ill effects have worldly affections and covetous deſires in the ſoul of man, rendering the ſeed of the word unfruitful and unprofitable. But the good Chriſtian hears the word attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſteadfaſtly, applies it particularly, practiſes it univerſally, and brings forth fruit perſeveringly. *Learn*, 1. That no hearers are in Chriſt's account good hearers of the word, but ſuch as bring forth fruit anſwerable to their hearing. 2. That a perſon may be a good hearer of the word in Chriſt's account, if he bring forth the beſt fruit he can, though it be not in ſo great a proportion as others do. As ſome grounds bring forth thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred-fold; in like manner do all ſincere hearers of the word. They all bring forth fruit, though not all alike; all in ſincerity, though not all equally, and none to perfection. It is Theophylact's note on the place: "How ſmall is the number of good men, and how few are ſaved! For only the fourth part of the ſeed fell upon good ground, and was preſerved." Others obſerves a gradation here: The ſeed ſown in the highway comes not up at all; that on ſtony ground comes up, but increaſeth not; that among thorns increaſeth, but bears no fruit; only that ſeed which fell on good ground brings forth fruit unto perfection.

21 And he ſaid unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a buſhel, or under a bed? and not to be ſet on a candleſtick? 22 For there is nothing hid which ſhall not be manifeſted; neither was any thing kept ſecret but that it ſhould come abroad. 23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And he ſaid unto them, Take heed what ye hear. With what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you: and unto you that hear ſhall more be given. 25 For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he hath.

Obſerve here, 1. The end and deſign of Chriſt in revealing his word and will to his diſciples, and in communicating to them the light of ſpiritual knowledge; namely, That they may communicate it to others, and not keep it cloſe unto themſelves. Even as the candle in an houſe diffuſes and diſperſes its light to all that come within the reach of it; in like manner ought all chriſtians, and particularly Chriſt's miniſters, by the light of life and doctrine, to direct perſons in their way towards heaven. Such as are enlightened by God in any meaſure, with the knowledge and underſtanding of his word, ought not to conceal and hide this knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and employ it for the good and benefit of others. 2. The cautionary direction given by Chriſt to his diſciples, *To take heed how they hear the word.* Such as would profit by hearing of the word, muſt diligently attend to the matter of the doctrine which they hear, and alſo the manner how they hear. Such is the majeſty and authority of the perſon that ſpeaks to us in the word, ſuch is the ſublimity and ſpirituality of the matter, and ſo great is our danger if we miſcarry under the word, that it nearly concerns us to *take heed*, both *what we hear*, and *how we hear*. 3. The argument which our Saviour makes uſe of to quicken his diſciples to communicate the knowledge, and improve the grace they had received for the good and benefit of others. *To him that hath ſhall be given:* That is, ſuch as improve their ſpiritual gifts ſhall have them increaſed; ſuch as improve them not ſhall have them blaſted. *Learn* hence, That the beſt courſe we can take to increaſe and thrive in grace, is to exerciſe and improve it. He that hides his talent, doth not only forfeit it, but is in danger of being puniſhed ſeverely for the non-improvement of it.

26 ¶ And he ſaid, So is the kingdom of God as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground, 27 And ſhould ſleep, and riſe, night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up he knoweth not how. 28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herſelf, firſt the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come.

This parable of our Saviour's, is an inſtructive leſſon to the miniſters of the goſpel, faithfully to do their parts in ſowing the ſeed of the word amongſt their people, and then not to be over-ſolicitous about the event, but to leave the iſſue to God; not to be diſcouraged, though the fruit of their labour doth not preſently appear. Accordingly Chriſt propounds the laborious huſbandman to his miniſters imitation. As the huſbandman, when he has prudently, and painfully caſt his ſeed into the ground, is not anxiouſly diſquieted, but goes to bed, and reſts in hope, and at length the corn ſprings up; firſt the blade, then the ear, then the grain. In like manner, let the miniſters of God do their duty without diſcouragement; in the morning ſow their ſeed, and in the evening not with-hold their hand. And although the ſeed ſown doth not appear preſently, it may be not in our days, but ſeems rotten among the clods; yet may it appear afterwards with a plentiful increaſe, when our own heads are laid among the clods; verifying that ſaying of our Saviour, *One ſoweth, and another reapeth. Learn* hence, 1. That the miniſtry of the word is the ordinary, the neceſſary, and the principal means which God has appointed for ſowing the ſeed of grace in the hearts of his people. *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground.* 2. That the virtue and efficacy of the word preached doth not depend upon the parts of a man, but upon the power of God. *The ſeed ſpringeth up he knoweth not how.* 3. That the word of God ſincerely preached may be ſucceſsful, though it be not preſently ſucceſsful; the ſeed ſown in one miniſter's days, may ſpring up in another's. Happy we, if as God's huſbandmen we be employed in ploughing, ſowing, or reaping; our Lord will reward us *ſecundum laborem, non fructum*; not according to our ſucceſs, but according to our endeavours. The care and endeavour is ours, but the bleſſing and ſucceſs is God's.

30 ¶ And he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? 31 *It is* like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which when it is ſown in the earth, is leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth. 32 But when it is ſown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ſhooteth out great branches; ſo that the fowls of the air may lodge under the ſhadow of it. 33 And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them as they were able to hear *it*. 34 But without a parable ſpake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his diſciples.

The deſign of our Saviour in this parable, is to ſhew how the goſpel church, from ſmall and little, from unlikely and contemptible beginnings, ſhould ſpread and increaſe, fructify and grow up: Like as muſtard-ſeed, one of the ſmalleſt of grains, grows up to a conſiderable tallneſs, even ſo Chriſt foretels, that the goſpel ſhould ſpread and increaſe, nations and countries becoming Chriſtian. Hence *learn*, That how ſmall beginnings ſoever the goſpel had in its firſt plantation, yet by the fructifying bleſſing of God, it has had, and ſhall have, a wonderful increaſe.

35 And the ſame day, when the even was come, he ſaith unto them, Let us paſs over unto the other ſide. 36 And when they had ſent away the multitude, they took him, even as he was, in the ſhip. And there were alſo with him other little ſhips. 37 And there aroſe a great ſtorm of wind, and the waves beat into the ſhip, ſo that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ſhip, aſleep on a pillow. And they awake him, and ſay unto him, Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh? 39 And he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and ſaid unto the ſea, Peace, be ſtill. And the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm. 40 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and ſaid one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the ſea obey him?

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour and his diſciples no ſooner put forth to ſea, but dangers attend, and difficulties do accompany them; a tempeſt aroſe, and the ſhip was covered with waves, which Chriſt himſelf was in, with his diſciples. *Learn* hence, That the preſence of Chriſt himſelf does not exempt his diſciples and followers from trouble and danger. Here is a great tempeſt about the diſciples ears, though Chriſt himſelf was in their company. 2. The poſture our Saviour was in when this tempeſt aroſe; he being wearied with the labours of the day, was laid down upon a pillow to ſleep at night, thereby ſhewing himſelf to be truly and really man, and that as he took upon him our human nature, ſo he aſſumed the infirmities of our nature alſo, as wearineſs and pain, hunger and thirſt. 3. The diſciples application made to Chriſt; they awake him with a ſad outcry, *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* Here was faith mixed with human frailty. They believed that he could ſave them; but being aſleep, they concluded he muſt be awaked before they can be ſaved by him: whereas, though his human nature was aſleep, yet his divine nature neither ſlumbered nor ſlept. *Learn* hence, That the prevalence of fear in the time of great danger, though it may argue weakneſs of faith, yet is no evidence of a total want of faith; in the midſt of the diſciples fears, they believed in Chriſt's power. 4. A double rebuke given by our Saviour, firſt to the winds, next to the fears of his diſciples. *He rebukes the winds*, and inſtantly *they are calm.* When the ſea was furious as a madman, Chriſt with a ſingle word calms it. *Learn* hence, That the moſt raging winds and outrageous ſeas cannot ſtand before the rebukes of Chriſt. Chriſt, as God, lays a law upon the moſt lawleſs creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt lawleſly. Farther, Chriſt rebukes his diſciples fears, *Why are ye fearful?* No ſooner was the ſtorm up, but their fears were up; they forgot that the Lord High Admiral of the ocean, was on board the ſhip; and were as much overſet with their boiſterous paſſion, as the veſſel was with tempeſtuous winds; and accordingly, Chriſt rebukes the tempeſt within, before the ſtorm without. Firſt he calms their hearts, then he quiets the ſeas. From this inſtance of the diſciples we may gather, that great faith in the habit may appear little in act and exerciſe; the diſciples faith, in forſaking all, and following Chriſt, was great faith; but in this preſent act, their faith was weak, through the prevalency of their fears. O the imperfect compoſition of ſaints! Faith and fear will take their turns, and act their parts, whilſt we are upon the ſtage of this world; ere long our fear will be vanquiſhed, and our faith ſwallowed up in viſion! Lord! ſet our ſouls a-longing for that joyful hour.

CHAP. V.

AND they came over unto the other ſide of the ſea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ſhip, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean ſpirit. 3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs: and no man could bind him, no not with chains: 4 Becauſe that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked aſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. 5 And always night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himſelf with ſtones. 6 But when he ſaw Jeſus afar off, he ran and worſhipped him, 7 And cried with a loud voice, and ſaid, What have I do with thee, Jeſus, *thou* Son of the moſt high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. 8 For he ſaid unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean ſpirit. 9 And he aſked him, What *is* thy name? and he anſwered, ſaying, my name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10 And he beſought him much that he would not ſend them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of ſwine feeding. 12 And all the devils beſought him, ſaying, Send us into the ſwine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forth Jeſus gave them leave. And the unclean ſpirits went out, and entered into the ſwine: and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea (they were about two thouſand) and were choked in the ſea. 14 And they that fed the ſwine fled, and told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to ſee what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jeſus, and ſee him that was poſſeſſed with a devil, and had the legion, ſitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16 And they that ſaw *it* told them how it befel to him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and alſo concerning the ſwine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coaſts. 18 And when he was come into the ſhip, he that had been poſſeſſed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit, Jeſus ſuffered him not, but ſaith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compaſſion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began to publiſh in Decapolis how great things Jeſus had done for him. And all *men* did marvel.

This piece of hiſtory gives us a very ſad relation of a perſon that was poſſeſſed with a legion of devils; we read of few, if any, in the Old Teſtament, that were thus poſſeſſed, but of many in the New Teſtament. Our Saviour came into the world to deſtroy the works of the devil; therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome human bodies, to ſhew his divine power in caſting them out. *Note* here, 1. That the evil angels by their fall loſt their purity, but not their power; for with God's permiſſion they have power, not only to enter into mens bodies, and to poſſeſs them, but alſo to diſtemper their minds, and drive them to frenzy and madneſs, cauſing them to offer violence to their own lives, and to do hurt and miſchief to their own bodies. Thus did this poſſeſſed perſon, wounding and cutting himſelf with ſtones. 2. That the reaſon why the evil angels do not oftner exert their power in doing miſchief to the bodies and lives of men, is from the reſtraining power of God. The devils cannot do all the miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. 3. The place where theſe evil ſpirits delighted to make their abode, *among the tombs* or graves, places deſolate, forlorn and ſolitary, which are apt to breed horror of mind, and give advantage to temptations. *Learn* thence, That it is dangerous, and very unſafe, for perſons, eſpecially in whom melancholy prevails, to give themſelves to ſolitarineſs, to frequent deſolate and forlorn places, and to effect the being much alone; it giving advantage to Satan to ſet upon them with powerful temptations. It is better to frequent human ſociety, and eſpecially to delight in the ſociety and communion of the ſaints, by means whereof we may be more and more ſtrengthened and fortified againſt Satan's temptations. 4. That the devils own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and that he came into the world to be a Saviour, but not a Saviour to them; therefore they cry out, *What have we to do with thee?* or thou with us? O! what an uncomfortable confeſſion and acknowledgment is this, to own Chriſt to be a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know that he is none of our Saviour! 5. That though the devils do own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and do pay homage and worſhip, and yield ſervice and ſubjection to him, as his ſlaves and vaſſals, yet it is not a free and voluntary ſervice, but extorted rather, and forced from them by the power of Chriſt. *He worſhipped, and cried out, ſaying, What have I to do with thee?* 6. What a multitude of evil ſpirits do enter into one man. O the extreme malice and cruelty of the devil againſt mankind, in that ſo many evil ſpirits did at once afflict and torment a ſingle perſon, even a *legion*, many thouſands of them. *Obſerve* alſo, The unity and agreement which is amongſt theſe evil ſpirits in doing miſchief; though there was *legion* of them in this one perſon, yet they have all but one name. *Learn*, That the very devils have a ſort of unity amongſt themſelves, and in their malice and miſchievous deſigns againſt mankind they are as one. How happy were it if good men were as much united in deſigns and endeavours for the glory of God, as devils conſpire and combine againſt it! 7. The outcry which the devil makes at the appearance and approach of Chriſt, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* From thence *learn*, 1. That there are tortures appointed to the ſpiritual natures of evil angels.

2. That

7. That the devils are not ſo full of torment as they ſhall be. Although they are as full of diſcontent as they can be, there will be a time when their torments ſhall be increaſed, when they ſhall have their fill of torment. This they know, and accordingly thus they pray, *Torment us not before our time*; that is, increaſe not our torments before the appointed time of their increaſe. 8. The devils requeſt, 1. Not *to ſend them out of the country*, ver. 10. for being now among heathens, they thought they were among their own, and not in Chriſt's juriſdiction, as being not amongſt his people. 2. For permiſſion and leave to go into the herd of ſwine. Where *obſerve*, firſt, The devil's malice; he will hurt the poor beaſts, rather than not hurt at all. Secondly, his powerful reſtraint; he cannot hurt a pig without permiſſion: *Suffer us to enter*. Satan's malice indeed is infinite, but his power is bounded; it is *poteſtas ſub poteſtate*, A power under a power. If he could not hurt the ſwine, much leſs can he afflict the body or ſoul of man without leave or licence. 9. How Satan's requeſt is yielded to by our Saviour, he permits the devils to enter into the ſwine; not to ſatisfy their deſire in doing miſchief; but, firſt, to ſhew his power over the devils, that they could do nothing without his permiſſion: next, To ſhew how great the power and malice of the devil would be, if not reſtrained: And, laſtly, That the miracle of caſting out ſuch a multitude of devils might appear to be the greater. *Learn* hence, That ſometimes almighty God, for wiſe ends, and juſt cauſes, doth ſuffer the devil to enjoy his deſire, in doing hurt and miſchief unto the creatures, *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Go*. 10. What a contrary effect this miracle which Chriſt wrought had upon theſe people; inſtead of believing his divine power, upon the ſight of his miraculous healing the poſſeſſed, the loſs of their ſwine enrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt to depart from them: carnal hearts prefer their ſwine before their Saviour, and had rather loſe Chriſt's preſence than their worldly profit. So deſirous were theſe Gadarenes to get rid of our Saviour's company, *that they pray and beſeech him to depart out of their coaſts*. *Learn* hence, Sad is the condition of ſuch from whom Chriſt departs, more ſad the condition of ſuch who ſay unto Chriſt, Depart; but moſt ſad the caſe of them who pray and beſeech Chriſt to depart from them. Thus did theſe Gadarenes deſire and beſeech Chriſt to depart from them; which accordingly he did, and we read no more of his return to them. Laſtly, How deſirous the poſſeſſed man was to continue with Chriſt; after he was come to himſelf, *He prayed that he might be with him*. This he might deſire, partly to teſtify his thankfulneſs to Chriſt, partly out of fear of being repoſſeſſed again by Satan, or perhaps to have the opportunity of hearing Chriſt's doctrine, and ſeeing his miracles. For ſuch as have once *taſted that the Lord is gracious*, and experienced the pleaſure and profit of Chriſt's company, are very deſirous of the continuance of it, and exceeding loath to part with it. However, our Saviour at this time did not think fit to ſuffer him, knowing that more glory would redound to God, by publiſhing the miracle to his friends. Chriſt expects, after eminent deliverances wrought for us, that we ſhould be the publiſhers of his praiſe, and declare to all, far and near, the great things which God hath done for us. Add to this, that our Saviour might not permit this man to be with him, to avoid the ſuſpicion of vain-glory; of which he might have given ſome umbrage, had he carried about with him thoſe upon whom his greateſt miracles were wrought. And, laſtly, To ſhew that Chriſt in his abſence, as well as when preſent, is able to protect thoſe that believe and truſt in him from the malice of evil ſpirits.

21 ¶ And when Jeſus was paſſed over again by ſhip unto the other ſide, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the ſea. 22 And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the ſynagogue, Jairus by name; and when he ſaw him, he fell at his feet, 23 And beſought him greatly, ſaying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that ſhe may be healed; and ſhe ſhall live. 24 And Jeſus went with him, and much people followed him, and thronged him.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon who came to Chriſt on behalf of his ſick daughter, deſcribed by his name *Jairus*: by his office, *a ruler of the ſynagogue*; by his geſture, *he fell down at Jeſus's feet, and worſhipped him*. This geſture of his was not only a ſign of tender affection in him towards his daughter, but alſo an evidence of his faith in our bleſſed Saviour; yet his confining Chriſt's power to his bodily preſence, and to the touch of his hand, was a token of the weakneſs of his faith. *Come*, ſays he, *and lay thine hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live*. As if Chriſt could not have cured her without either coming to her, or laying his hand upon her. *Note*, All that come to Chriſt are not alike ſtrong in faith. Yet our bleſſed Redeemer refuſes none who come to him with a ſincere faith, though in much weakneſs of faith. *Obſerve*, 2. How readily our Saviour complies with Jairus's requeſt; *Jeſus went with him*. Although his faith was but weak, yet our Saviour doth not reject him, or deny his ſuit, but readily goes with him. *Learn* hence, How ready we ſhould be to go to Chriſt in all our diſtreſſes, afflictions and neceſſities, who is ſo ready to hear, and ſo forward to help us, if we ſeek him in ſincerity, though our faith be feeble. 3. The great humility of our bleſſed Saviour, in ſuffering himſelf to be thronged by poor people. *Much people followed him and thronged him*. O humble and lowly Saviour! how free was thy converſation from pride and haughtineſs! how willing to converſe with the meaneſt of the people for their advantage! Our Lord did not only ſuffer them to come near him, but even to throng him: What an example is here for the greateſt perſons upon earth to imitate and follow, not to deſpiſe the perſons nor diſdain the preſence of the meaneſt and pooreſt of the people; but to look upon ſome with an eye of favour, upon others with an eye of pity, upon none with an eye of contempt.

25 And a certain woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years, 26 And had ſuffered many things of many phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe

had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe, 27 When ſhe had heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind and touched his garment. 28 For ſhe ſaid, If I may but touch his clothes, I ſhall be whole. 29 And ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and ſhe felt in her body that ſhe was healed of that plague. 30 And Jeſus immediately knowing in himſelf that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the preſs, and ſaid, Who touched my clothes? 31 And his diſciples ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the multitude thronging thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 32 And he looked round about to ſee her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

As our Saviour was on his way to Jairus's houſe, a diſeaſed woman comes behind him, touches his clothes, and is preſently healed; the virtue lay not in her finger, but in her faith, or rather in Chriſt, which her faith inſtrumentally drew forth. *Obſerve* here, 1. The diſeaſed perſon, a woman with a bloody-flux. Let women here take notice of the miſeries which the ſin of the firſt woman has brought upon all women, amongſt which this is one, that it has made their bodies ſubject to unnatural iſſues and fluxes of blood. 2. The long continuance of this diſeaſe, *twelve years*. It pleaſes God to lay long and tedious afflictions upon ſome of his children in this life, and particularly to keep ſome of them a very long time under bodily weakneſs, to manifeſt his power in ſupporting them, and to magnify his mercy in delivering them. 3. This poor woman was found in the uſe of means; ſhe ſought to phyſicians for help, and is not blamed for it, though *ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon them*. The uſe of phyſic is not to be neglected by us in times of ſickneſs, eſpecially in dangerous diſeaſes of the body. To truſt to means is to neglect God, and to neglect the means is to tempt God. The health of our bodies ought to be dear and precious to us, and all lawful means ought to be uſed, both to preſerve it, to recover it, and confirm it. 4. The workings and actings of this poor woman's faith; her diſeaſe was unclean by the ceremonial law, and therefore to be ſeparate from ſociety; accordingly ſhe is aſhamed to appear before Chriſt, but comes behind him to touch his clothes, being firmly perſuaded that Chriſt had a power communicated by God unto him, miraculouſly to cure incurable diſeaſes. And ſee how our Saviour encouraged her faith, though ſhe did not believe him to be the eternal Son of God, but one to whom God had communicated a power of healing bodily diſeaſes; yet, ſays Chriſt, *This thy faith hath made thee whole*. *Learn* hence, That faith oft-times meets with a better welcome from Chriſt, than it did or could expect. This poor woman came to Chriſt trembling, but went away triumphing. 5. Chriſt would have this miracle diſcovered; he therefore ſays, *Who touched me?* and, *I perceive that virtue is gone out of me*. Firſt, in reference to himſelf, to manifeſt his divine power, that by the touch of his clothes he could cure ſuch incurable diſeaſes. Secondly, In relation to the woman, that ſhe might have opportunity to give God the praiſe and glory for the cure. And, thirdly, with reſpect to Jairus, that is faith might be ſtrengthened in the belief of Chriſt's power to raiſe his daughter. Now from thoſe words, *Virtue went out of Chriſt*, and he healed them, it is evident, that the virtue which did theſe miraculous cures, reſided in Chriſt, and was not communicated to him; and conſequently proves him to be God; for the divine virtue, by which the prophets and apoſtles did their cures, is aſcribed to God; as Acts xix. 11. *God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul.* But the miracles done by Chriſt, are aſcribed to the divine virtue dwelling in him. Accordingly, here he ſays, *I perceive virtue is gone out of me.*

35 While he yet ſpake, there came from the ruler of the ſynagogue's *houſe certain* which ſaid, Thy daughter is dead: why troubleſt thou the Maſter any farther? 36 As ſoon as Jeſus heard the word that was ſpoken, he ſaith unto the ruler of the ſynagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37 And he ſuffered no man to follow him, ſave Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the houſe of the ruler of the ſynagogue, and ſeeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was come in, he ſaith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth. 40 And they laughed him to ſcorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damſel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damſel was lying. 41 And he took the damſel by the hand, and ſaith unto her, Talitha, cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damſel, (I ſay unto thee) ariſe. 42 And ſtraightway the damſel aroſe, and walked: for ſhe was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were aſtoniſhed with a great aſtoniſhment. 43 And he charged them ſtraitly that no man ſhould know it; and commanded that ſomething ſhould be given her to eat.

Obſerve here, 1. The doleful news brought to Jairus's ears, *Thy daughter is dead*. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer the faith of his ſaints to be hard put to it, greatly aſſaulted with difficulties and trials. 2. Our Saviour's ſeaſonable word of comfort, *Be not afraid, only believe*. Chriſt is ready to comfort believers in the hour of their ſtrongeſt temptations and greateſt trials. 3. Chriſt's application of himſelf to the raiſing unto life Jairus's dead daughter. In order to which, (1.) He goes into the houſe only with three of his diſciples, which were ſufficient to witneſs the truth of the miracle. Our Saviour, to avoid all ſhew of vain glory, and to evidence that he ſought not ambitiouſly his own honour and praiſe, would not work this great miracle publicly before all the people. 2. He rebukes them for the ſhew they make of immoderate grief and ſorrow for the dead damſel: they wept and wailed greatly with minſtrels and muſical inſtruments, according to the cuſtom of the heathens, who by a mourful ſort of muſic, did ſtir up the paſſion of grief at their funerals. To mourn immoderately for the dead, is an heatheniſh practice and cuſtom. It is hurtful to the living, and diſhonourable to the dead; nor is it an argument of more love, but an evidence of leſs grace. 3. He adds a reaſon for this rebuke and reproof given them; *The damſel is not dead but ſleepeth. Vobis mortua, mihi dormit*; "She is dead to you, but aſleep to me;" not ſo dead, as to be beyond my power to raiſe her to life. Souls departed are under the conduct of angels to their ſeveral regions of bliſs or miſery. It is very probable that the ſoul of this damſel was under the guard of angels, near her dead body, waiting the pleaſure of God, in order to its diſpoſal, either to reſtore it again to the body, or to tranſlate it to its eternal manſion. *Obſerve* Farther, the nature of death in general, and that of the ſaints in particular, deſcribed; *It is a ſleep.* Sleep is a ſtate of reſt; ſleep is a ſudden ſurpriſal; in ſleep there is an inſenſible paſſage of our time; the perſon ſleeping ſhall certainly awake, either in this world, or in the next. It will be our wiſdom to prepare for the bed of the grave, and ſo to live, that when we lie down in it, there may be nothing to diſturb our reſt. *Note,* The words which our Saviour uſed at the raiſing of the damſel, *Talitha cumi,* Syriac words, to ſhew the truth of the miracle, not like a conjurer, muttering a charm in unknown words to himſelf; and alſo to ſhew the greatneſs of the miracle, that he was able to raiſe her by a word ſpeaking. Laſtly, The charge given by our Saviour not to divulge this miracle; *He charged them ſtraitly that none ſhould know it.* That is, not to divulge it imprudently to ſuch of the ſcribes and Phariſees as would not be convinced by it, but only cavil at it, and be the more enraged againſt him, and ſeek his death before his time was come. Alſo not to divulge it unſeaſonably, and all at once, but gradually, and by degrees; for it was the will of God that the divine glory of Chriſt ſhould not be manifeſted to the world all at once, and on a ſudden, but by little and little, during his ſtate of humiliation; for his reſurrection was the time appointed for the full manifeſtation of his godhead, Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection of the dead.*

CHAP. VI.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his diſciples follow him. 2 And when the ſabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the ſynagogue: and many hearing *him* were aſtoniſhed, ſaying, From whence hath this man theſe things? and what wiſdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even ſuch mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James and Joſes, and of Judah, and Simon? and are not his ſiſters here with us? and they were offended at him. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe. 5 And he could there to do no mighty work, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed *them*. 6 And he marvelled becauſe of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

Our bleſſed Saviour having in the former chapter wrought two famous miracles, in curing a woman of her bloody iſſue, and raiſing Jairus's daughter from death, we find him here in the beginning of this chapter, paſſing *into his own country,* that is, the city of Nazareth in Galilee, called his own city and country, becauſe he was there conceived, there brought up; there Joſeph and Mary, and his kindred dwelt, and Chriſt with them, during his private life, which was till he was thirty years of age. Now our Saviour being come into his own country; *obſerve,* 1. What his employment was, he preached in their ſynagogues, and held communion with the Jewiſh church, although ſhe had many corruptions in her. *Teaching* us, by his example, not to deſert and forſake the communion of ſuch a church, in which there is found neither heretical doctrine nor idolatrous worſhip, although many things be found in her culpable and blame-worthy. The Jewiſh church was certainly ſuch, and yet our Saviour maintained not occaſional only, but conſtant communion with her. *Obſerve,* 2. The influence and effect which our Saviour's preaching had upon his own countrymen, the people of Nazareth; it did work admiration in them, but not faith; *they were aſtoniſhed,* but did not believe. Men may be mightily moved and affected by the word, and yet may never be converted by it; the men of Nazareth wondered, and yet were offended; they did not believe in him, but were offended at him. 3. The ground and cauſe of this their offence, and that was the meanneſs of his extraction, and the poverty of his condition, *Is not this the carpenter?* From whence the ancient fathers, particularly Juſtin Martyr, concluded, that our Saviour did work at his father Joſeph's trade, during his father's life, and thence was called *the carpenter's ſon*; and when Joſeph his father was dead (which was before Chriſt was thirty years old, when he entered upon his public office) he was then called *the carpenter.* The ancients ſay, he ſpent his time in making ploughs and yokes, and that thence it was he drew ſo many ſimilitudes in preaching from the yoke and the plough. This we are ſure of, that our Lord lived not thirty years, before his manifeſtation, idly and unprofitably. It is moſt probable that he followed his father's calling, and wrought under him, it being ſaid, that *he was ſubject to him,* Luke ii. 15. as a child to a parent, and as a ſervant to his maſter. As to this, that it ſeems not only true, but requiſite, that Chriſt ſhould be of ſome trade, becauſe by the Jewiſh canons, all fathers were bound to teach their children ſome trade; yea, ſays the learned *Whitby,* their moſt celebrated Rabbins thought it a great reproach not to be of ſome trade; doubtleſs our Lord, during his private life, did give no example

ample of idleneſs. Indeed, after he entered upon his prophetic office, he no longer followed Joſeph's calling, but applied himſelf wholly to the work of the miniſtry; he made no more ploughs, but one to break up hard hearts; no more yokes, but one for the devil's neck. However, in regard to our Saviour's low extraction, and mean education, *his countrymen were offended at him.* *Learn* hence, That the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's condition, was that which multitudes ſtumbled at, and which kept many, yea moſt, from believing on him: none but a ſpiritual eye can diſcern beauty in an humbled and abaſed Saviour.—2. That it is the property and practice of profane men, to take occaſion, from the outward quality and condition of God's miniſters, both to deſpiſe their perſons, and to reject their doctrine. 4. The reaſon aſſigned by our Saviour why the men of Nazareth deſpiſed him and ſet him at nought: becauſe he was their countryman and acquaintance; their familiarity bred contempt. Teaching us, That very often the faithful miniſters of God are moſt contemned and diſhonoured where they are moſt familiarly known: ſometimes the remembrance of their mean original and extraction, ſometimes the poverty of their parents condition, ſometimes the indecenies of their childhood, ſometimes the follies of their youth, are ripped up; all which are occaſions of contempt, and give ground for this proverbial ſaying, *That a prophet is not without honour ſave in his own country:* which, like other proverbial ſpeeches, holds true in the general, and that for the moſt part it is ſo; but it is not univerſally true in all perſons and caſes. However, this good uſe may be made of our Saviour's obſervation, To teach his miniſters to be wiſe in converſing with their people, not to make themſelves cheap and common in every company, not too familiar with all ſorts of perſons, nor to be light or vain in any company; for this will certainly breed contempt both of their perſons and miniſtry. Our duty is, by ſtrictneſs and gravity of deportment, to maintain our eſteem in the conſciences of our people, and to temper gravity with condeſcending affability. That miniſter which proſtitutes his authority, fruſtrates the end of his miniſtry, and is the occaſion of his own contempt. 5. How this people's contempt of Chriſt's perſon, and unbelief of his doctrine, did hinder Chriſt from working miracles among them: *He could do no mighty works there:* not becauſe he was unable, but becauſe they were unwilling; not as if their indefility abated his divine power, but they were unprepared to receive any benefit by him; his miracles would have been caſt away upon ſuch inconvincible perſons: who will ſow upon barren ſands, or water dead plants? It was an act of juſtice in Chriſt to deprive the Phariſees of thoſe advantages which they had ſo long reſiſted. Chriſt had a natural ability to do mighty works there, but no moral ability: he could not do it honourably, their unbelief was a moral hindrance; ſo then this inability proceeded from no deficiency in Chriſt's power, but from a defect in their faith: he could not, becauſe he would not: and he would not, becauſe it was not fit for him ſo to do. Although Chriſt be omnipotent, and has all power in his hands, yet unbelief binds his hands, and hinders him in the execution of that power: unbelief is ſuch a ſin, as keeps men from being partakers of the benefits of Chriſt. 6. How the incredulity and unbelief of this people was ſo great, that Chriſt wondered at it; *He marvelled becauſe of their unbelief:* not becauſe he was ignorant of the cauſe of it, but becauſe he had uſed ſuch marvellous means for the curing them of their unbelief. *Learn* hence, That unbelief is a great ſin at all times; but when marvels are wrought for the cure and healing of it, and it remains uncured, it is a marvellous ſin, and juſtly cauſes admiration and wonder in Chriſt himſelf: *He marvelled,* &c.

7 ¶ And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to ſend them forth by two and two; and gave them power *over* unclean ſpirits; 8 And commanded them that they ſhould take nothing for *their* journey, ſave a ſtaff only; no ſcrip, no bread, no money in *their* purſe: 9 But *be* ſhod with ſandals; and not put on two coats. 10 And he ſaid unto them, In what place ſoever ye enter into an houſe, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, ſhake off the duſt under your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12 And they went out, and preached that men ſhould repent. 13 And they caſt out many devils, and anointed with oil, many that were ſick, and healed *them*.

We heard before, chap. iii. of our Saviour's ſolemn calling his apoſtles to their work and office: now he ſends them forth to execute their office. Where *obſerve*, 1. The perſon that ſends them forth, Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That none ought to take upon them the office of preaching, or any other miniſterial function in the church, till thereunto lawfully called by Chriſt himſelf. The apoſtles were immediately called and ſent forth by Chriſt himſelf, and received the doctrine which they taught immediately from Chriſt's own mouth: his miniſters now are called mediately; they receive their authority from Chriſt by the hands of the governors of his church. 2. The manner of their ſending; by two and two in a company: Partly to make their meſſage of the more authority; partly to teſtify their mutual conſent in the doctrine which they taught; and partly to comfort and encourage, to help and ſtrengthen, to aſſiſt and ſupport each other: In imitation of this example, the Jeſuits ſend forth their emiſſaries by pairs. *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of the word do ſtand in great need of the mutual help and comfort, of the united aſſiſtance and encouragement of each other, in the weighty duties of their calling and function: Like labourers in the harveſt-field, they ſhould help one another, the ſtrong endeavouring to ſtrengthen the hands of the weak: But, Lord, what tears are ſufficient to bewail the want of love and unity, yea, the prevalency of that fear and malignity which is found too often amongſt the miniſters of the goſpel! So that inſtead of going two by two, happy is he that is alone in a place. Well might Melancthon bleſs God, when he lay a-dying, that he was going to a place where he ſhould be freed from the implacable hatred of divines: This is, and ought to be for a lamentation. 3. The power given by Chriſt to work miracles for confirming the doctrine of the goſpel which his apoſtles preached: He gave them power over unclean ſpirits, and they caſt out devils, and anointed with oil them that were ſick, and healed them. This power to work miracles was neceſſary for the apoſtles: partly to procure reverence to their perſons, being poor and unlearned men; but principally to gain credit and authority to their doctrine: For the doctrine of faith in the Meſſiah, as now come, and exhibited in the fleſh, being a ſtrange and new doctrine to the Jews, the truth and certainty of it was to be extraordinarily ratified by Chriſt and his apoſtles miracles, ſome of which were caſting out of devils, and by anointing with oil, to heal and recover ſick perſons. This gift of healing remained ſome time in the church, as appeared by St. James v. 14. *Is any ſick? Anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.* Where *obſerve*, That the apoſtles did not uſe oil as the inſtrument and means of healing (for then the cure had not been miraculous) but only as a ſymbol of the cure, or as an outward ſign and teſtimony of miraculous healing: Which outward ſign was for the ſtrengthening of the faith of ſuch as were healed; aſſuring them, that as certainly as their bodies were anointed, ſo certainly ſhould their health and ſtrength be reſtored. The Papiſts upon this ground their ſacrament of *extreme unction*; but very vainly: For the apoſtles anointed thoſe that were ſick, as a ſign of their recovery; but the papiſts anoint thoſe that have the pangs of death upon them, that their ſins may be blotted out, and the ſnares of the devil avoided. 4. The charge given by Chriſt to his apoſtles at the time of their ſending out. This is threefold. Firſt, Touching their preparation for their journey, he bids them not take much care, nor ſpend much time in furniſhing themſelves with victuals, money, apparel, weapons of defence, and the like; only taking a walking-ſtaff in their hands, becauſe they were to finiſh their journey ſpeedily, and to return again to Chriſt. This command of our Saviour to his apoſtles, not to incumber themſelves when going forth to preach the goſpel, *teaches* his miniſters their duty, to free themſelves as much as poſſibly they can from worldly incumbrances, which may hinder them in the performance of their office and function. 2 Tim. ii. 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life.* Secondly, Touching their lodging in their journey. Our Saviour adviſes them not to change it, during their ſtay in one place; but *into whatſoever houſe they firſt entered, they ſhould there continue till they departed out of that place*; that ſo they might avoid all ſhew of lightneſs and inconſtancy, and teſtify all gravity and ſtayedneſs in their behaviour, this being a ſpecial mean to win authority to their perſons and miniſtry. Thirdly, Chriſt gives a charge to his apoſtles touching their carriage towards ſuch as ſhould refuſe to give entertainment to them and their doctrine. They were to denounce the judgments of God againſt ſuch contemners, *by ſhaking off the duſt of their feet for a teſtimony againſt them.* Thence *learn*, That the contempt of God's miniſters, and eſpecially of their miniſtry and doctrine, is an odious and execrable ſin, deteſted by God, and which ought to be abhorred by man; *ſhake off the duſt of your feet.* This action was emblematical, ſignifying that almighty God would in like manner ſhake them off as the vileſt duſt. *Learn*, 2. That wherever the word is preached, it is for a teſtimony; either a teſtimony for or againſt a people. For if the duſt of a miniſter's feet bear witneſs againſt the deſpiſers of the goſpel, their ſermons much more. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The dreadful judgment denounced by our Saviour againſt the contemners of the apoſtles doctrine; *Verily it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.* Where *note*, 1. That there ſhall be a day of judgment. 2. That in the day of judgment ſome ſinners ſhall fare worſe than others. 3. That of all ſinners the condition of ſuch will be ſaddeſt at the day of judgment, who having lived under the goſpel, have died after all in impenitency and infidelity; *Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom, and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*

14 And king Herod heard *of him*; for his name was ſpread abroad: and he ſaid, That John the Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 15 Others ſaid, That it is Elias. And others ſaid, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16 But when Herod heard *thereof*, he ſaid, It is John whom I beheaded: he is riſen from the dead. 17 For Herod himſelf had ſent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in priſon, for Herodias' ſake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. 18 For John had ſaid unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel againſt him, and would have killed him; but ſhe could not. 20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a juſt man and an holy, and obſerved him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and chief eſtates of Galilee: 22 And when the daughter of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced, and pleaſed Herod, and them that ſat with him, the king ſaid unto the damſel, Aſk of me whatſoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23 And he ſware unto her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24 And ſhe went forth and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall I aſk? and ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt. 25 And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the king, and aſked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptiſt. 26 And the king was exceedingly ſorry; *yet* for his oath's ſake, and for their ſakes which ſat with him, he would not reject her. 27 And immediately the king ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in the priſon, 28 And brought his head in a charger,

and gave it to the damſel: and the damſel gave it to her mother. 29 And when his diſciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpſe, and laid it in a tomb.

The hiſtory of John the Baptiſt's death is here recorded by this Evangeliſt, as St. Matthew had done before, chap. xiv. 1, 2. Here we have theſe particulars farther *obſervable*; 1. The character and deſcription of a zealous and faithful miniſter. He is one that deals plainly, and dares tell the greateſt perſons of their faults. Herod, though a king, is reproved by the Baptiſt for his inceſt, in taking his brother's wife. The crown and ſceptre of Herod could not daunt the faithful meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in the miniſters of God both courage and impartiality. Courage, in fearing no faces; impartiality, in ſparing no ſins. 2. Who it was that commanded the Baptiſt to be beheaded. It was *Herod the king, whom he had reproved*. How ſad is it when kings, who ſhould be nurſing fathers to the church, do prove the bloody butchers of the prophets of God. The ſevereſt perſecutions which the prophets of God have fallen under, are uſually occaſioned by their telling great men of their crimes. Men in power are impatient of reproof, and imagine that their authority gives them a licenſe to tranſgreſs. 3. The time of the Baptiſt's death; it was upon Herod's birth-day. It was an ancient cuſtom among the eaſtern kings, to celebrate their birth-days; Pharoah did ſo, Gen. xl. and Herod here, but both with blood; yet theſe perſonal ſins do not make the practice unlawful, when we ſolemnize our birth-days with thankfulneſs to our Creator and Preſerver, and recommend ourſelves by prayer to his gracious providence and protection for the remainder of our days; this is an act of piety and religion. But Herod's birth-day was kept with revelling, with feaſting, with muſic and dancing: All which were made ſinful to him by the circumſtances which did attend it. Great men's feaſts and frolics are too often the ſeaſon and occaſion of much ſin. 4. The inſtigators and promoters of the holy Baptiſt's death; *Herodias and her daughter*. Lord! how deadly is the malice of ſouls debauched with luſt! Impriſonment would not ſatisfy them, they muſt have his blood. Reſolute ſinners who are mad upon their luſts, run furiouſly upon their oppoſers, and reſolve to bear down all oppoſition they meet with in the gratification of their unlawful deſires. 5. With what great reluctance Herod conſented to this villainy; *The king was exceeding ſorry*. Wicked men oft-times ſin with a troubled and diſturbed conſcience; there is a mighty ſtruggle betwixt their reaſon and their luſts; but at laſt they maſter their conſciences, and chuſe rather to gratify their luſts, than to obey their reaſon. So did Herod here; for notwithſtanding his ſorrow, he commands the act; he ſent and beheaded John in the priſon. 6. The motives and inducements which prevailed with Herod to behead this holy man. (1.) The conſcience of his oath; *Nevertheleſs, for his oath's ſake*. See his hypocriſy; he made ſcruple of a raſh oath, who made no ſcruple of real murder. See here not only the folly, but great impiety of raſh vows; eſpecially in ignorant perſons, who think themſelves obliged by them: Whereas, it is their duty, firſt to repent of them, and then to break them as faſt as they can. St. Chryſoſtom ſays, Herod might have ſpared the Baptiſt's head, and yet have kept his oath to Herodias; for he ſwore to give her only half of his kingdom, and his head was worth more than his whole kingdom. (2.) Reſpect to his reputation, not only for his oath's ſake, but *for them that ſat with him*. They heard him promiſe, and will be witneſs of his inconſtancy if he do not perform. Inſiſting upon punctilios of honour, has hazarded the loſs of millions of ſouls. (3.) His great unwillingneſs to diſcontent Herodias and her daughter. O vain and fooliſh hypocrite, who dreaded the diſpleaſing of a wanton miſtreſs, more than the offending of God and conſcience! 7. Theſe bloody women do not only require the Baptiſt to be beheaded, but *that his head be brought in a charger* to them. What a diſh was here to be ſerved up at a prince's table on his birth-day! a dead man's head ſwimming in blood. How prodigiouſly inſatiable is cruelty and revenge! Herodias did not think herſelf ſafe till John was dead; ſhe would not think him dead till his head was off, and would not believe his head was off till ſhe had it in her hand. Revenge never thinks it has made ſure enough. O! how cruel is a wicked heart, that could take pleaſure in a ſpectacle of ſo much horror! Methinks I ſee how that holy head was toſſed upon Herod's table by impure and filthy hands. That true and faithful tongue, thoſe ſacred lips, thoſe chaſte eyes, thoſe mortified cheeks, are now inſultingly handled by a lewd and inceſtuous harlot, and made a ſcorn to Herod's drunken gueſts. 8. That neither the holineſs of the prophets, nor the beſt of men, are more ſecure from violence than from natural death. The holy Baptiſt, who was ſanctified in the womb, conceived and born with ſo much miracle, lived with ſo much reverence and obſervation, is now at midnight obſcurely murdered in a cloſe priſon. 9. That it is as true a martyrdom to ſuffer for duty as for faith. He dies as truly a martyr that dies for doing his duty, as he that dies for profeſſing his faith, and bearing witneſs to the truth. 10. How far men may go in religion, and yet be far enough from ſaving grace; they may reverence God's miniſters, believe them to be holy and juſt men, hear them with delight and pleaſure, protect and defend them from their oppoſers; they may reform and do many things; and *yet be far from the kingdom of God*. Herod did all this; he knew John to be a holy and juſt man, reverenced and reſpected him, guarded and kept him ſafe from Herodias' malice. For though he was impriſoned before, yet Herod ſuffered none to hurt him, but heard him often with pleaſure and delight. Wicked and unregenerate men may be ſo affected with the word of God, as to become protectors and defenders of thoſe that diſpenſe it, and yet receive no ſaving advantage by it. The plain and powerful preaching of the word may win upon and prevail with an unregenerate man to perform many good duties, and to forſake many known ſins; and yet may he, after all, remain under the power of hypocriſy. Nay, from Herod's example we may *learn*, That a wicked man may take ſome pleaſure and delight in hearing the word preached; either the generality of the truths aſſerted, or the novelty of the notions delivered, or the wit and fancy, the graceful elocution and delivery of the preacher, may create a preſent delight; but it is neither a ſpiritual delight, nor an abiding delight. *And when his diſciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpſe, and laid it in a tomb.* When his diſciples heard of it, that is, the diſciples of John hearing that their holy maſter was thus barbarouſly murdered, they took up his dead body, and decently interred it. *Learn* thence, That the faithful ſervants of God are not aſhamed of the ſufferings of the ſaints, but will teſtify their reſpects unto them, both living, dying, and dead. The diſciples of John gave their maſter an honourable and reſpectful burial, fearing neither Herod's power, nor Herodia's malice.

30 ¶ And the apoſtles gathered themſelves together unto Jeſus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he ſaid unto them, Come ye yourſelves apart into a deſert place, and reſt a-while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a deſert place by ſhip privately. 33 And the people ſaw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34 And Jeſus, when he came out, ſaw much people, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, becauſe they were as ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

Obſerve here, 1. How the report of John's death being brought to Chriſt, he preſently withdraws, and his diſciples with him, from that place into the deſert. Chriſt will not long continue his preſence in thoſe places where any of his ſervants are ſlain, and others of them are in danger.— How our Saviour, upon the notice of John's death, flies into the deſert for his own preſervation; *His hour was not yet come*, and therefore he keeps out of Herod's way. It is no cowardice to fly from the rage of perſecutors. Chriſt himſelf both practiſed it, and directed his diſciples to it, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one city, fly to another.* We muſt not expoſe our lives to hazard, but when the laying down our lives will do God and religion more ſervice than we can do by living. 3. With what condolency and ſympathizing pity our bleſſed Saviour exerciſed acts of mercy and compaſſion, when the objects of compaſſion were before him. *Jeſus ſeeing the multitude, was moved with compaſſion towards them.* Chriſt, when here on earth, did bear a tender and compaſſionate heart towards poor creatures in diſtreſs and miſery; and to our comfort he retains the ſame compaſſionate nature and diſpoſition now in heaven which he had here on earth. 4. The ground or cauſe of this compaſſion in our Saviour, becauſe *they were as ſheep having no ſhepherd. Learn* thence, That the caſe of ſuch a people is very ſad, and their condition to be much lamented and pitied, who are deſtitute of able, faithful, and conſcientious paſtors and teachers, to feed them with the ſpiritual food of the word and ſacraments. Where proviſion fails, the people periſh. But was the Jewiſh church now without paſtors, as ſheep without a ſhepherd? Had they not the Phariſees, the ſcribes and doctors to teach and inſtruct them? Yes, no doubt; but they were no paſtors in Chriſt's account, becauſe unfaithful paſtors. Thence *learn*, That idle, negligent, and unfaithful paſtors, are no paſtors in the ſight of God, and in the account of Chriſt. *Jeſus had compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe*, &c.

35 And when the day was now far ſpent, his diſciples came unto him, and ſaid, This is a deſert place, and now the time *is* far paſſed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themſelves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſay unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat? 38 He ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and ſee. And when they knew, they ſay, Five, and two fiſhes. 39 And he commanded them to make all ſit down by companies upon the green graſs. 40 And they ſat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fiſhes, he looked up to heaven, and bleſſed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his diſciples to ſet before them; and the two fiſhes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baſkets full of the fragments, and of the fiſhes. 44 And they that did eat of the loaves, were about five thouſand men.

This miracle of our Saviour's feeding five thouſand men, beſides women and children, with five loaves and two fiſhes, is recorded by all the four evangeliſts; and in the hiſtory of it theſe following particulars are obſervable: 1. The diſciples pity towards the multitude, who had long faſted, and wanted now the ordinary comforts and ſupports of life. It well becomes the miniſters of Chriſt to reſpect the bodily neceſſities, as well as regard the ſpiritual wants of perſons. 2. The motion which the diſciples make to Chriſt, on behalf of the multitude, *Send them away, that they may buy victuals.* Here was a ſtrong charity, but a weak faith. A ſtrong charity, in deſiring the people's relief; but a weak faith, in ſuppoſing that they could not otherwiſe be relieved but by ſending them away; forgetting that Chriſt, who had healed the multitude miraculouſly, could alſo feed them miraculouſly if he pleaſed; all things being equally eaſy to an almighty power. 3. Our Saviour's ſtrange reply to the diſciples requeſt: they need not depart; *give ye them to eat.* Need not depart! Why, the people muſt either feed or famiſh. Victuals they muſt have, and a dry deſert will afford none. Yes, ſays Chriſt, to his diſciples, *Give ye them to eat.* Alas! poor diſciples! they had nothing for themſelves to eat, how then ſhould they give the multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us what we are unable to perform, it is to ſhew us our impotency and weakneſs, and to provoke us to look up to him, and depend by faith on his almighty power. 4. What a poor and ſlender proviſion the Lord of the earth has for his own houſhold and family, *five barley loaves and two* *ſmall fiſhes.* Teaching us, That theſe bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pampered; our belly muſt not be our maſter, much leſs our god. The end of food is to ſuſtain nature, we muſt not ſtifle it with a gluttonous variety. And as the quality of the victuals was plain, ſo the quantity was ſmall; five loaves and two fiſhes. Well might the diſciples ſay, *What are theſe among ſo many?* The eye of ſenſe and reaſon ſees an utter impoſſibility of thoſe effects which faith can eaſily apprehend, and divine power more eaſily produce. 5. How Chriſt, the great maſter of the feaſt, doth marſhal his gueſts. *He commands them all to ſit down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.* None of them reply, "Sit down, but to what? Here are the mouths, but where is the meat? We may ſoon be ſet, but when or whence ſhall we be ſerved?" Not a word like this; but they obey and expect. Lord, how eaſy is it to truſt to thy providence, and rely upon thy power, when there is corn in the barn, bread in the cupboard, or money in the purſe; but when our ſtores are all empty, and we have nothing in hand, then to depend upon an inviſible bounty, is a true and noble act of faith. 6. The actions performed by our bleſſed Saviour; *He bleſſed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his diſciples, and they to the multitude.* 1. *He bleſſed* them; teaching us by his example, never to uſe or to receive the good creatures of God for our nouriſhment without prayer and praiſe; never to ſit down to our food as a beaſt to his forage. *He brake* the loaves. He could have multiplied them whole, why then would he rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us, that we may rather expect his bleſſing in the diſtribution of his bounty, than in the reſervation of it. Scattering is the way to increaſing, liberality is the way to riches. 3. Chriſt *gave* the bread thus broken *to his diſciples*, that they might diſtribute it *to the multitude*. But why did our Lord diſtribute the loaves by his diſciples hands? Doubtleſs to gain reſpect to his diſciples from the people. And the ſame courſe doth our Lord take in ſpiritual diſtributions. He that could feed the world by his own immediate hand, chuſes rather by the hand of his miniſters to divide the bread of life among his people. 7. The certainty and greatneſs of the miracle: *They did all eat, and were filled.* They did all eat, not a crum or a bit, but to ſatiety and fullneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat, were ſatisfied, and yet *twelve baſkets of fragments remain.* More was left than was at firſt ſet on. It is hard to ſay which was the greateſt miracle, the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they ate, we may wonder that they left any thing: if what they left, that they eat any thing. 8. Theſe fragments, though of barley loaves, and fiſh-bones, muſt not be loſt, but at our Saviour's command, gathered up. The liberal houſekeeper of the world will not allow the loſs of his orts. O how tremendous will their account be, who having large and plentiful eſtates, ſpend them upon their luſts, being worſe than loſt in God's account.

45 ¶ And ſtraightway he conſtrained his diſciples to get into the ſhip, and to go to the other ſide before unto Bethſaida, while he ſent away the people. 46 And when he had ſent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when even was come, the ſhip was in the midſt of the ſea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he ſaw them toiling in rowing: for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the ſea, and would have paſſed by them. 49 But when they ſaw him walking upon the ſea, they ſuppoſed it had been a ſpirit, and cried out. 50 For they all ſaw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and ſaith unto them, Be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ſhip; and the wind ceaſed. And they were ſore amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and wondered. 52 For they conſidered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

This paragraph acquaints us with another miracle which our Saviour wrought, *in walking upon the ſea to his diſciples*; and herein we have *obſervable*, 1. His ſending his diſciples to ſea, *he conſtrained them to go into ſhip*; not compelling them againſt their wills, but commanding them to take ſhip, and go before him. No doubt the diſciples were loath to do this, unwilling to leave him, and to go without him; for they that have once taſted the ſweetneſs of Chriſt's company and acquaintance, are hardly and difficultly drawn away from him. 2. Chriſt having diſmiſſed his diſciples and the company, retires *into a mountain to pray*; to teach us, That when we addreſs ourſelves to God in duty, we take all helps, furtherances and advantages for the doing of our duty. We muſt diſmiſs the multitude, before we addreſs to God in prayer; we muſt ſend away the multitude of worldly cares, worldly thoughts, worldly concerns and buſineſs, when we would wait upon God in duty. 3. The great danger the diſciples were in, and the difficulties they were to encounter with. *They were in the midſt of the ſea, toſſed with the waves, and the winds were contrary*; and which was ſaddeſt of all, Chriſt was abſent. The wiſdom of God ſometimes ſuffers his children and people, not only to be diſtreſſed, but greatly diſtreſſed with a variety of diſtreſſes. 4. The ſeaſonable ſuccour and relief which Chriſt afforded his diſciples; *In the fourth watch he came unto them walking upon the waters.* It was not a ſtormy and tempeſtuous ſea that could ſeparate betwixt him and them; he that waded through a ſea of blood, and a ſea of wrath to ſave his people, will walk upon a ſea of waters to ſuccour and relieve them. And the time was the fourth watch, about four in the morning, when they had been many hours conflicting with the waves, and in great danger of their lives. To teach us, That Chriſt ſometimes lengthens out the trials of his children before he delivers them; but when they come to an extremity, that is the ſeaſon of his ſuccour. 5. How the diſciples took their deliverer for their deſtroyer; *when they ſaw Chriſt, they cried out.* Their fears were higheſt when their deliverer and deliverance were neareſt; God may be coming with ſalvation and deliverance to his people, when they for the preſent cannot diſcern it. 6. When the diſciples were in the ſaddeſt condition, one word from Chriſt revives them; it is a ſufficient ſupport

port in all our afflictions, to hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to us, and to enjoy his favourable preſence with us. Say but, O Saviour, *It is I*, and then let evils do their worſt: That one word, *It is I*, is ſufficient to allay all ſtorms, and to calm a thouſand tempeſts. Laſtly, What influence and effect this miracle had upon the diſciples, *They were ſore amazed, and beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed*; they wonder at the ceaſing of the winds, and calming of the ſeas; but *they had forgotten the miracle of the loaves*; which was a great ſtupidity and dulneſs in them, and argued hardneſs of heart, and want of conſideration in them. *Learn* thence, That there is much ſtupidity of mind, and hardneſs of heart, remaining unmortified in the beſt of ſaints; whilſt here in an imperfect ſtate, the work of grace and ſanctification is but imperfect in the beſt.

53 And when they had paſſed over, they came into the land of Genneſaret, and drew to the ſhore. 54 And when they were come out of the ſhip, ſtraightway they knew him, 55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick where they heard he was. 56 And whitherſoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Here *obſerve*, 1. The unwearied diligence and induſtry of our Saviour in going about to do good: he no ſooner landeth, but he goeth to Genneſaret, and healeth their ſick. It was the great buſineſs and conſtant employment of our Saviour's life to travel from place to place, that he might be uſeful and beneficent to mankind: he went to thoſe that could not, and to thoſe that would not, come to him. 2. The people of Genneſaret's charity to their ſick neighbours; they ſent abroad, to let the country know that Chriſt the great phyſician was come amongſt them. There is a duty of love and mercy which we owe unto thoſe that are in affliction and miſery; namely, To afford them the beſt help, relief and ſuccour we are able, both in their inward and outward afflictions. 3. The ſuddenneſs and certainty of the cure: they touched him, and were made whole. The healing virtue lay not in their fingers, but in their faith; or rather in Chriſt, whom their faith apprehended.

CHAP. VII.

THEN came together unto him the Phariſees, and certain of the ſcribes, which came from Jeruſalem. 2 And when they ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen) hands, they found fault. 3 For the Phariſees, and all the Jews, except they waſh *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 And *when they come* from the market, except they waſh, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, *as* the waſhing of cups and pots, of brazen veſſels, and tables. 5 Then the Phariſees and ſcribes aſked him, Why walk not thy diſciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwaſhen hands? 6 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Well hath Eſaias propheſied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit, in vain do they worſhip me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aſide the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the waſhing of pots and cups: and many other ſuch like things ye do. 9 And he ſaid unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moſes ſaid, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Whoſo curſeth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye ſay, If a man ſhall ſay to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to ſay, a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me; *he ſhall be free.* 12 And ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have delivered. And many ſuch like things do ye.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with the conference and diſputation which our Saviour had with the Phariſees about their ſuperſtitious obſervation of the Jewiſh traditions; theſe traditions were ſuch rites and cuſtoms as were delivered to them by the elders and rulers of the Jewiſh church in former times; which traditions they regarded and valued more than the expreſs commandments of God. *Learn* thence, That ſuperſtitious men are always more fond of, and zealous for, the traditions of men in divine worſhip, than for the expreſs and poſitive commands of God. Secondly, that it is the manner of ſuch perſons to tie others to their practice and example in matters of religious worſhip, and to cenſure and condemn all thoſe who do not conform to them in the ſmalleſt matters. The Phariſees here cenſure the diſciples for eating with unwaſhen hands, becauſe it was their cuſtom to waſh when they did eat; yet did not Chriſt or his diſciples refuſe to waſh before meat, as it was a civil and decent cuſtom, but becauſe the Phariſees made it a religious rite: Teaching us, That what is in itſelf indifferent, and may without offence be done as a civil cuſtom, ought to be diſcountenanced and oppoſed when required of us as an act of religion. The Jews, fearing leſt they ſhould touch any perſon or thing that was unclean, and ſo be defiled unawares, did uſe frequent waſhings, as of cups, pots, veſſels, tables, beds, or couches, which they lay upon when they ate: thus Phariſaical hypocriſy puts God off with outward cleanſing, inſtead of inward purity; regarding more the outward cleanneſs of the hand, than the inward purity of the heart. This was the accuſation of the Phariſees; to which our Saviour replies, by way of recrimination, that if his diſciples did not obſerve the traditions of the elders, they (the

Phariſees) *did reject and make void the commandment of God, and did worſhip him in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* *Learn* hence, That all ſervice and worſhip which is offered to God, according to man's will and ordinances, and not according to the rule of God's own word, is vain and unprofitable: Divine inſtitution is the only pure rule of religious worſhip, as to the ſubſtance of it: here, what God doth not command, he forbids. *Note* next, The inſtance which our Saviour produces of the Phariſees violating an expreſs command of God, and preferring their own traditions before it: He inſtances in the fifth commandment, which requires children to relieve their parents in their neceſſities. Now though the Phariſees did not deny this in plain terms, yet they made an exception from it: which, if children pleaſed, might render it vain, void, and uſeleſs: For the Phariſees taught, That in caſe the child of a poor parent, that wanted relief, would give a gift to the temple, which gift they called *corban*, that is, a gift conſecrated to God and religious uſes; that then the children of ſuch poor parents were diſcharged from making any further proviſion for their aged and impotent parents; but might reply after this manner, "That which thou aſkeſt for thy ſupply, is given to God, and therefore I cannot relieve thee:" So that covetous and graceleſs children looked upon it as the moſt frugal way, once for all, to find to the temple, rather than pay the conſtant rent of daily relief to their poor parents. *Learn* hence, That the practice of moral duties is required before, and is more acceptable to almighty God than the moſt ſolemn acts and exerciſes of inſtituted worſhip whatſoever: *I will have mercy*, ſays God, *rather than ſacrifice: and to do juſtice and judgment, is more acceptable than burnt-offering.* Secondly, That no duty, gift, or offering to God is accepted, where the duty of charity is neglected: it is much more acceptable to God to refreſh the bowels of his ſaints, who are the living temples of the Holy Ghoſt, than to adorn material temples with gold and ſilver. *Corban* is a Syriac word, ſignifying a gift given unto God: The Phariſees applied theſe gifts to the uſe and ſervice of the temple, poſſibly to repair, beautify, and adorn it; which had not been amiſs, if they had not taught that ſuch gifts to the temple did diſcharge children from the duty of charity to their natural parents: *Theſe things they ought to have done*, in the firſt place, *and not to leave the other undone.*

14 ¶ And when he had called all the people unto him, he ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and underſtand. 15 There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man. 16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17 And when he was entered into the houſe from the people, his diſciples aſked him concerning the parable. 18 And he ſaith unto them, Are ye ſo without underſtanding alſo? Do ye not perceive, that whatſoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; 19 Becauſe it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20 And he ſaid, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs: 23 All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Our bleſſed Saviour, leaving the Phariſees with ſome diſlike, applies himſelf to the multitude, and inſtructs them in a very neceſſary and uſeful doctrine, touching the true original cauſe of all ſpiritual pollution and uncleanneſs; namely, The filthineſs and impurity of man's heart and nature. And that it is not the meat eaten with the mouth, but the wickedneſs of the heart, vented by the mouth, which pollutes a perſon in God's account. The heart and ſoul of man alone is capable of ſinful defilement. Nothing can defile a perſon in God's account, but that which defileth the inward man. *Learn* hence, 1. That the heart of man is the ſink and ſeed-plot of all ſin, the ſource and fountain of all pollution. 2. That all the impiety of the life proceeds from the impurity and filthineſs of the heart. Men's lives would not be ſo bad, if their hearts were not worſe. The diſciples deſiring the interpretation of the foregoing parable, our Saviour gives it them; but withal, expoſtulates with them for not underſtanding a matter ſo obvious and plain, *Are ye yet without underſtanding?* As if he had ſaid, "Have you ſat thus long under my miniſterial teaching, and enjoyed the benefit of my converſation, and yet are no farther proficients in knowledge?" Plainly intimating, that Chriſt expects a proficiency in knowledge from us, proportionable to the opportunities and means of knowledge enjoyed by us. Having given them this rebuke, he next acquaints them with the ſenſe and meaning of the parable; namely, that it is out of a wicked and ſinful heart, that all ſin and wickedneſs doth proceed. Though the occaſions of ſin are from without, yet the ſource and original of it is from within. The heart of man is as a cage full of unclean birds; *Hence proceed evil thoughts*, either againſt God or our neighbours. *Adulteries*; or all the ſins of the fleſh. *Murders*; that is, all cruelty and hard dealing towards others. *An evil eye*; that is, an envious ſpirit, which frets and grieves at the happineſs of others; called an evil eye, becauſe envy doth much ſhew and manifeſt itſelf in the outward countenance, and eſpecially by the eyes. From the whole, *note*, That the beſt way to hinder the progreſs of ſin in the life, is to mortify it in the heart, to crucify all inordinate motions, luſts, and corruptions in their root; for the heart is the firſt ſeat and ſubject of ſin, from whence it flows forth into the life and converſation.

24 And from thence he aroſe, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an houſe, and would have no man know *it:* but he could not be hid. 25 For a certain woman, whoſe young daughter had an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation. And ſhe be-

ſought him that he would caſt forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jeſus ſaid unto her, Let the children firſt be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt *it* unto the dogs. 28 And ſhe anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29 And he ſaid unto her, For this ſaying, go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when ſhe was come to her houſe, ſhe found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

All along in the hiſtory of our Saviour's life, we are to take notice how he went about from place to place doing good. Being now come into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, he finds a poor woman of the race of the Canaanites, who becomes firſt an humble ſupplicant, and then a bold beggar, on the behalf of her poſſeſſed daughter. Where *obſerve*, 1. That though all Iſrael could not example the faith of this Canaanite, yet was her daughter tormented with the devil. *Learn* thence, That neither truth of faith, nor ſtrength of faith, can ſecure againſt Satan's inward temptations, or outward vexations; and conſequently, the worſt of bodily afflictions are no ſufficient proof of divine diſpleaſure. 2. The daughter did not come to Chriſt for herſelf, but the mother for her. Perhaps the child was not ſo ſenſible of its own miſery, but the mother feels both the child's ſorrow and her own. True goodneſs teaches us to appropriate the afflictions of others to ourſelves, cauſing us to bear their griefs, and to ſympathize with them in their ſorrows. 3. The ſeeming ſeverity of Chriſt to this poor woman; he calls her not a woman, but a *dog*; and, as it were, ſpurns her from the table. Did ever ſo ſevere a word drop from thoſe mild lips? What ſhall we ſay? Is the Lamb of God turned a lion, that a woman in diſtreſs, imploring pity, ſhould be thus rated out of Chriſt's preſence? But hence we *learn*, How Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt faith of his own children upon the ſevereſt trial. This trial had never been ſo ſharp, if her faith had not been ſo ſtrong: Uſually, where God gives much grace, he tries grace much. 4. The humble carriage of this holy woman; her humility grants all, her patience overcomes all, ſhe meekly deſires to poſſeſs the dog's place; not to crowd to the table, but to creep under it, and to partake of the crumbs of mercy that fall from thence. Nothing is ſo pleaſing to Chriſt as to ſee his people follow him with faith and importunity when he ſeems to withdraw himſelf from them.

31 ¶ And again, departing from the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the ſea of Galilee, through the midſt of the coaſts of Decapolis. 32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech; and they beſeech him to put his hand upon him. 33 And he took him aſide from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he ſpit, and touched his tongue; 34 And looking up to heaven, he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35 And ſtraightway his ears were opened, and the ſtring of his tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain. 36 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man: But the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed *it*; 37 And were beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

See here, 1. The bitter fruits and ſad effects of ſin, which has brought deafneſs, dumbneſs, and blindneſs upon the human nature. As death, ſo all diſeaſes entered into the world by ſin: ſin firſt brought infirmities and mortality into our natures, and the wages of ſin are diſeaſes and death. 2. That the bleſſing of bodily health and healing is from Chriſt; who by his divine power, as he was God, miraculouſly and immediately healed them that were brought unto him. 3. The actions and geſtures which our Saviour uſed in healing this deaf perſon. He puts his fingers into his ears, he ſpit, and touched his tongue. Not that theſe were means or natural cauſes effecting the cure, for there was no healing virtues in the ſpittle; but only outward ſigns, teſtimonies, and pledges of Chriſt's divine power and gracious readineſs to cure the perſon in diſtreſs. 4. How Chriſt withdrew the perſon from the multitude, whom he was about to help and heal. *Teaching* us, In all our good works to avoid all ſhew and appearance of oſtentation and vain-glory: To ſet God's glory before our eyes, and not ſeek our own praiſe. 5. The effect which this miracle had upon the multitude; it occaſioned their aſtoniſhment and applauſe. *They were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, He hath done all things well.* It becomes us both to take notice of the wonderful works of God, and alſo to magnify and extol the author of them. This is one way of glorifying our Creator.

CHAP. VIII.

IN thoſe days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaith unto them, 2 I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I ſend them away faſting to their own houſes, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his diſciples anſwered him, From whence can a man ſatisfy theſe men with bread here in the wilderneſs? 5 And he aſked them, How many loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to ſit down on the ground: and he took the ſeven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his diſciples to ſet before *them*; and they did ſet *them* before the people. 7 And they had a few ſmall fiſhes: and he bleſſed, and commanded to ſet them alſo before *them*. 8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baſkets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thouſand: And he ſent them away.

This chapter begins with the relation of a famous miracle wrought by our Saviour; namely, his feeding of four thouſand perſons with ſeven loaves and a few fiſhes. And here we have *obſervable*, firſt, The tender care which Chriſt took of the bodies of men, to provide all neceſſaries for their ſupport and comfort; *He giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* The great Houſekeeper of the world *openeth his hands, and filleth all things living with plenteouſneſs.* How careful was our Saviour here, that the bodies of poor creatures might not faint, nor be over weak and weary by the way! Therefore he would not diſmiſs them without refreſhment. 2. The original ſource and ſpring from whence this care that Chriſt had of the multitude did proceed and flow; namely, from that ſympathizing pity and tender compaſſion which the merciful heart of Chriſt did bear towards perſons in diſtreſs and miſery. *Learn* hence, That the tender pity and compaſſion of Chriſt is not the ſpring and fountain of ſpiritual mercies only, but of temporal bleſſings alſo; *I have compaſſion on the multitude who have nothing to eat.* 3. How the diſciples, not ſeeing any outward viſible means for the people's ſupport, conclude it impoſſible for ſo many to be ſatisfied with the little ſupply they had; namely, ſeven loaves and a few ſmall fiſhes. *Learn* thence, That a weak faith ſoon grows thoughtful, and ſometimes diſtruſtful at the ſight of difficulties. *Whence,* ſays the diſciples, *can theſe men be ſatisfied with bread?* Not conſidering that the power of God in bleſſing our food, is far above the means of food. It is as eaſy for him to ſuſtain and nouriſh us with a little as with much; *man liveth not by bread,* but by the bleſſing of God upon the bread he eats. 4. That although Chriſt could have fed theſe four thouſand without the loaves, yet he takes and makes uſe of them, ſeeing they may be had. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt did not neglect his own appointed ordinary means, nor do any thing in an extraordinary way, farther than was abſolutely neceſſary. Chriſt was above means, and could work without them, and when they failed, did ſo; but when the means were at hand, he made uſe of them himſelf, to teach us never to expect that in a way of miracle, which may be come at in a way of means. 5. From our Lord's example, the religious cuſtom of begging a bleſſing upon our food before we ſit down to it, and of *receiving the good creatures of God with thankſgiving.* How unworthy is he of the crumbs that fall from his own table, who with the ſwine looks not up unto, and takes no thankful notice of, the hand that feeds him! 6. The certainty and greatneſs of the miracle; *they did all eat and were filled.* They did all eat, not a cruſt of bread, or a bit of fiſh, but to ſatiety and fulneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied, and yet *ſeven baſkets remain;* more is left than was at firſt ſet on. It is hard to ſay which was the greateſt miracle, the miraculous eating, or miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they ate, we may wonder that they left any thing; if what they left, that they ate any thing. Laſtly, Our Lord's command to gather up the fragments, *teaches* us, That we make no waſte of the good creatures of God. The fragments of fiſh-bones and broken bread muſt be gathered up: The liberal Houſekeeper of the world will not allow the loſs of his orts. Frugality is a commendable duty. God hath made us ſtewards, but not abſolute lords of his bleſſings. We muſt be accountable to him for all the inſtances of his bounty received from him.

10 ¶ And ſtraightway he entered into a ſhip with his diſciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Phariſees came forth, and began to queſtion with him, ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempting him. 12 And he ſighed deeply in his ſpirit, and ſaith, Why doth this generation ſeek after a ſign? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall no ſign be given to this generation. 13 And he left them, and entering into the ſhip again, departed to the other ſide.

Obſerve here, 1. The unreaſonable practice of the wicked Phariſees in aſking a ſign of Chriſt; that is, ſome new and extraordinary miracle to be wrought by him, to demonſtrate him to be the true and promiſed Meſſias: But had not our Saviour ſhewed them ſigns enough already? What were all the miracles daily wrought before their eyes, but convincing ſigns of his divine power? But infidelity, mixed with obſtinacy, is never ſatisfied. 2. Our Saviour's carriage towards theſe obſtinate Phariſees, who perſiſted in their unbelief; *He ſighed deeply in his ſpirit,* and mourned for the hardneſs of their hearts. *Learn* thence, That to grieve and mourn for the ſins of others, to be affected with them, and deeply afflicted for them, is a gracious and Chriſt-like temper. It is not ſufficient to make an outward ſhew of grieving for others ſins, but we ought to lay them to heart, and to be inwardly afflicted for them. *Jeſus ſighed deeply in his ſpirit.* 3. A ſharp reproof given by our Saviour to them. At the ſame time that our Saviour did inwardly grieve for the Phariſees wickedneſs. He did openly reprove them for it. It is not ſufficient that we mourn for the ſin of others, but we muſt prudently reprove them, as occaſion is offered, and our duty requireth. 4. The ſin which the Phariſees are reproved for; namely, *for ſeeking after a ſign:* That is, for demanding new miracles, after he had wrought ſo many before their eyes, to prove the divinity of his perſon. *Learn* thence, That it is a ſin for any to require new ſigns and miracles for the confirmation of that doctrine which has been already ſufficiently confirmed by miracles; yea, an heinous ſin, which deſerveth a ſharp reproof and cenſure. Laſtly, Our Saviour's peremptory denial of the Phariſees preſumptuous requeſt; *There ſhall be no ſign given to this generation:* That is, no ſuch ſign or miracle as they deſire, or would have: No ſign or miracle ſhall be wrought at their motion and ſuit; although after this, Chriſt of his own accord, and at his own pleaſure, wrought many miracles before their eyes. Such as wilfully harden themſelves againſt the light of their own conſciences, are righteouſly delivered up to hardneſs of heart, and final impenitency. Theſe hypocritical Phariſees ſhut their eyes againſt the moſt convictive evidence; and they are given up to their own obſtinacy: Our Saviour *left them, and entering into the ſhip again, departed to the other ſide.*

14 Now *the diſciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ſhip with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, ſaying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and *of* the leaven of Herod. 16 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have no bread. 17 And when Jeſus knew *it*, he ſaith unto them, Why reaſon ye, becauſe ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither underſtand? have ye your heart yet hardened? 18 Having eyes, ſee ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19 When I brake the five loaves among five thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? They ſay unto him, Twelve. 20 And when the ſeven among four thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? and they ſaid, Seven. 21 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye do not underſtand?

Obſerve here, 1. How dull the diſciples of Chriſt were under Chriſt's own teaching, and how apt to put a carnal ſenſe upon his words. They apprehended he had ſpoken unto them of the leaven of bread, what he intended of the leaven of the Phariſees doctrine. 2. The rebuke our Saviour gives his diſciples for not underſtanding the ſenſe and ſignification of what he ſpake. Chriſt is much offended with his own people, when he diſcerns blindneſs and ignorance in them, after more than ordinary means of knowledge enjoyed by them: *How is it that ye do not yet underſtand?* 3. The metaphor by which Chriſt ſets forth the corrupt doctrines of the Phariſees and Herodians. He compares it to *leaven*. Partly for its ſourneſs, and partly for its diffuſiveneſs. Now *the leaven of Herod*, or the Herodians, is ſuppoſed to be this, That becauſe Herod was made king of the Jews, and lived at the time when the promiſed Meſſiah was expected, there were thoſe that maintained the opinion that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; which opinion Chriſt compares to leaven, becauſe as that diffuſes itſelf into the whole maſs or lump of bread with which it is mixed, ſo falſe doctrine was not only evil and corrupt in itſelf, but apt to ſpread its contagion farther and farther, to the infecting of others with it. *Learn* thence, That error is as damnable as vice; and perſons erroneous in judgment to be avoided, as well as thoſe that are wicked in converſation; and he that has a due care of his ſoul's ſalvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous principles, as he is of debauched practices. 4. Our Saviour does not command his diſciples to ſeparate from communion with the Phariſees, and oblige them not to hear their doctrine; but only to beware of their errors, which they mixed with their doctrine. We may and ought to hold communion with a church, though erroneous in judgment, if not fundamentally erroneous. For ſeparation from a church is not juſtifiable upon any other grounds than that which makes a ſeparation between God and that church, which is either apoſtaſy into groſs idolatry, or in point of doctrine, into damnable hereſy. 5. The fault obſerved by our Saviour in his diſciples, hardneſs of heart. *Have ye your heart yet hardened?* There may be, and oft-times is, ſome degree of hardneſs of heart in ſincere chriſtians; but this is not a total hardneſs; it is lamented and humbled for, not indulged and delighted in. As Chriſt is grieved for the hardneſs of his people's hearts, ſo are they grieved alſo; it is both bitter and burdenſome to them.

22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethſaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and beſought him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had ſpit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he aſked him, If he ſaw ought? 24 And he looked up, and ſaid, I ſee men as trees, walking. 25 After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was reſtored, and ſaw every man clearly. 26 And he ſent him away to his houſe, ſaying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

Here we have recorded a ſpecial miracle wrought by our Saviour at Bethſaida, in curing a blind man brought unto him. Where *obſerve*, 1. What evident proof the Phariſees had of Chriſt's divine power and Godhead: He had before cauſed *the deaf to hear, the dumb to ſpeak, and the lame to walk*; now *he makes the blind to ſee*; yet did the Phariſees obſtinately reſiſt all means of their conviction, and continued in their oppoſition to truth, to their inevitable and unutterable condemnation. 2. The wonderful humility, the great condeſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt towards this blind man: *He took him by the hand, and led him*, himſelf. A great evidence of his condeſcending humility, and of his goodneſs and mercy; ſhewing how ready and willing he was to help and heal him: See here a ſingular pattern of humility and condeſcending grace and mercy in our dear Redeemer, in that he vouchſafed with his own hands to take and lead a poor blind man through the ſtreets of Bethſaida, in the ſight of all the people. Let us learn of him, *who was thus meek and lowly in heart*. 3. Our Lord leads the blind man out of the town before he heals him; not in the town, where all the people might take notice of it. Thereby teaching us to avoid all ſhew of ambition, all appearance of vain-glory, in what we do. Even *as Chriſt ſought not his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him*. 4. The manner of the cure wrought upon this blind man: it was gradual, and by degrees; not inſtantaneous and at once: He had firſt a dark, dim, and obſcure ſight; afterwards a clear, and a perfect ſight. Chriſt thereby gave evidence of his abſolute and omnipotent power, that he was not tied to any particular means, or manner, or order of working; but wrought his miracles variouſly, as he ſaw to be moſt fit for the glory of God, and the benefit of his people. Laſtly, The charge given by our Saviour not to publiſh this miracle in the town of Bethſaida; a place where Chriſt had ſo often preached, and wrought ſo many miracles; but the inhabitants had obſtinately and contemptuouſly undervalued and deſpiſed both his doctrine and miracles; therefore we read, Matt. xi. 21. that our Saviour denounced a *wo againſt Bethſaida*, aſſuring her, *that it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for her.* The higher a people riſe under the means, the lower they fall if they miſcarry. Such a people as have been neareſt to converſion, being not converted, ſhall have the greateſt condemnation when they are judged.

27 And Jeſus went out, and his diſciples, into the towns of Ceſarea Philippi: and by the way he aſked his diſciples, ſaying unto them, Whom do men ſay that I am? 28 And they anſwered, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Peter anſwereth, and ſaith unto him, Thou art the Chriſt. 30 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed, and after three days riſe again. 32 And he ſpake that ſaying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Theſe verſes relate to us a conference which our Saviour had with his diſciples, touching their own and others opinion of his perſon. Where *obſerve*, 1. The place where Chriſt and his diſciples did confer: It was *in the way, as they walked together. Teaching* us our duty to take all occaſions and opportunities for holy conference, for good diſcourſe touching ſpiritual things, when in the houſe, when in the field, when travelling in the way, Mal. iii. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another*. 2. The conference itſelf: *Whom do men ſay that I am?* That is, What do the common people think and ſpeak of me? Not as if Chriſt were ignorant what men ſaid of him, or did vain-gloriouſly inquire after the opinion of the multitude concerning him; but with an intention more firmly to ſettle and eſtabliſh his diſciples in the belief of his being the true and promiſed Meſſias. The diſciples tell him, That *ſome ſaid, He was John the Baptiſt, others Elias, others one of the prophets.* It is no new thing, it ſeems, to find diverſity of judgments and opinions concerning Chriſt and the affairs of his kingdom: When our Saviour was amongſt men, who daily converſed with him, yet was there then a great diverſity of opinions concerning him. 3. How St. Peter, as the mouth of all the apoſtles, and in their names, makes a full and open confeſſion of Chriſt, acknowledging him to be the true and promiſed Meſſiah: *Peter ſaid, thou art the Chriſt.* Whence *note*, that the veil of Chriſt's human nature did not keep the eye of his diſciples faith from ſeeing him to be truly and really God. (2.) That Jeſus, the ſon of the Virgin Mary, was the Chriſt, the true Meſſiah, or the perſon ordained by God to be the Mediator betwixt God and man, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind; *Thou art the Chriſt*. 4. The charge and ſpecial injunction given by our Saviour, *to tell no man of him*; that is, not commonly and openly to declare that he was the Son of God and the true Meſſiah; becauſe he was now in his ſtate of humiliation, and the glory of his divinity was to be concealed till his reſurrection: Chriſt had his own fit times and proper ſeaſons, in which he revealed the great myſteries of his kingdom to the world. 5. The great wiſdom of our Saviour in acquainting his diſciples with the near approach of his death and paſſion; thereby to prevent that ſcandal and offence which otherwiſe they might have taken at his ſufferings; the better to fit and prepare them to bear that great trial; and to correct the error which they had entertained, touching an earthly kingdom of Chriſt, That the Meſſiah was to be a temporal prince. 6. St. Peter's carriage towards Chriſt upon this occaſion: *He took him aſide*, and began to blame him for affirming that he muſt die. O how ready is fleſh and blood to oppoſe all that tends to ſuffering; What need have we to be fortified againſt the temptations of our friends, as well as of our enemies! Satan ſometimes makes uſe of good men as his inſtruments to do his work by, when they little ſuſpect: Little did Peter think, that Satan now ſet him on work to hinder the redemption of mankind, by diſſuading Chriſt from dying. 7. With what indignation Chriſt rejects Peter's advice: *Get thee me behind me, Satan*. Chriſt heard Satan ſpeaking in Peter; It was Peter's tongue, but Satan tuned it; therefore Chriſt calls Peter by Satan's name: They that will do the devil's work, ſhall have the devil's name too: He that would hinder the redemption of mankind, is Satan, an adverſary to mankind. From our Saviour's ſmart reproof given to Peter, we *learn*, That no reſpect to men's perſons, or regard to their piety, muſt cauſe us to flatter them in their ſins, or move us to ſpeak favourably of their ſins: As well as our Saviour loved Peter, he rebukes him ſeverely. O Lord! ſo intent was thy heart upon the great work of our redemption, that thou couldſt not hear the leaſt word that ſhould obſtruct thee in it, or divert thee from it. *Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

34 And when he had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me. 35 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpel's, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

Obſerve here, 1. How our bleſſed Saviour recommends his religion to every one's election and choice, not attempting by force and violence to compel any perſon to the embracing of it: *If any man will come after me*; that is, if any man chuſes and reſolves to be a Chriſtian. 2. Our Saviour's terms propounded; namely, ſelf-denial, goſpel-ſuffering, and goſpel-ſervice. (1.) Self-denial; *Let him deny himſelf.* By which we are not to underſtand, either the denying of our ſenſes in matters of faith, or the renouncing our reaſon in the matters of religion; but a willingneſs to part with all our earthly comforts, and temporal enjoyments, for the ſake of Chriſt, when called thereunto. (2.) Goſpel-ſuffering; *He muſt take up his croſs.* An alluſion to the Roman cuſtom, that the malefactor who was to be crucified took his croſs upon his ſhoulder, and carried it to the place of execution. Where *note*, That not the making of the croſs, but the patient bearing of it, when God has made it, and laid it upon our ſhoulders, is the duty enjoined; *Let him take up his croſs.* (3.) Goſpel-ſervice; *Let him follow me*, ſays Chriſt: That is, obey my commands, and imitate my example. He muſt ſet my life and doctrine continually before him, and be daily correcting and reforming of his life by that rule and pattern. 3. The reaſons urged by our Saviour to induce men to a willingneſs to lay down their lives for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion; *He that will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; and he that is willing to loſe his life for the goſpel's ſake, the ſame ſhall find it.* Intimating to us, 1. That the love of this temporal life is a great temptation to men to deny Chriſt, and to renounce his holy religion. And, 2. That the ſureſt way to attain eternal life, is cheerfully to lay down our temporal life, when the glory of Chriſt, and the honour of religion, requires it at our hand.

36 For what ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? 37 Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

Our Saviour had ſhewn in the former verſes the great danger of ſeeking to ſave our temporal life, by expoſing to hazard our eternal life. This he confirms in the words before us by a double argument; the firſt drawn from the excellency of eternal life, or the life of the ſoul; the ſecond drawn from the irrecoverableneſs of this loſs, or the impoſſibility of redeeming the loſs of the ſoul by any way or means whatſoever: *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? Learn*, 1. That almighty God has inſtruſted every one of us with a ſoul of ineſtimable worth and precioufneſs, capable of being ſaved or loſt, and that to all eternity. 2. That the gain of the whole world is not comparable with the loſs of one precious ſoul: The ſoul's loſs is an inconceivable, irrecompenſible, and irrecoverable loſs.

38 Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation; of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

That is, whoſoever ſhall deny or diſown me, either in my perſon, my goſpel, or my members, for any fear or favour of man, he ſhall with ſhame be diſowned and eternally rejected by me at the great day. There are two paſſions that make perſons diſown Chriſt and religion in the day of temptation; namely, fear and ſhame: Many good men have been overcome by the former, as St. Peter, and others; but we find not any good man in ſcripture guilty of the latter, namely, that denied Chriſt out of ſhame; this argues a rotten, unſound, and corrupt heart. If any man thinks it beneath his honour and quality to own the oppoſed truths and deſpiſed members of Jeſus Chriſt, he will think it much more beneath him, his honour and dignity, to own them at the great day. *Learn* hence, That it is not ſufficient that we own Chriſt in believing in him, but we muſt honour him by an outward profeſſing of him alſo. Secondly, That ſuch as are aſhamed of Chriſt's doctrine or members, are aſhamed of Chriſt himſelf. Thirdly, That ſuch as either for fear dare not, or for ſhame will not, own the doctrine of Chriſt, or the members of Chriſt now, ſhall find Chriſt aſhamed to own and confeſs them at the great day: *Whoſoever is aſhamed of me, and of my words*, &c.

CHAP. IX.

AND he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that there be ſome of them that ſtand here which ſhall not taſte of death, till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power.

There is a threefold ſenſe and interpretation given of theſe words by expoſitors. 1. Some refer the words to the times of the goſpel after Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion, when the goſpel was ſpread and propagated far and near, and *the kingdom of God came with power. Learn* hence, That where the goſpel is powerfully preached, and cheerfully obeyed, there Chriſt cometh moſt glorioſly in his kingdom. 2. Others underſtand theſe words, of Chriſt's coming and exerciſing his kingly power in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; which ſome of the apoſtles then ſtanding by lived to ſee. 3. Others (as moſt agreeable to the context) underſtand the words as relating to our Saviour's transfiguration: As if he had ſaid, *Some of you*, meaning Peter, James, and John, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon mount Tabor, in ſuch ſplendor and glory, as ſhall be a *præludium*, a ſhadow and repreſentation of that glory which I ſhall appear in when I come to judge the world at the great day. And whereas our Saviour ſays not, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not die, but *which ſhall not taſte of death*, this implies two things. 1. That after they had ſeen his transfiguration, they muſt taſte of death as well as others. 2. That they ſhould but taſte of it, and no more. From whence *learn*, 1. That the faithful ſervants and diſciples of Chriſt muſt at length, in God's appointed time, taſte and have experience of death as well others. 2. That although they muſt taſte, yet they ſhall but taſte of death, they ſhall not drink of the dregs of that bitter cup; though they fall by the hand of death, yet ſhall they not be overcome by it, but in the very fall get victory over it.

2 ¶ And after ſix days Jeſus taketh with him Peter, and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themſelves: and he was transfigured before them.

Here we have the hiſtory of our Saviour's transfiguration; when he laid, as it were, the garments of our frail humanity aſide for a little time, aſſuming to himſelf the robes of majeſty and glory, to demonſtrate and teſtify the truth of his divinity; for this divine glory was an evidence of his divine nature, and alſo an emblem of that glory which he and his diſciples, all his faithful ſervants and followers, ſhall enjoy together in heaven.

3 And his raiment became ſhining, exceeding white as ſnow, ſo as no fuller on earth can white them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moſes: and they were talking with Jeſus. 5 And Peter anſwered, and ſaid to Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 6 For he wiſt not what to ſay: for they were ſore afraid. 7 And there was a cloud that overſhadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 8 And ſuddenly, when they had looked round about, they ſaw no man any more, ſave Jeſus only with themſelves.

Obſerve here, 1. That to confirm the diſciples faith in the truth of Chriſt's divine nature, he was pleaſed to ſuffer the rays of his divinity to dart forth before their eyes, ſo far as they were able to bear it. His face ſhined with a pleaſing brightneſs, and his raiment with ſuch a glorious luſtre, as did at once both delight and dazzle the eyes of the diſciples. 2. The choice which our Saviour makes of the witneſſes of his glorious transfiguration; his three diſciples, Peter, James, and John: but why diſciples? Why three diſciples? Why theſe three? (1.) Why diſciples? Becauſe this transfiguration was a type and ſhadow of his glory in heaven: Chriſt vouchſafes therefore the earneſt and firſt-fruits of that glory only to ſaints, upon whom he intended to beſtow the full harveſt in due time. 2. Why three diſciples? Becauſe three were ſufficient to witneſs the truth and reality of this miracle. Judas was unworthy of this favour; yet, leſt he ſhould murmur, or be diſcontented, others are left out as well as he. But, 3. Why theſe three, rather than others? Probably, (1.) Becauſe theſe three were more eminent for grace, zeal, and love towards Chriſt. Now, the moſt eminent manifeſtations of glory are made to thoſe that are moſt excelling in grace. (2.) Theſe three diſciples were witneſſes of Chriſt's agony and paſſion; to prepare them for which, they are here made witneſſes of his transfiguration. This glorious viſion upon mount Tabor fitted them to abide the terror of mount Calvary. *Obſerve*, 3. The glorious attendants upon our Saviour at his transfiguration. They were *two*, *two men*, and thoſe two men, *Moſes* and *Elias*. This being but a glimpſe of Chriſt's glory, not a full manifeſtation of it, only two of the glorified ſaints attend at it. Theſe two attendants are not two angels, but two men; becauſe men were more nearly concerned than angels in what was done. But why Moſes and Elias rather than other men? (1.) Becauſe Moſes was the giver of the law, and Elias was the chief of the prophets. Now both theſe attending upon Chriſt, did ſhew the conſent of the law and the prophets with Chriſt, and their accompliſhment and fulfilling in him. (2.) Becauſe theſe two were the moſt laborious ſervants of Chriſt; both adventured their lives in God's cauſe, and therefore are highly honoured by him. For, *thoſe that honour him, he will honour*. 4. The carriage and demeanour of the diſciples upon this great occaſion; (1.) They ſupplicate Jeſus, not Moſes and Elias; they make no ſuit to them, but to Chriſt only: *Maſter, it is good being here*. O what a raviſhing comfort and ſatisfaction is the communion and fellowſhip of the ſaints! But the preſence of Chriſt amongſt them renders their joys tranſporting. (2.) They proffer their ſervice to farther the continuance of what they did enjoy. *Let us make three tabernacles*. Saints will ſtick at no pains or coſt for the enjoyment of Chriſt's preſence, and his people's company. *Learn* hence, That a glimpſe of heaven's glory is ſufficient to wrap a ſoul into ecſtaſy, and to make it out of love with worldly company. (2.) That we are too apt to deſire more of heaven upon earth than God will allow. We would have the heavenly glory come down to us, but are unwilling by death to go up to that. 5. How a cloud was put before the diſciples eyes when the divine glory was manifeſted to them; partly to allay the luſtre and reſplendency of that glory which they were ſwallowed up with. The glory of heaven is inſupportable in this ſinful ſtate; we cannot bear it unveiled; and partly to hinder their farther prying and looking into that glory. We muſt be content to behold God through a cloud *darkly here*, ere long *we ſhall ſee him face to face*. 6. The teſtimony given out of the cloud, by God the Father, concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son: *This is my beloved Son, hear him*. Where *note*, 1. The dignity of his perſon; he is *my Son*. For nature co-eſſential, and for duration co-eternal, with his Father. 2. The endearedneſs of his relation, he is *my beloved Son*; becauſe of his conformity to me, and compliance with me. Likeneſs is the cauſe of love; and an union and harmony of wills cauſes a mutual endearing of affections. 3. The authority of his doctrine, *Hear ye him*: not Moſes and Elias, who were ſervants; but Chriſt, my Son, whom I have commiſſioned to be the great prophet and teacher of my church. Therefore adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your lawgiver. The obedient ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing eye, the adoring knee, or the applauding tongue.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them, that they ſhould tell no *man* what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead. 10 And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean. 11 And they aſked him, ſaying, Why ſay the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come? 12 And he anſwered and told them, Elias verily cometh firſt, and reſtoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he muſt ſuffer many things, and be ſet at nought. 13 But I ſay unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted, as it is written of him.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſtrict injunction given by Chriſt to his diſciples, not to publiſh or proclaim this glorious viſion at his transfiguration till after his reſurrection; becauſe being now in a ſtate of humiliation, he would have his divine majeſty and glory veiled and concealed. *Learn* hence, That the divine glory of Chriſt's perſon, as God, was not to be manifeſted ſuddenly, and all at once, but gradually, and by ſteps. Firſt more obſcurely, by his miracles, by the forced acknowledgments of devils, by the free confeſſion of his diſciples, and by the glorious viſion of his transfiguration; but the more clear and full, the more public and open manifeſtation of his divine glory, was at the time of his reſurrection and aſcenſion. 2. The diſciples obedience to Chriſt's injunction, touching the concealing of his transfiguration till after his reſurrection, *they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean.* Not that they queſtioned the reſurrection in general, but Chriſt's reſurrection only in particular, becauſe his reſurrection did ſuppoſe his death; and they could not conceive how the Meſſiah, whom they erroneouſly ſuppoſed muſt be a temporal prince, ſhould ſuffer death at the hands of men. 3. The queſtion which the diſciples put to Chriſt, how the obſervation of the Jewiſh doctors holds good: namely, That Elias muſt come before the Meſſias came: we ſee the Meſſias, but no Elias. Our Saviour anſwers, That *Elias was come already*; not Elias in perſon, but one in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to wit, John the Baptiſt, who was propheſied of under the name of Elias: there being a great reſemblance between the Elias of the Old Teſtament and of the New, viz. John the Baptiſt; they were both men of great zeal for God and religion, they were both undaunted reprovers of the faults of princes, and they were both implacably hated and perſecuted for the ſame. Thence *learn*, That hatred and perſecution, even unto death, has often been the lot and portion of ſuch perſons who have had the courage and zeal to reprove the faults of princes. *Elias is indeed come*, &c.

14 ¶ And when he came to *his* diſciples, he ſaw a great multitude about them, and the ſcribes queſtioning with them. 15 And ſtraightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, ſaluted him. 16 And he aſked the ſcribes, What queſtion ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my ſon, which hath a dumb ſpirit; 18 And whereſoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away. And I ſpake to thy diſciples that they ſhould caſt him out; and they could not. 19 He anſwered him, and ſaith, O faithleſs generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? Bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him. And when he ſaw him, ſtraightway the ſpirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. 21 And he aſked his father, How long is it ago ſince this came unto him? and he ſaid, Of a child. 22 And oft-times it hath caſt him into the fire, and into the waters to deſtroy him; but if thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us. 23 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou canſt believe, all things *are* poſſible to him that believeth. 24 And ſtraightway the father of the child cried out, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25 When Jeſus ſaw the people came running together, he rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And *the ſpirit* cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; inſomuch that many ſaid, He is dead. 27 But Jeſus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he aroſe. 28 And when he was come into the houſe, his diſciples aſked him privately, Why could not we caſt him out? 29 And he ſaid unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and faſting.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon brought to Chriſt for help and healing, one bodily poſſeſſed by Satan, who had made him deaf and dumb from his childhood; and oft-times caſt him into the fire and water, but rather to torment than to diſpatch him. O how does Satan, that malicious tyrant, rejoice in doing hurt to the bodies, as well as the ſouls of mankind! Lord abate his power, ſince his malice will not be abated. How great is thy goodneſs, in preſerving us from the power and malice of evil ſpirits! and how watchful is thy providence over us, to preſerve us, when Satan is ſeeking, by all imaginable means and methods, to deſtroy us! 2. The perſon that repreſents his ſad condition to our Saviour, his compaſſionate Father, *who kneeled down and cried out*: Need will make a perſon both humble and eloquent. Every one has a tongue to ſpeak for himſelf, happy is he that keeps a tongue for others. 3. The circumſtance of time, Satan had got poſſeſſion of his perſon very young, in his youth; nay, in his childhood: And O how hard was it to caſt him out after ſo long poſſeſſion! The diſciples could not do it with all their power and prayers; and when our Saviour himſelf, by the power of his godhead did diſpoſſeſs him, it was with foaming and rending that he left him. Thus when Satan gets poſſeſſion of perſons hearts in their youth, O how hard will it be to caſt him out! It will put the ſoul to great grief, great pain, great ſorrow of heart. Satan will endeavour to hold his own, and keep the ſinner his ſlave and vaſſal, if all the power of hell can keep him. Lord! convince young perſons, that it is eaſier to keep Satan out, than it is to caſt him out of the poſſeſſion of their hearts. 4. The phyſicians which this diſtreſſed perſon is brought unto. Firſt to the diſciples, and then to Jeſus. We never apply ourſelves importunately to the God of power, till we deſpair of the creature's help. But why could not the diſciples caſt him out? Chriſt tells them, becauſe of their unbelief; that is, becauſe of the weakneſs of their faith, not the total want of faith. Whence *learn*, That ſecret unbelief may lie hid and undiſcerned in the heart, which neither others nor ourſelves may take notice of, until ſome trial doth diſcover it. 5. This poor man's humble requeſt, and Chriſt's gracious reply. *If thou canſt do any thing, help me,* ſays the father; *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible,* ſays our Saviour. *Note* thence, That the fault is not in Chriſt, but in ourſelves, if we receive not that mercy from him which we deſire and need. There is no deficiency in Chriſt's power, the defect lies in our faith. Hereupon the man *cries out with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* If theſe were tears of joy for the truth of his faith, then we may gather, that the loweſt degree and leaſt meaſure of faith is matter of joy unſpeakable to the owner and poſſeſſor of it: If theſe were tears of ſorrow for the weakneſs of his faith, then we may collect, that the remains of unbelief in the children of God do coſt them many tears: They are the burden and ſorrow of gracious ſouls. *The father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* 6. With what facility and eaſe our Saviour caſt out this ſtubborn devil, that had ſo long poſſeſſed this poor child, even with a word ſpeaking. How long ſoever Satan has kept poſſeſſion of a ſoul, Chriſt can eject and caſt him out both eaſily and ſpeedily; one word of Chriſt's mouth is ſufficient to help us out of all diſtreſs, both bodily and ſpiritual. Yet did our Lord ſuffer the wicked ſpirit to rage and rend the child before he went out of him: not from any delight in the poor child's miſery, but that the multitude, ſeeing the deſperateneſs of the caſe, might the more admire the power of Chriſt in his deliverance. 7. The ſovereign power and abſolute authority which Chriſt had even here on earth, when in his ſtate of humiliation, over the devil and his angels: He commands him to go out, and enter no more into the child, and is obeyed. This was a proof and demonſtration of the Godhead of our Saviour, that he had power and authority over devils, to command and over-rule them, to curb and reſtrain them at his pleaſure. And whereas Chriſt commands the devil not only to come out, but to enter no more into the perſon; it implies, that Satan being caſt out of his hold, earneſtly deſires to enter in again to recover his hold, and regain his poſſeſſion; but if Chriſt ſays, Enter no more, Satan ſhall obey his voice. 8. The diſciples inquire into the reaſons why they could not caſt this ſtubborn devil out, according to the power which he had given them to work miracles. Chriſt tells them, it was (1.) Becauſe *of their unbelief*; by which underſtand the weakneſs of their faith, not their total want of faith. (2.) Becauſe they did not, in this extraordinary caſe, apply themſelves to the uſe of extraordinary means; namely, *prayer and faſting.* *Learn* hence, Firſt, That in extraordinary caſes, where the neceſſities either of ſoul or body do require it, recourſe muſt be had to the uſe of extraordinary means; one of which is an importunate application unto God by ſolemn prayer. Secondly, That faſting and prayer are two ſpecial means of Chriſt's own appointment for the enabling of his people victoriouſly to overcome Satan, and caſt him out of ourſelves or others. We muſt ſet an edge upon our faith by prayer, and upon our prayer by faſting.

30 And they departed thence, and paſſed through Galilee: and he would not that any man ſhould know *it.* 31 For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him: and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day. 32 But they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to aſk him.

Obſervable it is, How frequently our Saviour forewarned his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings; and as the time of his ſufferings drew near, he did more frequently warn them of it. But all was little enough to arm them againſt the ſcandal of the croſs, and to reconcile their thoughts to a ſuffering condition. The diſciples had taken up the common opinion, that the Meſſiah was to be a temporal prince, and as ſuch, to reign here upon earth, and they knew not how to reconcile this with his *being delivered up into the hands of men that ſhould kill him*; and yet *they were afraid to aſk him concerning this matter.* Now, from Chriſt's frequent forewarning his diſciples of approaching ſufferings, we may gather, That we can never hear either too often, or too much, of the doctrine of the croſs, nor be too frequently inſtructed in our duty to prepare for a ſuffering ſtate. As Chriſt went by his croſs to his crown, from a ſtate of abaſement to a ſtate of exaltation, ſo muſt all his diſciples and followers likewiſe.

33 ¶ And he came to Capernaum: and being in the houſe, he aſked them, What was it that ye diſputed among yourſelves by the way? 34 But they held their peace. For by the way they had diſputed among themſelves, who *ſhould be* the greateſt. 35 And he ſat down, and called the twelve, and ſaith unto them, If any man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all. 36 And he took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them, 37 Whoſoever ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me.

It may juſtly ſeem a wonder, that when our bleſſed Saviour diſcourſed ſo frequently with his diſciples about his ſufferings, they ſhould at the ſame time be diſputing among themſelves about precedency and pre-eminency, which of them ſhould be greateſt, the firſt in place, the higheſt in dignity and honour. But from this inſtance we may *learn,* That the holieſt and beſt of men are ſubject to pride and ambition, prone to covet worldly dignity and greatneſs, ready to catch at the bait of honour, to affect a precedency before, and a ſuperiority over others. The apoſtles themſelves were touched, if not tainted with the itch of ambition. To cure which our Saviour preaches to them the doctrine of humility. Where *obſerve* 1. Our Lord doth not ſay, he that is firſt, but *he that deſireth to be firſt, ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all.* *Teaching* us, That all perſons in general, and miniſters in particular, ought not to ſeek out places of dignity and pre-eminency for themſelves, but be ſought out for them; he that is firſt in ſeeking them, uſually leaſt deſerves them, and laſt obtains them; *If any man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all.* 2. Our Saviour teaches his diſciples humility by the type and example of a little child, which he ſets before them as the proper emblem of humility: ſhewing them, that they ought to be as free from ambition as a young child, which affects nothing of precedency or ſuperiority. Such as are of higheſt eminency in the church of Chriſt, ought to be adorned with humility, and look on themſelves as lying under the greateſt obligations to be moſt eminently uſeful and ſerviceable for the church's good. 3. How exceeding dear and precious ſuch perſons are to Chriſt, who reſemble little children in true humility and lowlineſs of mind; aſſuring the world, that whatſoever kindneſs or reſpect they ſhew to them, he accounts ſhewn to himſelf; *He that receiveth them,* ſays Chriſt, *receiveth me.* So near is the union, ſo dear the relation, betwixt Chriſt and his members, that whatever good or evil is done to them, he reckons it has done unto himſelf.

38 And John anſwered him, ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, becauſe he followeth not us. 39 But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not; for there is no man ſhall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me. 40 For he that is not againſt us, is on our part. 41 For whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, He ſhall not loſe his reward. 42 And whoſoever ſhall offend one of *theſe* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the ſea.

The Evangeliſt here ſets down a conference betwixt our Saviour Chriſt and St. John his diſciple. Where *obſerve,* 1. St. John's relation of a matter of fact to Chriſt, namely, his forbidding one to caſt out devils in Chriſt's name, that did not follow Chriſt as they did, being his profeſſed diſciples. Though only the diſciples that followed Chriſt had a commiſſion to work miracles, yet there were others, no enemies to Chriſt, who, in imitation of the diſciples, did attempt to do the like; and God was pleaſed, for the honour of his Son, in whoſe name they caſt out devils, to give them ſometimes ſucceſs. Almighty God may, and ſometimes doth, give ſucceſs to ſuch actions and enterprizes as are good in themſelves, though undertaken by perſons that have no lawful call or warrant from God to do them. However, it was no ſmall confirmation of the truth of chriſtianity, that Chriſt's name was thus powerful, even among thoſe that did not follow him, and therefore could do nothing by compact with him. 2. The action of the diſciples toward this perſon; *We forbade him.* This ſhewed, 1. Their ignorance, in ſuppoſing that none could be true diſciples, nor work miracles, but ſuch as followed them; *We forbade him, becauſe he followed not us.* 2. Their raſhneſs, in forbidding him of their own heads, before they had conſulted Chriſt about it. 3. Their envy and emulation, in that they were grieved and diſcontented at this perſon's caſting out devils, becauſe he was not a follower of them. O, the imperfect compoſition of the beſt of ſaints! how much weakneſs, infirmity, and corruption doth John the beloved diſciple diſcover upon this occaſion! The ſin of envy and emulation againſt the gifts of God in others, is very natural to man, and to good men, yea, to the beſt of men: it is as difficult to look upon other mens gifts without envy, as to look upon our own without pride. 3. Our Saviour's anſwer and reply; *Forbid him not:* Becauſe our Saviour knew that his enterprize of caſting out devils in his name, would in ſome manner and meaſure redound to the glory of his name, although he undertook the matter without ſufficient warrant from Chriſt. We ought not to cenſure and condemn thoſe who do that which is good in itſelf, though they fail in the manner of it, and in the means they uſe for effecting it. 4. What encouragement our Saviour gives the world to be kind to his followers: He aſſures them, *that even a cup of cold water given for his ſake,* to ſuch as profeſs his name, *ſhall not miſs of a reward.* *Learn* thence, That the leaſt office of love and reſpect, of kindneſs and charity, ſhewn to any of the miniſters or members of Jeſus Chriſt, for his ſake, is accounted as done unto himſelf, and ſhall be rewarded by himſelf. 5. He ſhall gain that which he cannot loſe, by parting with that which he could not keep. 6. What a heinous and grievous ſin it is to ſcandalize or offend any of the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt: He will moſt ſeverely judge and puniſh ſuch as give offence to them, by any wrong or injury done unto them, both in this life and the next: *It were better a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the ſea.*

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be caſt into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell-fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

In the former verſe our Saviour diſſuaded from the ſin of ſcandal, or giving offence to ſerious and ſincere chriſtians, threatening a very grievous judgment againſt ſuch as ſhould any ways offend them; now, in theſe ſix verſes he preſcribes a remedy againſt that and all other ſins, namely, by avoiding all occaſions that lead to ſin. Here *obſerve,* 1. The admonition of warning given by Chriſt unto us, to remove us far from all occaſion of ſin, though never ſo dear unto us. We are not to underſtand the command literally, as if it were our duty to maim our bodily members; but metaphorically, to cut off all occaſions that may betray us into ſin. Hence *note,* That ſin may be avoided;

it is our duty to avoid whatever leads unto it, or may be the inſtrument and occaſion of it. 2. A reaſon enforcing the admonition: this is drawn from the benefit and advantage that will come by cutting off ſuch occaſions of ſin: it will further us in our attainment of eternal life, and prevent our being caſt into hell fire. Now our Saviour affirms, that it is better for a man to enter into life with the loſs of all thoſe things that are dear and precious to him in this world, rather than go into hell with the fruition and enjoyment of them. *Learn* thence, That a diligent and daily care to avoid ſin, and all occaſions that lead unto it, will be a ſpecial means to eſcape the torments of hell, and further us in our attainments of heaven and eternal life.—3. The deſcription which our Saviour gives of the torments of hell. Firſt, By its extremity; it is like a *gnawing worm*, and a *conſuming fire*. Secondly, And by its eternity: a worm that *never dieth*, and a fire that is *never quenched*. Where *note*, That the remembrance of things paſt, the experience of things preſent, and expectation of things to come, are the bitings of the worm of conſcience; at every bite whereof damned ſouls give a dreadful ſhriek: ſuch as will not hear the voice of conſcience, ſhall feel, and that to purpoſe, the ſting of conſcience. *Learn* hence, That there is moſt certainly a place and ſtate of puniſhment and torment in another world for wicked men to ſuffer in, upon the ſcore of ſin committed in this world. Secondly, That the puniſhment and torments of the wicked in hell are intolerable and indeterminable, of exquiſite pain and endleſs duration: *Their worm never dieth*, &c.

49 For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt.

Every one ſhall be ſalted with fire: That is, every one of them mentioned in the foregoing verſes, who refuſe *to cut off a right hand*, and *pluck out a right eye*; that is, to mortify their boſom luſts, and beloved corruptions, which are as dear as a right hand or a right eye; every ſuch wicked and unmortified perſon *ſhall be ſalted with fire*; that is, *thrown into hell-fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*; as our Saviour ſpeaks, *verſe* 4. And their being *ſalted with fire*, imports and implies, That, as to their beings, they ſhall be preſerved, even as ſalt preſerves things from corruption, that they may the objects of the eternal wrath of God: So that for ſinners *to be ſalted with fire*, is to be given up to everlaſting deſtruction. *Learn* hence, That all ſuch unſavoury ſinners as indulge their corrupt luſts and affections, ſhall be ſalted with fire, that is, given up to everlaſting deſtruction in hell-fire: *But every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt*; that is, every Chriſtian who has given up himſelf a real ſacrifice unto God, ſhall be ſalted, not with fire, but with ſalt; not with fire to be conſumed and deſtroyed; but with ſalt; to be preſerved and kept ſavoury. The grace of mortification, is that to the ſoul which ſalt is to the body; it preſerves it from putrefaction, and renders it ſavoury. *Learn* hence, 1. That every Chriſtian in this life ought to be a ſpiritual ſacrifice or oblation unto God, 2. That there is a putrid and corrupt part in every ſacrifice, in every Chriſtian, which muſt be purged out, and the ſacrifice purified and cleanſed from. 3. That the grace of mortification is the true ſalt which muſt clarify the ſoul, and with which every ſacrifice muſt be ſalted, that will be a ſavoury offering unto God: *Every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt.*

50 Salt *is* good: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſaltneſs, wherewith will ye ſeaſon it? Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one with another.

Our bleſſed Saviour here compares Chriſtians in general, and his miniſters in particular, unto ſalt, for a double reaſon. Firſt, Becauſe it is the nature of ſalt to preſerve things from corruption and putrefaction, and to render them ſavoury and pleaſant. Thus are the miniſters of Chriſt to labour and endeavour, by the purity of their doctrine, to ſweeten putrefying ſinners, that they may become ſavoury unto God and man, and be kept from being fly-blown with errors and falſe doctrines. Secondly, becauſe ſalt has an acrimony, a piercing power in it, which ſubdues the whole lump, and turns it into its own nature: Such a piercing power is there in the miniſtry of the word, that it ſubdues the whole man to the obedience of itſelf. *Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one with another*: That is, let all perſons, eſpecially miniſters, retain a ſeaſoning virtue in themſelves, that they may ſweeten and ſeaſon others, even all that they converſe with: And as ſalt has an uniting power, and knits the parts of the body ſalted together, ſo the upholding of union and peace one with another, will declare that ye have ſalt in yourſelves. *Learn* hence, That it is the duty of all Chriſtians, but eſpecially of the miniſters of the goſpel, to maintain brotherly concord and agreement among themſelves, both as an argument of their ſincerity, and an ornament to their profeſſion.

CHAP. X.

AND he aroſe from thence, and cometh into the coaſts of Judea, by the farther ſide of Jordan: and the people reſort to him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 ¶ And the Phariſees came to him, and aſked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he anſwered, and ſaid unto them, What did Moſes command you? 4 And they ſaid, Moſes ſuffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto them, For the hardneſs of your heart, he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this *cauſe* ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: 8 And they twain ſhall be one fleſh: ſo then they are no more twain, but one fleſh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put aſunder. 10 And in the houſe his diſciples aſked him again of the ſame matter. 11 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her. 12

And if a woman ſhall put away her huſband, and be married to another, ſhe committeth adultery.

The firſt verſe of this chapter acquaints us with the great labour and pains our Saviour took in the exerciſe of his miniſtry, travelling from place to place, in an hot country, and that on foot, to preach the goſpel, when he was here upon earth: *Teaching* all perſons, but eſpecially miniſters, by his example, to be willing to undergo pains and labour, even unto much wearineſs in the ſervice of God, and in the duties of their calling. For this is God's ordinance, that every one ſhould feel the burden of his calling, and the painfulneſs of it. But, Lord, how nice and delicate are ſome labourers in thy vineyard, who are willing to do nothing but what they can do with eaſe; they cannot endure to think of labouring unto wearineſs, but are ſparing of their pains, for fear of ſhortening their days, and haſtening their end! Whereas the lamp of our lives can never be better ſpent, or burnt out, than in lighting others to heaven. The following verſes acquaint us with an enſnaring queſtion which the Phariſees put to our Saviour concerning the matter of divorce; concluding that they ſhould entrap him in his anſwer, whatever it was: If he denied the lawfulneſs of divorce, then they would charge him with contradicting Moſes, who allowed it. If he affirmed it, then they would condemn him for contradicting his own doctrine. St. Matt. v. 32. for favouring mens luſts, and complying with the wicked cuſtom of the Jews, who, upon every ſlight and frivolous occaſion, put away their wives from them. But ſuch was the wiſdom of our Saviour in all his anſwers to the enſnaring Phariſees, that neither their wit nor malice could lay hold upon any thing to entangle him in his talk. *Obſerve* therefore, the piety and prudence of our Saviour's anſwer to the Phariſees; he refers them to the firſt inſtitution of marriage, when God made huſband and wife one fleſh, to the intent that matrimonial love might be both incommunicable and indiſſoluble; and accordingly aſks them, *What did Moſes command you?* Thereby *teaching* us, That the beſt means for deciding all doubts, and reſolving all controverſies about matters of religion, is to have recourſe unto the ſcripture, or the written word of God: *What did Moſes command you?* *Obſerve* farther, How our Saviour, to confute the Phariſees, and convince them of the unlawfulneſs of divorce, uſed by the Jews, lays down the firſt inſtitution of marriage, and ſhews them, firſt the author, next the time, then the end of the inſtitution. The author, God. *What God has joined together*, &c. Marriage is an ordinance of God's own appointment, as the ground and foundation of all ſacred and civil ſociety. The time of the inſtitution was, in the beginning. Marriage is almoſt as old as the world, as old as nature itſelf; there was no ſooner one perſon, but God divided him into two; and no ſooner was there two, but he united them in one. And the end of the inſtitution of marriage Chriſt declares was this, That there might be not only an intimacy and nearneſs, but alſo an inſeparable union and oneneſs, by means of this endearing relation: the conjugal knot is tied ſo cloſe, that the bonds of matrimonial love are ſtronger than thoſe of nature. Stricter is the tie betwixt huſband and wife, than that betwixt parent and child, according to God's own appointment. *For this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain ſhall be one fleſh.* And whereas our Saviour adds, *What God has joined together, let no man put aſunder:* Two things are hereby intimated to us, 1. That God is the author of the cloſe and intimate union which is betwixt man and wife in a married condition. 2. That it is not in the power of man to untie or diſſolve that union which God has made betwixt man and wife in the married ſtate; yea, it is a great ſin to adviſe unto, or endeavour after the ſeparation of them. *Obſerve*, laſtly, Our Saviour's private conference with the diſciples, after his public diſputation with the Phariſees, about this matter of divorce. He tells his diſciples, and in them he tells all Chriſtians to the end of the world, that it is utterly unlawful for man and wife to be ſeparated by divorcement one from another, for any cauſe whatſoever, except *only for the ſin of adultery* committed by either of them after the marriage. *Learn* hence, That according to the word and will of God, nothing can violate the bonds of marriage, and juſtify a divorce betwixt man and wife, ſave only the defiling of the marriage bed by adultery and uncleanneſs. This is the only caſe in which man and wife may lawfully part; and being for this cauſe parted, whether they may afterwards marry again to other perſons has been much diſputed; but that the innocent and injured perſon, whether man or woman, (for there is an equal right on both ſides) may not marry again, ſeems very unreaſonable; for why ſhould one ſuffer for another's fault?

13 ¶ And they brought young children to him,
that he ſhould touch them: and *his* diſciples rebuked
thoſe that brought *them*. 14 But when Jeſus
ſaw *it*, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them,
Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid
them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God.
15 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive
the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall
not enter therein. 16 And he took them up in his
arms, put his hands upon them, and bleſſed them.

Obſerve here, A ſolemn action performed; children are brought to Chriſt to be bleſſed by him. Where *note*, 1. The perſons brought, *children*, young children, ſucking children, as the words imports, St. *Luke* xviii. 15. *They brought them in their arms*, not led them by the hands. 2. The perſon they are brought unto, *Jeſus Chriſt*. But for what end? Not to baptize them, but to bleſs them: The parents looking upon Chriſt as a prophet, a great prophet, *the* great prophet, do bring their infants to him, that they might receive the benefit of his bleſſing and prayers. Whence *learn*, 1. That infants are capable of benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt office that parents can perform unto their children, to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made partakers of that benefit. 3. If infants be capable of benefit by Chriſt, if capable of his bleſſing on earth and preſence in heaven, if they be ſubjects of his kingdom of grace, and heirs of his kingdom of glory, then may they be baptized: For they that are in covenant, have a right to the ſeal of the covenant. If Chriſt denies not infants the kingdom of heaven, which is the greater, what reaſon have miniſters to deny them the benefit of baptiſm, which is the leſs?

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and aſked him, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Obſerve here, 1. A perſon addreſſing himſelf to Chriſt with an important queſtion in his mouth. This perſon was a young man, a rich man, and a ruler; a young man in the prime of his age, a rich man in the fulneſs of his wealth, and a ruler in the prime of his authority and power. From whence *learn*, That for young men, rich men, eſpecially noblemen, to inquire the way to ſalvation, is very commendable, but very rare. 2. As the perſon addreſſing, ſo the manner of the addreſs, he came running and kneeled to Chriſt. Where *obſerve* his voluntarineſs, he *came* of himſelf, not drawn by others importunity, but drawn by his own perſonal affections. And his readineſs, he came *running*. This ſhewed his zeal and forwardneſs to meet with Chriſt, and be reſolved by him. And, laſtly, His humility; he *kneeled to him*, as an eminent prophet and teacher, not knowing him to be the Son of God. 3. The addreſs itſelf, *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* Where *note*, 1. He believes the certainty of a future ſtate. 2. He profeſſes his deſire of an eternal happineſs in that ſtate. 3. He declares his readineſs to do ſome good thing, in order to the obtaining of that happineſs. Hence *learn*, That the light of nature, or natural religion, teaches men that good works are neceſſary to ſalvation: or that ſome good thing muſt be done by them, who at death expect eternal life. It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, that intitles us to heaven and eternal life.

18 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, *Why calleſt thou me good*, when thou doſt not belive or own me to be God? *For there is none good*, that is, eſſentially and originally good, abſolutely and immutably good, but God only; nor any derivatively good, but he that receiveth his goodneſs from God alſo: There is no mere man that is abſolutely and perfectly good of himſelf, but by participation and derivation from God only. See the note on St. Matt. xix. 17.

19 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Obſerve here, That the duties which our Saviour inſtances in, are the duties of the ſecond table, which hypocrites are moſt failing in. But nothing is a better evidence of our unfeigned love to God, than the ſincere performance of our duty to our neighbour. Love to man is a fruit and teſtimony of our love to God; for *he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 John iv. 20. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are defective in the duties of the ſecond table charity and juſtice, do make but a counterfeit ſhew of religion, though they pretend to the higheſt meaſures and degrees of love to God. Here *note*, That there are two ways of injuring our neighbour, which ought to be avoided; namely, 1. By theft; and this either privately and clandeſtinely, without the knowledge of the owner; or openly and by force, againſt the conſent of the owner; both theſe are forbidden in the eighth commandment. 2. By ſecret and cunning devices, where the law and a pretence of right is made uſe of to cover the injury. This is forbidden in the tenth commandment, and here expreſſed by *Thou ſhalt not defraud.* And ſurely all ſuch endeavours to defraud, muſt ſhew a very covetous mind, inclining a perſon, againſt the dictates of his own conſcience, to defraud another of his right.

20 And he anſwered and ſaid unto him, Maſter, all theſe have I obſerved from my youth.

This aſſertion of the young man might be very true, according to the Phariſees ſenſe and interpretation of the law, which condemned only the groſs outward act, not the inward luſt and motion of the heart. An outſide obedience to the law this young man had performed; this made him think well of himſelf, and conclude the goodneſs of his own condition. *Learn* hence, How prone men are to think the beſt of themſelves, and to have too high an opinion of their own goodneſs and righteouſneſs before God; *All theſe things have I kept from my youth.* It is a natural corruption in men to think too well of themſelves, and of their own goodneſs and righteouſneſs before God; but it is very dangerous and fatal ſo to do.

21 Then Jeſus, beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt: go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor; and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, take up the croſs, and follow me. 22 And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved: for he had great poſſeſſions.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's compaſſion towards this young man. He loved him with a love of pity and compaſſion, with a love of courteſy and reſpect. There may be ſome very amiable and lovely qualities in natural and unregenerate men: and goodneſs, in what kind or degree ſoever it is, doth attract and draw forth Chriſt's love towards a perſon. If Chriſt did love civility, what reſpect has he for ſincere ſanctity. 2. Our Lord's admonition, *One thing thou lackeſt*, which was true ſelf-denial, in renouncing the ſin of covetouſneſs, and the inordinate love of worldly wealth. We ought, upon God's call, to maintain ſuch a readineſs of mind, as to be willing to part with all for God's ſake which is dear unto us in this world. 3. Our Lord's injunction, *Sell what thou haſt and give to the poor.* This was not a common, but a ſpecial precept belonging particularly to this young man. It was a commandment of trial given to him, like that given to Abraham, Gen. xxii. to convince him of his corrupt confidence in his riches: Yet it is thus far of general uſe to us all, to teach us ſo to contemn worldly poſſeſſions, as to be willing to part with them when they hinder our happineſs and ſalvation. It follows, *And take up the croſs*; an alluſion to the Roman cuſtom, when the malefactor was to be crucified, he bore his croſs upon his ſhoulder, and carried it to the place of execution. It is not the taking, but the patient bearing of the croſs, which is our duty. *Learn*, That all Chriſt's followers ſhould prepare their ſhoulders for Chriſt's croſs. To bear the croſs, implies faithfulneſs and integrity without ſhifting, patience and ſubmiſſion without murmuring, joy and cheerfulneſs without fainting. 4. The effect which our Saviour's admonition had upon this young perſon. *He was ſad and grieved at that ſaying*. Thence *note*, 1. That carnal men are ſad, and exceeding ſorrowful, when they cannot win heaven in their own way. 2. That ſuch as are wedded to the world, will renounce Chriſt rather than the world, when the world and Chriſt ſtand in competition.

23 And Jeſus looked round about, and ſaith unto his diſciples, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words. But Jeſus anſwereth again, and ſaith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that truſt in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And Jeſus looking upon them, ſaith, With men *it is* impoſſible, but not with God: for with God all things are poſſible.

From this diſcourſe of our holy Lord's, concerning the danger of riches, and the difficulty that attends rich men in their way to heaven, we may collect and gather, firſt, That rich men do certainly meet with more difficutties in their way to heaven than other men. It is difficult to withdraw their affections from riches, to place their ſupreme love upon God in the midſt of their abundance. It is difficult to depend entirely upon God in a rich condition; for *the rich man's wealth is his ſtrong tower*. Secondly, That yet the fault lies not in riches, but in rich men; who by placing their truſt, and repoſing their confidence in riches, do render themſelves incapable of the kingdom of God. 3. The proverbial ſpeech which our Saviour makes uſe of to ſet forth the difficulty of a rich man's ſalvation: *It is eaſier for a camel to go through a needle's eye*. This was a proverb among the Jews, ſignifying a thing of great difficulty, next to an impoſſibility; and it implies thus much, That it is not only a very great difficulty, but an utter impoſſibility, for ſuch as abound in worldly wealth, and place their confidence therein, to be ſaved, without an extraordinary grace and aſſiſtance from God. 4. The diſciples are affected with wonder and admiration at this doctrine of our Saviour's, and cry out, *Who then can be ſaved? Learn* thence, That ſuch are the ſpecial and peculiar difficulties which lie in the rich man's way to ſalvation, that their getting to heaven is matter of wonder and admiration to the diſciples of Chriſt. 5. How our Saviour reſolves this doubt, by telling his diſciples, That what was impoſſible with men, was poſſible with God; implying, That it is impoſſible for any man, rich or poor,, by his own natural ſtrength to get to heaven. And, 2. That when we are diſcouraged with the ſenſe of our own impotency, we ſhould conſider the power of God, and fix our faith upon it; *With God all things are poſſible.*

28 Then Peter began to ſay unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, There is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake, and the goſpel's, 30 But he ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with perſecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life. 31 But many *that are* firſt, ſhall be laſt; aad the laſt, firſt.

The apoſtles having heard our Saviour's command to ſell all and give to the poor, St. Peter, in the name of the reſt, tells Chriſt, that *they had left all to follow him.* Where *note*, How Peter magnifies that little which he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it in with a note of admiration; *Lo! we have left all. Learn* hence, That though it be very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and have to forſake upon his account, yet are we apt to magnify and extol it, as if it were ſome great matter: *Behold we have left all, and followed thee.* Next, Our Lord's kind and gracious anſwer, that thoſe that leave all to follow him, ſhall be no loſers by him; we may be loſers for Chriſt, we ſhall never be loſers by him; for whatever we part with in this world for the ſake of Chriſt, *Houſes or lands, brethren or ſiſters, we ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this life.* But how ſo? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter; non in ſpecie, ſed in valore:* "Not in kind, but in equivalency:" not an hundred brethren, ſiſters, or lands in kind, but he ſhall enjoy that in God, which all creatures would be to him if they were multiplied an hundred times: And the gifts and graces, the comforts and conſolations of the Holy Spirit, ſhall be an hundred times better portion than any thing we can part with for the ſake of Chriſt. For the ſenſe of thoſe words, *The firſt ſhall be laſt*, &c. See the note on Matt. xx. 19.

32 ¶ And they were in the way going up to Jeruſalem; and Jeſus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things ſhould happen unto him, 33 *Saying*, Behold we go up to Jeruſalem; and the Son of man ſhall be delivered unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes; and they ſhall condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34 And they ſhall mock, him and ſhall ſcourge him, and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill him: and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

This is at leaſt the third time that Chriſt had acquainted his diſciples with his approaching ſufferings. The firſt time he told his diſciples of his death in general; the ſecond time, he declares the means, by treaſon; now he tells them the manner, by crucifying him: All this he did, to prevent their dejection at his ſufferings. *Learn* hence, That it is highly neceſſary that the doctrine of the croſs be often preached to us, that ſo being armed with expectations of ſufferings before they come, we may be the leſs diſmayed and diſheartened when they come. Our Lord's forewarning his diſciples ſo frequently of his death and ſufferings, was to fore-arm them with expectations of his ſufferings, and with preparation for their own. Farther, Who were the perſons that were the inſtrumental cauſes of our Saviour's death, they were both Jews and Gentiles; *The Son of man ſhall be deliaered to the chief prieſts, aud they ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles.* As both Jews and Gentiles had a hand in the death and ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo are they by faith capable of an intereſt in the merit of his death, and in the virtue and efficacy of his ſufferings. Chriſt offered up his blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it.

35 ¶ And James and John the ſons of Zebedee
come unto him, ſaying, Maſter, we would that thou
ſhouldeſt do for us whatſoever we ſhall deſire. 36
And he ſaid unto them, What would ye that I ſhould
do for you? 37 They ſaid unto him, Grant unto us
that we may ſit, one on thy right hand, and the other
on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jeſus ſaid
unto them, Ye know not what ye aſk: can ye drink
of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the
baptiſm that I am baptized with? 39 And they
ſaid unto him, We can. And Jeſus ſaid unto them,
Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and
with the baptiſm that I am baptized withal ſhall ye
be baptized: 40 But to ſit on my right hand and
on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it *ſhall*
be given to them for whom it is prepared. 41 And
when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much diſ-
pleaſed with James and John.

Note here, 1. The ambitious ſuit and requeſt of the two apoſtles, James and John, for dignity and ſuperiority, *Grant that we may ſit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory*, or in thy *kingdom.* Where *obſerve* That by Chriſt's kingdom and glory, they underſtood an earthly temporal kingdom; for of that ſort the Jews did expect the kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhould be, and the diſciples themſelves were tainted with the common errors. —*Learn* hence, That ambition and inordinate deſire of worldly honour and dignity, is a ſin very natural and incident to the beſt of men: Who can wonder to ſee ſome ſparks of ambition in the holieſt of God's miniſters, when Chriſt's own apoſtles were not free from aſpiring thoughts, even when they lay in the boſom of our Saviour? 2. Both the unſeaſonableneſs and unreaſonableneſs of this requeſt made by James and John; Chriſt ſpeaks of his ſufferings to them, and they ſue for dignity and great places from him. *In optimis nonnihil eſt peſſimi*: the holieſt, the wiſeſt, and the beſt of men are not wholly free from paſſionate infirmities: Who could have thought that when our Saviour had been preaching the doctrine of the croſs to his diſciples, that they ſhould at the ſame time be ſeeking and ſuing to him for ſecular dignity and honour, pre-eminence and power? But the beſt of men are but men; none are in a ſtate of perfection on this ſide heaven. 3. Our Saviour's anſwer to his diſciples' ambitious requeſt, and the courſe which he takes to cool their ambition; he tells them they muſt expect here, not crowns on their heads, but a croſs on their backs; they muſt firſt taſte of his ſufferings, before they partake of his glory; and thoſe that ſuffer moſt for Chriſt, ſhall partake of the higheſt dignity and glory from him. 4. The preſumptuous confidence which the apoſtles had of their own ſtrength and ability for ſufferings, *Are ye able*, ſays Chriſt, *to drink of my cup? We are able*, ſay the diſciples. Alas, poor men, when it came to the trial, they all cowardly forſook him and fled. Thoſe that are leaſt acquainted with ſuffering, are uſually the moſt confident undertakers. See note on Matt. xx. 22, 23.

42 But Jeſus called them to him, and ſaith unto
them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule
over the Gentiles, exerciſe lordſhip over them; and
their great ones exerciſe authority upon them. 43
But ſo ſhall it not be among you: but whoſoever
will be great among you, ſhall be your miniſter: 44
And whoſoever of you will be the chiefeſt, ſhall be
ſervant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came
not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give
his life a ranſom for many.

To the end that our bleſſed Saviour might effectually quench thoſe unhappy ſparks of ambition which were kindled in his apoſtles' minds, he tells them, That ſupremacy and dominion belong to ſecular princes, not to goſpel miniſters, who ought to carry themſelves with humility and condeſcenſion one towards another. Not that Chriſt directs to a parity and equality amongſt his miniſters, but only condemns the affectation of ſuperiority, and the love of pre-eminency. *Learn* hence, 1. That the miniſters of Chriſt ought to be ſo far from affecting a domination and ſuperiority over their brethren, that in imitation of their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves fellow-ſervants; *The Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.* 2. That ſuch miniſters as do love and affect pre-eminence and ſuperiority are moſt unfit for it; and they deſerve it beſt who ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the dignity and honour which the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly, yea only affect, is in another world; and the way to be greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble, mean in our own eyes, and little in our own eſteem. See note on Matt. xx. 28.

46 ¶ And they came to Jericho: and as he went
out of Jericho with his diſciples, and a great num-
ber of people, blind Bartimeus, the ſon of Timeus,
ſat by the highway-*ſide* begging. 47 And when he
heard

heard that it was Jeſus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and ſay, Jeſus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called: and they call the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe; he calleth thee. 50 And he caſting away his garment, aroſe, and came to Jeſus. 51 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto him, What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? the blind man ſaid unto him, Lord, That I might receive my ſight. 52 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way.

This chapter concludes with a recital of a famous miracle wrought by our bleſſed Saviour upon blind Bartimeus, in the ſight of a great multitude which followed him.—Where *note*, 1. The blind man's faith, in acknowledging Jeſus to be the Meſſiah; for ſo much the title of the Son of David ſignified. 2. His fervency, in crying ſo earneſtly to Chriſt for mercy and healing, *Have mercy upon me, thou Son of David.* A true ſenſe of want will make the ſoul cry unto Chriſt with earneſtneſs and importunity. 3. The great compaſſion and condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards this poor blind man, he ſtood ſtill, he called him, and enlightened his eyes. A mighty inſtance of Chriſt's divine power: he that can open blind eyes with a touch of his finger, and that by his own power, is really God; his touch is an omnipotent touch. 4. Although Chriſt well knew the condition of this blind man, yet before he will reſtore his ſight, he muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of ſight, and cry for help and healing. Chriſt knows all his creatures wants, but takes no notice of them, till they make them known to him by prayer. 5. The way and courſe which the blind man takes to expreſs his thankfulneſs to Chriſt for recovered ſight, *He roſe and followed Jeſus.*—Mercy from Chriſt is then well improved, when it engages us to follow Chriſt. This ſhould be the effect of all ſalvations wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt that ſerveth him moſt: the life of thankfulneſs conſiſts in the thankfulneſs of the life.

CHAP. XI.

AND when they came nigh to Jeruſalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples. 2 And ſaith unto them, Go your way into the village over againſt you; and as ſoon as ye be entered into it, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon never man ſat; looſe him, and bring *him*. 3 And if any man ſay unto you, Why do ye this? ſay ye that the Lord hath need of him, and ſtraightway he will ſend him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they looſe him. 5 And certain of them that ſtood there, ſaid unto them, What do ye looſing the colt? 6 And they ſaid unto them even as Jeſus had commanded: and they let them go.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with our Saviour's ſolemn and triumphant riding into the city of Jeruſalem: He who in all his journies travelled like a poor man on foot, without noiſe, and without train; now he goes up to Jeruſalem to die for ſinners, he rides, to ſhew his great forwardneſs to lay down his life for us: The beaſt he rides on is an *aſs*, as the manner of kings and great perſons anciently was, and to fulfil that prophecy, Zech. ix. 9. *Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh riding upon an aſs.* It was alſo an aſs upon which *never man ſat before*; ſignifying thereby, that the moſt unruly and untamed creatures become obſequious to Chriſt. Grotius obſerves, That ſuch animals as had not been employed in the uſe of man, were wont to be choſen for ſacred uſes. Even heathens adjudged thoſe things moſt proper for the ſervice of the gods, which had never been put to profane uſes. Thus in 1 Sam. vi. 7. we read, That the Philiſtines returned the ark in a new cart, drawn by heifers never before put into the yoke: they thinking them polluted by being put to profane work. Our Saviour here chuſes an aſs which had never been backed before; and that the colt ſhould ſo patiently ſuffer Chriſt to ride upon him, was miraculous. And this was a borrowed aſs, whereby our Saviour's right to all the creatures was manifeſted; and accordingly he bids his diſciples tell the owner, *That the Lord hath need of him.* Not your Lord, or our Lord, but *the Lord*; that is, he that is Lord of all, whoſe are the *cattle on a thouſand hills*. *Obſerve* farther, That notwithſtanding Chriſt's ſupreme right to the colt, he will not have it taken without the owner's knowledge and conſent, *Tell him that the Lord hath need of him.* Laſtly, What a clear and full demonſtration Chriſt gave of his divine nature; of his omniſciency, in foreſeeing and foretelling the event; of his omnipotency, in inclining the heart, and over-ruling the will of the owner to let the colt go; and of his ſovereignty, as he was Lord of the creatures, to command and call for their ſervice when he needed them.

7 And they brought the colt to Jeſus, and caſt their garments on him; and he ſat upon him. 8 And many ſpread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and ſtrawed *them* in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna: Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord. 10 Bleſſed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hoſanna in the higheſt.

Obſerve here, The obedience of his diſciples. Firſt, They did as Jeſus had commanded, they do not diſpute their Lord's commands, nor raiſe objections, nor are afraid of dangers; when our call is clear, our obedience muſt be ſpeedy; what Chriſt commands we are not to diſpute, but to obey. 2. The actions of the multitude in acknowledging Chriſt to be their King; they caſt their garments on the ground for him to ride upon, according to the cuſtom of princes when they ride in ſtate; and do not only diſrobe their backs, but expend their breath in joyful acclamations, and loud hoſannas, wiſhing all manner of proſperity to their meek but mighty King. In this princely, yet poor and deſpicable pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous city of Jeruſalem. O! how far was our holy Lord from affecting worldly greatneſs and grandeur! He deſpiſed that glory which worldly hearts fondly admire; yet becauſe he was a King, he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his kingdom confeſſed, applauded, and bleſſed. But that it might appear, that his kingdom was not of this world, he abandons all worldly magnificence. O glorious, yet homely pomp! O meek, but mighty prince!

11 And Jeſus entered into Jeruſalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve. 12 ¶ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 And ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when they came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*. 14 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his diſciples heard *it*.

Some move the queſtion here, how Chriſt came to curſe a tree for want of that fruit which the ſeaſon afforded not? It is anſwered, that naturaliſts obſerve, that the fig-tree puts forth her fruit as ſoon as her leaf; that tree is always bearing; and whilſt one fig is ripe another is green. And whereas it is ſaid, *That the time of figs was not yet:* the meaning is, "That the time of ingathering of figs was not yet;" but the tree having leaves, ſhewed it might have fruit; accordingly Chriſt goes in expectation of its having fruit; but finding none, either ripe or green, he curſes the tree for totally diſappointing his expectation. Beſides, Chriſt was wont not only to ſpeak, but to work parables; and this action of his was typical; an emblem of Jeruſalem's deſtruction in general, and of every perſon's in particular, that ſatisfies himſelf with a withered profeſſion; bearing leaves only, but no fruit; as this fig-tree was, ſo are they nigh unto curſing. From whence *note*, That all ſuch as content themſelves with a fruitleſs profeſſion of religion, are in great danger of having God's blaſting added to their barrenneſs.

15 And they come to Jeruſalem: And Jeſus went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves; 16 And would not ſuffer that any man ſhould carry any veſſel through the temple. 17 And he taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, My houſe ſhall be called of all nations, The houſe of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the ſcribes and chief prieſts heard *it*, and ſought how they might deſtroy him: for they feared him, becauſe all the people was aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 19 And when even was come he went out of the city.

No ſooner had our bleſſed Saviour entered Jeruſalem, but his firſt walk was to the temple, and his firſt work there was to purge and reform. All reformation of manners muſt begin at the houſe of God. Yet *obſerve*, Our Lord's buſineſs at the temple was not to ruin, but to reform it only. Places dedicated to public worſhip, if profaned and polluted, ought to be purged from their abuſes; not pulled down and deſtroyed, becauſe they have been abuſed. But what was the profanation of the temple, which ſo offended our Saviour? I anſwer, In the outward court of the temple there was a public mart or market kept, where were ſold oxen, ſheep, and doves, for ſacrifice. Many of the Jews coming an hundred miles to the temple, it was burdenſome to bring their ſacrifice ſo far with them; wherefore the prieſts ordered, that ſheep and oxen, meal and oil, and ſuch other requiſites for ſacrifice, ſhould be had for money cloſe by the altar, to the great eaſe of the offerer. Nothing could be more plauſible than this plea: But the faireſt pretences cannot bear out a ſin with God: Therefore our bleſſed Saviour, in a juſt indignation, whips out theſe chapmen, caſts down their tables, and vindicates the honour and reputation of his Father's houſe. *Learn* hence, That there is reverence due to God's houſe, for the owner's ſake, and for the ſervice ſake: Nothing but holineſs can become the place where God is worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs. Laſtly, The reaſon which our Saviour gives for this act of his; *Is it not written*, ſays he, *my houſe ſhall be called the houſe of prayer?* Where, by prayer, is to be underſtood the whole worſhip and ſervice of God, of which prayer is an eminent and principal part. That which gives denomination to an houſe, is certainly the chief work to be done in that houſe: Now God's houſe being called an houſe of prayer, certainly implies, that prayer is the chief and principal work to be performed in his houſe: Yet take we heed, that we ſet not the ordinances of God at variance: We muſt not idolize one ordinance, and vilify another, but reverence them all.

20 And in the morning, as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, Maſter, behold, the fig-tree which thou curſedſt is withered away. 22 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea; and ſhall not doubt in his heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs; he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith. 24 Therefore I ſay unto you, What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye ſhall have *them*.

The blaſting and ſudden withering of the fig-tree at the word of Chriſt, plainly ſhewed his divine power: and by this miraculous operation, our Saviour deſigned to ſhew his diſciples the mighty power of faith; that is, a full perſuaſion of the power of God, that he is able, and of the goodneſs of God, that he is willing, to grant whatever we aſk according to his will, that has a tendency to his glory and our good. *Learn* hence, That faith is a neceſſary and principal ingredient in prayer. Praying without faith, is like to a man's ſhooting without a bullet; it makes a noiſe, but doth no execution. Secondly, That whatſoever good thing God has made the matter of his promiſe, ſhall be given to good men in a way of performance, provided they pray in faith. *Whatſoever ye deſire, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.*

25 And when ye ſtand praying, forgive, if you have ought againſt any: that your Father alſo which is in heaven may forgive you your treſpaſſes. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your treſpaſſes.

Theſe are two qualifications requiſite in prayer, if we expect to find acceptance with God, namely, faith and love; to the firſt Chriſt had ſpoken in the former verſe, to the latter in this. *When ye ſtand praying, forgive.* It was ordinary for the Jews to pray ſtanding; yet in their ſolemn days of faſting, they did kneel and proſtrate themſelves before the Lord: but the chriſtians uſually kneeled down and prayed, Acts ix. 40. Now the command here to forgive thoſe that offend us before we pray, ſhews, 1. That no reſentments of what our brother doth, ſhould ſtick long upon our ſpirits, becauſe they indiſpoſe us for that duty we are to be continually prepared for. 2. That there is ſome ſort and kind of forgiveneſs to be exerciſed towards an offending brother before he aſks it, though he doth not ſhew any token of repentance and ſorrow for it, becauſe I am to pray for him out of love unto him, and muſt lift up pure hands, without wrath. *Learn* hence, That they who are ſuing for, and expecting forgiveneſs from God, muſt exerciſe forgiveneſs towards others, or elſe their prayers are a ſort of imprecations on themſelves. Chriſt ſpeaks indefinitely; *When ye pray, forgive:* He doth not ſay, your brethren, but men. Matt. vi. 14. *If we forgive men their treſpaſſes*; that is, all men, good and bad, friends and enemies; if we forgive one another freely, our heavenly Father will forgive us fully. Our forgiving one another is the indiſpenſible condition of God's forgiving us, and of hearing the prayers which are put up by us.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jeruſalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders, 28 And ſay unto him, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things? And who gave thee this authority to do theſe things? 29 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk of you one queſtion, and anſwer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 30 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? anſwer me. 31 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay, Why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we ſhall ſay, of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33 And they anſwered, and ſaid unto Jeſus, We cannot tell. And Jeſus anſwering, and ſaith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often queſtioned our Saviour's doctrine before, they call in queſtion is miſſion and authority now, although they might have eaſily underſtood his divine miſſion by his daily miracles: for almighty God never impowered any to work miracles that were not ſent by him. Our bleſſed Saviour underſtanding their deſign, anſwers them one queſtion by aſking them another: Says Chriſt, *The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men?* Was it of divine inſtitution, or of human invention? Implying very plainly, that the calling of ſuch as call themſelves the miniſters of God, ought to be from God: *No man ought to take that honour upon him, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,* Heb. v. 4. The Phariſees reply, They could not tell whence John had his miſſion and authority: This was a manifeſt untruth. By refuſing to tell the truth, they fall into a lie againſt the truth: One ſin enſnares and draws men into the commiſſion of many more. Such as will not ſpeak exact truth according to their knowledge, fall into the ſin of lying againſt their knowledge and their conſcience. Our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things:* He doth not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you, but I do not, I need not tell you, becauſe the miracles which I work before you are a ſufficient demonſtration of my divine commiſſion, that I am ſent of God amongſt you; for God never ſet the ſeal of his omnipotence to a lie, nor impowered an impoſtor to work real miracles.

CHAP. XII.

AND he began to ſpeak unto them by parables: A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and ſet an hedge about it, and digged *a place for* the wine-vat, and built a tower, and let it out to huſband-men, and went into a far country. 2 And at the ſeaſon he ſent to the huſbandmen a ſervant, that he might receive from the huſbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and ſent *him* away empty. 4 And again he ſent unto them another ſervant: and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded *him* in the head, and ſent *him* away ſhamefully handled. 5 And again he ſent another; and him they killed: and many others; beating ſome, and killing ſome. 6 Having yet therefore one ſon, his well-beloved, he ſent him alſo laſt unto them, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 7 But thoſe huſbandmen ſaid amongſt themſelves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance ſhall be ours. 8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and caſt *him* out of the vineyard.

In this parable, the Jewiſh church is compared to a *vineyard*; almighty God to an *houſholder*; his *planting*, *pruning*, and *fencing his vineyard*, denotes his care to furniſh his church with all needful helps and means to make it ſpiritually fruitful; *His letting it out to huſbandmen*, ſignifies the committing the care of his church to the prieſts and Levites, the public paſtors and governors of the church; *His ſervants* are the prophets and apoſtles, whom he ſent time after time to admoniſh them to bring forth fruit anſwerable to the coſt which God had expended on them; *His Son* is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the rulers of the Jewiſh church ſlew and murdered. The deſign and ſcope of the parable, is to diſcover to the Jews, particularly to the Phariſees, their obſtinate impenitency, under all the means of grace, their bloody cruelty towards the prophets of God, their tremendous guilt in crucifying the Son of God: For all which God would unchurch them finally, ruin their nation, and ſet up a church among the Gentiles that ſhould bring forth better fruit than the Jewiſh church ever did. From the whole, *note* 1. That the church is God's vineyard; A vineyard is a place incloſed, a place well planted, well fruited, and exceeding dear and precious to the planter and the owner of it. 2. As dear as God's vineyard is unto him, in caſe of barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs, it is in great danger of being deſtroyed and laid waſte by him. 3. That the only way and courſe to engage God's care over his vineyard, and to prevent its being given to other huſbandmen, *is to give him the fruit of it*; it is but a vineyard that God lets out; it is no inheritance. No people ever had ſo many promiſes of God's favour as the Jews had, nor ever enjoyed ſo many privileges, whilſt they continued in his favour, as they did; yet though they were the firſt and the natural branches, *they are broken off, and we Gentiles ſtand by faith*; *let us not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20.

9 What ſhall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? he will come and deſtroy the huſbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 And have ye not read this ſcripture? The ſtone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. 12 And they ſought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had ſpoken the parable againſt them: and they left him, and went their way.

Theſe words of our Saviour are taken out of the cxviiith pſalm, which the Jews underſtood to be a prophecy of the Meſſiah; accordingly Chriſt applies them to himſelf: The church is the *building* intended, Chriſt himſelf the *ſtone* rejected. The *rejecters*, or the builders *rejecting*, are the heads of the Jewiſh church; that is, the chief prieſts and Phariſees. God, the great maſter-builder of his church, takes this precious foundation-ſtone out of the rubbiſh, and ſets it in the head of the corner. Nevertheleſs, there are many that ſtumble at this ſtone; ſome through ignorance, others through malice: Some are offended at his perſon, others at his doctrine. *Theſe ſhall be broken in pieces: but on whomſoever this ſtone will fall, it will grind them to powder*: that is, Chriſt himſelf will fall as a burdenſome ſtone upon all them that knowingly and maliciouſly oppoſe him; and particularly to the Jews, who not only rejected, but perſecuted and deſtroyed him. Thus Chriſt tells the chief prieſts and Phariſees their own particular doom, and alſo declares what will be the fatal iſſue of all that oppoſition which is made againſt himſelf and his church; it will terminate in the inevitable deſtruction of all its oppoſers: *Whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone, ſhall be broken*; *and on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind them to powder*.

13 ¶ And they ſend unto him certain of the Phariſees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words. 14 And when they were come, they ſay unto him, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and careſt for no man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men, but teacheſt the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæſar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or ſhall we not give? But he knowing their hypocriſy, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may ſee *it*. 16 And they brought *it*: And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? And they ſaid unto him, Cæſar's. 17 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Obſerve here, A grand deſign to entangle our bleſſed Saviour in his diſcourſe. Where *note*, 1. The perſons employed to put the enſnaring queſtion to Chriſt, namely, the Phariſees and Herodians. The Phariſees were againſt paying tribute to Cæſar, looking upon themſelves as a free people, and the emperor as an uſurper; but the Herodians were for it. Herod being made by the Roman emperor king over the Jews, he was very zealous for having the Jews pay tribute to Cæſar; and ſuch of the Jews as ſided with him, particularly his courtiers and favourites, were called Herodians. *Note*, 2. The policy and wicked craft here uſed, in employing theſe two contrary parties to put this queſtion to our Saviour concerning tribute, thereby laying him under a neceſſity, as they hoped, to offend one ſide, let him anſwer how he would; if, to pleaſe the Phariſees, he denied paying tribute to Cæſar, then he is accuſed of ſedition; if, to gratify the Herodians, he voted for paying tribute to Cæſar, then he is looked upon as an enemy to the liberty of his country, and expoſed to a popular odium. Thus has it all along been the practice of Satan and his inſtruments, to draw the miniſters of God into diſlike, either with the magiſtrates or with the people, that they may fall under the cenſure of one, or the diſpleaſure of the other. 3. With what wiſdom and caution our Lord anſwers them; he calls for the Roman penny, anſwering to ſeven-pence halfpenny of our money, two of which they paid by way of tribute, as poll-money for every head to the emperor. Chriſt aſks them, *Whoſe image or ſuperſcription* this their coin bore? *They anſwer, Cæſar's*. *Render then*, ſays he, *to*

Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's. As if our Lord had ſaid, "Your admitting of the Roman coin among you is an evidence that you are under ſubjection to the emperor, becauſe the coining and impoſing of money is an act of ſovereign authority; therefore you have owned Cæſar's authority over you, by accepting of his coin amongſt you; give unto him his juſt dues, and *render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's.*" *Learn* hence, 1. That our Saviour was no enemy to magiſtracy and civil government; there was no truer paymaſter of the king's dues, than he that was King of kings; he preached it, and he practiſed it, Matt. xvii. 27. 2. Where a kingdom is in ſubjection to a temporal prince, whether his right be by deſcent, election, or by conqueſt, the ſubjects ought, from a principle of conſcience, to pay tribute to him. 3. That as Chriſt is no enemy to the civil rights of princes, and his religion exempts none from paying their civil dues; ſo princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his divine honour, as he is not to wrong them of their civil rights; as Chriſt requires all his followers to *render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*, ſo ſhould princes oblige all their ſubjects to *render unto God the things that are God's.*

18 ¶ Then come unto him the Sadducees, which ſay there is no reſurrection; and they aſked him, ſaying, 19 Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 20 Now there were ſeven brethren: And the firſt took a wife, and dying left no ſeed. 21 And the ſecond took her, and died, neither left he any ſeed: and the third likewiſe. 22 And the ſeven had her, and left no ſeed. Laſt of all the woman died alſo. 23 In the reſurrection therefore, when they ſhall riſe, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of them? for the ſeven had her to wife. 24 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Do ye not therefore err, becauſe ye know not the ſcriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they riſe; have ye not read in the book of Moſes, how in the buſh God ſpake unto him, ſaying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Ye therefore do greatly err.

Our bleſſed Saviour having put the Phariſees and Herodians to ſilence in the former verſes, here he encounters the Sadducees. This ſect derived its name from one Sadock, who denied the immortality of the ſoul, the reſurrection of the body, and angels and ſpirits. Here they propound a caſe to our Saviour, of a woman who had ſeven brethren ſucceſſively to her as huſbands; they demand, whoſe wife of the ſeven this woman ſhould be at the reſurrection? As if they had ſaid, "If there be a reſurrection of bodies, ſurely there will be of relations too; and the other world, if there be ſuch a place, will be like this, in which men will marry, as they do here; and if ſo, whoſe wife of the ſeven ſhall this woman be, they all having an equal claim to her?" Now our Saviour, for reſolving of this queſtion, firſt ſhews the different ſtate of men in this and in the other world. The children of this world, ſays our Saviour, marry and are given in marriage, but in the reſurrection they do neither. As if Chriſt had ſaid, "After men have lived a while in this world, they die, and therefore marriage is neceſſary to maintain a ſucceſſion of mankind; but in the other world men ſhall become immortal, and live for ever, and then the reaſon of marriage will wholly ceaſe; for when men can die no more, there will be no need of any new ſupplies of mankind." Secondly, That our Saviour being got clear of the Sadducees objection, by taking away the foundation and ground of it, he produceth an argument for the proof of the ſoul's immortality and the body's reſurrection. "Thoſe to whom almighty God pronounces himſelf a God, are certainly alive; but God pronounces himſelf a God to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, many hundred years after their bodies were dead, therefore their ſouls are yet alive; for otherwiſe God could not be their God; becauſe *he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* From the whole, *note*, 1. That there is no opinion ſo monſtrous and abſurd, that having had a mother, will die for lack of a nurſe. The beaſtly opinion of the mortality of the ſoul, and the annihilation of the body, find Sadducees to profeſs and propagate it. 2. The certainty of another life after this, in which men ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as they behave themſelves here. Though ſome men live like beaſts, yet they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their laſt end be like theirs. 3. That glorified ſaints, in the morning of the reſurrection, ſhall be like the glorious angels; not like them in eſſence and nature, but like them in their properties and qualities, in holineſs and purity, in immortality and incorruptibility; as alſo in their manner of living, they ſhall ſtand in no more need of meat and drink than the angels do, but ſhall live the ſame heavenly, immortal, and incorruptible life that the angels live. 4. That all thoſe who are in covenant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their ſouls do immediately paſs into glory, and their bodies at the reſurrection ſhall be ſharers in the ſame happineſs with their ſouls; if God be juſt, their ſouls muſt live, and their bodies muſt riſe; for good men muſt be rewarded, and wicked men puniſhed ſomewhere, either in this life or in another. God will moſt certainly at one time or other, plentifully reward the righteous, and puniſh the wicked doers. But, this being not always done in this life, the juſtice of God requires that it be done in the next.

28 And one of the ſcribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, Which is the firſt commandment of all? 29 And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Iſrael; the Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength. This is the firſt commandment.

31 And the ſecond *is* like, *namely* this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. There is none other commandment greater than theſe. 32 And the ſcribe ſaid unto him, Well, Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he. 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love *his* neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. 34 And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt aſk him *any queſtion.*

Obſerve here, 1. A queſtion propounded to our bleſſed Saviour, and his anſwer thereunto. The queſtion propounded is, *Which is the firſt and great commandment?* Our Saviour tells them, *It is to love God with all their heart and ſoul, with all their mind and ſtrength*; that is, with all the powers, faculties, and abilities of the ſoul, with the higheſt meaſures, and moſt intenſe degrees of love; this is the ſum of the duties of the firſt table, *This is the firſt and great commandment, and the ſecond is like unto it.* He doth not ſay equal with it: Although the duties of the ſecond table are of the ſame authority, and of the ſame neceſſity with the firſt, as no man can be ſaved without the love of God, ſo neither without the love of his neighbour. Whence *note*, 1. That the fervency of all our affections, and particularly the ſupremacy of our love, is required by God as his right and due: love muſt paſs through, and poſſeſs all the powers and faculties of our ſouls; the mind muſt meditate upon God, the will muſt chuſe and embrace him, and the affections muſt delight in him. The meaſure of loving God is to love him without meaſure; God reckons that we love him not at all, if we love him not above all. 2. That thus to love God, is *the firſt great commandment*; *great* in regard of its object, which is God, the firſt cauſe and chief good; *great* in regard of the obligation of it; for ſo long as he is God, and we his creatures, we ſhall lie under a natural and neceſſary obligation to love and ſerve him. *Great* alſo is this command and duty, in regard to the duration and continuance of it; when faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in viſion, and hope in fruition, love will then be perfected in a full enjoyment. —3. That every man may, yea, ought to love himſelf; not his ſinful ſelf, but his natural ſelf; eſpecially his ſpiritual ſelf, the new nature in him. This it ought to be his particular care to ſtrengthen and increaſe. Indeed there is no expreſs command in ſcripture, for a man to love himſelf, becauſe the light of nature directs, and the law of nature binds him ſo to do. God has put a principle of ſelf-love, and of ſelf-preſervation, into all his creatures, but eſpecially into man. 4. That as every one ought to love himſelf, ſo is it every man's duty *to love his neighbour as himſelf*; not as he doth love himſelf, but as he ought to love himſelf; yet not in the ſame degree that he loves himſelf, but after the ſame manner, and with the ſame kind of love that he loves himſelf. As we love ourſelves freely and readily, ſincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and continually, ſo ſhould we love our neighbour alſo; though we love him not as much as we love ourſelves, yet muſt we love him as truly as ourſelves. *Note*, laſtly, That the duties of the firſt and ſecond table are inſeparable, namely, love to God, and love to our neighbour. Theſe two muſt not be ſeparated; he that loveth not his neighbour whom he hath ſeen, never loved God whom he hath not ſeen. A conſcientious regard to the duties of both tables will be an argument of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion. *Obſerve* laſtly, The favourable cenſure which our Saviour paſſes upon the ſcribe; he tells him, *He was not far from the kingdom of God*. *Note* here, 1. Some perſons may be ſaid to be far, and farther than others from the kingdom of heaven; ſome are farther, in regard of the means; they want the ordinances, the diſpenſation of the word and ſacraments; others are far from the kingdom of God in regard of qualifications and diſpoſitions; of the former ſort are all heathens without the pale of the church; they are *afar off*, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, Eph. ii. 13. of the latter ſort are all groſs and cloſe hypocrites within the church, who, whilſt they continue ſuch, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. 2. As ſome perſons may be ſaid to be far from the kingdom of God, ſo are there others which may be ſaid, *not to be far*; ſuch who have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, abſtained from open and ſcandalous ſins, are leſs wicked than multitudes are, but are ſtrangers to an inward, thorough, and prevailing change in the frame of their hearts, and courſe of their lives; they have often ſaid, *I would be*, but they never ſaid, *I will be* the Lord's. When the work of regeneration is brought to the birth, after all it proves an abortion. Lord! what a diſappointment will this be, to periſh within ſight of the promiſed land; to be near heaven in our expectation, and yet nearer in the iſſue and event? Wo unto us, if this be the condition of any of us, who have all our days ſat under the diſpenſation of the goſpel.

35 ¶ And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, while he taught in the temple, How ſay the ſcribes, that Chriſt is the ſon of David? 36 For David himſelf ſaid by the Holy Ghoſt, The Lord ſaid to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool. 37 David therefore himſelf calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his ſon? And the common people heard him gladly.

The Phariſees had often put forth ſeveral queſtions maliciouſly unto Chriſt, and now Chriſt puts one queſtion innocently unto them; namely, What they thought of the Meſſiah whom they expected? They reply, That he was to be the ſon of David; that is, a ſecular prince deſcending from David, who ſhould deliver them from the power of the Romans, and reſtore them to their civil rights. This was the notion they had of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould be a mere man, the ſon of David according to the fleſh, and nothing more. Our Saviour replies, *Whence is it then that David calls the Meſſiah Lord?* Pſal. cx. 1. *The*

Lord ſaid to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. How could he be both David's Lord, and David's ſon; no ſon being lord to his father? Therefore, if Chriſt were David's Sovereign, he muſt be more than man, more than David's ſon; as man, ſo he was David's ſon; as God-man, ſo he was David's Lord. *Note* hence, 1. That although Chriſt was truly and really man, yet he was more than a bare man; he was Lord unto, and the ſalvation of, his own foreſathers. 2. That the only way to reconcile the ſcriptures which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be God and man in one perſon; the Meſſiah as man, was to come forth out of David's loins; but as God-man, he was David's Sovereign and Saviour: As man, he was his Father's ſon; as God, he was Lord to his own father.

38 And he ſaid unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the ſcribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* ſalutations in the market-places, 39 And the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts: 40 Which devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: theſe ſhall receive greater damnation.

Obſerve here, What it is that our Saviour condemns; not civil ſalutations in the market-place, not the chief ſeats in ſynagogues, not the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, but their fond affecting of theſe things, and their ambitious aſpiring after them. It was not their taking, but their loving the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, which Chriſt condemns. 2. How our Saviour condemns the Phariſees for their groſs hypocriſy in colouring over their covetouſneſs with a pretence of religion, making long prayers in the temple and ſynagogues for widows, and thereupon perſuading them to give bountifully to *corban*; that is, the common treaſury for the temple, ſome part of which was employed for their maintenance. Whence we *learn*, That it is no new thing for deſigning hypocrites to cover the fouleſt tranſgreſſions with the cloke of religion. The Phariſees made long prayers a cloke and cover for their covetouſneſs.

41 ¶ And Jeſus ſat over againſt the treaſury, and beheld how the people caſt money into the treaſury: and many that were rich caſt in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and ſhe threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that this poor widow hath caſt more in, than all they which have caſt into the treaſury: 44 For all *they* did caſt in of their abundance; but ſhe of her want did caſt in all that ſhe had, *even* all her living.

As our bleſſed Lord ſat over againſt the treaſury, that is, that part of the court of the temple where the *corban*, or cheſts, for receiving the people's offerings and gifts were ſet, he obſerved and took notice of thoſe that offered their oblations; and ſome that were rich, offered very liberally; but *a certain poor woman came and offered two mites.* Our Saviour here upon takes occaſion to inſtruct his diſciples in this comfortable truth; namely, "That almighty God accepts the will of thoſe that give cheerfully, though they cannot give largely;" This poor woman caſt in more in reſpect of the inward affection of her heart, and in proportion to her eſtate, than all thoſe that were rich and wealthy, that had caſt in before her; a mite to her being more than a pound to them. From the whole *note*, 1. That the poorer, yea, the pooreſt ſort of people are not exempted from good works; even they muſt exerciſe charity according to their abilities. 2. That in all works of pious charity which we perform, God looks at the heart, the will, and affection of the giver, more than at the largeneſs and liberality of the gift: *If there be a willing mind,* ſays the apoſtle, 2 Cor. viii. 12. *it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* 3. That a perſon ought ſometimes to give what he cannot well ſpare himſelf; and be read to diſtribute not only to his power, but even above and beyond his power, 2 Cor. viii. 2, 3.

CHAP. XIII.

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of ſtones, and what buildings *are here!* 2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great buildings? there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another that ſhall not be thrown down.

Our bleſſed Saviour being now ready to depart from the temple; never more, after this, entering into it; and his diſciples ſhewing him with wonder and admiration the magnificent ſtructures and buildings thereof, apprehending that in regard of its invincible ſtrength it could not be deſtroyed, or that, at leaſt, in regard of its incredible magnificence, it was great pity it ſhould be deſtroyed; they ſay to Chriſt, *Maſter, behold, what buildings are here!* Not conſidering how ſin will undermine and blow up the moſt famous ſtructures. Sin brings cities and kingdoms, as well as particular perſons, to their end; not one ſtone of this magnificent ſtructure, ſays Chriſt, ſhall remain unpulled down. Which threatening was exactly fulfilled after the death of Chriſt, when Titus, the Roman emperor deſtroyed the city, burnt the temple, and Turnus Rufus, the general of his army, ploughed up the very foundation on which the temple ſtood: thus was the threatening of God fulfilled, Jer. xxvi. 18. *Zion ſhall be ploughed as a field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become an heap.* *Learn* hence 1. That ſin has laid the foundation of ruin in the moſt flouriſhing cities and kingdoms. 2. That the threatenings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing improbabilities there may be to the contrary. It is neither the temple's ſtrength nor beauty that can oppoſe or withſtand God's power.

3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, over againſt the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew aſked him privately, 4 Tell us, when ſhall

theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign when all theſe things ſhall be fulfilled?

A double queſtion is here propounded to our Saviour by his diſciples; namely, When the deſtruction of Jeruſalem ſhall be? And what ſhall be the ſigns of that deſtruction? See here what an itching curioſity there is in the beſt of men to know futurities: to know things that ſhall come to paſs hereafter, and when that hereafter is to come to paſs. Oh! how happy were we, if as forward to obey the declarations of God's will, as we are to pry into the hidden counſels of his ſecret will! *Tell us*, ſay the diſciples, *when ſhall theſe things be?*

5 And Jeſus anſwering them, began to ſay, Take heed leſt any *man* deceive you. 6 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and ſhall deceive many. 7 And when ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *ſuch things* muſt needs be; but the end ſhall not *be* yet. 8 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom; and there ſhall be earthquakes in divers places, and there ſhall be famines and troubles: theſe *are* the beginnings of ſorrows. 9 ¶ But take heed to yourſelves: for they ſhall deliver you up to councils: and in the ſynagogues ye ſhall be beaten: and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them. 10 And the goſpel muſt firſt be publiſhed among all nations.

Here, and in the following verſes, our Saviour gives his diſciples the ſigns which ſhould forerun the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. The firſt of which was this, that *there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts, falſe prophets and ſeducers*; ſuch as Theudas, and others, under the name and perſon of the Meſſias, ſome affirming themſelves to be Chriſt perſonal, or the promiſed Meſſiah; others to be Chriſt doctrinal, affirming their erroneous opinions to be the mind and opinions of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That as there will be many ſeducers before the end of the world (for Jeruſalem's deſtruction was a type and emblem of the world's deſtruction) and many will be ſeduced and miſled by them; ſo it is the duty of Chriſt's own diſciples to take heed, leſt they *being alſo led away by the error of the wicked do fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs: Take heed*, ſays Chriſt, *that no man deceive you, for many will come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and will deceive many.* The ſecond ſign of Jeruſalem's deſtruction, was *wars and rumours of wars*; that is, civil broils, and inteſtine commotions among themſelves, as alſo *famine and earthquake*. Whence *note*, That war and fire, earthquakes and famines, are judgments and calamities inflicted by God upon a ſinful people for their contempt of Chriſt and goſpel grace. 2. That although theſe be very terrible judgments, and deſolating calamities, yet to an incorrigible and irreclaimable people are they the forerunners of worſe judgments. *Theſe are*, ſays Chriſt, *the beginnings of ſorrows.* The third ſign of this approaching deſtruction, was a general perſecution of the miniſters of the goſpel, for preaching the doctrine of the goſpel to a loſt world; *Ye ſhall be beaten and brought before kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony.*— Whence *note*, That the preaching of the goſpel, wherever it comes, will be for a teſtimony to them to whom it comes; either a teſtimony for them or againſt them; to the humble it is a teſtimony for, to deſpiſers and ſcorners it is a teſtimony againſt; if the duſt of the miniſters feet bear witneſs againſt the deſpiſers of the goſpel, their ſermons much more. The word of God delivered in the ſcriptures, and diſpenſed in the miniſtry thereof, hath its divers and contrary effects upon different and contrary ſubjects; from both which, yet almighty God knows how to raiſe his own glory: to the humble and teachable, the goſpel is *adjutorium*, to the ſcorners and deſpiſers it will be *in teſtimonium*; to ſome the ſavour of life unto life, to others the ſavour of death unto death.

11 But when they ſhall lead *you* and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt. 12 Now the brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the father the ſon: and children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and ſhall cauſe them to be put to death. 13 And ye ſhall be hated of all *men* for my name's ſake: But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

Here our Saviour acquaints his diſciples, that for preaching the goſpel they ſhould be brought before kings and rulers, but adviſes them, when they ſhould be ſo brought not to be anxiouſly thoughtful and ſolicitous what they ſhould ſay; for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt what to ſay in that hour. *Note* here, that this promiſe ſeems to be peculiar to the apoſtles, and that it belonged to them only, when they were brought before kings and rulers, to plead the cauſe of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That though the truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his Holy Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch arguments to them as all their enemies ſhall not be able to gainſay. Farther, How our Saviour deſcribes the bitter enmity of the world againſt the preachers of the goſpel, to be ſuch as would overcome and extinguiſh even the natural affection of the deareſt relations one towards another. *The brother ſhall betray the brother to death.* Grace teaches us to lay down our lives for the brethren; but corruption in general, and enmity to the goſpel in particular, teaches brother to take away the life of brother; *The brother ſhall betray the brother to death.* Laſtly, how our Saviour comforts his diſciples, that there would be an end of theſe their ſharp and bitter ſufferings; aſſuring them, that if their faith and patience did hold out *unto the end, they ſhould be ſaved.* This is our comfort, our ſufferings for Chriſt muſt be ſharp, but they ſhall be ſhort; if our ſufferings for Chriſt end not in our life-time, they will end with our lives.

14 ¶ But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of

deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtanding where it ought not (let him that readeth, underſtand)—

The ſenſe is, "When ye ſhall ſee the Roman army, which is an abomination to you, and an occaſion of deſolation wherever it goes; when you ſhall ſee that abominable deſolating army, begirting the city of Jeruſalem, in order to her ruin and being laid waſte, then call to mind the prophecy of Daniel, which primarily reſpected Antiochus, but ſecondarily, Titus the Roman emperor, and ſhall now be fully completed; for the ſiege ſhall not be raiſed till both city and temple be razed to the ground." From whence *learn*, 1. That God has inſtruments ready at his call to lay waſte the ſtrongeſt cities, and to ruin the moſt flouriſhing kingdoms which do reject his Son, and refuſe the tenders of his grace. 2. That God can, and ſometimes doth, make uſe of thoſe very perſons whom ſinners moſt abhor, to be the inſtruments of their puniſhment, and the occaſions of their deſtruction. The Roman army, which was an abomination to the Jews, did God deſtroy them by.

—Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the houſe-top, not go down into the houſe, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his houſe: 16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

The meaning is, "As ſoon as ye ſhall ſee the Roman army appear before the city of Jeruſalem, let every one that values his own ſafety fly, as far and as faſt as he can, as Lot fled from the flames of Sodom; and be glad if by flight he can ſave his life, though he loſe goods and clothes, and all things beſide." Whence *learn*, That when almighty God is pouring forth his fury upon a ſinful people, it is both lawful, and a neceſſary duty, by flight to endeavour to ſhelter and ſecure ourſelves from the approaching calamity and deſolation; when ye ſee *Jeruſalem encompaſſed with armies, flee to the mountains*. 2. That in caſe of flight before an enraged enemy, and bloody army, if we loſe all that we have, and our lives be given us for a prey, we fare well, and the Lord deals very graciouſly and mercifully with us. Next, our Saviour declares the doleful diſtreſs of thoſe that could not flee from the Roman army encompaſſing Jeruſalem, *as women great with child, and others giving ſuck*, who by that means are like to loſe their lives: and adds farther, That it would increaſe the calamity, if their *flight ſhould happen to be in the winter*; or, as St. Matthew adds, *on the ſabbath day*, Matt. xxiv. 20. *Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the ſabbath-day.* Flight in the winter is ſad, becauſe we can then fly neither faſt nor far; and on the ſabbath-day it is very ſorrowful, that being the day of our ſpiritual labour, and of our bodily reſt. *Learn* thence, That it is a great addition to the trouble and diſquiet of a good man's ſpirit, when the day of his ſpiritual reſt is interrupted; and inſtead of enjoying communion with God in his houſe, he is driven from houſe and home.

19 For in thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither ſhall be. 20 And except that the Lord had ſhortened thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved: but for the elect's ſake, whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortened the days.

The dreadful calamities which were coming upon the Jews in general, and Jeruſalem in particular, are here foretold by our bleſſed Saviour, partly from the Roman army without, and partly from the ſeditions and factions of the *zealots* within; who committed ſuch outrages and ſlaughters, that there were no leſs than an hundred thouſand Jews ſlain, and ninety-ſeven thouſand taken priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for thirty pence, were now themſelves ſold thirty for a penny. Now did the temple itſelf become a ſacrifice, a whole burnt-offering, and was conſumed to aſhes. Yet *obſerve*, Chriſt promiſes that *thoſe days of* vengeance *ſhould be ſhortened for the elect's ſake*; God had a remnant which he deſigned ſhould ſurvive that deſtruction, to be an holy ſeed; and accordingly the providence of God ſo ordered it, that the city was taken in ſix months, and the whole country depopulated in eighteen. From whence *obſerve*, How the Lord intermixes ſome mercy with the extremeſt miſery that doth befal a people for their ſin on this ſide hell. No ſinners can ſay in this life, that they feel the ſtrokes of juſtice to the utmoſt, or that they have judgment without mercy.

21 And then, if any man ſhall ſay to you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt; or lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not. 22 For falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, if *it were* poſſible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

The Jews had all along cheriſhed in themſelves a vain expectation, that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a temporal deliverer, and ſet them at liberty from the power and ſlavery of the Romans; and accordingly our Saviour declares to his diſciples here, That, immediately before Jeruſalem's deſtruction, ſeveral perſons, taking the advantage of this expectation, would make themſelves heads of parties, and pretend that they were the true Meſſiah, who ſhould ſave and deliver them from their enemies, if they would follow them. Hereupon our Saviour cautions his diſciples againſt ſuch falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets; and bids them not believe, though they did never ſo many ſigns and wonders, and promiſed them never ſuch glorious deliverances. From hence *note*, 1. That the church's great danger is from ſeducers, that come in Chriſt's name, and pretend to work ſigns and wonders by his authority. 2. That ſuch is the power of ſeduction and deluſion, that many in all ages of the church, have been carried away with ſeducers and falſe teachers. 3. That the elect themſelves, if left to themſelves, might be ſeduced; but being guarded by divine power, againſt ſeduction and deluſion, they ſhall be preſerved from that fatal miſchief; *They ſhall ſeduce, if poſſible, even the elect.*

24 ¶ But in thoſe days, after that tribulation, the ſun ſhall be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light, 25 And the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall, and the powers that *are* in heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 26 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermoſt part of the earth to the uttermoſt part of heaven.

Our Saviour goes on, in figurative expreſſions, to ſet forth the calamities that ſhould befal the Jewiſh nation immediately after Jeruſalem's deſtruction. *The ſun ſhall be darkened*; that is, all their glory and excellency ſhall be eclipſed, all their wealth and proſperity ſhall be laid waſte; their whole government, civil and eccleſiaſtical, deſtroyed; and ſuch marks of miſery found upon them, as never were ſeen upon a people. Thoſe that apply this to the general judgment, underſtand the words literally, that the ſun and moon will then have their influences ſuſpended. That the holy angels will be ſent forth *to gather the elect from all quarters of the world, with the ſound of a trumpet*, ſays St. Matthew: probably, as there was an audible ſound of a trumpet at the giving of the law, ſo there ſhall be the like ſound of a trumpet, when Chriſt ſhall ſummon the world to judgment for tranſgreſſing of that law. A joyful ſound will this be to the friends of Chriſt; a doleful, dreadful ſound, in the ears of his enemies.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is near: 29 So ye, in like manner, when ye ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30 Verily I ſay unto you, That this generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be done. 31 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away; but my words ſhall not paſs away. 32 But of that day and *that* hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the the Son, but the Father.

Here our bleſſed Saviour declares two things with reference to his coming. 1. The certainty of the thing itſelf. 2. The uncertainty of the time. The certainty of his coming he ſets forth by the ſimilitude of the fig-tree, whoſe beginning to bud *declares the ſummer at hand*. Thus our Saviour tells them, that when they ſhould ſee the fore-mentioned ſigns, they might conclude the deſtruction of their city and temple to be nigh at hand; and, accordingly, ſome then living did ſee theſe predictions fulfilled. *Obſerve*, The uncertainty as to the preciſe time when this judgment ſhould come: no angel in heaven, nor creature upon earth, could determine the time, only the glorious perſons in the godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. *Learn* hence, That all things are not revealed to the angels themſelves, but ſuch things only as it concerns them to know, and the wiſdom of God thinks fit to reveal. 2. That the preciſe time of the day of judgment is kept by God as a ſecret to himſelf: we are not to know the hour, to the intent we may be upon our watch every hour; Chriſt himſelf did not know it as man, but as God only: the knowledge and revelation of this was no part of Chriſt's prophetic office, it being one of thoſe times and ſeaſons which the father has put in his own power, Acts i. 7. Conſider Chriſt is God, or the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, and to affirm that there is any thing that he does not know, is blaſphemy: but conſider him as the Meſſias, and to ſay there were ſome things which Chriſt, as ſuch, did not know, is no blaſphemy: for though Chriſt, as God, was equal with the Father; yet, as Meſſias, or God-man, he was inferior to the Father, his ſervant or meſſenger, and could do nothing of himſelf, and did not know all things.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 *For the ſon of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his houſe, and gave authority to his ſervants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at mid-night, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: 36 Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping. 37 And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

Our bleſſed Saviour takes occaſion, from the foregoing doctrine of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of his coming to judgment, to inforce the duty of diligent and induſtrious watchfulneſs upon all his diſciples and followers; that is, to be upon their guard againſt all ſin, and to be in an actual readineſs for his appearance and approach. *Learn* hence, That it is the indiſpenſible duty, and ought to be the indefatigable endeavour of every chriſtian, to ſtand upon his guard, in a prepared readineſs for Chriſt's appearance, both for his coming to them, and for their going to him. There is a twofold readineſs for Chriſt's coming, namely, habitual and actual: An habitual readineſs, is a readineſs of the ſtate and condition; actual readineſs, is the readineſs of the perſon. When we are furniſhed with all the graces and virtues of a good life, when our lamps are burning, and our loins girded, our ſoul's furniſhed with all the graces of God's holy Spirit, our lives fruitful in good works, *Bleſſed is that ſervant, who, when his Lord cometh, ſhall be found thus watching.*

CHAP. XIV.

AFTER two days was *the feaſt of* the paſſover and of unleavened bread: and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes ſought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day*, leſt there be an uproar of the people.

This chapter gives us a ſad and ſorrowful account of the high prieſts conſpiracy againſt the life of our bleſſed Saviour. In which we have *obſervable*, The perſons that made this conſpiracy, the manner of the conſpiracy, and the time when this conſpiracy was made. 1. The perſons conſpiring are the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders; that is, the whole Jewiſh ſanhedrim, or general council: They lay their malicious heads together to contrive the deſtruction of the innocent Jeſus. Thence *learn*, That general counſels have erred, and may err fundamentally in matters of doctrine; ſo did this general council at Jeruſalem, conſiſting of chief prieſts, doctors, and elders, with the high prieſt their preſident, in not believing Jeſus to be the Meſſias, after all the miracles wrought before their eyes. 2. The manner of this conſpiracy againſt our Saviour's life: It was clandeſtine, ſecret, and ſubtle; *They conſult how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.* Thence *note*, That Satan makes uſe of the ſubtlety of crafty men, and abuſeth their parts, as well as their power, for his own purpoſes and deſigns: The devil ſends no fools of his errands. 3. The circumſtance of time when this conſpiracy was managed: *At the feaſt of the paſſover*; it being a cuſtom among the Jews to execute malefactors at their ſolemn feaſts, as at the feaſt of the paſſover, the feaſt of weeks, and the feaſt of tabernacles; at which times all the Jews came up to Jeruſalem to ſacrifice, and when they put malefactors to death, that all Iſrael might ſee and hear, and not do ſo wickedly: Accordingly, this feaſt of the paſſover was waited for by the Jews as a fit opportunity to put our Saviour to death; the only objection was, That it might occaſion a tumult amongſt the people, there being ſuch a mighty concourſe at that time in Jeruſalem. But Judas making them a proffer, they readily comply with the motion, and reſolve to take the firſt opportunity to put our Saviour to death.

3 ¶ And being in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, there came a woman having an alablaſter box of ointment of ſpikenard, very precious; and ſhe brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured againſt her. 6 And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what ſhe could: ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* alſo that ſhe hath done ſhall be ſpoken of, for a memorial of her.

Several particulars are *obſervable* in this piece of hiſtory: As, firſt, the action which this holy woman performed: She pours a box of precious ointment upon our Saviour's head as he ſat at meat, according to the cuſtom of the eaſtern countries at their feaſts. Murmuring Judas valued this ointment at three hundred pence, which makes of our money nine pounds ſeven ſhillings and ſixpence, reckoning the Roman penny at ſevenpence halfpenny. I do not find that any of the apoſtles were at thus much coſt and charge to put honour upon our Saviour as this poor woman was. *Learn* hence, That where ſtrong love prevails in the heart towards Chriſt, nothing is adjudged too dear for him, neither will it ſuffer itſelf to be outſhined by any examples; the weakeſt woman that ſtrongly loves her Saviour, will piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt apoſtle to expreſs the fervour of her affection towards him. 2. How this action was reſented and reflected upon by Judas, and ſome other diſciples whom he had influenced; *they had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, To what purpoſe is this waſte?* O! how doth a covetous heart think every thing too good for Chriſt! Happy was it for this poor woman, that ſhe had a more righteous judge to paſs ſentence upon her action, than murmuring Judas. 3. How readily our holy Lord vindicates this good woman; ſhe ſays nothing for herſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſo good an advocate. Firſt, he rebukes Judas, *Let her alone, why trouble ye the woman?* Next, He juſtifies the action, *She hath wrought a good work*, becauſe it flowed from a principle of love to Chriſt. And, laſtly, He gives the reaſon of her action; *She did it for my burial.* As kings and great perſons were wont in thoſe eaſtern countries, at their funerals, to be embalmed with odours and ſweet perfumes; ſo, ſays our Saviour, this woman, to declare her faith in me as her King and Lord, doth with this box of ointment, as it were before hand, embalm my body for its burial. True faith puts honour upon a crucified as well as glorified Saviour. This holy woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all honour in his death, believing it would be a ſweet ſmelling ſacrifice unto God, and the ſavour of life unto his people. 4. Our Saviour doth not only juſtify and defend the action of this poor woman, but magnifies and extols it, declaring that ſhe ſhould be rewarded for it with an honourable memorial in all ages of the church, *Whereſoever this goſpel is preached, this ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her. Note* hence, The care which Chriſt takes to have the good deeds of his children not buried in the duſt with them, but had in everlaſting remembrance. Though ſin cauſes men to rot above the ground, and ſtink alive, and when they were dead, leaves an ignominy upon their graves, yet will the actions of the juſt ſmell ſweet, and bloſſom in the duſt.

10 ¶ And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief prieſts, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promiſed to give him money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

Obſerve here, 1 The perſon betraying our bleſſed Redeemer, *Judas:* Judas a profeſſor, Judas a preacher, Judas an apoſtle, and *one of the twelve*, whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the world to be his deareſt friends, his family and houſhold: Shall we wonder to find friends unfriendly or unfaithful to us, when our Saviour had a traitor in his own family? 2. The heinous nature of Judas's ſin, *he betrayed Jeſus*; Jeſus his maker, Jeſus his maſter. It is no ſtrange or uncommon thing for the vileſt of ſins, and moſt horrid impieties, to be acted by ſuch perſons as make the moſt eminent profeſſion of holineſs and religion. 3. What was the occaſion that led Judas to the commiſſion of this ſin? It was his inordinate love of money. I do not find that Judas had any particular malice, ſpite, or ill-will againſt our Saviour, but a baſe and unworthy ſpirit of covetouſneſs poſſeſſed him, that made him ſell his maſter. Covetouſneſs is the root-ſin. An eager and inſatiable thirſt after the world, is a parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural ſins; for which reaſon our Saviour doubles his caution, Luke xii. 15. *Take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs.* It ſhews us both the danger of the ſin, and the great care we ought to take to preſerve ourſelves from it.

12 ¶ And the firſt day of unleavened bread, when they killed the paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayeſt eat the paſſover? 13 And he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wherеſoever he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good-man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 15 And he will ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed and prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his diſciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

The time for the celebration of the paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends two of his diſciples to Jeruſalem to prepare things neceſſary in order thereunto. And here we have *obſervable*, 1. An eminent proof of Chriſt's divine nature in telling them all the particulars which they ſhould meet with in the city, as *a man bearing a pitcher of water*, &c. 2. How readily the heart of this houſholder was diſpoſed to receive our Saviour and his diſciples, and to accommodate them with all things needful upon this occaſion. Our bleſſed Saviour had not a lamb of his own, and peradventure no money wherewith to buy one, yet he finds as excellent accommodations in this poor man's houſe, as if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory palace, and had the proviſion of Solomon's table. When Chriſt has a paſſover to celebrate, he will diſpoſe the heart to a free reception of himſelf. The room which Chriſt will enter into, muſt be a *large room, an upper room, a room furniſhed and prepared.* A *large room*, is an enlarged heart, enlarged with love and thankfulneſs; an *upper room*, is an heart exalted, not puffed up with pride, but lifted up by heavenly-mindedneſs; a *room furniſhed*, is a ſoul adorned with the graces of the Holy Spirit: Into ſuch an heart and only ſuch, will Chriſt enter.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they ſat and did eat, Jeſus ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, One of you which eateth with me ſhall betray me. 19 And they began to be ſorrowful, and to ſay unto him one by one, Is it I? and another *ſaid*, Is it I? 20 And he anſwered, and ſaid unto them, *It is* one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the diſh. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

Obſerve here, 1. The unexampled boldneſs of this impudent traitor Judas: he preſumed, as ſoon as he had ſold his Maſter, to ſit down at the table with him, and did eat the paſſover with the diſciples. Had the preſence of Judas polluted this ordinance to any but himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would never have ſuffered him to approach unto it. But hence we *learn*, 1. That nothing is more ordinary than for unholy perſons to preſs in unto the holy ordinances of God, which they have no right, while ſuch, to partake of. 2. That the preſence of ſuch perſons doth pollute the ordinance only to themſelves; holy perſons are not polluted by their ſins, therefore ought not to be diſcouraged from coming by their preſence there. *Obſerve*, 2. What a ſurpriſing and aſtoniſhing word it was which dropt from our Saviour's mouth amongſt his diſciples; *One ſhall betray me*; yea, *one of you ſhall betray me.* Can any church upon earth expect purity in all its members, when Chriſt's own family of twelve had a traitor and a devil in it? Yet though it was very ſad to hear of one, it was matter of joy to underſtand that there was but one. One hypocrite in a congregation is too much, but there is cauſe of rejoicing if there be no more. 3. Chriſt did not name Judas, and ſay, "Thou, O perfidious Judas, art the traitor; but, *One of you ſhall betray me:*" Doubtleſs it was to draw him to repentance, and to prevent the giving him any provocation. Lord! how ſad is it for any of thy family, who pretend friendſhip to thee, to conſpire with thine enemies againſt thee! for any *that eat of thy bread to lift up their heel againſt thee!* 4. The diſciples ſorrow upon theſe words of Chriſt, and the effect of that ſorrow. Their ſorrow was (as well it might be) exceeding great: well might innocent diſciples be overwhelmed with ſorrow, to hear that their Maſter ſhould die, that he ſhould die by treaſon, that the traitor ſhould be one of themſelves. But though their ſorrow was great, yet was the effect of their ſorrow very good, it wrought in them an holy ſuſpicion of themſelves, and cauſed every one to ſearch himſelf, and ſay, *Maſter, Is it I?* *Learn* hence, That it is poſſible for ſuch ſecret wickedneſs to lodge in the heart we never ſuſpected, till time and temptation draw it forth. None of the diſciples ſuſpected, nay, Judas himſelf never apprehended that depth of iniquity and hypocriſy which was found lodging in him. Yet *note*, That though the diſciples were jealous and ſuſpicious, yet was it of themſelves, not of one another; nay, not of Judas himſelf: every one ſaid, *Maſter, is it I?* Not, *Maſter, is it Judas?* True ſincerity and chriſtian charity will make us more ſuſpicious of ourſelves than of any other; it hopes the beſt of others, and fears the worſt of ourſelves. 5. That though Judas ſees himſelf pointed at by our Saviour, and hears the dreadful threatenings denounced againſt him, *that it had been better for him that he had never been born*, yet he is no more blanked than innocence itſelf. Reſolute ſinners run on deſperately in their evil courſes, and with open eyes ſee and meet their own deſtruction, without being either diſmayed at it, or concerned about it. This ſhameleſs man had the impudence to ſay to our bleſſed Saviour, *Maſter, Is it I?* Our Saviour gives him a direct anſwer, *Thou ſayeſt it.* Did not Judas (think we) bluſh extremely, caſt down his guilty eyes, and let fall his drooping head, at ſo galling an intimation? Nothing leſs: we read of nothing like it. Lord! how does obduracy in ſin ſteel the brow, and make it incapable of all relenting impreſſions! Laſtly, How our Saviour prefers non-entity before damnation; *It had been better for that man he had never been born.* A temporal, miſerable being is not worſe than no being; but eternal miſery is much worſe than non-entity; better to have no being, than not to have a being in Chriſt. It had been better for Judas that he had never been born, than to lie under everlaſting wrath.

22 ¶ And as they did eat, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he ſaid unto them, This is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many. 25 Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Immediately after the celebration of the paſſover, our Lord inſtitutes his holy ſupper; in which inſtitution we have *obſervable*, The author, the time, the elements, and miniſterial actions. *Obſerve* here, 1. The author of this new ſacrament: *Jeſus took bread. Note* thence, That to inſtitute a ſacrament is the ſole prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt. The church has no power to make new ſacraments: it is only her duty to celebrate thoſe which our Saviour has made. 2. The time of the inſtitution, the night before his paſſion; *The night in which he was betrayed, Jeſus took bread. Learn* thence, That it is very neceſſary, when ſufferings are approaching, to have recourſe to the table of the Lord, which affords both an antidote againſt fear, and is a reſtorative to our faith. 3. The ſacramental elements, *bread and wine*; bread repreſenting the body, and wine the blood, of our dear Redeemer. 4. The miniſterial actions, *The breaking of the bread*, and *the bleſſing of the cup*; as to the bread, *Jeſus took it*; that is, ſet it apart from common uſe, and ſeparated it for holy ends and purpoſes. He *bleſſed it*; that is, prayed for a bleſſing upon it, and *brake it*; thereby ſhadowing forth his body broken upon the croſs; and he *gave it to his diſciples, ſaying*, This broken bread ſignifies my body, ſuddenly to be broken upon the croſs, for the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world; *Do this in remembrance of my death.* As to the cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by prayer and thankſgiving, he commands his diſciples to *drink all of it*; and accordingly they *all drank of it*, ſays this Evangeliſt; and our Saviour gives his reaſon for it, ver. 24. *For this is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for remiſſion of ſins*; that is, the wine in this cup repreſents the ſhedding of my blood, by which this new covenant between God and man is ratified and confirmed. Whence we gather, That every communicant hath as undoubted a right to the cup, as to the bread of the Lord's ſupper; *Drink ye all of this*, ſays Chriſt; therefore to deny the cup to the common people, is ſacrilege, and directly contrary to our Saviour's inſtitution. And Chriſt calling the cup *the fruit of the vine*, affords a ſtrong argument againſt the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, thus: "That which after conſecration remains the fruit of the vine, is not ſubſtantially changed into the blood of Chriſt. But Chriſt called the wine in the cup the fruit of the vine after conſecration; therefore that which Chriſt gave the apoſtles to drink, was not ſubſtantially changed into his blood. Wine is metaphorically called the blood of the grape, why may it not, by a like metaphor, be ſtyled the blood of Chriſt?" After the celebration was over, our Saviour and his diſciples ſung an hymn, as the Jews were wont to do at the paſſover the ſix euchariſtical pſalms, from the 113th to the 119th pſalm. From Chriſt's example we may gather, how ſuitable it is to ſing a pſalm after the celebration of the Lord's ſupper; how fit it is that God be glorified in his church by ſinging of pſalms; and in particular when the Lord's ſupper is celebrated. *When they had ſung an hymn, they went into the mount of Olives.*

27 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered. 28 But after that I am riſen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter ſaid unto him, Although all ſhall be offended, yet *will* not I. 30 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, that this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 31 But he ſpake the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.

Obſerve here, 1. The warning that our Saviour gives his diſciples of their forſaking him in the time of his ſufferings; *All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night. Learn*, That Chriſt's deareſt friends forſook and left him alone in the midſt of his greateſt diſtreſs and danger. *Obſerve* 2. What was the cauſe of their flight; it was their fear, the weakneſs of their faith, and the prevalency of their fear. O how ſad and dangerous is it for the beſt of men to be left under the power of their own fears in the day of temptation! 3. Notwithſtanding our Saviour's prediction, St. Peter's preſumption of his own ſtrength and ſtanding; *Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I. Learn* thence, That ſelf-confidence, and a preſumptuous opinion of their own ſtrength, is a ſin very incident to the holieſt and beſt of men. This good man reſolved honeſtly, no doubt; but too, too much in his own ſtrength. Little, little did he think what a feather he ſhould be in the wind of temptation, if once left to the power and prevalency of his own fears. None are ſo near falling, as thoſe who are moſt confident of their own ſtanding; if ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is the fear of falling that muſt enable us to ſtand.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethſemane: and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here, while I ſhall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter, and James and John, and began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And ſaith unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that, if it were poſſible, the hour might paſs from him. 36 And he ſaid, Abba, Father, all things *are* poſſible unto thee: take away this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh, and findeth them ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt thou? couldeſt not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation. The ſpirit truly *is* ready, but the fleſh *is* weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words. 40 And when he returned, he found them aſleep again; for their eyes were heavy: neither wiſt they what to anſwer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* reſt: it is enough, the hour is come: behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 42 Riſe up, let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Our bleſſed Saviour being now come with his diſciples into the garden, he falls there into a bitter and bloody agony, in which he prayed with wonderful fervency and importunity to his heavenly Father; his ſufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his knees, and would be found in a praying poſture. *Learn* thence, That prayer is the beſt preparative for, as well as the moſt powerful ſupport under, the heavieſt ſufferings that can befal us. As to the prayer of our Saviour in the garden, many things are very *obſervable*; as, firſt, the place where he prayed, *the garden*. But why went Chriſt thither? Not, with our firſt parents, to hide himſelf there among the trees of the garden, from the notice and obſervation of his enemies. But as a garden was the place where our miſery began, as the firſt ſcene of human ſin and miſery was acted in a garden, ſo does our Lord chuſe a garden as the fitteſt place for his agony and ſatisfactory pains to begin in. Again, this garden was a place of privacy and retirement, where our Lord might beſt attend the offices of devotion preparatory to his paſſion: St. John xviii. 2. tells us; *That Jeſus oft-times reſorted to this garden with his diſciples, and that Judas well knew the place.* It is evident then, that Chriſt went not into the garden to ſhun his ſufferings, but to prepare himſelf by prayer to meet his enemies. 2. The time when he entered into the garden for prayer, it was in the evening before he ſuffered; here he ſpent ſome hours in pouring forth his ſoul to God; for about midnight Judas with his black guard came, and apprehended him in a praying poſture. Our Lord *teaching* us, by his example, That when imminent dangers are before us, eſpecially when death is apprehended by us, to be very much in prayer to God, and very fervent in our wreſtlings with him. 3. The matter of our Lord's prayer; *That if poſſible the cup might paſs from him*; and he might be kept from the hour of ſuffering, that his ſoul might eſcape that dreadful wrath at which he was ſo ſore amazed. "But what did Chriſt then begin to repent of his undertaking for ſinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when it came to the pinch?" No, nothing leſs; but as he had two natures, being God and man, ſo he had two diſtinct wills; as man, he feared and ſhunned death; as God-man, he willingly ſubmitted to it. The divine nature, and the human ſpirit of Chriſt, did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing intereſts. Again, this prayer was not abſolute, but conditional, *If it be poſſible, Father*; *if it may be*; if thou art willing, if it pleaſe thee, *let this cup paſs*; if not, *I will drink it.* The cup of ſufferings we ſee is a very bitter and diſtaſteful cup; a cup which human nature abhors, and cannot deſire, but pray againſt; yet God doth put this bitter cup of affliction into the hands oft-times of thoſe whom he doth ſincerely love; and when he doth ſo, it is their duty to drink it with ſilence and ſubmiſſion, as here their Lord did before them; *Father, let the cup paſs; yet not my will, but thine be done.* 4. The manner of our Lord's prayer in the garden: And here we may remark, 1. It was a ſolitary prayer; he went by himſelf *alone*, out of the hearing of his diſciples. The company of our beſt and deareſt friends is not always ſeaſonable: There is a time to be ſolitary as well as to be ſociable; there are times and caſes when a man would not be willing that the moſt intimate friend he has in the world ſhould be with him, to hear what paſſes in ſecret between him and his God. 2. It was an humble prayer, that is evident by the poſtures into which he caſt himſelf, ſometimes kneeling, ſometimes lying proſtrate upon his face; he lies in the very duſt, and lower he cannot lie; and his heart was as low as his body. 3. It was a vehement, fervent, and moſt importunate prayer; ſuch was the fervour of our Lord's ſpirit, that he prayed himſelf into an agony. O let us bluſh, to think how unlike we are to Chriſt in prayer, as to our praying frame of ſpirit. Lord, what deadneſs and drouſineſs, what ſtupidity and formality, what dulneſs and lazineſs is found in our prayers! how often do our lips move, when our hearts ſtand ſtill! 4. It was reiterated and repeated prayer: he prayed the firſt, ſecond, and third time, *for the paſſing of the cup from him*; he returns upon God over and over again, reſolving to take no denial. Let us not be diſcouraged, though we have ſought God often for a particular mercy, and yet no anſwer has been given in unto us. Our prayers may be anſwered, though their anſwer for the preſent is ſuſpended. A prayer put up in faith, according to the will of God, though it may be delayed, ſhall not be loſt. Our Saviour prayed the firſt, ſecond, and third time, for the paſſing of the bitter cup; and although he was not heard as to exemption from ſuffering, yet he was heard to ſupport under ſuffering. *Obſerve*, 5. The poſture the diſciples were found in when our Lord was in this agony, praying to his Father; *They wer-*

were faſt aſleep. Good God! could they poſſibly ſleep at ſuch a time as that was, when Chriſt's ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful? Could their eyes be thus heavy? *Learn* thence, That the beſt of Chriſt's diſciples may be, and oft-times are, overtaken with infirmities, with great infirmities, when the moſt important duties are performing; *He cometh to his diſciples, and finds them ſleeping.* 6. The mild and gentle reproof which he gives his diſciples for their ſleeping; *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* "Could ye not watch when your Maſter was in ſuch danger? Could ye not watch with me when I am going to deliver up my life for you? What not one hour? And that the parting hour too?" After his reprehenſion he ſubjoins an exhortation, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*; and ſuperadds a forcible reaſon, *for though the ſpirit be willing, yet the fleſh is weak.* Thence *learn,* That the holieſt and beſt reſolved chriſtians, who have willing ſpirits for Chriſt and his ſervice, yet in regard of the weakneſs of the fleſh, or frailty of human nature, it is their duty to watch and pray, and thereby guard themſelves againſt temptation; *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*; *for though the ſpirit is willing, yet the fleſh is weak.*

43 ¶ And immediately, while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude, with ſwords, and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; take him, and lead *him* away ſafely. 45 And as ſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, maſter; and kiſſed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that ſtood by drew a ſword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his ear. 48 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and *with* ſtaves, to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: But the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled. 50 And they all forſook him, and fled.

The hour is now almoſt come, even that hour of ſorrow which Chriſt had ſo often ſpoken of, *Yet a little while, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners*; *for while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas with a band of ſoldiers* to apprehend him: It was the lot and portion of our dear Redeemer, to be betrayed into the hands of his mortal enemies by the treachery of a falſe and diſſembling friend. Here we have *obſervable,* 1. The traitor. 2. The treaſon. 3. The manner how. 4. The time when this treaſonable deſign was executed. *Obſerve,* 1. The traitor, *Judas.* All the Evangeliſts carefully deſcribe him by his name, Judas; by his ſirname, Judas Iſcariot; leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for Jude, the brother of James. Almighty God takes great care to preſerve the names of his upright-hearted ſervants. He is farther deſcribed by his office, *One of the twelve.* The eminency of his place and ſtation was an high aggravation of his tranſgreſſion. *Learn* hence, That the greateſt profeſſors had need be very jealous of themſelves, and ſuſpicious of their own hearts, and look well to the grounds and principles of their profeſſion; for a profeſſion begun in hypocriſy will certainly end in apoſtaſy. *Learn* farther, That perſons are never in ſuch imminent danger, as when they meet with temptations exactly ſuited to their maſter-luſts. Covetouſneſs was Judas's maſter-ſin; the love of the world made him a ſlave to Satan, and the devil lays a temptation before him exactly ſuited to his temper and inclination, and it inſtantly overcomes him. O! pray we, that we may be kept from a ſtrong and ſuitable temptation; a temptation ſuited to our inclination and predominant luſt and corruption. 2. The treaſon of this traitor Judas; he led on an armed multitude to the place where Chriſt was, gave them a ſignal to diſcover him by, and bids them lay hands upon him, and *hold him faſt.* Some conjecture, that when Judas bade them hold Chriſt faſt, he thought they could not do it; but that as Chriſt had at other times conveyed himſelf from the multitude, when they attempted to kill or ſtone him, ſo he would have done now: But his hour was now come, and accordingly he ſuffers himſelf to be delivered by the treachery of Judas into his enemies hands. And this his treaſon is attended with theſe helliſh aggravations; he had been a witneſs to the miracles which our Saviour had wrought by his divine power, and therefore could not ſin out of ignorance; what he did was not at the ſolicitation and perſuaſion of others, but he was a volunteer in this ſervice; the high prieſts did not ſend to him, but he went to them, offering his aſſiſtance; no doubt it was a matter of ſurprize to the chief prieſts, to find one of Chriſt's own diſciples at the head of a conſpiracy againſt him. Lord! how dangerous is it to allow ourſelves in any one ſecret or open ſin! None can ſay how far that one ſin may in time lead us. Should any have told Judas, that his love of money would at laſt make him ſell his Saviour, he would have ſaid with Hazael, *Is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do this thing?* That ſoul can never be ſafe, that harbours one ſin within its breaſt. 3. The manner how this helliſh plot was executed; partly by force, and partly by fraud; by force, in that Judas came with a multitude armed with *ſwords and ſtaves*; and by fraud, *giving a kiſs,* and ſaying, *Hail, Maſter.* Here was honey in the lips, but poiſon in the heart. 4. The time when, the place where, and the work which our Saviour was about, when this treaſonable deſign was executed: He was in the garden with his diſciples, exhorting them to prayer and watchfulneſs, dropping heavenly advice and comfort upon them. While he yet ſpake, *Lo! Judas came.* Our Saviour was found in the moſt heavenly and excellent employment when his enemies came to apprehend him. Lord! how happy is it when our ſufferings find us in God's way, engaged in his work, and engaging his aſſiſtance by fervent ſupplication! Thus did our Lord's ſufferings meet him: May ours in like manner meet us. 5. The endeavours uſed by the diſciples for the Maſter's reſcue; *one of them* (St. Matthew ſays it was Peter) *draws his ſword, and cuts off the ear of Malchus,* who probably was one of the forwardeſt to lay hands on Chriſt. But why did not St. Peter draw upon Judas rather than Malchus? becauſe, though Judas was more faulty, yet Malchus was more forward to arreſt and carry off our Saviour. How doth a pious breaſt ſwell with indignation at the ſight of any open affront offered to its Saviour? Yet though St. Peter's heart was ſincere, his hand was raſh; good intentions are no warrant for irregular actions; and accordingly Chriſt, who accepted the affection, reproves the action: *Put up thy ſword; for they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh by the ſword;* Chriſt will thank no man to fight for him without a warrant and commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a lawful magiſtrate, in Chriſt's own defence, is raſh zeal, and diſcountenanced by the goſpel. Laſtly, The effect which our Saviour's apprehenſion had upon the diſciples; *They all forſook him and fled.* They that ſaid to Chriſt a little before, *Though we ſhould die with thee, yet we will not deny thee;* do all here deſert and cowardly forſake him, when it came to the trial. *Learn* hence, That the beſt and holieſt of men know not their own hearts, when great temptations and trials are before them, until ſuch time as they come to grapple with them. No man knows his own ſtrength till temptation puts it to the proof.

51 And there followed him a certain young man,
having a linen cloth caſt about his naked body; and
the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left
the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. 53 And
they led Jeſus away to the high prieſt: and with him
were aſſembled all the chief prieſts, and the elders, and
the ſcribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off,
even into the palace of the high-prieſt: and he ſat
with the ſervants, and warmed himſelf at the fire.
55 And the chief prieſts, and all the council, ſought
for witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death; and
found none. 56 For many bare falſe witneſs againſt
him, but their witneſs agreed not together. 57 And
there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him,
ſaying, 58 We heard him ſay, I will deſtroy this
temple that is made with hands, and within three
days I will build another made without hands. 59
But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together. 60
And the high prieſt ſtood up in the midſt, and aſked
Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what is it
which theſe witneſs againſt thee? 61 But he held
his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high
prieſt aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou The
Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed? 62 And Jeſus ſaid,
I am: and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the
right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of
heaven. 63 Then the high prieſt rent his cloaths,
and ſaith, What need we any further witneſſes? 64
Ye have heard the blaſphemy; what think ye? And
they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65 ¶
And ſome began to ſpit on him, and to cover his
face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſy:
and the ſervants did ſtrike him with the
palms of their hands.

Here we have the hiſtory of our Saviour's examination before the high-prieſt and council, who ſat up all night to arraign and try the holy and innocent Jeſus; for, leſt his death ſhould look like a downright murder, they allow him a mock trial, and abuſe the law by perverting it to injuſtice and bloodſhed: accordingly falſe witneſſes are ſuborned, who depoſe that they heard him ſay, *He would deſtroy their temple, and build it again in three days.* It is not in the power of the greateſt innocency to protect the moſt holy and innocent perſon from ſlander and falſe accuſation: yea, no perſon is ſo innocent and good, whom falſe witneſs may not condemn. 2. Our Lord's meekneſs and patience, his ſilence under all theſe wicked ſuggeſtions and falſe accuſations; *Jeſus held his peace, and anſwered nothing.* Guilt is naturally clamorous and impatient, but innocency is ſilent, and careleſs of miſreports. *Learn* hence, That to bear the revilings, contradictions, and falſe accuſations of men, with a ſilent and ſubmiſſive ſpirit, is an excellent and Chriſt-like temper. Our Lord ſtood before his unjuſt judge, and falſe accuſers, even as a ſheep before the ſhearer, dumb, and not opening his mouth; even then when a trial for his life was managed moſt maliciouſly and illegally againſt him, *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not.* May the ſame humble mind and forgiving ſpirit be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus. 3. That although our Saviour was ſilent, and made no reply to the falſe witneſſes, yet now, when the queſtion was ſolemnly put by the high prieſt, *Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed? He anſwered, I am.*— Thence *learn,* That although we are not obliged by every enſnaring queſtion to make anſwer, yet are we bound faithfully to own, and freely to confeſs the truth, when ſolemnly called thereunto: when our ſilence will be interpreted a denial of the truth, a diſhonour to God, a reproach and ſcandal to our brethren, it will be a great ſin to hold our peace; and we muſt not be ſilent, though our confeſſion of the truth hazards our liberty, yea, our life; Chriſt knew that his anſwer would coſt him his life, yet he durſt not but give it; *Art thou the Son of the bleſſed? Jeſus ſaid, I am.* 4. The crime which the high-prieſt pronounces our Saviour to be guilty of, that of blaſphemy; *He hath ſpoken blaſphemy.* Hereupon the high-prieſt rends his clothes; it being uſual with the Jews ſo to do, both to ſhew their ſorrow for it, and great deteſtation of it, and indignation againſt it. 5. The vile affronts and horrid abuſes which the enemies of our Saviour put upon him: They *ſpit in his face,* they *blindfold him,* they *ſmite him with their hands,* and in contempt and mockery *bid him prophecy who it was that ſmote him.* Verily there is no degree of contempt, no mark of ſhame, no kind of ſuffering, which we ought to decline, or ſtick at, for Chriſt's ſake, who hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting upon our account. 6. The high prieſt rends his clothes at Chriſt's telling him, *He ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting at God's right hand, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* And well might his clothes and his heart rend alſo. It was as if our Lord had ſaid, "I that am now your priſoner, ſhall ſhortly be your judge. I now ſtand at your bar; and, ere long, you muſt ſtand at my tribunal. Thoſe eyes of yours, that now ſee me in the form of a ſervant, ſhall behold me in the clouds, at the right hand of your God and my Father."

66 ¶ And as Peter wrs beneath in the palace, there
cometh

cometh one of the maids of the high prieſt: 67 And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, ſaying, I know not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69 And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is *one* of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that ſtood by ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth *thereto.* 71 But he began to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak. 72 And the ſecond time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

This laſt paragraph of the chapter gives us an account of the fall and riſing of Peter; of his ſin in denying Chriſt, and of his recovery by repentance. Both are conſidered diſtinctly in the notes of St. Matt. xxvi. 69. That which is here farther to be taken notice of, is as followeth. *Obſerve*, 1. That amongſt all the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, we meet not with any ſo extraordinary, either for faith or obedience, as St. Peter. He was an early profeſſor, St. Matt. iv. 18. and a glorious confeſſor, St. Matt. xvi. 16. *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God:* Which confeſſion of his faith, like a rock, was to be the foundation of the goſpel-church in all ages. And Chriſt was pleaſed to put that honour upon Peter, as to uſe his miniſtry in firſt laying the foundation of a Chriſtian church among the Jews and Gentiles, he being the firſt preacher to them of that faith which he did here confeſs: To the Jews, Acts ii. where we read of three thouſand ſouls converted and baptized; and to the Gentiles, Acts x. in the converſion of Cornelius and his friends, whom God directed to ſend, not to Jeruſalem for James, nor to Damaſcus for St. Paul, but to Joppa for Peter: whom Chriſt had appointed for that work, that he might tell him words by *which he and his houſhold ſhould be ſaved.* 2. The great and mighty courage which was found in St. Peter. 1. At the command of Chriſt he adventures to walk on the ſea, Matt. xiv. 28. being firmly perſuaded, that whatſoever Chriſt commanded his diſciples to do, he would give them ſtrength and ability to perform. And 2. It was a noble courage which enabled him to ſay, *Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* No doubt the good man really reſolved to do as he ſaid, little ſuſpecting that he ſhould, with horrid oaths and bitter imprecations, deny and abjure his dying Maſter. "Lord, how prone are we to think our hearts better than they are! our grace ſtronger than it is! Not all the inſtances we have of human frailty in ourſelves, nor all the ſcars, marks, and wounds, upon ſome of the beſt and holieſt of men, by reaſon of their ſad and ſhameful falls, will ſufficiently convince us of our wretched impotency, and how unable we are to do good, or reſiſt evil, by our own ſhattered and impaired ſtrength." 3. An undaunted courage, and heroic greatneſs of mind, appeared in this apoſtle, when he told the Jews to their faces, that they were guilty of murder, and muſt never expect ſalvation any other way, than by faith in that Jeſus whom they had ignominouſly crucified, and unjuſtly ſlain, nor did Peter ſay this in a corner, or behind the curtain, but in the ſanhedrim, that open court of judicature which had ſo lately ſentenced and condemned his Lord and Maſter. 3. St. Peter's profound humility and lowlineſs of mind: it was a mighty honour that our Lord put upon him, in making uſe of his miniſtry for laying the foundation of a chriſtian church both among the Jews, and Gentiles; and accordingly Cornelius, Acts x. would have entertained him with expreſſions of more than ordinary honour and veneration, falling down at his feet, and ready to adore him; but this humble apoſtle was ſo far from complying with it, that he plainly told him, that he was no other than ſuch a man as himſelf. And when our Lord, by a ſtupenduous act of condeſcenſion, ſtooped ſo low as to waſh his diſciples feet, Peter could by no means be perſuaded to admit of it, neither could be induced perſonally to accept it, till Chriſt was in a manner forced to threaten him into obedience, and a compliance with it, John xiii. 8. *Obſerve*, How admirable was his love unto, and how burning his zeal for, his Lord and Maſter, inſomuch that he could and did appeal to his omniſciency for the truth and ſincerity of it, *Lord thou knoweſt all things: Thou knoweſt that I love thee.* It was love that cauſed him to draw his ſword in the defence of his Maſter, againſt a band of ſoldiers, and an armed multitude: it was love that cauſed him to adventure on the greateſt difficulties, and to expoſe his life to the greateſt hazards: it was love that cauſed him to engage ſo deep as to ſuffer and die rather than deny him. Theſe were his exemplary virtues. His failings were theſe: Firſt, Too great a confidence of his own ſtrength, notwithſtanding Chriſt had particularly told him, that Satan had deſired to winnow him as wheat. None are ſo likely to be overcome by temptation, as thoſe who are leaſt afraid of it; none ſo ready to fall, as thoſe that think it impoſſible to fall. It is a dangerous thing to believe, that, becauſe we have long kept our innocence, we can never loſe it; and to conclude, becauſe we have been once or twice victorious over temptations, we muſt be ever conquerors, 1 Cor. x. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall*; that is, let him keep a jealous eye upon the weakneſs and inconſtancy of his nature, and with a believing eye look up to the power and promiſe of God, that he may be preſerved from falling, and preſented faultleſs in the day of Chriſt. Secondly, His fears overcame his faith. The inſolent affronts offered to his Maſter, cauſed him to forget his former reſolutions, and inſtead of being a valiant confeſſor, he turns a ſhameful renegado, renouncing him for whom a little before he reſolved to die. *Learn* hence, That ſlaviſh fear is a moſt tumultuous and ungovernable paſſion; its powerful aſſaults not only vanquiſh the ſtrongeſt reaſon, but ſometimes overcome the ſtrongeſt faith. It is a weapon which the tempter uſes, to the diſcomfort of ſome, and deſtruction of others, and therefore ought to be guarded againſt by thoſe who ſet any value on the peace and comfort of their ſouls. Thirdly, One ſin drew on another; his ſinful equivocation, in ſaying, I *know* *not the man*, prepared him for a downright denial, and that for an abjuration of him, with an imprecation and an anathema, ſwearing that he knew not the man. "Ah! Peter, is this thy owning thy Lord? Is this thy not being offended, though all ſhould be offended? Is this thy dying with him, rather than deny him? What! haſt thou forgot all thy promiſes and engagements to him, and all the dear and ſweet pledges of his love, ſo lately ſhewn to thee? Surely I have learnt from thy example, that it is as dangerous to truſt an heart of fleſh, as to rely upon an arm of fleſh; for had not thy denied and forſaken Maſter prayed for thee, and timely ſuccoured thee, Satan would not only have winnowed thee like wheat, but ground thee to powder." Fourthly, obſerve how many complicated ſins were included in this ſin of Peter's. The higheſt ingratitude to his maſter; unpardonable raſhneſs, in venturing into ſuch company, tarrying there ſo long, and without a call; making bold with a temptation; and for a time there was impenitence and hardneſs of heart. It is holy and ſafe to reſiſt the beginnings of ſin; if we yield to Satan in one temptation, he will certainly aſſault us with more and ſtronger. Peter proceeded here from a denial to a lie, from a lie to an oath, from an oath to a curſe. Let us reſiſt ſin at firſt; for then have we moſt power, and ſin has leaſt. *And the Lord looked on Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out, and wept bitterly. Obſerve*, If Chriſt had not looked towards Peter, Peter would never more have looked after Chriſt; nor was it barely the turn of Chriſt's bodily eye that wrought this diſciple to a ſorrowful remembrance of his ſin; had not this outward look been accompanied with the inward and ſecret influences of his Spirit, it had certainly proved ineffectual. Chriſt looked on Judas after his treaſon, ay, and reproved him too; but neither that look nor that reproof did break his heart. As the ſun with the ſame beams ſoftens wax and hardens clay, ſo a look from the ſame Chriſt leaves Judas hard and impenitent, and melts down Peter into tears. Though none can ſay, that tears are always a ſign of true repentance, yet certainly when they flow from a heart duly ſenſible of ſin, and deeply affected with ſorrow, it adminiſters matter of hope that there is ſincere repentance. Peter, after he had wept bitterly for ſin, never more returned to the after commiſſion of ſin; but he that was before timorous as an hare, became afterwards bold as a lion. He that once ſo ſhamefully denied, nay, abjured his maſter, afterwards openly confeſſed him, and ſealed that confeſſion joyfully with his blood. It is uſually obſerved, that a broken bone once well ſet, never more breaks again in the ſame place; a returning backſlider, when once reſtored, contracts ſuch an hatred of former ſins, as never, never more to run into the commiſſion of them. Let St. Peter's fall then be a warning to all profeſſors againſt preſumptuous confidence, and his reſtoration be an encouragement to all backſliders, to renew their faith and repentance. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

AND ſtraightway in the morning the chief prieſts held a conſultation with the elders and ſcribes, and the whole council, and bound Jeſus, and carried *him* away; and delivered *him* to Pilate.

The foregoing chapter gave us an account of Judas's treaſon, in delivering our Saviour into the hands of the chief prieſts. In this chapter we find our holy Lord brought by the chief prieſts unto Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, in order to his condemnation. Whence *obſerve*, That it has been the old policy of corrupt church governors to abuſe the power of the civil magiſtrate, in executing their cruel and unjuſt cenſures and ſentences upon holy and innocent perſons. The chief prieſts and elders do not kill our Saviour themſelves, for it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, being themſelves under the power of the Roman government; accordingly they deliver Chriſt over to the ſecular power, and deſire Pilate, the civil magiſtrate, to ſentence, and condemn him.

2 And Pilate aſked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt *it*. 3 And the chief prieſts accuſed him of many things: but he anſwered nothing. 4 And Pilate aſked him again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? behold, how many things they witneſs againſt thee. 5 But Jeſus yet anſwered nothing; ſo that Pilate marvelled.

It is very *obſervable*, how readily our Saviour anſwers before Pilate; Pilate ſaid, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* Jeſus anſwered, *Thou ſayeſt it*; or, it is as thou ſayeſt. But to all the accuſations of the chief prieſts, and to all that they falſely laid to his charge before Pilate, our Saviour anſwered never a word. He anſwered Pilate, but would not anſwer the chief prieſts a word before Pilate; probably for theſe reaſons, becauſe his innocency was ſuch as needed no apology; becauſe their calumnies and accuſations were ſo notoriouſly falſe, that they needed no confutation; to ſhew his contempt of death, and teach us by his example, to deſpiſe the falſe accuſations of malicious men, and to learn us patience and ſubmiſſion, when for his ſake we are ſlandered and traduced; for theſe reaſons our Saviour was as a deaf man, not anſwering the calumnies of the chief prieſts; but when Pilate aſks him a queſtion, which our Saviour knew that a direct anſwer to would coſt him his life, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* He replies, *I am.* Hence, ſays the apoſtle, 1 Tim. vi. 13. that *Jeſus Chriſt before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion. Teaching* us, That although we may, and ſometimes ought, to hold our peace, when our own reputation is concerned, yet muſt we never be ſilent when the honour of God and his truth may effectually be promoted by a free and full confeſſion: *For*, ſays Chriſt, *whoſoever denies me before men, him will I deny in the preſence of my Father, and before all his holy angels.*

6 Now at *that* feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner, whomſoever they deſired. 7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made inſurrection with him, who had committed murder in the inſurrection. 8 And the multitude, crying aloud, began to deſire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. 9 But Pilate anſwered them, ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the

king of the Jews? 10 (For he knew that the chief prieſts had delivered him for envy). 11 But the chief prieſts moved the people *to deſire* that he ſhould releaſe Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate anſwered, and ſaid again unto them, What will ye then that I ſhould do *unto him* whom ye call the king of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate ſaid unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? and they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. 15 ¶ And *ſo* Pilate, willing to content the people, releaſed Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jeſus, when he had ſcourged *him*, to be crucified.

Now *at the feaſt*, that is, at the feaſt of the paſſover, which by way of eminency is called *the feaſt*, the governor uſed to releaſe a priſoner; poſſibly by way of memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt: Accordingly Pilate makes a motion that Chriſt may be the priſoner ſet at liberty in honour of their feaſt; for he was ſenſible that what they did was out of envy and malice. *Obſerve* here, 1. What were the ſins which immediately occaſioned the death of Chriſt; they were covetouſneſs and envy. Covetouſneſs cauſed Judas to ſell him to the chief prieſts, and envy cauſed the chief prieſts to deliver him up to Pilate to crucify him: Envy is a killing and murdering paſſion; *Envy ſlayeth the ſilly one*, Job. v. 2. that is, it ſlayeth the ſilly perſon who harbours this peſtilent luſt in his breaſt and boſom; being like a fire in his bones, continually preying upon his ſpirits; and it is alſo the occaſion of ſlaying many an holy and innocent perſon; for who can ſtand before envy? The perſon envying wiſhes the envied out of the way, yea, out of the world; and, if need be, will not only wiſh it, but lend a lift upon occaſion towards it alſo: Witneſs the chief prieſts here, whoſe envy was ſo conſpicuous and barefaced, that Pilate himſelf takes notice of it; he knew that the chief prieſts had delivered him for envy. 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling Pilate was to be the inſtrument of our Saviour's death: One while he expoſtulates with the chief prieſts, ſaying, *What evil hath he done?* Another while he bids them, *Take him and judge him according to their law:* Nay, St. Luke ſays, that Pilate came forth three ſeveral times, profeſſing, *That he found no fault in him*, Luke xxiii. From hence *note*, That hypocrites within the viſible church may be guilty of ſuch tremendous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſciences of infidels and Pagans without the church may boggle at and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, abſolves Chriſt, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, that heard his doctrine, and ſaw his miracles, do condemn him. Laſtly, How Pilate ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the Jews importunity, and, contrary to the light of his own reaſon and judgment, delivers the holy and innocent Jeſus, firſt to be ſcourged, and then crucified. It is a vain apology for ſin, when perſons pretend that it was not committed with their own conſent, but at the inſtigation and importunity of others; ſuch is the frame and conſtitution of man's ſoul, that none can make him either wicked or miſerable without his own conſent. Pilate, willing to content the people, *when he had ſcourged Jeſus, delivered him to be crucified.* Here *obſerve*, That as the death of the croſs was a Roman puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans firſt to whip their malefactors, and then crucify them. Now the manner of the Roman ſcourging is ſaid to be thus: "They ſtripped the condemned perſon, and bound him to a poſt: two ſtrong men firſt ſcourged him with rods of thorns, then two others ſcourged him with whips of cords full of knots, and laſt of all two more with whips of wire, and therewith tore off the very fleſh and ſkin from the malefactor's back and ſides." That our bleſſed Saviour was thus cruelly ſcourged by Pilate's command, ſeems to ſome not improbable, from that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* cxxix. 3. *The ploughers ploughed upon my back, and made long furrows:* Which, if ſpoken prophetically of Chriſt, was literally fulfilled in the day of his ſcourging. But why was the precious and tender body of our holy Lord thus galled, rent and torn with ſcourging? Doubtleſs to fulfil that prophecy, *Iſaiah* l. 6. *I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair: That by his ſtripes we might be healed.* And from his example, *learn*, Not to think it ſtrange, if we find ourſelves ſcourged with the tongue, with the hand, or with both, when we ſee our dear Redeemer bleeding by ſtripes and ſcourges before our eyes.

16 And the ſoldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. 17 And they clothed him with purple, and plaited a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*, 18 And began to ſalute him, Hail, king of the Jews! 19 And they ſmote him on the head with a reed, and did ſpit upon him, and bowing *their* knees, worſhipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

The next part of our Saviour's ſufferings conſiſted of cruel mockings; he had owned himſelf to be the king of the Jews; that is, a ſpiritual King in and over his church; but the Jews expecting that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in the pomp of an earthly prince, and finding themſelves diſappointed of their expectation in our Saviour, they look upon him as a deceiver and impoſtor; and accordingly treat him as a mocking, with all the marks of deriſion and ſcorn; for firſt they put a crown upon his head, but a very ignominious and cruel one, *a crown of thorns*; they place a ſceptre in his hand, but that of a *reed*; a *robe of ſcarlet* or *purple* upon his body, and then *bowed their knees before him*, as they were wont to do before their princes, crying, *Hail, King*. Thus were all the marks of ſcorn imaginable put upon our dear Redeemer; yet what they did in jeſt, God permitted to be done in earneſt; for all theſe things were ſigns and marks of ſovereignty; and almighty God cauſed the regal dignity of his Son to ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt abaſement; what was all this jeering, but to flout majeſty? And why did Chriſt undergo all this ignominy, diſgrace, and ſhame, but to ſhew what was due unto us for our ſins? As alſo to give us an example to bear all the ſcorn, reproach, and ſhame imaginable for his ſake, *who for the joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the ſhame, as well as endured the croſs.*

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who
paſſed by, coming out of the country, the father of
Alexander and Rufus, to bear his croſs. 22 And
they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is,
being interpreted, The place of a ſcull. 23 And
they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh:
but he received *it* not. 24 And when they had
crucified him, they parted his garments, caſting lots
upon them, what every man ſhould take. 25 And it
was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26
And the ſuperſcription of his accuſation was written
over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 ¶ And
with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his
right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the
ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, And he was
numbered with the tranſgreſſors. 29 And they that
paſſed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and
ſaying, Ah, thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and
buildeſt *it* in three days, 30 Save thyſelf, and come
down from the croſs. 31 Likewiſe alſo the chief
prieſts mocking, ſaid among themſelves, with the
ſcribes, He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. 32
Let Chriſt the king of Iſrael deſcend now from the
croſs, that we may ſee and believe. And they that
were crucified with him, reviled him. 33 And when
the ſixth hour was come, there was darkneſs over
the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the
ninth hour, Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying,
Eloi, Eloi, lama ſabachthani? which is, being interpreted,
My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken
me? 35 And ſome of them that ſtood by, when
they heard *it*, ſaid, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36
And one ran, and filled a ſpunge full of vinegar, and
put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, ſaying, Let
alone; let us ſee whether Elias will come to take
him down. 37 And Jeſus cried with a loud voice,
and gave up the ghoſt.

The ſentence of death being paſſed by Pilate, who can with dry eyes, behold the ſad pomp of our Saviour's bloody execution? Forth comes the bleſſed Jeſus out of Pilate's gate, bearing that croſs which ſoon after was to bear him; with his croſs on his ſhoulders he marches towards Golgotha; and when they ſee he can go no faſter, they force Simon the Cyrenian, not out of compaſſion, but indignation, to be the porter of his croſs. The Cyrenian being a Gentile, not a Jew, that bare our Saviour's croſs, thereby might be ſignified, that the Gentiles ſhould have a part in Chriſt as well as the Jews, and be ſharers with them in the benefits of the croſs. At length, our holy Lord comes to Golgotha, the place of his bitter and bloody execution; here in a public place, with infamous company, betwixt two thieves, is he crucified; that is, faſtened to a great croſs of wood, his hands ſtretched forth abroad, and his feet cloſed together, and both hands and feet faſtened with nails; his naked body was lifted up in the open air, hanging betwixt heaven and earth; ſignifying thereby, that the crucified perſon deſerved to live in neither. This ſhameful, painful, and accurſed death did the holy and innocent Jeſus ſuffer and undergo for ſhameleſs ſinners. Some obſerve all the dimenſions of length, breadth, depth, and height, in our Saviour's ſufferings; for length, his paſſion was ſeveral hours long, from twelve to three, expoſed all that time both to hunger and cold. The thieves that were crucified with him endured only perſonal pains, but he underwent the miſeries of all mankind. As to its breadth, his paſſion extended over all the powers and parts of his ſoul and body; no part free but his tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his enemies. His ſight was tormented with the ſcornful geſtures of thoſe *who paſſed by wagging their heads*: His hearing grieved with the taunts and jeers of the prieſts and people: his ſmelling offended with noiſome ſavours in the place of ſculls; his taſte with the gall and vinegar given him to drink; his feeling was wonderfully affected by the nails which pierced his tender nerves with a multiplicity of wounds. And for the depth of his paſſion, it was as deep as hell itſelf; enduring tortures in his ſoul, as well as torments in his body; groaning under the burden of deſertion, and crying out, *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Laſtly, for the height of his paſſion, his ſufferings were as high as heaven, his perſon being infinite as well as innocent, no leſs than the Son of God, which adds infinite worth and value to his ſufferings. Lord, *Let us be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth and length, depth and heighth of our Saviour's love* in ſuffering for us, *and let us know that love of his which paſſeth knowledge. Obſerve* next, The inſcription wrote by Pilate over our ſuffering Saviour, *This is Jeſus the King of the Jews:* It was the manner of the Romans, when they crucified a malefactor, to publiſh the cauſe of his death in capital letters, placed over the head of the perſon. Now it is obſervable, how wonderfully the wiſdom of God over-ruled the heart and pen of Pilate, to draw his title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his croſs: Pilate is Chriſt's herald, and proclaims him *King of the Jews*. *Learn* hence, That the regal dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt ſufferings and reproaches; Pilate, without his own knowledge, did our Saviour an eminent piece of ſervice; he did that for Chriſt which none of his own diſciples durſt do; not that he did it deſignedly, but from the ſpecial over-ruling providence of God; no thanks to Pilate for all this, becauſe the higheſt ſervices performed to Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall neither be accepted nor rewarded by God. *Obſerve*, farther, The ſeveral aggravations of our Lord's ſufferings upon the croſs. 1. From the company he ſuffered with, *two thieves:* It had been a ſufficient diſparagement to our bleſſed Saviour to have been ſorted with the beſt of men; but to be numbered with the ſcum of mankind, is ſuch an indignity as confounds our thoughts. This was deſigned by the Jews to diſhonour and diſgrace our Saviour the more, and to perſuade the world that he was the greateſt of offenders; but God over-ruled this alſo, for fulfilling an ancient prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, *Iſa.* liii. laſt verſe: *And he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.* 2. Another aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings upon the croſs, was the ſcorn and mocking deriſion which he met with in his dying moments, both from the common people, from the chief prieſts, and from the thieves that ſuffered with him. The common people *reviled him, wagging their heads*; the chief prieſts, though men of age and gravity, yet barbarouſly mocked him in his miſery: and not only ſo, but they atheiſtically ſcoff and jeer at his faith and affiance in God; ſaying, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him*; *let him deliver him, if he would have him.* Where *note*, That perſecutors are generally atheiſtical ſcoffers; the chief prieſts and elders though knowing men, yet they blaſpheme God; they mock at his power, and deride his providence, which is as bad as to deny his being: So that from hence we may gather, That thoſe who adminiſter to God in holy things by way of office, if they be not the beſt, they are the worſt of men. No ſuch bitter enemies to the power of godlineſs, as the miniſters of religion who were never acquainted with the efficacy and power of it upon their own hearts and lives. Nothing on this ſide hell is worſe than a wicked prieſt, a miniſter of God devoted to the ſervice of the devil. A third aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings upon the croſs, was this, That the thieves that ſuffered with him reviled him with the reſt; that is, one of them, as St. *Luke* has it, or perhaps both of them might do it at firſt; which, if ſo, increaſes the wonder of the penitent thief's converſion. From the impenitent thief's reviling Chriſt, we *learn*, That neither ſhame nor pain will change the mind of a reſolute ſinner, but even then when he is in the ſuburbs of hell will he blaſpheme. *They that were crucified with him reviled him.* But the moſt aggravating circumſtance of all the reſt in our Lord's ſufferings, was this, that he was forſaken of his Father; *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Thence *learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ſuffering for our ſins, was really deſerted and forſaken by his Father, and left deſtitute of all ſenſible conſolation. *Why haſt thou forſaken me? Learn* farther, That under this deſertion Chriſt deſpaired not, but ſtill retained a firm perſuaſion of God's love unto him, and experienced neceſſary ſupports from him: *My God, My God!* theſe are words of affiance and faith. Chriſt was thus forſaken for us, that we might never be forſaken by God; yet by God's forſaking of Chriſt, we are not to underſtand any abatement of divine love, but only a withdrawing from the human nature the ſenſe of his love, and a letting out upon his ſoul a deep afflicting ſenſe of his diſpleaſure againſt ſin. There is a twofold deſertion; the one total, final, and eternal, by which God utterly forſakes a perſon, both as to grace and glory, being for ſin wholly caſt out of God's preſence, and adjudged to eternal torments. This Chriſt was not capable of, nor could the dignity of his perſon admit it: The other is a partial, temporary deſertion; when God for a little moment hides his face from his children. Now this was moſt agreeable to Chriſt's nature, and alſo ſuitable to his office, who was to ſatiſfy the juſtice of God for our forſaking of him, and to bring us back again to God, that we might be received for ever. Laſtly, What a miraculous evidence Chriſt gave of his Godhead: inſtantly before he gave up the ghoſt, *he cried with a loud voice.* This ſhews he did not die according to the ordinary courſe of nature, gradually drawing on, as we expreſs it; but his life was whole in him to the laſt, and nature as ſtrong as it was at firſt. Other men die by degrees, and towards their end their ſenſe of pain is much blunted; but Chriſt ſtood under the pains of death in his full ſtrength, and his life was whole and entire in him to the very laſt moment. This was evident, by the mighty outcry he made when he gave up the ghoſt, contrary to the ſenſe and experience of all perſons. Now he that could cry with ſuch a loud voice as he did (*in articulo mortis,*) could have kept himſelf from dying, if he would. Hence we *learn*, That when Chriſt died, he rather conquered death, than was conquered by it; he muſt voluntarily and freely lay down his life, before death could come at him. Thus died Chriſt the captain of our ſalvation; and, like Sampſon, became more victorious by his death, than he was in his life.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain,
from the top to the bottom. 39 ¶ And when the
centurion, which ſtood over-againſt him, ſaw that
he ſo cried out and gave up the ghoſt, he ſaid, Truly
this man was the Son of God. 40 There was alſo
women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary
Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the leſs,
and of Joſes, and Salome; 41 Who alſo, when he
was in Galilee, followed him, and miniſtered unto
him; and many other women which came up with
him unto Jeruſalem.

Three circumſtances are here *obſervable*; 1. A ſtupendous prodigy happening upon the death of our Saviour, *the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from top to bottom*; the veil was a hanging which parted the moſt holy place from the holy ſanctuary. By the rending of which, God teſtified that he was now about to forſake his temple; that the ceremonial law was now aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt, and that by the blood of Jeſus we have acceſs unto God, and may enter into the holy of holies. See the note on Matt. xvii. 51. *Obſerve*, 2. What influence the manner and circumſtances of our Saviour's death had upon the centurion, and the ſoldiers with him; they cry out, *Verily this was the Son of God.* Where *note*, That the heathen ſoldiers are ſooner convinced of the divinity of our Saviour, than the unbelieving Jewiſh doctors. Obſtinacy and unbelief filled their minds with an invincible prejudice againſt Chriſt; ſo that neither the miracles wrought by him in his life, or at his death, could convince them that Chriſt was any thing better than an impoſtor and deceiver. None are ſo blind as thoſe who through malicious obſtinacy and inveterate prejudice will not ſee. 3. Who of Chriſt's friends were witneſſes of his death; they are *the women that followed him, and miniſtered unto him*; not one of his dear diſciples came near him, except John, who ſtood by the croſs with the virgin Mary. O! what a ſhame was this, for apoſtles to be abſent from a ſpectacle upon which the ſalvation of the whole world did depend? And what an honour was this to the female ſex in general, and to theſe holy women in particular, that they had the courage to follow Chriſt to his croſs, when all his diſciples forſook him and fled? God can make timorous and fearful women bold and courageous confeſſors of his truth, and fortify them againſt the fears of ſuffering, contrary to the natural timorouſneſs of their temper; theſe women wait upon Chriſt's croſs, when his apoſtles fly, and durſt not come nigh it.

42 ¶ And now when the even was come (becauſe it was the preparation, that is, the day before the ſabbath); 43 Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellor, which alſo waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jeſus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he aſked him, Whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joſeph. 46 And he brought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a ſepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a ſtone unto the door of the ſepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joſes, beheld where he was laid.

The circumſtances of our Lord's funeral, and honourable interment in the grave, are here recorded by the Evangeliſt; ſuch a funeral as never was, ſince graves were firſt digged. Where *obſerve* 1. Our Lord's body muſt be begged before it could be buried; the dead bodies of the malefactors being in the power, and at the diſpoſal of the judge. Pilate grants it, and accordingly the dead body is taken down, wrapped in fine linen, and prepared for the ſepulchre. 2. The perſon that beſtows this honourable burial upon our Saviour, Joſeph of Arimathea; a diſciple no doubt, though he did not make a public and open profeſſion; a worthy, though a cloſe diſciple. Grace doth not always make a public and open ſhew where it is; as there is much ſecret riches in the bowels of the earth, which no eye ever ſaw; ſo there is much grace in the hearts of ſome chriſtians that the eye of the world takes little notice of. Some gracious perſons cannot put forward, and diſcover themſelves in diſcourſe as others; and yet ſuch weak chriſtians, as the world counts them, perhaps ſhall ſtand their ground when ſtronger run away. We read of none of the apoſtles at Chriſt's funeral. Fear had chaſed them away, but Joſeph of Arimathea appears boldly; if God ſtrengthens the weak, and leaves the ſtrong to the prevalency of their own fears, *The weak ſhall be as David, and the ſtrong as tow.* 3. The mourners that followed our Saviour's hearſe, namely, The women which came out of Galilee, and particularly the two Mary's; a very poor train of mourners; the apoſtles were all ſcattered, and afraid to own their Lord and maſter either dying or dead. And as our Lord affected no pomp nor gallantry in his life, ſo funeral pomp had been no way ſuitable, either to the end or manner of his death. Humiliation was deſigned in his death, and his burial was the loweſt degree of humiliation, and therefore might not be pompous. 4. The grave or ſepulchre in which our Lord was buried: It was in a ſepulchre hewn out of a rock; in a new ſepulchre; in a new ſepulchre in a garden. 1. Our Lord was buried in a garden. As by the ſins of the firſt Adam we were driven out of the garden of pleaſure, the earthly paradiſe, ſo by the ſufferings of the ſecond Adam, who lay buried in a garden, we may hope for entrance into the heavenly paradiſe. 2. It was in a ſepulchre hewn out of a rock, that ſo his enemies might have no occaſion to cavil, and ſay that his diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret holes, or unſeen paſſages under ground. 3. It was in a new ſepulchre, *in which never man was laid*; leſt his adverſaries ſhould ſay it was ſome other that was riſen, who was buried there before him; or that he roſe from the dead by touching ſome other corps. 5. The manner of our Lord's funeral, it was haſty, open, and decent; it was performed in haſte, by reaſon of the ſtraits of time; the ſabbath was approaching, and they lay all buſineſs aſide to prepare for that. *Learn* hence, How much it is our duty to diſpatch our worldly buſineſs as early as we can towards the end of the week, that we may be the better prepared to ſanctify the Lord's day, if we live to enjoy it. Hence it is that we are called upon to remember that day before it comes, and to ſanctify it when it is come. Again, our Lord was buried openly, as well as haſtily; all perſons had liberty to be ſpectators, leſt any ſhould object that there was deceit and fraud uſed in or about our Saviour's burial; yet was he alſo interred decently, his holy body being wrapped in fine linen, and perfumed with ſpices, according to the Jewiſh cuſtom. 6. The reaſons why our Lord was buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other men lie by the walls; and, had his dead body remained a thouſand years unburied, it would have ſeen no corruption, having never been tainted with ſin. Sin is the cauſe of the body's corruption; it is ſin that makes our bodies ſtink worſe than carrion when they are dead. A funeral then was not neceſſary for Chriſt's body, upon the ſame accounts that it was neceſſary for ours. But, 1. Our Lord was buried, to declare the certainty of his death, and the reality of his reſurrection; and for this reaſon did God's providence order it, that he ſhould be embalmed, to cut off all pretenſions; for in this kind of embalming, his mouth, his ears, and his noſtrils, were all filled with odours and ſpices, ſo that there could be no latent principle of life in him; his being thus buried then, did demonſtrate him to be certainly dead. 2. Chriſt was buried, to fulfil the types and prophecies that went before concerning him. *Jonas's being three days and three nights in the belly of the whale*, was a type of *Chriſt's being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*; yea, the prophet Iſaiah, chap. liii. 9. declared our Lord's funeral, and the manner of it, long before he was born; *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*; pointing by that expreſſion at this tomb of Joſeph's, who was a rich man, and laid him in a tomb deſigned for himſelf. 3. He was buried to complete his humiliation; *They have brought me to the duſt of death*; ſays David, a type of Chriſt. This was the loweſt ſtep he could poſſibly deſcend in his abaſed ſtate; lower he could not be laid, and ſo low his bleſſed head muſt be laid, elſe he had not been humbled to the loweſt degree of humiliation. 4. Chriſt went into the grave that he might conquer death in its own territories and dominions. His victory over the grave cauſes his ſaints to triumph and ſing, *O grave, where is thy deſtruction!* Our dear Redeemer has perfumed the bed of the grave by his own lying in it, ſo that a pillow of down is not ſo ſoft to a believer's head as a pillow of duſt. Laſtly, Of what uſe the doctrine of our Lord's burial may be unto his diſciples and followers: 1. For inſtruction. Here we ſee the amazing depths of our Lord's humiliation; from what, and to what, his love brought him; even from the boſom of his Father, to the boſom of the grave. O how doth the depth of his humiliation ſhew us the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, and therewith the heinouſneſs of our tranſgreſſion! 2. For conſolation againſt the fears of death and the grave; the grave received Chriſt, but could not retain him; death ſwallowed him up, as the fiſh did Jonas, but quickly vomited him up again: And ſo ſhall it fare with Chriſt myſtical, as it did with Chriſt perſonal. As it was done to the head, ſo it ſhall be done to the members: The grave could not long keep him, it ſhall not always keep us; as his body reſted in hope, ſo ſhall ours alſo; and although we ſee corruption, yet ſhall we not always lie under the power of corruption. In ſhort, Chriſt's lying in the grave has changed and altered the nature of the grave; it was a priſon before, a bed of reſt now; he whoſe head is in heaven, need not fear to put his feet into the grave: *Awake, and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the duſt*, for the enmity of the grave is ſlain by Chriſt. 3. For our imitation: Let us ſtudy and endeavour to be buried with Chriſt; in reſpect of our ſins, I mean, Rom. vi. 4. *Buried with him into death.* Our ſins ſhould be as a dead body in ſeveral reſpects. Are dead bodies removed out of the ſociety of men? So ſhould our ſins be removed far from us. Do dead bodies in the grave ſpend and conſume by degree? So ſhould our ſins daily. Will dead bodies grow every day more and more loathſome to others? So ſhould our ſins be to ourſelves. Do dead bodies wax out of memory, and are quite forgotten? So ſhould our ſins alſo, in reſpect of any delight that we take in remembering of them; we ſhould always remember our ſins to our humiliation, but never think or ſpeak of them with the leaſt delight or ſatisfaction; for this in God's account is a new commiſſion of them, and lays us under an aggravated guilt and condemnation.

CHAP. XVI.

This laſt chapter of St. Mark's goſpel contains the hiſtory of our Saviour's reſurrection, and gives us an account of what he did upon earth, between the time of his triumphant reſurrection, and his glorious aſcenſion.

AND when the ſabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought ſweet ſpices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the firſt *day* of the week they came unto the ſepulchre, at the riſing of the ſun.

The Lord of life was buried on the Friday, in the evening of that day in which he was crucified, and his holy body reſted in the ſilent grave all the next day, and ſome part of the day following. Thus roſe he again the third day, neither ſooner nor later; not ſooner, leſt the truth of his death ſhould have been queſtioned, that he did not die at all; and not later, leſt the faith of his diſciples ſhould have failed. Accordingly, when the ſabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene getting the other women together, ſhe and they ſet out before day to viſit the holy ſepulchre; and about ſun-riſing they get to it, intending with their ſpices and odours farther to embalm their Lord's body. Here *obſerve* 1. That although the hearts of theſe holy women did burn with an ardent zeal and affection to their crucified Lord, yet the commanded duties of the ſabbath are not omitted by them: they keep cloſe, and ſilently ſpend that holy day in a mixture of grief and hope. A good pattern of ſabbath-ſanctification, and worthy of our chriſtian imitation. 2. Theſe holy women go, but not empty-handed: She that had beſtowed a coſtly alablaſter box of ointment upon Chriſt whilſt alive, has prepared no leſs precious odours for him now dead; thereby paying their laſt homage to our Saviour's corpſe. But what need of odours to perfume a body which could not ſee corruption? True, his holy body did not want them, but the love and affection of his friends could not withhold them. 3. How great a tribute of reſpect and honour is due and payable to the memory of theſe holy women, for their great magnanimity and courage; they followed Chriſt when his cowardly diſciples left him, they accompanied him to the croſs, they followed his hearſe to the grave, when his diſciples durſt not appear; and now, very early in the morning, they go to viſit his ſepulchre, fearing neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the preſence of the watchmen. *Learn* hence, That courage is the ſpecial gift of God: and if he gives it to the feebler ſex, even to timorous and fearful women, it is not in the power of men to make them afraid.

3 And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre? (4 And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away) for it was very great. 5 And entering into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man ſitting, on the right ſide, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is riſen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his diſciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre: for they trembled, and were amazed: neither ſaid they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

Obſerve here, 1. With what pomp and triumph doth our Lord ariſe; an angel is ſent from heaven to roll away the ſtone. But could not Chriſt have riſen without the angel's help? Yes, doubtleſs; he that raiſed himſelf, could ſurely have rolled away the ſtone; but God thinks fit to ſend an officer from heaven to open the priſon-door of the grave, and, by ſetting our ſurety at liberty, proclaims our debt to the divine juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit that the angels, who had been witneſſes of our Saviour's paſſion, ſhould alſo be witneſſes of his reſurrection. 2. Our Lord's reſurrection declared, *He is riſen, he is not here.* Almighty God never intended that the darling of his ſoul ſhould be left in an obſcure ſepulchre; *He is not here*, ſaid the angel, where they laid him, where you left him. Death has loſt its prey, and the grave has loſt its priſoner. 3. It is not ſaid, he is not here, for he is raiſed, but *he is riſen.* The word imports the active power of Chriſt, or the ſelf-quickening principle by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the dead, *Acts* i. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion.* Hence *learn*, That it was the divine nature, or Godhead of Chriſt, which raiſed the human nature from death to life; others were raiſed from the grave by Chriſt's power, but he raiſed himſelf by his own power. 4. The teſtimony of witneſs given of our Lord's reſurrection; that of an angel in human ſhape, *A young man clothed in a long white garment.* But why is an angel the firſt publiſher of our Saviour's reſurrection? ſurely the dignity of our Lord's perſon, and the excellency of his reſurrection, require that it ſhould be thus publiſhed.—How very ſerviceable and officious the holy angels were in attending upon our Saviour in the days of his fleſh, ſee note on *Matt.* xxviii. 6, 7. 5. The perſons to whom our Lord's reſurrection was firſt declared and made known; to women, to the Mary's. But why to women? and why to theſe women? Why to women? Becauſe God will make choice of weak means for producing great effects; knowing, that the weakneſs of the inſtrument redounds to the greater honour of the agent. In the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel, God intermixes divine power with human weakneſs. Thus the conception of Chriſt was by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, but his mother, a poor woman, a carpenter's ſpouſe; ſo the crucifixion of Chriſt was in much meanneſs and outward baſeneſs, being crucified between two thieves. But the powers of heaven and earth trembling, the rocks rending, the graves opening, ſhewed a mixture of divine power. Thus here, God will honour what inſtruments he pleaſes for the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes. But why to theſe women, the two Mary's, is the firſt diſcovery made of our Saviour's reſurrection? Poſſibly it was a reward for their magnanimity and maſculine courage; theſe women cleaved to Chriſt when the apoſtles forſook him; they aſſiſted at his croſs, they attended at his funeral, they waited at his ſepulchre; theſe women had more courage than the apoſtles, therefore God makes them apoſtles to the apoſtles. This was a tacit rebuke, a ſecret check given to the apoſtles, that they ſhould be thus outdone by women; theſe holy women went before the apoſtles in the laſt ſervices that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the apoſtles here come after them in their rewards and comforts. 6. The evidence which the angel offers to the women, to evince and prove the verity and certainty of our Saviour's reſurrection, namely, by an appeal to their ſenſes; *Behold the place where they laid him:* The ſenſes when rightly diſpoſed, are the proper judges of all ſenſible objects; and accordingly Chriſt himſelf did appeal to his diſciples ſenſes concerning the truth of his own reſurrection: *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf.* And indeed if we muſt not believe our ſenſes, we ſhall want the beſt external evidence for the proof of the certainty and truth of the Chriſtian religion; namely, the miracles wrought by Chriſt and his apoſtles: For what aſſurance can we have of the reality of thoſe miracles but from our ſenſes! Therefore, ſays our Saviour, *If ye believe not me; yet believe the works that I do*; that is, the miracles which I have wrought before your eyes. Now as my ſenſes tell me that Chriſt's miracles were true, ſo they aſſure me that the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is falſe. From the whole *note*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the omnipotent power of his Godhead, revived and roſe again from the dead the third day, to the terror and conſternation of his enemies, and the unſpeakable joy and conſolation of believers. Laſtly, The quick diſpatch made of the joyful news of our Lord's reſurrection to the ſorrowful diſciples; *Go tell the diſciples*, ſays the angel; *Go tell my brethren*, ſays Chriſt, Matt. xxviii. 10. Chriſt might have ſaid, "Go tell thoſe apoſtate apoſtles, that cowardly left me in my danger, that durſt not own me in the high prieſt's hall, that durſt not come within the ſhadow of my croſs, nor within ſight of my ſepulchre;" not a word of this by way of upbraiding them for their late ſhameful cowardice, but all words of kindneſs: *Go tell my brethren.* Where *note*, That Chriſt calls them brethren after his reſurrection and exaltation; thereby ſhewing, that the change of his condition had wrought no change in his affection towards his poor diſciples; but thoſe that were his brethren before, in the time of his abaſement, are ſtill ſo after his exaltation and advancement; *Go tell my brethren*, ſays Chriſt; *Go tell his diſciples and Peter*, ſays the angel. Where *note*, That St. Peter is particularly named, not becauſe of his primacy and ſuperiority over the reſt of the apoſtles, as the church of Rome would have it, but becauſe he had denied Chriſt, and for that denial was ſwallowed up with ſorrow, and ſtood moſt in need of comfort; therefore, ſays Chriſt by the angel, ſpeak particularly to Peter, be ſure that his ſad heart be comforted with this joyful news, that he may know that I am friends with him, notwithſtanding his late cowardice. *Tell the diſciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee.* But why to Galilee? Becauſe Jeruſalem was now a forſaken place, a people abandoned to deſtruction; but Galilee was a place where Chriſt's miniſtry was more acceptable. Such places ſhall be moſt honoured with Chriſt's preſence, where his goſpel his moſt accepted.

9 ¶ Now when *Jeſus* was riſen early, the firſt *day* of the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. 10 *And* ſhe went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been ſeen of her, believed not. 12 ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13 And they went and told *it* unto the reſidue: neither believed they them.

14 ¶

14 ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they ſat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen.

An account is here given of a threefold appearance of Chriſt after his reſurrection. 1. To Mary Magdalene, not to the Virgin Mary; and it is obſervable, that our bleſſed Saviour, after his reſurrection, firſt appeared to Mary Magdalene, a grievous ſinner, for the comfort of all true penitents. Mary goes immediately to his diſciples, whom ſhe finds weeping and mourning, and tells them, *ſhe had ſeen the Lord; but they believed her not.* The ſecond appearance was to the two diſciples going into the country; that is, into the village of Emmaus; as they were in the way, Jeſus joined himſelf to their company, *but their eyes were holden,* by the power of God, that they did not diſcern him in his own proper ſhape, but apprehended him to be another perſon whom they converſed with. His third appearance was *to the eleven as they ſat at meat, whom he upbraids with their unbelief*; and, to convince them effectually that he was riſen from the dead, *he eats with them a piece of broiled fiſh, and of an honeycomb.* Not that he needed it, ſeeing he was now become immortal, but to aſſure them, he had ſtill the ſame body. From the whole *note,* How induſtriouſly our Lord endeavours to confirm his diſciples faith in the doctrine of his reſurrection: ſo ſlack and backward were they to believe that the Meſſiah was riſen again from the dead, that all the predictions of ſcripture, all the aſſurances they had received from our Saviour's mouth, yea, all the appearances of our Saviour to them, after he was actually riſen from the dead, were little enough to confirm and eſtabliſh them in the certain belief that he was riſen from the dead.

15 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.

Here our Saviour gives commiſſion to his diſciples to congregate and gather a chriſtian church out of all nations, *to go forth and preach the goſpel to every creature;* that is, to all reaſonable creatures capable of it; not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles alſo, without any diſtinction of country, age, or ſex, whatſoever. *Learn* thence, That the apoſtles and firſt planters of the goſpel had a commiſſion from Chriſt, to go among the Pagan Gentiles, without limitation or diſtinction, to inſtruct them in the ſaving myſteries of the goſpel. The ſecond branch of their commiſſion was to baptize. Where obſerve the encouraging promiſe made by Chriſt, *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved:* that is, he that receiveth and embraceth the goſpel preached by you, and thereupon becomes a proſelyte and diſciple of Chriſt, and receives baptiſm, the ſeal of the new covenant ſhall for all his former ſins receive pardon, and upon his perſeverance, obtain eternal life; but he that ſtands out obſtinately and impenitently, ſhall certainly be damned. The two damning ſins under the goſpel are infidelity and hypocriſy; not receiving Chriſt for their Lord and Saviour by ſome, or doing it feignedly by others. Happy are they in whom the preaching of the goſpel produceth ſuch a faith as is the parent and principle of obedience; *He that ſo believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.* Accordingly, ſome paraphraze the words thus: "He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; that is, he ſhall by virtue of the faith in baptiſm, be put into a ſtate of ſalvation; ſo that if he continue in that faith, and do not wilfully recede from his baptiſmal covenant, he ſhall actually be ſaved." *Note,* farther, That they who hence conclude that infants are not capable of baptiſm, becauſe they cannot believe; muſt alſo hence conclude, that they cannot be ſaved becauſe they cannot believe; for faith is more expreſsly required to ſalvation than to baptiſm. Laſtly, That though it be ſaid, *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved;* it is not ſaid, He that is not baptized ſhall be damned; becauſe it is not the want, but the contempt of baptiſm, that damns, otherwiſe infants might be damned for their parents neglects.

17 And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; In my name ſhall they caſt out devils; they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues; 18 They ſhall take up ſerpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.

Here we have a gracious promiſe in Chriſt, that in order to the ſpreading and propagating the goſpel, as far as may be, the Spirit ſhould be poured forth abundantly from on high upon the apoſtles, and thereby they ſhould be enabled to work miracles, to caſt out devils, to ſpeak ſtrange languages, which we read they did, Acts ii. And this power of working miracles continued in the church an hundred years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, until Chriſtianity had taken root in the hearts of men. Iræneus, lib. II. c. 58. ſays, That many believers, beſides the apoſtles, had this power of working miracles; as new-ſet plants are watered at firſt, till they have taken faſt rooting; ſo, that the Chriſtian faith might grow the faſter, God watered it with miracles at its firſt plantation. Yet *obſerve,* That all the miracles which they had power to work were healing and beneficent; not terrifying judgments, but act of kindneſs and mercy. It was our Saviour's deſign to bring over perſons to chriſtianity by lenity, mildneſs, and gentleneſs, not to affright them into a compliance with aſtoniſhing judgments, which might affect their fear, but little influence their faith: For the will and conſent of perſons to the principles of any religion, eſpecially the chriſtian, is like a royal fort which muſt not be ſtormed by violence, but taken by ſurrender.

19 ¶ So then after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.

Here we have that grand article of our Chriſtian faith aſſerted, namely, our Saviour's aſcenſion into heaven, together with his exaltation there, expreſſed by his *ſitting at God's right hand;* he aſcended now to heaven in his human nature, for in his divine nature he was there already; as it was neceſſary that he ſhould thus aſcend, in order to his own perſonal exaltation and glorification. When he was on earth, his humility, patience and ſelf-denial, were exerciſed by undergoing God's wrath, the devil's rage, and man's cruelty; now he goes to heaven, that they may be rewarded; he that is a patient ſufferer upon earth, ſhall be a triumphant conqueror in heaven; alſo with reſpect to his church on earth, it was needful and neceſſary that our Lord ſhould aſcend up into heaven, namely, to ſend down the Holy Spirit upon his apoſtles, which he did at the feaſt of Pentecoſt. *If I go not away*, ſays Chriſt, *the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will ſend him to you.* And likewiſe to be a powerful advocate and interceſſor with his Father in heaven, on the behalf of his church and children here upon earth. Heb. ix. 24. *Chriſt is entered into heaven itſelf, there to appear in the preſence of God for us.* Finally, Chriſt aſcended into heaven, to give us an aſſurance, that in due time we ſhould aſcend after him, John xiv. 2. *I go to prepare a place for you.* Hence the apoſtle call our Saviour, *our forerunner*, Heb. vi. 19. Now if Chriſt in the aſcenſion was a forerunner, then there are ſome to follow after. To the ſame purpoſe is that expreſſion of the apoſtle, Eph. ii. 6. *He hath made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt*; that is, we are already ſat down in him and ere long ſhall ſit down by him; we are already ſat down in him as our head, and ſhall hereafter ſit down by him as his members. The only way to this, namely, to aſcend unto, and ſit down with Chriſt in heaven, is to live like him, and to live unto him here on earth: *If any man love me, he will follow me, and where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be*, St. John xii. 26.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with ſigns following. Amen.

Obſerve here, firſt, the general publication of the goſpel by the apoſtles; they went forth and preached *every where*. Secondly, The reaſon of the efficacy and ſucceſs of it, namely, that divine and miraculous power which accompanied the preaching of it, *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word with ſigns following*. *Note* 1. The general publication of the goſpel by the apoſtles; *they went forth and preached every where*. The induſtry of the holy apoſtles was incredibly great, yet was their ſucceſs greater than their induſtry; even beyond all human expectation; which will evidently appear, if we conſider, 1. The vaſt ſpreading of the goſpel ſo far in ſo ſhort a pace of time: for in thirty years time after Chriſt's death, it was ſpread through the greateſt part of the Roman empire, and reached as far as Parthia and India. 2. The wonderful power and efficacy which the goſpel had upon the lives and manners of men; the generality of thoſe that entertained the goſpel were obedient to it both in word and deed, becauſe, chriſtianity being an hated and perſecuted profeſſion, no man could have any inducement to embrace it, that did not reſolve to practiſe it, and live up unto it. 3. The weakneſs and meanneſs of the inſtruments that were employed in propagating the goſpel, ſhews the ſucceſs of it to be very great and ſtrange; a company of plain and illiterate men, moſt of them deſtitute of the advantages of education, and unaſſiſted by the countenance of any authority whatſoever, yet did they in a ſhort ſpace draw the world after them. The powerful oppoſition which was raiſed againſt the goſpel, namely, the prejudices of education, the power of indwelling luſts, and alſo the powers of the world then in being, did ſtrongly combine againſt it; yet did chriſtianity bear up againſt all this oppoſition, and made its way through all the reſiſtance that the luſts and prejudices of men armed with the power and authority of the world could make againſt it. 4. The great diſcouragements that men were then under to embrace the goſpel and the chriſtian profeſſion; all the evils of this world threatened them, mockings and ſcourgings, baniſhments and impriſonments, reproach and ruin; death in all its fearful ſhapes was preſented to them, to deter them from embracing this religion. *Note* therefore, 2. The reaſon of this wonderful ſucceſs; *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the words with ſigns following. The Lord wrought with them*; this points at the inward operation of the holy Spirit upon the minds of men. O! it is ſweet and proſperous working in fellowſhip with Chriſt and his holy Spirit! He directs his miniſters, he aſſiſts them, he guides their lips, influences their minds, quickens their affections, ſets home their inſtructions, and crowns all their endeavours with his bleſſing. *And confirmed the word with ſigns*; that is, confirmed their doctrines with miracles, ſuch as, healing diſeaſes, raiſing the dead, caſting out devils, inflicting corporal diſeaſes on ſcandalous perſons, and ſometimes death itſelf. From the whole we gather the truth and divinity of the chriſtian religion, that it was, and is certainly of God, and therefore never could, never can be overthrown.

THE END OF ST. MARK's GOSPEL.

THE
GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
ST. LUKE.

CHAP. I.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand
to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things
which are moſt ſurely believed among us, 2 Even
as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning
were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the
word; 3 It ſeemed good to me alſo, having had
perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt,
to write unto thee in order, moſt excellent Theophilus,
4 That thou mighteſt know the certainty of
thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.

This goſpel, together with the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, were written by St. Luke, the beloved phyſician and companion of St. Paul, who wrote, as did the reſt of the evangeliſts, by the ſpecial direction and inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt; where we may profitably remark the wonderful wiſdom of God, who, in order to the confirming of our faith in the truth of the goſpel, raiſed up a ſufficient number of witneſſes to teſtify the verity and infallible certainty of all that the goſpel delivers unto us. Now this evangeliſt, St. Luke, dedicates this goſpel, together with the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, to Theophilus, who was, as ſome think, an honourable ſenator; or a renowned and eminent perſon in the church, as others ſuppoſe: But many take the word *Theophilus*, not for a proper name, but common name, ſignifying every one that *loveth God*; to whom St. Luke addreſſes his diſcourſe. The firſt four verſes of this chapter are a preface to the following hiſtory, and acquaint us with the reaſons which induced St. Luke to write, namely, becauſe divers perſons in that age had imprudently and inconſiderately ſet upon writing goſpels, without direction from the Spirit of God, whoſe errors and miſtakes were to be corrected by a true narrative. This St. Luke declares he was able to make, having had perfect underſtanding and knowledge of the truth of thoſe things he was about to relate; partly by his familiarity with St. Paul, and partly by his converſation with the other apoſtles, who, conſtantly attending our Saviour, were eye and ear-witneſſes of thoſe things that are the ſubject matter of the enſuing hiſtory. Hence *learn*, 1. That there were ſome apocryphal writings (or writings which were not of divine authority) relating to the New Teſtament, as well as to the old: As the books of Aſher, Gad, and Iddo are recited in the old Teſtament, but were never received into the canon of the ſcripture; ſo were there ſome goſpels, or hiſtorical relations of our Saviour's life and actions, wrote by perſons which the church never received, as not having the impreſs of God's ordination. 2. That the goſpels which St. Luke and the other evangeliſts wrote having nothing of fallability or uncertainty in them: They wrote nothing but what they either heard, or ſaw themſelves, or elſe received from thoſe that were eye and ear-witneſſes of matter of fact. *It ſeemed good to me to write, having had perfect knowledge of all things from the very firſt.*

5 THERE was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain prieſt named Zacharias, of the courſe of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Eliſabeth.

In this and the following verſes, the Holy Ghoſt gives us a deſcription of John the Baptiſt, who was the harbinger and forerunner of our Saviour Chriſt; he is deſcribed, firſt by his parentage, being the ſon of Zacharias and Eliſabeth. This Zacharias was a prieſt, who had a courſe in the temple, or a right to officiate there when it came to his turn; for we read in 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. That *David appointed the prieſts, the ſons of Aaron, to miniſter by turns, and divided them into four and twenty courſes*, every one miniſtring in the temple by their weeks. Here *note*, That Zacharias, a prieſt, and attending the ſervice of the temple, was a married perſon, having one of the daughters of Aaron to wife, according to the command of God, Levit. xxi. 14. where the prieſt is required to marry one of his own people. *Learn* hence, That neither the prieſts under the law did, nor the miniſters of Chriſt under the goſpel ought, to abhor the marriage-bed, nor judge themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their Maker. The doctrine of the church of Rome, *which forbids to marry*, St. Paul calls *a doctrine of devils*.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs.

Note here, 1. The ſweet harmony of this religious couple in the ways of God: *They both walked in the commandments of God*. It is an happy match when huſband and wife are one, not only in themſelves but in the Lord. 2. The univerſality of their holineſs and obedience: *They walked*, not in ſome, but *in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord*. Such as will approve themſelves to be ſincerely religious, muſt make conſcience of every known duty, and endeavour to obey every precept and command of God. 3. The high commendation of which the holy Spirit of God gives of this their religious courſe of holineſs and obedience: They are pronounced *blameleſs*. He that liveth without groſs ſin, in a goſpel ſenſe, liveth blameleſs, and without ſin. To live without groſs ſin, is our holineſs on earth; to live without any ſin, will be our happineſs in heaven. Many ſins may be in him that has true grace; but he that has truth of grace, cannot allow himſelf in any ſin. Such are the condeſcenſions of the covenant of grace, that ſincere obedience is called perfection. Truth of grace is our perfection on earth, but in heaven we ſhall have perfection as well as truth. Laſtly, A pattern for their imitation who wait at God's altar, and are employed in and about holy things: Such ought all the miniſters of the goſpel and their wives to be, what Zacharias and Eliſabeth are here ſaid to be, namely, *blameleſs*; that is, very innocent and inoffenſive in their daily converſation.

7 And they had no child, becauſe that Eliſabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well ſtricken in years,

Note here, 1. This holy pair, Zacharias and Eliſabeth, were fruitful in holy obedience, but barren in children: A fruitful ſoul and a barren womb are conſiſtent, and do ofttimes meet together. This religious couple made no leſs progreſs in virtue than in age, and yet their virtue could not make their age fruitful. 2. Eliſabeth was barren in the flower of her age, but much more ſo in old age. Here was a double obſtacle, and conſequently a double inſtance of divine power in the birth of John the Baptiſt, ſhewing him to be a prophet very extraordinary, and miraculouſly ſent by God. 3. That when almighty God in old times did long delay to give the bleſſing of children to holy women, he rewarded their expectation with the birth of ſome eminent and extraordinary perſon: Thus Sarah, after long barrenneſs, brought forth an Iſaac; Rebecca, a Jacob; Rachel, a Joſeph; Hannah, a Samuel; and Eliſabeth, St. John the Baptiſt. When God makes his people wait long for a particular mercy, if he ſees it good for them, he gives it in at laſt with a double reward for their expectation.

8 And it came to paſs, that while he executed the prieſt's office before God in the order of his courſe,

9 According to the cuſtom of the prieſt's office, his lot was to burn incenſe when he went into the temple of the Lord.

Here *note*, 1. That none but a ſon of Aaron might offer incenſe to God in the temple, and not every ſon of Aaron neither, nay, not any of them at all ſeaſons. God is a God of order, and hates confuſion no leſs than irreligion. And as under the law of old, ſo under the goſpel of this day, *No man ought to take this honour upon him, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*. 2. That there were courſes of miniſtration in the legal ſervices, in which the prieſts did relieve one another weekly. God never purpoſed to burden any of his ſervants with devotion, nor is he pleaſed when his ſervice is made burdenſome, either to or by his miniſters. Many of the ſons of Aaron ſerved together in the temple, according to the variety of their employments, which were aſſigned them by lot; and accordingly it fell out this time, that Zachary was choſen by lot to burn incenſe. 3. That morning and evening, twice a day, the prieſts offered up their incenſe to God, that both parts of the day might be conſecrated to him, who was the maker and giver of their time. This incenſe offered under the law, repreſents our prayers offered to God under the goſpel. Theſe almighty God expects that we ſhould, all his church over, ſend up to him morning and evening. The ejaculatory elevations of our hearts ſhould be perpetual; but if twice a day we do not preſent God with our ſolemn invocation, we make the goſpel leſs officious than the law: And can we reſonably think that almighty God will accept of leſs now than would content him then?

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incenſe.

Obſerve here, 1. While the incenſe was burning, the people were praying; while the prieſt ſends up his incenſe in the temple within, the people ſend up their prayers in the court without: The incenſe of the prieſt and the prayers of the people meet, and go up to heaven together. Hence *learn*, That it is a bleſſed thing when both miniſter and people jointly offer up their prayers for each other at the ſame throne of grace, and mutually ſtrive together in their ſupplications, one with, and one for another. 2. How do prieſt and people keep their place and ſtation: The prieſt burns incenſe in the holy place, and the people offer up their prayers in the outward court. The people might no more go into the holy place to offer up their prayers, than Zachary might go into the holy of holies to burn incenſe. Whilſt the partition wall ſtood betwixt Jew and Gentile, there was alſo a partition betwixt the Jews themſelves: But now, under the goſpel, every man is a prieſt to God, and may enter the holy of holies by the blood of Jeſus. But, Lord! what are we better for this great and gracious freedom of acceſs to thee, if we want hearts to prize and and improve our privilege from thee!

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord ſtanding on the right ſide of the altar of incenſe.

Whilſt Zachary was praying to God, an angel appears to him. When we are neareſt to God, the good angels are nigheſt us; they are moſt with us when we are moſt with him. The preſence of angels with us, is no novelty, but their apparition to us is ſo. They are always with us, but rarely ſeen by us. Let our faith ſee them, whom our ſenſes cannot diſcern. Their aſſumed ſhapes do not make them more preſent, but only more viſible. *Obſerve*, The place as well as the time where the angel appeared: in the temple, and at the altar, and *on the right ſide of the altar of incenſe.* As the holy angels are always preſent with us in our devotions, ſo eſpecially in religious aſſemblies; as in all places, ſo moſt of all in God's houſe; they rejoice to be with us whilſt we are with God, but they turn their faces from us when we go about our ſins.

12 And when Zacharias ſaw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

It was partly the ſuddenneſs, partly the unexpectedneſs, and partly the glory of the apparition, that affrighted this good man. Glorious and ſudden apparitions do affright even the holieſt and beſt of men. We cannot bear the ſight and preſence of an angel without conſternation and fear, in our frail and ſinful ſtate. O happy hour, when mortality and ſin being taken out of our natures, we ſhall not only behold the glorified angels without fear, but the glorious God with delight and love. Lord! let me now ſee thee by faith, hereafter by ſight. *Sit in alio ſeculo, non in hoc! viſio tua, merces mea.* Gerſon.

13 But the angel ſaid unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Eliſabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name John.

Obſerve here, 1. How apprehenſive this good angel was of Zachary's ſurprizing fear, and encourages him againſt it. The holy angels, though they do not expreſs it in words, yet they pity our frailties, and ſuggeſt comfort to us. The evil angels, if they might, would kill us with terror; the good angels labour altogether for our tranquility and chearfulneſs. *The angel ſaid unto him, Fear not.* 2. The comfortable words ſpoken by the angel to Zacharias: *Thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Eliſabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon.* No doubt, Zachary and Eliſabeth had often prayed for a child, and now God ſends them one when they leaſt expected it. *Learn* hence, That God gives in a mercy to us when we leaſt expect it: yea, when we have given over looking for it. No doubt it was the caſe here, *Zachary and Eliſabeth being both well ſtricken in age.* 3. The name which the angel directed Zachary to give his ſon: *Thou ſhalt call his name John*, which ſignifies *gracious*; becauſe he was to open the kingdom of grace, and to preach the grace of the goſpel through Jeſus Chriſt. The giving of ſignificant names to children, has been an ancient and pious practice; names which either carried a remembrance of duty or of mercy in them.

14 And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs; and many ſhall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord, and ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink; and he ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he ſhall go before him, in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Here the angel declares to Zachary, what kind of ſon ſhould be born unto him, even one of eminent endowments, and deſigned for extraordinary ſervices. The proof of children makes them either the bleſſings or croſſes of their parents. What greater comfort could Zachary deſire in a child, than is here promiſed to him? 1. He hears of a ſon that ſhould *bring joy to himſelf, and many others*; even to all that did expect the coming of the Meſſias, whoſe forerunner the Baptiſt was. 2. *That he ſhould be great in the ſight of the Lord*; that is, a perſon of great eminency, and great uſefulneſs, in the church. A perſon of great riches and reputation is great in the ſight of men: but the man of great ability and uſefulneſs, the man of great integrity and ſerviceableneſs, he is truly *great in the ſight of the Lord.* They are *little* men in the ſight of the Lord, that live in the world to little purpoſes; who do little ſervice to God, and bring little honour and glory to him. But the man that does all the poſſible ſervice he can for God, and the utmoſt good that he is capable of doing to all mankind; he is a perſon *great in the ſight of the Lord:* and ſuch was the holy Baptiſt. 3. It is foretold that he ſhould *drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink*; that is, that he ſhould be a temperate and abſtemious perſon, living after the manner of the Nazarites, though he was not ſeparated by any vow of his own, or his parents, but by the ſpecial deſignation and appointment of God only. It was forbidden the prieſts under the law, to drink either wine or ſtrong drink, upon pain of death, during the time of their miniſtration. Lev. x. 9. And the miniſters of Chriſt under the goſpel, are forbidden to be lovers of wine, 1 Tim. iii. 3. 4. *He ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb:* that is, he ſhall be furniſhed abundantly with the extraordinary gifts and ſanctifying graces of the holy Spirit, which ſhall very early appear to be in him, and upon him. 5. His high and honourable office is declared, that he ſhould *go before* the Meſſiah, as his harbinger and forerunner, with the ſame ſpirit of zeal and courage againſt ſin, which was found in the old prophet Elias, whom he did ſo nearly reſemble. 6. The great ſucceſs of his miniſtry foretold: namely, *That he ſhould turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt:* That is, the hearts of the Jews to the Gentiles, ſay ſome: that he ſhould bring men, ſay others, even the the moſt diſobedient and rebellious Phariſees and Sadducees, publicans and ſinners unto repentance, unto the minding of juſtice and righteouſneſs, and all moral duties; and *thus he made ready a people for the Lord*, by fitting men to receive Chriſt upon his own terms and conditions; namely, faith and repentance. From the whole *note*, That thoſe whom almighty God deſigns for eminent uſefulneſs in his church, he furniſhes with endowments ſuitable to their employment;

and when he calls to extraordinary ſervice, comes in with more than ordinary aſſiſtance. Here was the holy Baptiſt extraordinarily called, and as extraordinarily furniſhed for his office and miniſtry.

18 And Zacharias ſaid unto the angel, Whereby ſhall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years. 19 And the angel, anſwering, ſaid unto him, I am Gabriel, that ſtand in the preſence of God; and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings. 20 And behold thou ſhalt be dumb and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried ſo long in the temple. 22 And when he came out he could not ſpeak unto them: and they perceived that he had ſeen a viſion in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs.

Obſerve here, Zachary being ſlow to believe ſo ſtrange a meſſage, aſks the angel by what ſign he ſhould know that this thing, ſo far above the ordinary courſe of nature, ſhould come to paſs? The angel anſwers, that he was diſpatched by God as a meſſenger extraordinary, to declare this good news to him. And ſeeing he was ſo hard to believe it, and required a ſign, he ſhould have it, but ſuch a one as ſhould be a puniſhment of his unbelief, as well as a ſign to confirm his faith; namely, he ſhould from thenceforward, to the birth of the child, be dumb and deaf; as the original word ſignifies, becauſe he had not hearkened to the angel's ſpeech he was ſtruck deaf; and becauſe he had gainſaid it, he was made dumb. *Learn* hence, That the word of God in the mouth of his meſſengers, is God's own word, and as ſuch ſhould be received and believed. 2. That not believing their word, is a ſin which God will ſeverely puniſh; it is all one not to believe God, and not to believe the meſſengers of God ſpeaking from him. Some expoſitors will have this dumbneſs of Zachary to be prefigurative. The prieſt, at the diſmiſſion of the people, when the ſervice of the temple was finiſhed, was to pronounce the bleſſing, recorded Numb. vi. 24, 25. which when Zachary was about to do, he is ſtruck dumb, and cannot perform it; ſignifying thereby, that the ſilencing of the Levitical prieſthood was now at hand; that they muſt expect another kind of worſhip, and that he who was able to bleſs indeed, namely, the Meſſias, was near at hand. Laſtly, That though Zachary ceaſed to ſpeak, yet he did not ceaſe to miniſter; he takes not his dumbneſs for a diſmiſſion, but ſtays out the eight days of his courſe, knowing that the ſervice of his heart and hand would be accepted of that God which had bereaved him of his tongue. Thoſe powers which we have, we muſt make uſe of in the public ſervice of God, who will accept us according to what we have; pardoning our infirmity, and rewarding our ſincerity.

23 And it came to paſs, that, as ſoon as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe. 24 And after thoſe days his wife Eliſabeth conceived, and hid herſelf five months, ſaying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The prieſts, during the time of their adminiſtration, had their lodgings in buildings appertaining to the temple. Zachary having ended his adminiſtration, leaves his lodgings, and returns to his houſe, where his wife Eliſabeth conceiving, *ſhe hides herſelf*; that is, retires from company, partly to prevent the diſcourſe of people, until it was out of all doubt that ſhe had conceived; and partly to give herſelf opportunity of returning her thankful acknowledgements unto God, who had given her this miraculous mercy; and had thereby taken away her reproach of barrenneſs, which was ſo heavy and inſupportable among the Jews. *Note* here two things, 1. How piouſly Eliſabeth aſcribes this mercy to the power of God: *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me.* It is God that keeps the key of the womb in his own hand, and makes the fruit of it his reward, and therefore children are to be owned as his ſpecial gift. 2. How great a reproach bodily barrenneſs is in the ſight of man, but not ſo great as ſpiritual barrenneſs in the ſight of God: For this is at once a reproach to God, a reproach to religion, a reproach to profeſſors, and to ourſelves.

26 ¶ And in the ſixth month the angel Gabriel was ſent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin eſpouſed to a man whoſe name was Joſeph, of the houſe of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and ſaid, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: bleſſed *art* thou among women. 29 And when ſhe ſaw him, ſhe was troubled at his ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be. 30 And the angel ſaid unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou haſt found favour with God. 31 And behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Jesus. 32 He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt: and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33 And he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.

In this hiſtory of our Saviour's miraculous and immaculate conception, we have ſeveral things obſervable, as, 1. The meſſenger ſent from heaven to publiſh the news of the conception of the Son of God; an *angel.* An evil angel was the firſt author of our ruin; a good angel could not be the author of our reſtoration, but is the joyful reporter of it. 2. The angel's name, Gabriel, which ſignifies the power of God; the ſame angel who had many hundred years before declared to the prophet Daniel the coming of the Meſſiah. 3. The place which the angel is ſent unto, Nazareth; an obſcure place little taken notice of; yea, a city in Galilee, out of which ariſes no prophet: Even there doth the God of prophets condeſcend to be conceived. No blind corner of Nazareth can hide the bleſſed Virgin from the angel: The favours of God will find out his children wherever they are withdrawn. 4. The perſon whom the angel is ſent unto: *To a virgin eſpouſed, whoſe name was Mary.* For the honour of virginity, Chriſt choſe a virgin for his mother: for the honour of marriage, a virgin eſpouſed to an huſband. 5. The meſſage itſelf, *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; Bleſſed art thou among women.* Where *note*, That the angel ſalutes the Virgin as a *ſaint*, he doth not pray to her as a *goddeſs*. The church of Rome idolatrouſly uſes theſe words as a prayer to the holy Virgin (ſaying ten *Ave Maries* for one *Pater Noſter)* whereas they are only a ſalutation; declaring that ſhe, above all women, had the honour freely conferred by God upon her to be the mother of the Meſſiah. The original word ſignifies, not *full of grace*, but *freely beloved*. Compare Mary with other renowned women, and what had ſhe, beſides this favour, more than they? Had ſhe the ſpirit of prophecy? ſo had they: Had ſhe the ſpirit of ſanctification? ſo had they: And ſhe had no more immunity and freedom from ſin and death than they. Accordingly, ſays the angel, *Bleſſed art thou among women:* He doth not ſay, Bleſſed art thou *above women*. Let the church of Rome be as copious as they will in commendation of the mother, ſo they do not derogate from the glory of the Son. But how ſenſeleſs are they, (1.) In turning a ſalutation into a prayer? (2.) In making uſe of theſe words upon every occaſion, which were ſpoken by an angel upon a ſpecial occaſion? (3.) In applying theſe words to her now in heaven, which ſuited with her only when ſhe was on earth, ſaying, *Full of grace* to her who is full of glory; and, *The Lord is with thee*, to her that is *with the Lord?* 6. The effect which the ſight and ſalutation of the angel, had upon the holy Virgin: She was afraid. If Zachary before her was amazed at the ſight of the angel, much more the Virgin, her ſex ſubjecting her to fear. All paſſions, but particularly the paſſion of fear, diſquiets the heart, and makes it unfit to receive the meſſages of God; therefore the angel inſtantly ſays unto her, *Fear not*; let joy enter into thy heart, out of whoſe womb ſhall come forth ſalvation. Thus the fears of holy perſons do end in comfort: Joy was the errand which the angel came upon, and not terror. What little cauſe ſhe had to fear the preſence of an angel, who was ſo highly favoured of him at whoſe preſence the angels tremble! But we ſee the holieſt perſon on earth cannot bear the preſence of an *holy angel*, much leſs the preſence of an *holy God*; nor ſtand before the manifeſtations of his favours: Lord, how unable then will the wicked be at the great day to ſtand before the manifeſtations of thy fury? If the ſight of an holy angel now makes the beſt of ſaints to quake and tremble, what will the ſight of an infinitely holy and juſt God then do, when the wicked ſhall be ſlain by the brightneſs of his preſence? Laſtly, The character which the angel gives of the perſon that ſhould be born of the bleſſed Virgin: *He ſhall be great, and called the Son of the Higheſt. Great*, in reſpect of his perſon: *Great*, in reſpect of his offices: *Great*, in reſpect of his kingdom; for God would ſettle upon him a ſpiritual kingdom, of which David's earthly one was a type, which ſhall never be aboliſhed; though the adminiſtration of it by the word and ſacraments ſhall ceaſe at the day of judgment, when he ſhall deliver up the kingdom, in that reſpect, to his Father. All other kingdoms have had, or ſhall have their periods, but the goſpel-church, which is Chriſt's kingdom, ſhall continue till his kingdom of glory be revealed.

34 Then ſaid Mary unto the angel, How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel anſwered, and ſaid unto her, The holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, thy couſin Eliſabeth, ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old age: and this is the ſixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible. 38 And Mary ſaid, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Obſerve here, 1. The Virgin's queſtion, *How ſhall this be?* This queſtion did not import her denial of the poſſibility of the thing, but her wonder at the ſtrangeneſs of the thing; it proceeded rather from a deſire of information, than from a doubt of infidelity. Therefore ſhe doth not ſay, this cannot be, nor, how can this be? but *How ſhall this be?* She doth not diſtruſt, but demand how her virginity ſhall become fruitful, and how ſhe, being a Virgin, could bring forth a ſon. 2. The angel's reply to the Virgin's queſtion: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee.* Where *note*, The angel declares the author who, but not the manner how: The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee; but in what way, and after what manner, is not declared. No mother knows the manner of her natural conception; what preſumption had it then been, for the mother of the Meſſiah to have inquired how the Son of God could take fleſh and blood of his creature? It is for none but the Almighty to know thoſe works which do immediately concern himſelf. 3. The holy and immaculate conception of our bleſſed Redeemer: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the moſt High ſhall overſhadow thee; wherefore that Holy thing which ſhall be born of thee ſhall be called the Son of God*; that is, the Holy Ghoſt ſhall prepare and ſanctify ſo much of thy fleſh, blood, or ſeed, as ſhall conſtitute the body of Chriſt: For though it was a work of the whole Trinity, yet it is aſcribed particularly to the Holy Ghoſt, ſanctification being his peculiar work. And the title and epithet of *that holy thing*, ſheweth the purity and immaculateneſs of Chriſt's human nature, and that none was ever born thus holy and immaculate but Chriſt only; becauſe none had ever ſuch a way and means of conception, but only he: *Therefore that holy thing ſhall be called the Son of God*; not conſtituted and made, but evidenced and declared. Chriſt was God before he aſſumed fleſh, even from eternity; but his taking fleſh in this manner evidences him to be the Son of God. 4. The argument uſed by the angel to confirm Mary in the belief of what he had told her, namely, the wonderful conception of her couſin Eliſabeth *in her old* *age*, who was now *ſix months gone with child.* Where *note* (1.) What an exact knowledge God has, and what a particular notice he takes of all the children of men; he knoweth not only ourſelves but our relations alſo; *Behold thy couſin Eliſabeth:* The knowledge which God has of every perſon, and every action, is a clear and diſtinct knowledge. (2.) How the angel ſtrengthens her faith by a conſideration drawn from the almighty power of God: *With God nothing ſhall be impoſſible,* be it never ſo ſtrange and difficult. There is no ſuch way to overcome difficulties, as by ſtrengthening our faith in the almighty power of God. Faith will enable us to aſſent to truth, though ſeemingly incredible; and to believe the poſſibility of things, though appearing impoſſible. Laſtly, How the Virgin expreſſes her faith and obedience, her ſubmiſſion and entire reſignation to the divine pleaſure, to be diſpoſed of by God as he thought fit: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.* We hear of no more objections or interrogations, but an humble and ſubmiſſive ſilence. *Learn* hence, That a gracious heart, when once it underſtands the pleaſure of God, argues no farther, but quietly reſts in a believing expectation of what God will do. All diſputations with God, after his will is made known and underſtood, ariſe from infidelity and unbelief. The Virgin having thus conſented, inſtantly conceived by the overſhadowing power of the Holy Ghoſt.

39 ¶ And Mary aroſe in thoſe days, and went into the hill-country with haſte, into a city of Judah; 40 And entered into the houſe of Zacharias, and ſaluted Eliſabeth. 41 And it came to paſs, that when Eliſabeth heard the ſalutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Eliſabeth was filled with the holy Ghoſt: 42 And ſhe ſpake out with a loud voice, and ſaid, Bleſſed *art* thou among women, and bleſſed *is* the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me? 44 For lo, as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And bleſſed *is* ſhe that believed: for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which were told her from the Lord.

Note here, 1. The viſit made by the Virgin Mary to her couſin Eliſabeth. The holy Virgin had underſtood by the angel, that Eliſabeth was no leſs a-kin to her in condition than relation, being both fruitful in conception; ſhe haſtens into the hill-country to viſit that holy matron: The two wonders of the world were now met under one roof, to congratulate their mutual happineſs; only the meeting of the ſaints in heaven can parallel the meeting of theſe two ſaints on earth. 2. The deſign and intention of this viſit, which was partly to communicate their joys to each other, and partly to ſtrengthen the faith of each other: Such a ſoul as has Chriſt ſpiritually conceived in it, is reſtleſs, and cannot be quiet till it has imparted its joy. 3. The effect of the Virgin's ſalutation: She had no ſooner ſaluted Eliſabeth, *but the babe in Eliſabeth's womb leaped for joy,* doing homage and paying adoration to his Lord, who was then in preſence. If Eliſabeth, and her holy babe thus rejoiced, when Chriſt came under their roof, how ſhould our hearts leap within us, when the Son of God vouchſafes to come into the ſecret of our ſouls, not to viſit us for an hour, but to dwell with us, yea, to dwell in us, and that for ever? 4. How Eliſabeth, by an extraordinary ſpirit of prophecy, confirms what the angel before had told the holy Virgin. *Bleſſed,* ſays ſhe, *art thou among women, and bleſſed is the fruit of thy womb.* ver. 42. Where *obſerve,* How Eliſabeth acknowledged the incarnation of Chriſt, and the union of the divine and human nature in the perſon of the Mediator. She acknowledges Chriſt her *Lord,* and Mary to be the mother of the Son of God. Laſtly, how the Virgin is pronounced bleſſed, not ſo much for carrying Chriſt in her womb by ſenſe, as for bearing him in her heart by faith; *Bleſſed is ſhe that believed.* Mary was not ſo bleſſed in bringing forth Chriſt, as believing in him; yet the believing here mentioned, I take to be her firm aſſent to the meſſage which was brought her by the angel; as if Eliſabeth had ſaid, "Dumbneſs was inflicted on my huſband for his unbelief of what the angel ſaid, but 'Bleſſed art thou that didſt believe the angel:' My huſband, a man, an aged man, a learned and eminent man, a prieſt of the moſt high God; and the meſſage to him of more appearing poſſibility, yet he diſbelieved: But thou, a woman, a mean, unlearned woman, of a private condition, and the meſſage brought moſt incredible both to nature and reaſon, and yet it is believed by thee! *Bleſſed therefore is ſhe that believed;* and know, that as a reward for thy faith, *all things ſhall certainly be performed that were foretold thee from the Lord.*" *Learn* hence, 1. That it is the property of God to do great and wonderful things. Our faith muſt be great, and our expectation great; great expectations from God honour the greatneſs of God. 2. That if our faith be great, God's performances will be gracious and full. *Bleſſed,* &c. ver. 45.

46 ¶ And Mary ſaid, My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: 48 For he hath regarded the low eſtate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations ſhall call me bleſſed. 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy *is* his name. 50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm; he hath ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* ſeats, and exalted them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath ſent away empty. 54 He hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael, in remembrance of *his* mercy, 55 As he ſpake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his ſeed for ever.

This is the firſt canticle, or ſong of praiſe, recorded in the New Teſtament, compoſed by the bleſſed Virgin with unſpeakable joy, for deſigning her to be the inſtrument of the conception and birth of the Saviour of the world: Where, *Obſerve*, 1. The manner of her praiſe, her ſoul and ſpirit bear their part in the work of thankſgiving, *My ſoul doth magnify, my ſpirit hath rejoiced.* As the ſweeteſt muſic is made in the belly of the inſtrument, ſo the moſt delightful praiſe ariſes from the bottom of the heart. 2. The object of her praiſe; ſhe doth not magnify herſelf, but the Lord; yea, ſhe doth not rejoice ſo much in her ſon, as in her *Saviour*. Where *note*, (1.) That ſhe doth implicitly own and confeſs herſelf a ſinner; for none need a Saviour, but a ſinner: And (2.) By rejoicing in Chriſt as her Saviour, ſhe declares how ſhe values herſelf, rather by her ſpiritual relation to Chriſt as his member, than by her natural relation to him as his mother; according to that of St. Auſtin, *Beatior fuit Maria percipiendo Chriſti fidem, quam concipiendo carnem*; ſhe might have been miſerable, notwithſtanding ſhe bore him as her ſon, had ſhe not believed in him as her Saviour: Therefore ſhe ſings, *My ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* 3. How ſhe admires and magnifies God's peculiar favour towards herſelf, in caſting an eye upon her poverty and lowly condition; that ſhe, a poor obſcure maid, unknown to the world, ſhould be looked upon with an eye of regard by him that dwells in the higheſt heavens. Where *note*, That as God magnified her, ſhe magnified him, aſcribing all honour and glory to him that had thus dignified and exalted her. *He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and glorified be his name.* 4. She thankfully takes notice, that it was not only an high honour, but a laſting honour which was conferred upon her, *All generations ſhall call me bleſſed.* She beholds an infinite laſting honour prepared for her, as being the mother of an univerſal and everlaſting bleſſing, which all former ages had deſired, and all ſucceeding ages ſhould rejoice in, and proclaim her happy for being the inſtrument of. 5. How the holy Virgin paſſes from the conſideration of her perſonal privileges to the univerſal goodneſs of God; ſhewing us, that the mercies and favours of God were not confined and limited to herſelf, *But his mercy is on all them that fear him, throughout all generations.* She declares the general providence of God towards all perſons, his mercy to the pious, *his mercy is on all them that fear him*; his juſtice on the proud, *he hath put down the mighty from their ſeat, and ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts*; his bounty to the poor, *he fills the hungry with good things.* *Learn* hence, The excellency and advantageous uſefulneſs of the grace of humility; how good it is to be meek and lowly in heart. This will render us lovely in God's eye, and though the world trample upon us, he will exalt us to the admiration of our ſelves, and the envy of our deſpiſers. Laſtly, How ſhe magnifies the ſpecial grace of God in our redemption, *he hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael*; that is, bleſſed them with a Saviour, who lived in the faith, hope, and expectation of the promiſed Meſſiah, and this bleſſing ſhe declares was, (1.) The reſult of great mercy, *He remembering his mercy, hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael.* (2.) The effect of his truth and faithfulneſs in his promiſes, *as he promiſed to our forefathers, Abraham, and his ſeed for ever.* *Learn* hence, that the appearance of the promiſed Meſſiah in the fulneſs of time, in order to the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world, it was the fruit of God's tender love, and the effect of his faithfulneſs in the promiſes made of old to his church and children: *He hath holpen*, &c. v. 54.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own houſe. 57 ¶ Now Eliſabeth's full time came, that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and ſhe brought forth a ſon. 58 And her neighbours and her couſins heard how the Lord had ſhewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Two things are here *obſervable*, 1. The civil courteſy of the Virgin Mary towards her couſin Eliſabeth. She ſtays with her three months, probably till ſhe was delivered and brought to bed, not leaving her juſt at the time of her travail; for the angel told Mary, ver. 36. That it was then the *ſixth month* with Eliſabeth, after which Mary ſtays with her *three months*, which made the full time. To viſit and accompany our friends in the time of their diſtreſs, is not only an act of civil courteſy, but of religion and piety; not a matter of indifference, but of duty, James i. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled is this, to viſit in affliction*; that is, this is an eminent act and exerciſe of religion, the evidence and fruit of ſincere religion; and the Virgin's doing this, was an act and inſtance of her piety, as well as of her civil courteſy. 2. The religious joy, and ſpiritual rejoicing, which the neighbours and kindred expreſſed at the lying in of Eliſabeth: They did not meet together upon that great occaſion only to eat and drink and make merry; *but they rejoiced that the Lord had ſhewn great mercy upon her.* Oh, how rarely is this example followed in our age! At the delivery of the mother, and at the birth of the child, how little is God taken notice of? How little is his power magnified, and his goodneſs celebrated in opening the womb, in giving ſtrength to bring forth? And how rarely is this the ſubject of diſcourſe at the woman's labour? Verily, if the mercy of a child, and the ſafe delivery of the mother, be not the firſt and principal things taken notice of at ſuch rejoicing meetings, they look more like Pagan than Chriſtian rejoicings.

59 And it came to paſs, that on the eighth day they came to circumciſe the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother anſwered, and ſaid, Not *ſo*; but he ſhall be called John. 61 And they ſaid unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62 And they made ſigns unto his father, how he would have him called. 63 And he aſked for a writing-table, and wrote, ſaying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *looſed*, and he ſpake, and praiſed God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all theſe ſayings were noiſed abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. 66 And all they that heard *them*, laid *them* up in their hearts, ſaying, What manner of

child ſhall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Obſerve here, 1. The circumciſion of the child at eight days old, according to the commandment, Gen. xvii. Where *note*, firſt, The act, *circumciſing*. Secondly, The time, *At eight days old*. God commanded every male-child to be circumciſed, becauſe the males by the foreſkin propagate ſin, and convey original impurity. By this ordinance God gave his people to underſtand the exceeding filthineſs of ſin, and that man brings ſomething into the world with him, which ought preſently to be cut off. *Note* alſo, The time of circumciſing the child, *at eight days old:* not before, leſt the child ſhould be too weak to bear the pain; and it muſt not be deferred longer, leſt God interpret the delay to be a contempt of the ordinance. Hence by the way we may *learn*, That God did not tie ſalvation to the outward ſacrament; for if the child had periſhed that died uncircumciſed, it had been an hard thing to defer circumciſion eight hours. 'Tis not the want, but the contempt and neglect of the ſacrament that damns. *It came to paſs on the eighth day they came to circumciſe the child.*' We find in ſcripture the ordinance appointed, and the time limited, but neither the perſon nor the place declared; Moſes's wife *circumciſed the child, and that in an inn*, Exod. iv. A duty is ſometimes poſitively enjoined in the ſcripture, when the circumſtances belonging to the duty are undetermined. Thus the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is appointed by Chriſt; but the time, the place, the geſture, are not poſitively commanded, but to be prudentially determined. *Obſerve* 2. The name is given, or at leaſt declared at the time of the child's circumciſing, and that by his parents; *His mother ſaid he ſhall be called John.* But how did his mother know *that*, when her huſband was dumb? *Anſwer*, 'Tis like her huſband Zachary had by a writing informed his wife concerning the whole viſion, and what name was impoſed upon him by the angel; therefore ſhe ſays, *He ſhall be called John*, and Zachary ratifies it, *His name is John*. The nomination was originally from the angel, the impoſition of the name is now at circumciſion from the parents. 3. How ancient a cuſtom it has been to give names to children according to the names of their fathers or kindred. *There is none of thy kindred of this name*, ſay they: The Jews made it a part of religion to give ſuitable names to their children, and ſignificant names. Accordingly they either gave them names to put them in remembrance of God's mercy to them, or of their duty to him. Thus Zachary ſignifies *the remembrance of God*; which name points at God's mercy in remembring him, and his duty in remembering God. Well then, it is uſual and uſeful for parents to give ſignificant names to their children: Then let children have an holy ambition to make good the ſignification of their names. Thus John ſignifies *the grace of God*; but how will that gracious name riſe up in judgment againſt that child that is graceleſs? 4. How Zachary's ſpeech is immediately reſtored to him upon the naming of his child. The angel, ver. 20. told him, *he ſhould be dumb till the things he had told him ſhould be performed*; and now that they were performed, *his tongue is looſed, and he praiſed God* in a moſt thankful manner. 5. The effect which all this had upon the neighbourhood; *Fear came upon all them that dwelt round about them*; that is, an awful and religious fear of God, occaſioned by theſe miraculous operations; and they *laid up theſe ſayings in their hearts*; that is, conſidered of them, and pondered upon them. It argues a very vain ſpirit and temper of mind, when we paſs over the obſervation of God's wonderful acts with a ſlight regard. The true reaſon why we do ſo little admire the wonderful works of God, is, becauſe we conſider ſo little of them. 6. The ſpecial favour vouchſafed by God to this child John, *The hand of the Lord was with him*; that is, God was in a ſpecial manner preſent with him, to direct and aſſiſt him, to protect and proſper him. The hand of God in ſcripture ſignifies the help of God, the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of God. The hand of man is a weak and impotent hand, a ſhort and ineffectual hand; but the hand of God, is a ſtrong hand, an almighty hand, able to aſſiſt and help, able to protect and preſerve: *The hand of the Lord was with him*; that is, the hand of God and the help of God, the love and favour of God to ſupport him, the power and providence of God to protect and preſerve him. Lord, let our hearts be with thee, and then thy heart and thy helping hand will be with us.

67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the
holy Ghoſt, and propheſied, ſaying, 68 Bleſſed be
the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and re-
deemed his people, 69 And hath raiſed up an horn
of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David,
70 As he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets,
which have been ſince the world began: 71 That we
ſhould be ſaved from our enemies, and from the
hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy
promiſed to our fathers, and to remember his
holy covenant, 73 The oath which he ſware
to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant
unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of
our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, 75 In
holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of
our life. 76 ¶ And thou, child, ſhalt be called The
prophet of the Higheſt: for thou ſhalt go before
the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; 77 To
give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people, by the
remiſſion of their ſins, 78 Through the tender
mercy of our God; whereby the day ſpring from
on high hath viſited us, 79 To give light to them
that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, to
guide our feet into the way of peace.

Here *obſerve*, 1. That no ſooner was Zachary recovered and reſtored to his ſpeech but he ſings the praiſes of his redeemer, and offers up a thankſgiving to God: The beſt return we can make to God for the uſe of our tongue, for the giving or reſtoring of our ſpeech, is to publiſh our Creator's praiſe, to plead his cauſe, and vindicate his honour. 2. What it is that Zachary makes the ſubject-matter of his ſong: What is the particular and ſpecial mercy which he praiſes and bleſſes God for. It is not for his own particular and private mercy; namely, the recovery of his ſpeech, though undoubtedly he was very thankful to God for that mercy; but he bleſſes and praiſes God for catholic and univerſal mercies beſtowed upon his church and people: He doth not ſay, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, that hath viſited me in his mercy, that hath once more looſed my tongue, and reſtored my ſpeech; But, *Bleſſed be the Lord that hath viſited and redeemed his people.* Whence *learn*, that it is both the duty and diſpoſition of a gracious ſoul to abound in praiſe and thankfulneſs to God, more for catholic and univerſal mercies towards the Church of God, than for any particular and private mercies, how great ſoever, towards himſelf. *Bleſſed be God for viſiting and redeeming his people. Oqſerve* 3. In this evangelical hymn there is a prophetical prediction, both concerning Chriſt, and concerning John. Concerning Chriſt he declares, that God the Father had ſent him of his free mercy and rich grace, yet in performance of his truth and faithfulneſs; and according to his promiſe and oath which he had made to Abraham and the fathers of the Old Teſtament. Where *note* (1.) He bleſſes God for the comprehenſive bleſſing of the Meſſiah, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath viſited his people*; namely, in his Son's incarnation. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the fulneſs of time, made ſuch a viſit to this ſinful world, as men and angels admired at, and will admire to all eternity. (2.) The ſpecial fruit and benefit of this gracious and merciful viſitation, and that was the redemption of a loſt world; he hath viſited and *redeemed his people.* This implies that miſerable thraldom and bondage which we were under to ſin and Satan, and expreſſes the ſtupendous love of Chriſt, in buying our lives with his deareſt blood; and both by price and power reſcuing us out of the hands of our ſpiritual enemies. (3.) The character given of this Saviour and Redeemer; he is an horn of ſalvation; that is, a royal and glorious, a ſtrong and powerful Saviour to his church and people. The horn in ſcripture ſignifies glory and dignity, ſtrength and power; as the beauty, ſo the ſtrength of the beaſt lies in its horn; Now Chriſt being ſtyled an horn of ſalvation, intimates, that he himſelf is a royal and princely Saviour, and that the ſalvation which he brings is great and plentiful, glorious and powerful; *God hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David.* (4.) The nature and quality of that ſalvation and deliverance which the Son of God came to accompliſh for us: not a temporal deliverance, as the Jews expected, from the power of the Romans; but ſpiritual, from the hands of ſin and Satan, death and hell: his deſign was to purchaſe a ſpiritual freedom and liberty for us, *that we might be enabled to ſerve him without fear*; that is, without the ſervile and offending fear of a ſlave, but with the dutiful and ingenuous fear of a child: and this in *holineſs and righteouſneſs*; that is, in the duties of the firſt and ſecond table, *all the days of our life. Learn* hence, That believers, who were ſlaves of Satan, are by Chriſt made God's free men. Secondly, That as ſuch, they owe God a ſervice, a willing, cheerful, and delightful ſervice, without fear; and a conſtant perſevering ſervice all the days of their life, that *we being delivered out of the hands*, &c. (5.) The ſource and fountain from whence this glorious Saviour and gracious ſalvation did ariſe and ſpring, namely, from the mercy and faithfulneſs of God; *To perform the mercy promiſed to our forefathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he ſware to our father Abraham. Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the mercy of mercies, was graciouſly promiſed, and faithfully performed by God to his church and people. Chriſt was a free and full mercy; a ſuitable, a ſeaſonable, and a ſatisfying mercy; an incomparable, unſearchable, and everlaſting mercy; which God graciouſly promiſed in the beginning of time, and faithfully performed in the fulneſs of time. Thus far this hymn of Zachary reſpects the Meſſiah. *Obſerve* 4. How he next turns himſelf to his child, and prophecies concerning him: *And thou, child, ſhall be called the prophet of the Higheſt*, &c. *Note* (1.) The nature of his office, *thou ſhalt be a prophet*; not a common and ordinary one, but a prophet of the higheſt rank; the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts. A prophet thou ſhalt be, and more than a prophet. (2.) As the nature of his office, ſo the quality of his work. *Thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way:* Thou ſhalt be an herald and harbinger to the Moſt High, thou ſhalt go before the face of the Meſſias, and by thy ſevere reproofs, and powerful exhortations, ſhall prepare his way before him, and make men fit and ready to receive this mighty Saviour. Thou, child, ſhalt be as the morning ſtar, to foretel the glorious ariſing of this Sun of righteouſneſs. *Learn* hence (1.) That it is the higheſt honour and dignity to ſerve Chriſt in the quality and relation of a prophet. (2.) That it is the office and duty of the prophets of Chriſt to prepare and make fit the hearts of men to receive and embrace him. 5. That Zachary having ſpoken a few words concerning his ſon, he returns inſtantly to celebrate the praiſes of our Saviour, comparing him to the riſing ſun, which ſhined forth in the brightneſs of his goſpel, to enlighten the dark corners of the world: *Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us, to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs. Learn* hence (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt is that true Sun of righteouſneſs, which in the fulneſs of time did ſpring from on high to viſit a loſt and undone world. (2.) That the great errand of Chriſt's coming into the world, and the particular end of his appearing in the fleſh, was *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs.* (3.) That it was nothing leſs than an infinite mercy, and bowels of compaſſion in God and Chriſt, which inclined him to come from on high to viſit them that ſit in darkneſs: Through the tender bowels of mercy in our God, whereby his own and only Son ſprung from on high to viſit us here below, who ſat in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death; and to guide our feet into the way that leads to everlaſting peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, and was in the deſerts till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael.

Here we have a ſhort account of John's private life before he entered upon his public miniſtry, which was at thirty years of age; *He grew*, that is, in bodily ſtature, *and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit*; that is, in the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, which increaſed with his age, and ſhewed themſelves in him every day more and more. *And he was in the deſerts*; that is, the mountainous country of Judea, where he was born, till the time of his preaching to, and amongſt the Jews; not that he lived like a hermit, recluſe from all ſociety with men, but contented himſelf to continue in an obſcure privacy, till called forth to promulge and preach the goſpel: And when that time was come, John leaves the hill country, and enters with unwearied diligence upon his miniſtry: *Teaching* us, by his example, That when we are fit and ripe for public ſervice, we ſhould no leſs willingly leave our obſcurity, than we took the benefit of it for our preparation. John abode *in the deſerts till his ſhewing unto Iſrael*; that is, till the time of his ſetting forth to execute his office among the Jews.

CHAP. II.

AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was firſt made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; becauſe he was of the houſe and lineage of David: 5 To be taxed, with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child. 6 ¶ And ſo it was, that while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered. 7 And ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.

The concluſion of the former chapter acquainted us with the birth of John the Baptiſt; the beginning of this chapter relates the birth of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and the remarkable circumſtances which did attend it. And here we have *obſervable*, 1. The place where he was born, not at Nazareth, but at Bethlehem, according to the prediction of the prophet Micah, chap. v. 2. *And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the leaſt among the princes of Judah, for out of thee ſhall come a governor that ſhall rule my people Iſrael.* We may ſuppoſe, that the bleſſed Virgin little thought of changing her place, but to have been delivered of her holy burden at Nazareth, where it was conceived. Her houſe at Nazareth, was honoured by the preſence of the angel; yea, by the overſhadowing power of the Holy Ghoſt: That houſe there, we may ſuppoſe, was moſt ſatiſfactory to the Virgin's deſire. But he that made choice of the womb where his Son ſhould be conceived, it was fit he ſhould alſo chuſe the place where his Son ſhould be born. And this place, many hundred years before the nativity, was foretold ſhould be Bethlehem. 2. How remarkable the providence of God was in bringing the Virgin up from Nazareth to Bethlehem, that Chriſt, as it was propheſied of him, might be born there. Auguſtus, the Roman emperor, to whom the nation of the Jews was now become tributary, puts forth a decree, that all the Roman empire ſhould have their names and families enrolled, in order to their being taxed. This edict required, that every family ſhould repair to that city to which they did belong, to be enrolled and taxed there. Accordingly Joſeph and Mary, being of the houſe and lineage of David, have recourſe to Bethlehem, the city of David, where, according to the prophecy, the Meſſias was to be born. Here *note*, How the wiſdom of God over-rules the actions of men, for higher or nobler ends than what they aimed at. The emperor's aim by this edict was to fill his coffers; God's end was to fulfil his prophecies. 3. How readily Joſeph and Mary yielded obedience to the edict and decree of this heathen emperor. It was no leſs than four days journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem: How juſt an excuſe might the Virgin have pleaded for her abſence? What woman ever undertook ſo hazardous a journey, that was ſo near her delivery? And Joſeph, no doubt, was ſufficiently unwilling to draw her forth into ſo manifeſt an hazard. But as the emperor's command was ſo peremptory, ſo their obedience was exemplary. We muſt not plead difficulty for withdrawing our obedience to ſupreme commands. How did our bleſſed Saviour, even in the womb of his mother, yield homage to civil rulers and governors! The firſt leſſon which Chriſt's example taught the world, was loyalty and obedience to the ſupreme magiſtrate. 4. After many weary ſteps, the holy Virgin comes to Bethlehem, where every houſe is taken up by reaſon of the great confluence of people that came to be taxed; and there is no room for Chriſt but in a ſtable: The ſtable is our Lord's palace, the manger is his cradle. Oh, how can we be abaſed low enough for him that thus neglected himſelf for us! What an early indication was this, that our Lord's kingdom was not of this world! Yet ſome obſerve a myſtery in all this: An inn is *domus publici juris*, not a private houſe, but open and free for all paſſengers, and the ſtable is the commoneſt place in the inn; to mind us, that he who was born there, would be a common Saviour to high and low, noble and baſe, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile; called therefore ſo often the Son of man; the deſign of his birth being for the benefit of mankind.

8 ¶ And there were in the ſame country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them: and they were ſore afraid. 10 And the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. 12 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you; Ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Here we have the promulgation, and firſt publiſhing of our Saviour's birth to the world. *The angel ſaid unto the* *ſhepherds, I bring you glad tidings.* A Saviour is born. Where *obſerve*, 1. The meſſengers employed by God to publiſh the joyful news of a Saviour's birth; the holy angels, heavenly meſſengers employed about a heavenly work: It is worth our notice, how ſerviceable the angels were to Chriſt upon all occaſions, when he was here upon earth; an angel declares his conception; an hoſt of angels publiſh his birth; in his temptation, an angel ſtrengthens him; in his agony, an angel comforts him; at his reſurrection, an angel rolls away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre; at his aſcenſion, the angels attend him up to heaven; and at his ſecond coming to judge the world, he ſhall be *revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.* And great reaſon there is, that the angels ſhould be thus officious in their attendances upon Chriſt, who is an head of confirmation to them, as he was an head of redemption to fallen man. 2. The perſons to whom this joyful meſſage of a Saviour's birth is firſt brought, and they are the ſhepherds; *the angel ſaid unto the ſhepherds, Fear not.* (1.) Becauſe Chriſt the great ſhepherd of his church was come into the world. (2.) Becauſe he was of old promiſed unto ſhepherds, the old patriarchs, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, who by their occupation were ſhepherds. 3. The time when theſe ſhepherds had the honour of this revelation; it was not when they were aſleep on their beds of idleneſs and ſloth, but when they were lying abroad, and watching their flocks. The bleſſings of heaven uſually meet us in the way of an honeſt and induſtrious diligence; whereas the idle are fit for nothing but temptation to work upon. If theſe ſhepherds had been ſnoring in their beds, they had no more ſeen angels, nor yet heard the news of a Saviour, than their neighbours. 4. The nature and quality of the meſſage which the angel brought, it was a meſſage of *joy*, a meſſage of *great joy*, a meſſage of *great joy unto all people.* For here was born a Son, that Son a Prince, that Prince a Saviour, that Saviour not a particular Saviour of the Jews only, but an univerſal Saviour, whoſe *ſalvation is to the ends of the earth.* Well might the angel call it a meſſage, or glad tidings of great joy unto all people. 5. The ground and occaſion of this joy, the foundation of all this good news which was proclaimed in the ears of a loſt world: And that was the birth of a Saviour, ver. 11. Hence *learn*, (1.) That the incarnation and birth of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his manifeſtation in our fleſh and nature, was and is matter of exceeding joy and rejoicing unto all people. (2.) That the great end and deſign of our Lord's incarnation, and coming into the world, was to be the Saviour of loſt ſinners: *Unto you is born a Saviour; which is Chriſt the Lord.*

13 And ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying,
14 Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.

Although the birth of our bleſſed Saviour was publiſhed by one angel, yet it is celebrated by an hoſt of angels; a whole choir of angels chant forth the praiſes of almighty God, upon this great and joyful occaſion. Here *obſerve*, 1. The ſingers. 2. The ſong itſelf. The ſingers of this heavenly anthem are the holy angels; called *an hoſt*, partly for their number, and partly for their order. Where *learn*, (1.) The goodneſs and ſweet diſpoſition of theſe bleſſed ſpirits, in whoſe boſom that cankered paſſion of envy has no place; if it had, there was never ſuch an occaſion to ſtir it up as now: But heaven admits of no ſuch paſſion; envy is a native of hell, it is the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit, the character and temper of the apoſtate ſpirit: theſe grieve at the happineſs of man, as much as the angels rejoice. O ye bleſſed angels, what did theſe tidings concern you, that ruined mankind ſhould be taken again into favour; whereas thoſe of your own hoſt, which fell likewiſe, remained ſtill in that gulph of perdition, into which their ſin had plunged them, without either hope of mercy, or poſſibility of recovery? the leſs we repine at the good, and the more we rejoice at the happineſs of others, the more like we are to the holy angels; yea, the more we reſemble God himſelf. (2.) Did the angels thus joy and rejoice for us? Then what joy ought we to expreſs for ourſelves? Had we the tongue of angels, we could not ſufficiently chant forth the praiſes of our Redeemer. Eternity itſelf would be too ſhort to ſpend in the rapturous contemplation of redeeming mercy. 3. The anthem or ſong itſelf, which begins with a doxology, *Glory be to God in the higheſt*; that is, let God in the higheſt heavens be glorified by the angels that dwell on high. The angelical choir excite themſelves, and all the hoſt of angels, to give glory to God for theſe wonderful tidings; as if they had ſaid, "Let the power the wiſdom, the goodneſs and mercy of God, be acknowledged and revered by all the hoſt of heaven for ever and ever." Next to the doxology follows a gratulation: Glory be to God in the higheſt, *for there is peace on earth*, and *good will towards men.* The birth of Chriſt has brought a peace of reconciliation betwixt God and man upon earth; and alſo a peace of amity and concord betwixt man and man, and is therefore to be celebrated with acclamations of joy.

15 And it came to paſs, as the angels were gone
away from them into heaven, the ſhepherds ſaid one
to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem,
and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the
Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they
came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and
the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they
had ſeen *it*, they made known abroad the ſaying
which was told them concerning this child. 18 And
all they that heard *it*, wondered at thoſe things which
were told them by the ſhepherds. 19 But Mary
kept all theſe things, and pondered *them* in her heart.
20 And the ſhepherds returned, glorifying and
praiſing God for all the things that they had heard
and ſeen, as it was told unto them.

Several particulars are here *obſervable*, as, 1. That the ſhepherds no ſooner heard the news of a Saviour, but they ran to Bethlehem to ſeek him; and though it was at midnight, yet they delayed not to go. Thoſe that left their beds to attend their flocks, now leave their flocks to enquire after their Saviour. *Learn* thence, That a gracious ſoul no ſooner hears where Chriſt is, but inſtantly makes out after him, and judges no earthly comfort too dear to be left and forſaken for him. Theſe ſhepherds ſhew, that they preferred their Saviour before their ſheep. 2. Theſe ſhepherds having found Chriſt themſelves, do make him known to others, ver. 17. *Learn*, That ſuch as have found Chriſt to their comfort, and taſted that the Lord is gracious to themſelves, cannot but recommend him to the love and admiration of others. 3. What effect this relation had upon the generality of people that heard it; it wrought in them amazement and aſtoniſhment, but not faith: *The people wondered*, but not believed. It is not the hearing of Chriſt with the hearing of the ear, nor the ſeeing of Chriſt with the outward eye; neither the hearing of his doctrine, nor the ſight of his miracles, will work divine faith in the ſoul, without the concurring operation of the holy Spirit: the one may make us marvel, but the other makes us believe. *All that heard it wondered at theſe things.* Laſtly, The effect which theſe things had upon Mary, quite different from what they had upon the common people; *they wondered, ſhe pondered*; the things that affected their heads influenced her heart; *She kept all theſe things, and pondered them in her heart.*

21 ¶ And when eight days were accompliſhed for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was ſo named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Two things are here *obſervable*, 1. Our Saviour's circumciſion, and the name given him at his circumciſion, There was no impurity in the Son of God, and yet he is circumciſed, and baptized alſo, though he had neither filth nor foreſkin, which wanted either the circumciſing knife, or the baptiſmal water, yet he condeſcends to be both circumciſed and baptized; thereby ſhewing, that as he was made of a woman, ſo he would be made under the law, which he punctually obſerved to a tittle. And accordingly, he was not only circumciſed, but circumciſed the eighth day, as the ceremonial law required: And thus our Lord *fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, Matt. iii. 15. 2. The name given at our Saviour's circumciſion, *His name was called Jeſus:* that is, a Saviour, *he being to ſave his people from their ſins*, Matt. i. 21. The great end of Chriſt's coming into the world was to ſave perſons from the puniſhment and power of their ſins. Had he not ſaved us from our ſins, we muſt have died in our ſins, and died for our ſins, and that eternally. Never let us then ſit down deſponding, either under the guilt, or under the power of our ſins; and conclude, that they are either ſo great, that they cannot be forgiven, or ſo ſtrong that they can never be overcome.

22 ¶ And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent *him* to the Lord; 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb ſhall be called holy to the Lord;) 24 And to offer a ſacrifice, according to that which is ſaid in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

A twofold act of obedience doth the holy Virgin here perform to two ceremonial laws; the one concerning the purification of women after child-birth, the other concerning the preſenting the male-child before the Lord. The law concerning the purification of women we have recorded, Levit. xii. where the time mentioned for the woman's purification is ſet down; namely, after a male child *forty days*, after a female *fourſcore days:* After which time ſhe was to bring a *lamb of a year old* for a burnt-offering, in caſe ſhe was a perſon of ability; or *a pair of turtle doves*, or *two young pidgeons*, in caſe of extreme poverty. Now as to the Virgin's purification, *obſerve*, 1. That no ſooner was ſhe able, and allowed to walk, but ſhe travels to the temple. Where *note*, that ſhe viſited God's houſe at Jeruſalem before her own houſe at Nazareth. *Learn* thence, That ſuch women whom God has bleſſed with ſafety of deliverance, if they make not their firſt viſit to the temple of God, to offer up their praiſes and thankſgivings there, they are ſtrangers to the Virgin's piety and devotion. 2. Another act of Mary's obedience to the ceremonial law: She preſented her child at Jeruſalem to the Lord. But how durſt the bleſſed Virgin carry her holy babe to Jeruſalem, into Herod's mouth? It was but a little before that Herod ſought the young child's life to deſtroy it; yet the holy Virgin ſticks not, in obedience to the commands of God, to carry him to Jeruſalem. *Learn* hence, That no apprehenſion of dangers, either imminent or approaching, either at hand or afar off, ought to hinder us from performing our duty to almighty God: We ought not to neglect a certain duty, to eſcape an uncertain danger. Farther, As, the obedience, ſo the humility of the holy Virgin, in ſubmitting to the law for purifying of uncleanneſs: For thus ſhe might have pleaded, "What need have I of purging, who did not conceive in ſin? Other births are from men, but mine is from the Holy Ghoſt, who is purity itſelf: Other women's children are under the law, mine is above the law." But like the mother of him whom it behoved to fulfil all righteouſneſs, ſhe dutifully fulfils the law of God without quarrelling or diſputing. Laſtly, As the exemplary humility, ſo the great poverty of the holy Virgin: She has not a lamb, but comes with her two doves to God. Her offering declares her penury. The beſt are ſometimes the pooreſt, ſeldom the wealthieſt; yet none are ſo poor, but God expects an offering from them: He looks for ſomewhat from every one, not from every one alike. The providence of God it is that makes difference in perſons abilities, but his pleaſure will make no difference in the acceptation: *Where there is a willing mind, it ſhall be accepted according to what a perſon hath*, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

25 And behold, there was a man in Jeruſalem, whoſe name *was* Simeon; and the ſame man *was* juſt and devout, waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael: and the Holy Ghoſt was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the

the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and bleſſed God, and ſaid,

No ſooner was our Saviour brought into the temple, and preſented to the Lord by his devout parents, but in ſprings old Simeon, a pious and devout man, who had a revelation from God, that he ſhould not die, until he had, with his bodily eyes, ſeen the promiſed Meſſiah. Accordingly, *he takes up the child Jeſus in his arms*, but hugs him faſter by his faith than by his feeble arms, and with raviſhment of heart praiſes God for the ſight of his Saviour, whom he calls *the conſolation of Iſrael*; that is, the Meſſiah, whom the Iſrael of God had long looked and waited for, and now took comfort and conſolation in. *Note* here, 1. How God always performs his promiſes to his children with wonderful advantages. Simeon had a revelation that he ſhould not die till he had ſeen Chriſt: Now he not only ſees him, but feels him too; he not only has him in his eye, but holds him in his hands. Though God ſtays long before he fulfils his promiſes, he certainly comes at laſt with a double reward for our expectation. 2. That the coming of the Meſſiah in the fulneſs of time, and his appearing in our fleſh and nature, was and is matter of unſpeakable conſolation to the Iſrael of God. And now that he is come, let us live by faith in him, as the foundation of all comfort and conſolation both in life and death. Alas! what are all other conſolations beſides this, and without this? They are impotent and inſufficient conſolations, they are dying and periſhable conſolations; nay, they are ſometimes afflictive and diſtreſſing conſolations. The bitterneſs accompanying them, is ſometimes more than the ſweetneſs that is taſted in them: But in Chriſt, who is *the conſolation of Iſrael*, there is light without darkneſs, joy without ſorrow, all conſolation without any mixture of diſcomfort.

29 Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, 31 Which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Iſrael. 33 And Joſeph and his mother marvelled at thoſe things which were ſpoken of him.

Theſe words are a ſweet canticle, or ſwan-like ſong of old Simeon, a little before his diſſolution. He had ſeen the Meſſias before by faith, now by ſight, and wiſhes to have his eyes cloſed, that he might ſee nothing after this deſirable ſight. It is ſaid of ſome Turks, that after they have ſeen Mahomet's tomb, they put out their eyes, that they may never defile them after they have ſeen ſo glorious an object: Thus old Simeon deſires to ſee no more of this world, after he had ſeen Chriſt the Saviour of the world; but ſues for his diſmiſſion, *Lord, let thy ſervant depart*. *Note* here, 1. That a good man having ſerved his generation, and God in his generation faithfully, is weary of the world, and willing to be diſmiſſed from it. 2. That the death of a good man is nothing elſe but a quiet and peaceable departure; it is a departure *in peace* to the God of peace. 3. That it is only a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt by faith that can welcome the approach of death, and render it an object deſirable to the chriſtian's choice; he only that can ſay, *My eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*, will be able to ſay, *Lord, let thy ſervant depart*. Farther, Holy Simeon having declared the faithfulneſs of God to himſelf in the gift of Chriſt, next he celebrates the mercy of God in beſtowing this invaluable gift of a Saviour upon the whole world. The world conſiſts of Jews and Gentiles; Chriſt is *a light* to the one, and *the glory* of the other. A light to the blind and dark Gentiles, and the glory of the renowned church of the Jews; the Meſſias being promiſed to them, born and bred with them, living amongſt them, preaching his doctrine to them, and working his miracles before them: And thus was Chriſt *the glory of his people Iſrael*.

34 And Simeon bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael; and for a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt; 35 (Yea a ſword ſhall pierce through thy own ſoul alſo) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Two things are here obſerved, Simeon's bleſſing, and Simeon's prediction. *He bleſſed them*; that is, the parents and the child Jeſus; not authoritatively, but prophetically, declaring how God would bleſs them. His prediction is twofold, (1.) Concerning Chriſt. (2.) Concerning his mother. Concerning Chriſt, Simeon declares, that he ſhould be *for the riſe of many in Iſrael*; namely, all ſuch as ſhould embrace and obey his doctrine, and imitate and follow his example: and *for the fall of others*; that is, ſhall bring puniſhment and ruin upon all obdurate and impenitent ſinners: and a *ſign to be ſpoken againſt*; that is, he ſhall be as a mark for obſtinate ſinners to ſet themſelves againſt. Chriſt himſelf, when here in the world, was a *ſtone of ſtumbling*, and a *rock of offence*, to the men of the world; *enduring the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf*, both the virulence of their tongues, and the violence of their hands. Doubtleſs God's firſt deſign in ſending his Son into the world, was, *That through him the world might be ſaved*, John iii. 16. but to ſuch perſons whoſe minds had no reliſh for ſpiritual things, he became accidentally a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence. Secondly. Concerning the mother of Chriſt, Simeon declares, that the ſight of her Son's bitter ſufferings would, like a *ſword, pierce her heart*: For though he might be born yet ſhould he not die, without the pains of his mother; as if the throes ſuffered by other women at the birth, were reſerved for her to endure at the death of her Son. The ſufferings of the holy Jeſus on the croſs, were as a ſword or dagger at the heart of the holy Virgin; and ſhe ſuffered with him, both as a tender mother, and as a ſympathizing member of his body: Yea, ſuffered martyrdom after him, ſaith Epiphanius.

36 And there was one Anna a propheteſs, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aſer: ſhe was of a great age, and had lived with an huſband ſeven years from her virginity; 37 And ſhe *was* a widow of about fourſcore and four years, which departed

not from the temple, but ſerved *God* with faſtings and prayers night and day. 38 And ſhe coming in that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.

Simeon is ſeconded by Anna, a propheteſs; ſhe alſo declares, that the child Jeſus was the promiſed and expected Meſſias: And thus Chriſt was proclaimed in the temple by two heralds of different ſexes. Concerning this aged woman Anna, it is ſaid, that *ſhe departed not from the temple night nor day*; not that ſhe lived and lodged there, but by her never departing from, underſtand her daily repairing to the temple. That which is often done, is ſaid in ſcripture to be always done; We are ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably: thus we pray continually, when we pray as often as duty requires us to pray. *Learn* That ſuch duties as a chriſtian performs out of conſcience, he will perform with conſtancy and perſeverance: Nature will have her good moods, but grace is ſteady. The devotions of a pious ſoul, like Anna's, are as conſtant, but more frequent, than the returns of day and night.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 ¶ And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, filled with wiſdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Here we ſee the truth and reality of Chriſt's human nature; he grew as we do, from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth and manhood. To his divine nature no acceſſion or addition could be made; for that which is infinite cannot increaſe. The Deity was infinite in Chriſt, ſo was not the humanity, but capable of additions: And accordingly, as Chriſt grew up in the ſtature of his body, the faculties of his mind increaſed, through the grace and power of God's Spirit upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the paſſover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt.

Obſerve here, The perſons making this yearly journey to Jeruſalem, our Saviour's parents and himſelf; (1.) Joſeph, who is called Chriſt's father, not that he was his natural father, for Chriſt had no father upon earth; but Joſeph was his reputed and ſuppoſed father, his nurſing father, who by the appointment of God, took a fatherly care of him; and his father-in-law, being huſband to Mary. (2.) Mary, the mother of Chriſt, went up to Jeruſalem, with her huſband and her ſon; God commanded only the males to go up to Jeruſalem, the weaker ſex were excuſed; but the holy Virgin, well knowing the ſpiritual profit of that long journey, would not ſtay at home. Such as will go no farther than they are dragged in religious exerciſes, are ſtrangers to the Virgin's piety and devotion. But, (3.) *The child Jeſus*, in his minority goes up with his parents to this holy ſolemnity, thereby, no doubt, intending our inſtruction, when we are young to give God an early poſſeſſion of our ſouls, to conſecrate the virgin operations of our minds to him, and in our youth to keep cloſe to the worſhip and ſervice of God, when we are ſo importunately courted by the world. Farther, this holy family came not to look at the feaſt and be gone, but they duly ſtayed out all the appointed time. Joſeph's calling, and the Virgin's houſhold buſineſs, could neither keep them at home, nor haſten them home before the public duties in the temple were diſpatched and ended. All worldly buſineſs muſt give place to divine offices, and we muſt attend God's ſervice to the end, except we will depart unbleſt. Laſtly, The conſtant returns of their devotion, *they went up to Jeruſalem every year*. No difficulties, no diſcouragements, could hinder their attendance. Though it is no certain evidence of the truth of grace to frequent the public aſſemblies, yet it is an infallible ſign of the want of grace cuſtomarily to neglect them.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; and Joſeph and his mother knew not *of it*. 44 But they ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they ſought him among *their* kinsfolk and among *their* acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him.

The ſervice of the temple being ended, they return home to Nazareth. Religious duties are not to be attended, to the prejudice and neglect of our particular callings. God calls us as well from his houſe as to his houſe. They are much miſtaken who think God is pleaſed with nothing but devotion; he that ſays, *Be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord*, ſays alſo, *Be not ſlothful in buſineſs*. Piety and induſtry muſt keep pace with one another; God is as well pleaſed with our return to Nazareth, as with our going up to Jeruſalem. *Note* farther, Though Joſeph and Mary returned home, the child Jeſus, unknown to them, ſtays behind. Their back was no ſooner turned upon the temple, but his face was towards it: Chriſt had buſineſs in that place, which his parents knew not of. They miſſing him, *ſeek him in the company*, concluding him with their *kinsfolk and acquaintance*: From whence we may gather, That the parents of Chriſt knew him to be of a ſweet and ſociable, of a free and converſative, not of a ſullen and moroſe diſpoſition. They did not ſuſpect him to be wandering in the fields or deſerts, but when they miſſed him, ſought him among their kinsfolk: Had he not wanted to converſe formerly with them, he had not now been ſought amongſt them. Our bleſſed Saviour, when on earth, did not take pleaſure in a wild retiredneſs, in a froward auſterity, but in a mild affability and amiable converſation; and herein alſo his example is very inſtructive to us.

46 ¶ And it came to paſs, that after three days they found him in the temple, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them and aſking them queſtions. 47 And all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers.

Obſerve here, 1. The place where the child Jeſus is found, *in the temple*: where could there be a more likely place to find the Son of God, than in his Father's houſe! No wonder that his parents found him there; but that they went not firſt to ſeek him there. 2. At twelve years old, our Saviour diſputes in the temple with the doctors of the law: never had thoſe great rabbies heard the voice of ſuch a tutor. Thus, in our Saviour's nonage, he gives us a proof of his proficiency; even as the ſpring ſhews us what we may hope from the tree in ſummer. Our Saviour diſcovered his accompliſhments by degrees; had his perfections appeared all at once, they had rather dazzled than delighted the eyes of the beholders; even as the ſun would confound all eyes, ſhould it appear at its firſt riſing in its full ſtrength. Chriſt could now have taught all thoſe great rabbies the deep myſteries of God; but being not yet called by his Father to be a public teacher, he contents himſelf to hear with diligence, and to aſk with modeſty. *Learn* hence, That parts and abilities for the miniſterial function are not ſufficient to warrant our undertaking of it without a regular call. Chriſt himſelf would not run, no not on his heavenly Father's errand, before he was ſent, much leſs ſhould we.

48 And when they ſaw him, they were amazed: and his mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have ſought thee, ſorrowing.

Without doubt it was impoſſible to expreſs the ſorrow of the holy Virgin's ſoul, when all the ſearch of three days could bring them no tidings of their holy child. How did ſhe blame her eyes for once looking off this object of her love, and ſpend both days and nights in a paſſionate bemoaning of her loſs! O bleſſed Saviour! who can miſs thee, and not mourn thee? never any ſoul conceived thee by faith, but was apprehenſive of thy worth, and ſenſible of thy want: what comforts are we capable of, while we want thee? and what reliſh can we taſte in an earthly delight without thee!

49 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?

Obſerve here, that Chriſt blames not his parents for their ſolicitous care of him, but ſhews them how able he was to live without any dependency upon them and their care; and alſo to let them underſtand, that higher reſpects had called him away; that as he had meat to eat, ſo had he work to do, which they knew not of. For, ſays he, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?* As if he had ſaid, "Although I owe reſpect to you as my natural parents, yet my duty to my heavenly Father muſt be preferred. I am about his work, promoting his glory, and propagating his truth." We have alſo a Father in heaven. O! how good it is to ſteal away from our earthly diſtractions, that we may employ ourſelves immediately in his ſervice; that when the world makes inquiry after us, we may ſay, as our Saviour did before us, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs?*

50 And they underſtood not the ſaying which he ſpake unto them. 51 ¶ And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them: but his mother kept all theſe ſayings in her heart. 52 And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man.

The moſt material paſſage of our Saviour's life for the firſt twelve years is here recorded; namely, his diſputing with the doctors in the temple; how he ſpent the next eighteen years, namely, till he was thirty, the ſcripture doth not mention. It is here ſaid, that he lived with, and was ſubject to his parents, obeying their commands, and, as it is believed, following their employment, working at the trade of a carpenter, as was obſerved, Mark vi. 3.—Doubtleſs he did not live an idle life; and why ſhould he that did not abhor the Virgin's womb, a ſtable and a manger, be ſuppoſed to abhor the works of an honeſt vocation. Farther, What a ſingular pattern is here for children to imitate and follow, in their ſubjection to their parents: if the greateſt and higheſt of mortals think themſelves above their parents commands, our Saviour did not ſo; he paid homage to the womb that bare him, and to his ſuppoſed father that provided for him. Let a perſon be never ſo high above others, he is ſtill below and inferior to his parents. Jeſus dwelt with his parents, *and was ſubject to them*. Laſtly, A further evidence of our Saviour's humanity, with reſpect to his human nature, which conſiſted of body and ſoul; he did grow and improve, his body in ſtature, his ſoul in wiſdom; and he became every day a more eminent and illuſtrious perſon in the eyes of all, being highly *in favour both with God and man*. Vain then is the concluſion of the Socinians from this text, that Chriſt could not be God: Becauſe God cannot wax ſtrong in ſpirit, or increaſe in wiſdom, as Chriſt is here ſaid to do; for God's perfections are infinite, and will admit of no increaſe. Whereas it is plain, that this increaſe here attributed to Chriſt in age and ſtature, reſpects his humanity; the wiſdom and endowments of his human mind were capable of increaſe, though his divine perfections were abſolutely perfect. So glad are theſe men of the leaſt ſhadow of a text, that may cloud the divinity of the Son of God.

CHAP. III.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæſar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyſanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high prieſts, the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias in the wilderneſs.

The two foregoing chapters gave us an account of the birth of our Saviour Chriſt, and John the Baptiſt. The Evangeliſt, now leaving the hiſtory of our bleſſed Saviour for eighteen years, namely, till he was thirty years old (the Holy Ghoſt having thought fit to conceal that part of our Saviour's private life from our knowledge) he begins this chapter with a relation of the Baptiſt's miniſtry, acquainting us with the time when, and the place where, and the doctrine which, the Baptiſt taught. *Obſerve* 1. The time deſcribed when St. John began his public miniſtry, namely, when Tiberius was emperor, and Annas and Caiaphas high prieſts. 2. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, when the Jews were entirely under the power of the Romans, who ſet four governors over them, called Tetrarchs, ſo named from their ruling over a fourth part of the kingdom. From hence the Jews might have obſerved, had not prejudice blinded their eyes, that the ſcepter being now departed from the houſe of Judah, according to Jacob's prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. Shiloh, or the Meſſias, was now come. Again, the time when St. John began his miniſtry was, when Annas and Caiaphas were high prieſts. Under the law there were three ſorts of miniſters that attended the ſervice of the temple, namely, prieſts, levites, and nethenims; over theſe the high prieſt was chief, who, by God's command, was to be the firſt-born of Aaron's family. But how came two high prieſts here, ſeeing God never appointed but one at a time? In anſwer to this, ſay ſome, The power and coveteouſneſs of the Romans put in high prieſts at pleaſure to officiate for gain. Say others, The high prieſt was allowed his aſſiſtant or deputy, who, in caſe of his pollution or ſickneſs, did officiate in his place. But that which we may profitably *obſerve* from hence, is this, The exactneſs and faithfulneſs of this hiſtorian St. Luke, in relating the circumſtances of our Saviour's nativity, and the Baptiſt's miniſtry. That the truth might evidently appear, he is exact in recording the time.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths ſtraight. 5 Every valley ſhall be filled, and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth: 6 And all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The place where the Baptiſt exerciſed his miniſtry, in the wilderneſs of Judea, where were ſome cities and villages, though thinly inhabited. *Note* here, The great humility of the Baptiſt, in preaching in an obſcure place, and to a ſmall handful of people. Jeruſalem, ſome might think, was a fitter place for ſo celebrated a preacher; but God had called him to preach in the wilderneſs, and there he opens his commiſſion. *Learn* hence, That the moſt eminent of God's miniſters muſt be content to execute their office, and exerciſe their miniſtry where God calls them, be the place never ſo mean and obſcure, and the people never ſo rude and barbarous. In the place where God by his providence fixes us, we muſt abide, till he that called us thither, removes us thence. And this was the Baptiſt's caſe here. He leaves the wilderneſs at God's command, and comes to more inhabited places; *he came into the country about Jordan, preaching.* It is not only lawful, but a neceſſary duty, for the miniſters of God to remove from one place and people to another, provided their call be clear, their way plain, the good of ſouls their motive, and the glory of God their end. 2. The doctrine which the Baptiſt preached, namely, *The baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*; that is, the doctrine of baptiſm, which ſealeth remiſſion of ſins to the party baptized. *Learn* hence, That the preaching of the doctrine of repentance is the indiſpenſible duty of every goſpel-miniſter: John the Baptiſt preached it, our Saviour preached it, his apoſtles preached it: *They went out every where preaching that men ſhould repent.* Till we are in a ſtate of ſinleſs perfection, the doctrine of repentance muſt be preached unto us, and practiſed by us. 3. The motive and inducement which prompted the Baptiſt to his duty, which was to fulfil the prophecies that went before of him, *as it is written in the book,* &c. ver. 4—6. Where *note*, 1. The title given to John the Baptiſt, a *voice*, a crying voice.— This implies both his vehemency and earneſtneſs, and alſo his freedom and boldneſs in delivering of his meſſage; when a miniſter's own heart is warmly affected with what he preaches, he may hope to affect the hearts of others. 2. The ſum and ſubſtance of what he cried, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord,* &c. that is, Make yourſelves ready to receive the Meſſiah, to embrace and entertain his doctrine. As loyal ſubjects, when their prince is coming near their city, remove every thing out of the way that may impede his progreſs; all annoyances, and all impediments; in like manner the preparatory work of the goſpel upon the hearts of ſinners, lies in pulling down mountains, and filling up vallies; that is, in humbling the proud hearts of ſinners, puffed up, as the Phariſees were, with a conceit of their own righteouſneſs, who would be their own ſaviours, and not beholden to Chriſt, and his free grace, for ſalvation. *Learn* hence, 1. That man's heart is naturally very unfit to receive and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his holy doctrine: We have naturally no fitneſs, no inclination, nor diſpoſition to believe in him, or ſubmit unto him. 2. That if ever we deſign to entertain Chriſt in our hearts, we muſt firſt prepare and make ready our hearts for the receiving and embracing of him. For though the *preparation of the heart be from the Lord,* yet he requires the exerciſe of our faculties, and the uſe of our endeavours; he prepares our hearts, by enabling us to prepare our own hearts, by getting a ſight of the evil of ſin, and a ſenſe of our miſery without Chriſt; an hungering deſire after him, and a lively faith in him. God does not work upon man, as maſons work upon ſtone; what he doth in us and for us, he doth it by us, he works by ſetting us to work; therefore ſays the holy Baptiſt, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make,* &c. The act of endeavour is ours, the aid and aſſiſtance is God's. Laſtly, the encouragement which the Baptiſt gives to perſons to prepare the way of the Lord; *for,* ſays he, *all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God:* that is, now is the time that all perſons, Jews and Gentiles, may ſee the author of ſalvation, whom God has promiſed to the world; and may by faith be made partakers of that ſalvation which the Meſſiah ſhall purchaſe for them, and in his goſpel tender to them. The great end of Chriſt's coming into the world, was to purchaſe ſalvation for all fleſh willing to be ſaved by him.

7 Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth

to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father. For I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

St. Matthew, chap. iii. 7, 8. ſays, that the Baptiſt ſpake theſe words to the Phariſees and Sadducees, whom he gives, firſt, a quick and cutting compellation, *O generation of vipers*; then a ſharp and ſevere reprehenſion, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* and laſt of all, a ſeaſonable exhortation; *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.* As if he had ſaid, "O ye Phariſees, and worſt of men, I perceive by your coming hither, ſomebody has alarmed you with the notice of that dreadful vengeance that is coming upon this generation; to prevent which, you pretend repentance of your ſins, but let me ſee by your actions that you are not only demure, but ſincere penitents; let me ſee the fruits of your repentance in the daily courſe of your converſation." *Learn* here, 1. That the condition of proud Phariſees, pretending and falſe-hearted hypocrites, though very dangerous, yet is not hopeleſs and deſperate; and their ſalvation, though the worſt of men, muſt not be deſpaired of. St. John reproves them for their ſins, but yet encourages their repentance. 2. That ſincere repentance is not a barren thing, but does conſtantly bring forth fruits anſwerable to its nature; as faith without works, ſo repentance without fruits is dead alſo. The genuine fruits of repentance, are humility of heart, and holineſs of life. Laſtly, The cautionary direction which he gives to theſe hypocrites, not to reſt in their external privileges; *Think not to ſay within yourſelves, We have Abraham to our father*; glory not in this, that you are the only viſible church that God has upon earth, for God can, out of the obdurate Gentile world, raiſe up a people to himſelf, take them into covenant with himſelf, and caſt you out. *Learn* hence, 1. That men are exceeding apt to boaſt of, and glory in their external privileges, and to place religion in thoſe things wherein God places it leaſt. How did the Jews glory in their fleſhly deſcent from Abraham, as if God was tied to Abraham's line, and could have no people, if he had not them for his people? 2. That it is a vain thing to expect exemption from the judgments of God, becauſe of outward privileges enjoyed by us. If we be not born again of the Spirit, it will avail us nothing to be born of Abraham's fleſh: If Abraham's faith be not found in our hearts, it will be to no advantage to us, that Abraham's blood is running in our veins.

9 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and caſt into the fire.

St. John having preached the doctrine of repentance in the foregoing verſes, he backs it with a powerful argument in this verſe, drawn from the certainty and ſeverity of that judgment which ſhould come upon them, if they continued in their ſins; *Now is the ax laid to the root of the tree.*— *Learn* 1. That it is not unſuitable for goſpel-preachers to preſs repentance and holineſs of life upon their hearers, from arguments of terror; John does it here, and Chriſt elſewhere. 2. That thoſe whoſe hearts are not pierced with the ſword of God's word, ſhall certainly be cut down and deſtroyed by the ax of his judgments. Farther, That foraſmuch the ſin here ſpecified is a ſin of omiſſion, *every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit*, as well as that which bringeth forth evil fruit, *is hewn down and caſt into the fire:* We *learn*, That ſins of omiſſion are certainly damning, as well as ſins of commiſſion. The neglects of duty are as dangerous and damnable as the acts of ſin. Such trees as ſtand in God's orchard, the church, and bring forth no good fruit, are marked out as fewel for the devil's fire.

10 And the people aſked him, ſaying, What ſhall we do then? 11 He anſwereth, and ſaith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe.

The Baptiſt having preſt his hearers to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, here they inquire of him what fruits they ſhould bring forth? he tells them firſt, the fruits of charity and mercy, *He that hath two coats*, &c. This is not to be underſtood ſtrictly, as if the command required us to give the clothes off our back to every one that wanted them; but it directs thoſe that have the things of this life in abundance, to diſtribute and communicate to thoſe that are in want. *Learn* hence, That an extenſive liberality and a diffuſive charity, in diſtributing ſuch things as we can well ſpare towards the relief of others neceſſities, is an excellent fruit of repentance, and a good proof and evidence of the truth and ſincerity of it. *Note*, That the Baptiſt here doth not make it unlawful for a man to have two coats, but means only, that he that has one coat which his brother wants, and he at preſent doth not, ſhould rather give it him, than ſuffer him to be in want of it. *Teaching* us, That it is not lawful to abound in thoſe things which our brother wants, when we have ſufficient both to relieve his and our neceſſities.

12 Then came alſo publicans to be baptized, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? 13 And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

The publicans were perſons employed by the Romans to gather the tax of tribute among the Jews, who were now tributaries to the Romans, and paid them a public revenue. Theſe publicans were great oppreſſors, exacting more than was the emperor's due; therefore we find the publicans and ſinners ſo often joined together in the goſpel. Theſe men inquiring what fruits of repentance they ſhould bring forth, St. John directs them to acts of juſtice, *Exact not*, &c. Where *note*, 1. That acts of juſtice and righteouſneſs, as well as of charity and mercy, are real fruits of ſincere repentance. 2. John doth not condemn the office, but cautions the officer. If magiſtrates may impoſe taxes, they may doubtleſs appoint officers to collect thoſe taxes: Chriſtian charity then muſt always teach us to diſtinguiſh betwixt the calling and the crime. We muſt not cenſure any office, either in church or ſtate, for the ſake of their mal-adminiſtration who are employed in that office.

14 And the ſoldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe *any* falſely; and be content with your wages.

Obſerve here, What a general reſort there was of all ſorts of perſons to John's miniſtry; Phariſees, Sadducees, publicans, and ſoldiers: Theſe laſt here inquire of him, What they ſhould do to gain acceptance with God? He anſwers, *Do no violence, defraud no man of his own* by falſe accuſation, but be content with the allowance aſſigned for your maintenance. Where it is, 1. Strongly ſuppoſed, that ſoldiers are inſolent oppreſſors, making no conſcience of injuſtice, falſe accuſation, and violent oppreſſion: Yet, 2. The office and employment of a ſoldier is not condemned, but regulated: he does not bid them caſt away their arms, abandon war, appear no more as military men in the field; but manage their employment inoffenſively. Whence we *learn*, That in ſome caſes, and under ſome circumſtances, for chriſtians to make war, is both lawful and neceſſary. To make a war lawful, there is required a lawful authority, a righteous cauſe, an honourable aim and intention, and a juſt and righteous manner of proſecution, without vanity and oſtentation, without cruelty and oppreſſion. Courage and compaſſion on the one hand, and cowardice and cruelty on the other hand, do frequently accompany one another.

15 ¶ And as the people were in expectation, and all *men* muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt, or not; 16 John anſwered, ſaying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe: he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire. 17 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Obſerve here, 1. How the extraordinarineſs of John the Baptiſt's perſon, the earneſtneſs of his preaching, the acceptableneſs of his doctrine, and the exemplarineſs of his converſation, drew all perſons to an admiration of him; inſomuch that they began to think within themſelves, whether he were not the Meſſias himſelf. He plainly tells them he was not, but only his ſervant, his harbinger, and forerunner. 2. The high opinion which John had of Chriſt: *He is mightier than I*; that is, a perſon of greater authority, dignity, and excellency than myſelf. From whence may be gathered, That though Chriſt was man, he was more than man, even very God, equal with the Father: For John himſelf was the greateſt of them that were born of women, Matt. xi. 11. yet, ſays John, Chriſt is mightier than I. How ſo? In regard of the dignity of his perſon, being both God and man: *He that cometh after me is mightier than I.* 3. The humble and low eſtimation that the holy Baptiſt had of himſelf: *His ſhoe-latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe*: A proverbial ſpeech, implying, that he was unworthy to do the loweſt offices and meaneſt ſervices for Chriſt. Lord, how well does humility of mind, an humble apprehenſion, and a low opinion of themſelves, become the meſſengers and miniſters of Chriſt? John was a man of eminent abilities, yet of exemplary humility; he thought himſelf unworthy to unlooſe Chriſt's ſhoe. 4. John does not only declare the dignity of Chriſt's perſon, but the excellency of his office: *He ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire.* As if he ſaid, "I only waſh the body with water, but Chriſt cleanſes the ſoul by the operation of his holy Spirit, which is as fire in the effects of it, purifying the hearts of his people from ſin, and conſuming their luſts and corruptions; yet at the ſame time having fiery indignation, and flaming judgments, to deſtroy and burn up impenitent ſinners like dry ſtubble." *Obſerveable* it is in ſcripture, that Chriſt is repreſented by one and the ſame metaphor of fire, in a way of comfort to his children, and in a way of terror to his enemies; he is fire unto both. He ſits in the hearts of his people as a refiner's fire; he is amongſt his enemies as a conſuming fire: A fire for his church to take comfort in; a fire for his enemies to periſh by. Laſtly, How the holy Baptiſt compares our Saviour to an huſbandman, and the Jewiſh church to a barn-floor: The office of an huſbandman is to threſh, fan, and winnow his corn, ſeparating it from the chaff; preſerving the one, and conſuming the other. *Obſerve*, 1. That the church is Chriſt's floor. 2. That this floor Chriſt will purge, and that thoroughly. 3. That the word of Chriſt is the fan in his hand, by and with which he will thoroughly purge his floor. The church is compared to a floor, upon the account of that mixture which is in the church. In a floor there is ſtraw as well as grain, chaff as well as corn, tares as well as wheat, cockel and darnel as well as good ſeed: Thus in the church there has been, there is, and ever will be, a mixture of good and bad, ſaints and ſinners, hypocrites and ſincere chriſtians; but this floor Chriſt will purge, purge it, but not break it up; purge out its corruptions, but not deſtroy its eſſence and exiſtence. And the fan in Chriſt's hand, with which he will purge his floor, is his holy word, accompanied with the wing of diſcipline: the fan detects and diſcovers the chaff, and the wing diſſipates and ſcatters it; and by the help of both, the floor is purged: *His fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge*, &c.

18 And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 ¶ But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done. 20 Added yet this above all, that he ſhut up John in priſon.

Obſerve here, 1. In John the Baptiſt, the character of a zealous and faithful miniſter of the goſpel; he is one that deals plainly, and durſt tell the greateſt perſons of their faults. Herod, though a king, is reproved by him for his adultery and inceſt. The crown and ſceptre of Herod could not daunt the faithful meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in the miniſters of Chriſt both courage and impartiality; courage in fearing no faces, and impartiality in ſparing no ſins. 2. Who it was that impriſoned and beheaded the holy Baptiſt; Herod, a king. How ſad is it, when kings, who ſhould be nurſing fathers to the church, do prove the bloody butchers of the prophets of God. Many of the ſevereſt perſecutions which the miniſters of God have fallen under, have been occaſioned by their telling great men of their crimes: men in power are impatient of reproof, and imagine that their authority gives them a licence to tranſgreſs. 3. The heinous aggravation of this ſin in Herod, *he added this to all his other ſins, that he ſhut up John the Baptiſt in priſon.* This evidenced him incorrigible, and unreclaimable. John had preached before Herod, and Herod had heard John with ſome delight; but he had a darling luſt, which occaſioned his deſtruction. *Learn* hence, That hypocrites may hear the word with ſome pleaſure, and do many things with ſome delight: but they have always ſome beloved luſt that muſt be ſpared, they will neither part with it, nor bear reproof for it. Herod ſticks not to cut off that head, whoſe tongue was ſo bold to reprove him for his luſts.

21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, it came to paſs that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

Obſerve 1. The great condeſcenſion of Chriſt in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the baptiſm of John. Chriſt, though John's Lord and Maſter, yet he yields to be baptized of his ſervant and meſſenger. 2. The reaſons why Chriſt would be baptized; (1.) That by this rite he might enter himſelf into the ſociety of chriſtians, as he had before by circumciſion entered into the ſociety of the Jews. (2.) That he might by his own baptiſm ſanctify the ordinance of baptiſm unto us. (3.) That thereby he might fulfil the righteouſneſs of the ceremonial law, which required the waſhing of the prieſts in water, before they entered upon their office, as appears, Exod. xxix. 4. 3. How the duty of prayer accompanieth the ordinance of baptiſm: *Jeſus being baptized, and praying: Teaching* us by his example to ſanctify every ordinance, and every action with prayer. Chriſt, when he was baptized, prayed: when he was tempted, he prayed; when he brake bread, he prayed; when he wrought miracles, he prayed; in his agony in the garden, he prayed; when he ſuffered on the croſs, he prayed. What was the ſubject-matter of our Lord's prayer at this time, is not expreſſed; but by what followed, namely, the heavens opening, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending, it is probably conjectured, that he prayed for ſome teſtimony to be given from heaven concerning himſelf; for it immediately follows,

22 And the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleaſed.

Obſerve here, The ſolemn inveſting of Chriſt into his office, as Mediator, is attended with a threefold miracle, namely, the opening of the heavens, the deſcending of the Holy Ghoſt, and God the Father's voice concerning his Son. *The heavens were opened*; to ſhew, that heaven, which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our ſins, is now opened to us, by Chriſt's undertaking for us: Next, *The Holy Ghoſt deſcends like a dove upon our Saviour*: here we have a proof and evidence of the bleſſed Trinity; the Father ſpeaks from heaven, the Son comes out of the water, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcends after the manner of a dove, hovering and overſhadowing him. But why did the Holy Ghoſt now deſcend upon Chriſt? Firſt, For the deſignation of his perſon, to ſhew that he was the perſon ſet apart for the work and office of a Mediator. Secondly, For the unction and ſanctification of his perſon, for the performance of that office: now was he anointed to be the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his church. Laſtly, We have here *the voice of God the Father*, pronouncing, 1. The nearneſs of Chriſt's relation, *This is my Son.* 2. The endearedneſs of his perſon, *This is my beloved Son.* 3. The fruit and benefit of this near relation unto us, *In thee I am well pleaſed. Learn* hence, 1. That there is no poſſibility for any perſons to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; neither our perſons, nor our performances can find acceptance with God, but only in and through him and for his ſake. 2. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the ground and cauſe of all that love, and good will, which God the Father ſheweth to the ſons of men. In Chriſt God is well pleaſed with us as a reconciled Father, out of him, a conſuming fire. *Thou art*, &c.

23 ¶ And Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was ſuppoſed) the ſon of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Heli.

At thirty years of age, the prieſts under the law entered upon their public office; accordingly Chriſt ſtays the full time preſcribed by the law, before he undertakes his public miniſtry; and he gives the reaſon for it, Matt. iii. 15. *That he might fulfil all righteouſneſs*; that is, the righteouſneſs of the ceremonial law, which required perſons to be of that age, before they entered upon that office; and alſo enjoined them to be baptized or waſhed in water; when they undertook that office. See Exod. xxix. 4. *Learn* hence, That whatever the law required in order to perfect righteouſneſs, *that* Chriſt fulfilled in moſt abſolute perfection, both in his own perſon, and alſo in the name of all believers. *Note* farther, The title given to Joſeph here; he is called the ſuppoſed father of Chriſt. Joſeph was not his natural father, though ſuppoſed by the Jews; but he was his legal father, being married to the Virgin when our Saviour was born; and he was his nurſing father, that took care of him, and provided for him, though our Lord ſometime ſhewed both his parents, that, if he pleaſed, he could live without any dependence upon their care.

24 Which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Janna, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph,

25 Which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Amos, which was *the ſon* of Naum, which was *the ſon* of Eſli, which was *the ſon* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the ſon* of Maath, which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Semei, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Juda,

27 Which was *the ſon* of Joanna, which was *the ſon*
of Rheſa, which was *the ſon* of Zorobabel, which
was *the ſon* of Salathiel, which was *the ſon* of Neri,
28 Which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon*
of Addi, which was *the ſon* of Coſam, which was
the ſon of Elmodam, which was *the ſon* of Er,
29 Which was *the ſon* of Joſe, which was *the ſon* of
Eliezer, which was *the ſon* of Jorim, which was *the*
ſon of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, 30
Which was *the ſon* of Simeon, which was *the ſon*
of Juda, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was
the ſon of Jonan, which was *the ſon* of Eliakim,
31 Which was *the ſon* of Melea, which was *the ſon*
of Menan, which was *the ſon* of Mattatha, which
was *the ſon* of Nathan, which was *the ſon* of David,
32 Which was *the ſon* of Jeſſe, which was *the ſon*
of Obed, which was *the ſon* of Booz, which was
the ſon of Salmon, which was *the ſon* of Naaſſon,
33 Which was *the ſon* of Aminadab, which was *the*
ſon of Aram, which was *the ſon* of Eſrom, which
was *the ſon* of Phares, which was *the ſon* of Juda,
34 Which was *the ſon* of Jacob, which was *the ſon*
of Iſaac, which was *the ſon* of Abraham, which was
the ſon of Thara, which was *the ſon* of Nachor,
35 Which was *the ſon* of Saruch, which was *the*
ſon of Ragau, which was *the ſon* of Phalec, which
was *the ſon* of Heber, which was *the ſon* of Sala,
36 Which was *the ſon* of Cainan, which was *the ſon*
of Arphaxed, which was *the ſon* of Sem, which was
the ſon of Noe, which was *the ſon* of Lamech,
37 Which was *the ſon* of Methuſala, which was *the*
ſon of Enoch, which was *the ſon* of Jared, which
was *the ſon* of Maleleel, which was *the ſon* of Cainan,
38 Which was *the ſon* of Enos, which was *the ſon*
of Seth, which was *the ſon* of Adam, which was
the ſon of GOD.

We find the genealogy of our bleſſed Saviour recorded by two evangeliſts, St. Matthew, and St. Luke; his pedigree is ſet forth by St. Matthew from his father Joſeph, by St. Luke from his mother Mary; the deſign of both is, to prove him lineally deſcended from Abraham and David, and conſequently, the true and promiſed Meſſiah.—St. Matthew, intending his hiſtory primarily for the Jews, proves him to be the ſon of Abraham and David, for their comfort. St. Luke, deſigning the information and comfort of the Gentiles, derives our Lord's pedigree from Adam, the common parent of mankind; to aſſure the Gentiles of their poſſibility of an intereſt in Chriſt, they being ſons of Adam. Neither of theſe evangeliſts are ſtrict and accurate in enumerating every individual perſon; which ſhould *teach* us, not to be over-curious in ſcanning the parts of this genealogy, much leſs captiouſly to object againſt it, becauſe of ſome ſeeming contradictions to it; for if the evangeliſts were not nice and critical in compoſing this geneaology, why ſhould we be ſo in examining of it? Let us rather attend the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in writing of it, which was twofold: 1. For the honour of our Saviour as man, ſhewing us who were his royal and noble progenitors according to the fleſh. 2. For the confirmation of our faith, touching the reality of our Saviour's incarnation. The ſcripture making mention of all his progenitors from the firſt man Adam to his reputed father Joſeph. We cannot reaſonably doubt either of the truth of his human nature, or of the certainty of his being the promiſed Meſſiah. Hence we may *learn*, That the wiſdom of God has taken all neceſſary care, and uſed all needful means for ſatisfying the minds of all unprejudiced perſons, touching the reality of Chriſt's human nature, and the certainty of his being the promiſed Meſſias: for both theſe ends is our Saviour's genealogy and pedigree, recorded in ſcripture.

CHAP. IV.

AND Jeſus being full of the Holy Ghoſt, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs,

At the twenty-ſecond verſe of the foregoing chapter, we find the Holy Ghoſt deſcending in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon our Saviour; here we find the extraordinary effects and fruits of the Holy Ghoſt's deſcent upon our Saviour; he was filled with all the gifts and graces of the bleſſed Spirit, to fit and furniſh him for that miniſterial ſervice which he was now entering upon. But *obſervable* it is, That before our Saviour undertook the miniſterial office, *he is led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs*, and there furiouſly aſſaulted with Satan's temptations. Temptation, meditation, and prayer, ſays Luther, make a miniſter; great temptations of Satan, do fit us for greater ſervices for God. And whereas it is ſaid, that Chriſt was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs, *to be tempted of the devil*; by the Spirit, we muſt underſtand the Holy Spirit of God; for the devil, I think, is never called the Spirit, but has always a brand of reproach annexed, as, the evil ſpirit, the unclean ſpirit, and the like. By his being led by the Spirit (St. Mark ſays, he was *drove* by the Spirit) we may either underſtand a potent and efficacious perſuaſion, without any violent emotion; or elſe, as the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, Chriſt was bodily caught up by the holy Spirit into the air, and carried from Jordan, where he was baptized, into the wilderneſs, where he was tempted. God had put great honour upon Chriſt at his baptiſm, declared him to be his well beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed; and the next news we hear, is the devil aſſaulting him with his temptations. *Learn* thence, That the more any are beloved of God, and dignified with more eminent teſtimonies of his favour, ſo much the more is the devil enraged and maliciouſly bent againſt them.

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in thoſe days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterwards hungered.

Note here, How the divine power upheld Chriſt's human nature without food: What Moſes did at the giving of the law, Chriſt doth at the beginning of the goſpel, viz.

Faſt forty days and forty nights. Chriſt hereby intended our admiration rather than our imitation; or if our imitation, of the action only, not of the time. From this example of Chriſt we *learn*, That it is our duty, by faſting and prayer, to prepare ourſelves for a conflict with our ſpiritual enemies. As Chriſt prepared himſelf, by faſting, to grapple with the tempter, ſo ſhould we.

3 And the devil ſaid, if thou be the Son of God, command this ſtone that it be made bread.

Obſerve here, 1. The occaſion of the temptation; and, 2. The temptation itſelf: The occaſion of the temptation was our Saviour's hunger and want of bread. *Learn* thence, That when God ſuffers any of his children to fall into want, and to be ſtraitened for outward things, Satan takes a mighty advantage thereupon to tempt and aſſault them. 3. What it is he tempts our Saviour to, it is the ſin of diſtruſt, to call in queſtion his Sonſhip, *If thou be the Son of God*; and then to diſtruſt God's providence and care, *command that theſe ſtones be made bread*: it is the grand policy of Satan, firſt to tempt the children of God to doubt of their adoption; next, to diſtruſt God's fatherly care and proviſion; and, laſt of all, to uſe unwarrantable means to help themſelves. Thus Satan dealt with Chriſt, and thus he deals with chriſtians; for to work a miracle at Satan's direction, was not a lawful mean of providing food for himſelf.

4 And Jeſus anſwered him, ſaying, It is written, That man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Note 1. That though the devil abuſed ſcripture, yet Chriſt uſes it. Good things are never the worſe for being abuſed by Satan and his inſtruments. 2. The weapon which our Saviour made uſe of to vanquiſh Satan, it was the word of God: *It is written*, ſays Chriſt. *Learn*, That the ſcripture, or the written word of God, is the only ſure weapon wherewith to vanquiſh Satan, and beat back all his fiery temptations. The ſcripture is God's armoury, out of which all our weapons of war muſt be taken, for managing our conflict with ſin and Satan.

5 And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, ſhewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil ſaid unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomſoever I will, I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine. 8 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

Obſerve, 1. The next ſin which Satan tempts our Saviour to, is the ſin of idolatry, even to worſhip the devil himſelf. O thou impudent and foul ſpirit, to deſire thy Creator to worſhip thee, an apoſtate creature! Doubtleſs there is no ſin ſo black and foul, ſo horrid and monſtrous, but the chriſtian may be tempted to it, when Chriſt himſelf was tempted to worſhip the tempter, even the devil himſelf. St. Matthew reads it, *If thou wilt worſhip me*; St. Luke, *If thou wilt worſhip before me*: From whence we may gather, that if to worſhip before the devil, be to worſhip the devil, then to worſhip before an image, is to worſhip the image. (Dr. *Lightfoot.*) 2. The bait which Satan makes uſe of to allure our Saviour to the ſin of idolatry, repreſenting to his eye and view all the glories of the world in the moſt inviting manner, and that in a moment of time, that ſo he might affect him the more, and prevail the ſooner. *Learn* thence, That the pomp and grandeur of the world is made uſe of by Satan, as a dangerous ſnare to draw men into a compliance with him in his temptations unto ſin. *He ſhewed him*, &c. 3. What an impudent liar and proud boaſter the devil is: he was a liar from the beginning: *All this will I give*, &c. An impudent untruth, for the dominion over the things of the world was never given to the angels, neither has the devil any power over the creatures, but by permiſſion from God. The devil is a moſt impudent liar, he told the firſt lie, and by long practice has become a perfect maſter in the art of lying. *Obſerve* alſo, The devil's boaſting as well as lying. *All this will I give* thee; when he had not one foot of ground to diſpoſe of. Great boaſters are for the moſt part great liars, and ſuch boaſters and liars are like the devil. 4. How our Saviour declares the true and only object of religious worſhip; namely, God himſelf: *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God*, &c. Religious worſhip is to be given to none of the creatures, neither to angels nor men, how excellent ſoever, but God alone. We read but of two creatures that ever deſired in ſcripture to be worſhipped with divine worſhip; namely, The devil and antichriſt; but the command is peremptory, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord, and him only.*

9 And he brought him to Jeruſalem, and ſet him on a pinnacle of the temple, and ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down from hence: 10 For it is written, he ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 And in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 12 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, It is ſaid, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 ¶ And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a ſeaſon.

Obſerve here, 1. The power which Satan, by God's permiſſion, had over the body of our bleſſed Saviour; he took him up, and carried his body through the air, from the wilderneſs of Jeruſalem, and there ſet him upon one of the pinnacles of the temple. *Learn* hence, (1.) That Satan, by God's permiſſion, may have power over the bodies of men, yea, over the bodies of the beſt of men. (2.) That this exerciſe of Satan's power over the bodies of men, is no argument that ſuch perſons do not belong to God. Our Saviour himſelf, who was dear to God, is yet left for a time in Satan's hands. But though Satan had a power to ſet him upon the pinnacle of the temple, yet he had no power to caſt him down; though

Satan's malice be infinite, his power is limited and bounded; he cannot do all the miſchief he would, and he ſhall not do all he can. 2. The ſin which Satan tempts Chriſt to, the ſin of ſelf-murder: *Caſt thyſelf down.* *Learn,* That ſelf-murder is a ſin which Chriſt himſelf was, and the beſt of children may be, ſolicited and tempted to; yet though Satan ſolicited Chriſt to the ſin, he could not compel him to comply with the temptation. Thence *note,* That how much earneſtneſs and importunity ſoever Satan uſes in preſſing his temptation, he can only perſuade, he cannot compel; he may entice, but cannot enforce. 3. The argument which Satan uſes, to perſuade Chriſt to the ſin of ſelf-murder: it is a ſcripture-argument; he quotes a promiſe; *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee.* What a wonder is here, to ſee the devil with a bible under his arm, and with a text of ſcripture in his mouth! Chriſt had alledged ſcripture before to Satan; here Satan retorts ſcripture back again to Chriſt. *It is written,* ſays Chriſt, *It is written,* ſays Satan. *Learn,* That Satan knows how to abuſe the moſt excellent and comfortable ſcriptures to the moſt horrid and pernicious ends and purpoſes: He that had profanely touched the ſacred body of Chriſt with his hands, ſticks not preſumptuouſly to handle the holy ſcriptures with his tongue. 4. The text of ſcripture which Satan makes uſe of, *Pſal.* xci. 11, 12. *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee;* where the doctrine is good, but the application is bad. The doctrine is true, that God is pleaſed to employ his angels for the good of his ſervants, and particularly for their preſervation in times of danger: But ſee how falſely the devil perverts, miſapplies, and wreſts that ſacred ſcripture. When God promiſes that his angels ſhall keep us, it is *in all his ways,* not in our crooked paths. *Learn,* That although the children of God have the promiſe of the guardianſhip of his holy angels, yet then only may they expect their protection, when walking in the way of their duty. Laſtly, The iſſue of this combat, Satin is vanquiſhed, and departs from our Saviour. St. Matthew ſays, *The devil left him, and angels came and miniſtred unto him:* Satan is conquered, and quits the field. *Teaching* us, That nothing but a vigorous reſiſtance of temptation cauſes the tempter to flee from us. Satan is both a cowardly enemy, and a conquered enemy; reſiſt him, and he will run.

14 ¶ And Jeſus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their ſynagogues, being glorified of all. 16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Eſaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor; he hath ſent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed: 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he cloſed the book, and he gave *it* again to the miniſter, and ſat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the ſynagogue were faſtened on him. 21 And he began to ſay unto them, This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears.

Our bleſſed Saviour being thus fitted and prepared by his baptiſm and temptations, for the execution of his miniſterial office, he now enters upon the great work of preaching the goſpel, and St. Luke here declares the firſt place he preached at, namely, Nazareth; and the firſt text he preached upon, Iſa. lxi. 1. *Obſerve* 1. The place where our Saviour preached at, he beſtowed his firſt ſermon upon Nazareth, the place of his conception and education; for though Chriſt was born at Bethlehem, yet he was bred and brought up at Nazareth; there he had his poor but painful education, working at his father's trade, that of a carpenter. This prejudiced the Jews againſt him, who looked for a ſceptre, not an ax, in the hand of him *that was born king of the Jews.* Our Saviour's ſhort and ſecret abode at Bethlehem, and his long and public living at Nazareth, occaſioned him to be called *Jeſus of Nazareth;* yet ſome conceive it was a nick-name faſtened by the devil upon our Saviour, that he might diſguiſe the place of his nativity, and leave the Jews at a greater loſs reſpecting their Meſſiah. Sure it is, that this name, *Jeſus of Nazareth,* ſtuck upon our Saviour all his life; and at his death, was fixed by Pilate on his croſs. Yea, after his aſcenſion, ſuch as believed on him, were called, *The ſect of the Nazarenes,* or, *the followers of Jeſus of Nazareth.* 2. The text which our Saviour preached upon at Nazareth; he takes it out of the prophet Eſaias, chap. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor;* that is, God the Father hath poured forth his holy Spirit without meaſure upon me, in all the gifts and graces of it, to fit and furniſh me for the work of a Mediator; and particularly, to preach the goſpel to the poor in ſpirit, and to ſuch as are poor in outward condition alſo, if meekened and humbled with the ſight and ſenſe of their ſins. *To bind up the broken hearted;* that is, to comfort them with the glad tidings of the goſpel. *To preach deliverance to the captives;* to let ſuch ſinners know, who were ſlaves to ſin and Satan, that a deliverer is come, if they be willing to be delivered by him. *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord;* or to proclaim a ſpiritual jubilee, in which God proffers pardon of ſin and reconciliation with himſelf upon the terms of the goſpel. *Learn* hence, 1. That God ſtirreth up none to take upon them the office of the miniſtry whom he hath not fitted and furniſhed with gifts for the regular diſcharge of it. 2. That Chriſt himſelf did not undertake the office of a Mediator, but by the ordination of God the Holy Spirit; *The Spirit of Lord,* &c. 3. That no creature, angel, or man, could perform the office of a Mediator, but only Chriſt, who was conſecrated to that office by an anointing from the Holy Spirit without meaſure: *The Spirit of the Lord* hath anointed me. 4. That the preaching of the goſpel is the great ordinance which

Chriſt himſelf made uſe of, and recommended to his apoſtles and miniſters, for enlightening blind ſinners, for comforting broken hearts, and for delivering captive ſouls from the ſlavery and dominion of ſin and Satan; *he hath ſent me*, &c. What enemies then are they to the ſouls of men, who have low and mean thoughts of this high and honourable ordinance of God, the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel, which is the power of God unto ſalvation? 3. The behaviour of our Saviour's auditors, the men of Nazareth, under his preaching; their eyes were fixed, and their minds intent upon him, and what was ſpoken by him; *The eyes of all*, &c. not cloſed with ſleep, nor gazing about upon others; but fixed upon Chriſt the preacher. Fixing of the eye is a great help to the attention of the ear, and the intention of the mind; a faſtened eye is a mean to help us to a fixed heart; as a wandering eye is both a ſign and a cauſe of a wandering heart. O that our hearers would imitate our Saviour's hearers under the word! They faſtened their eyes upon him, as if they meant to hear with their eyes as well as with their ears; and yet we have cauſe to ſuſpect, that curioſity rather than piety cauſed this their attention; ſeeing, as you will find, ver. 29. that theſe very perſons, who out of novelty were ready to eat his words, ſoon after, out of cruelty, were ready to devour the ſpeaker; *for they thruſt him out of the city, led him to the brow of the hill, and would have caſt him down headlong*. O bleſſed Saviour! what wonder is it, that the perſons of thy miniſters are deſpiſed, and their doctrine neglected, when thou thyſelf, the firſt preacher of the goſpel, and for thy firſt ſermon at Nazareth, wert thus ignominiouſly treated! Laſtly, How Chriſt conforms to the ceremonies of the Jewiſh doctrine, who in honour of the law and the prophet, *ſtood up* when they read them, and according to cuſtom, *ſat down* when they explained them. And although the ſynagogual worſhip was then loaden with rules and ceremonies of human invention, and alſo the lives and manners both of prieſts and people were much corrupted, yet both our Saviour and his diſciples went to the ſynagogue, as members of the church of Nazareth, every ſabbath-day, joining with them in the public worſhip. From whence we may reaſonably infer, that ſuch chriſtians as do quietly and peaceably comply with the practice of the church in whoſe communion they live, in the obſervation of ſuch indifferent rites as are uſed by her, act moſt agreeable to our Saviour's practice and example.

22 And all bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they ſaid, Is not this Joſeph's ſon? 23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye will ſure ſay unto me this proverb, Phyſician heal thyſelf: whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy country. 24 And he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

Obſerve here, 1. The effect of our Saviour's miniſtry at Nazareth, it created wonder, but did not produce faith; they marvelled, but not believed; they admired the wiſdom of his diſcourſes, but will not own him to be the promiſed Meſſiah, because of the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's condition; *Is not this Joſeph's ſon?* They expect the ſon of a prince, not the ſon of a carpenter, to be their Meſſiah. Thence *note*, That the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's condition was that which multitudes ſtumbled at, and kept many, yea, moſt, from believing on him. None but a ſpiritual eye can diſcern beauty in an humble and abaſed Saviour. 2. Our Saviour wonders not that ſo few of his countrymen, among whom he had been bred and brought up, and with whom he had lived moſt part of his time, did deſpiſe his perſon, and reject his doctrine; he tells them, *No prophet has honour in his own country*; that is, very ſeldom has: *Teaching* us, That uſually the miniſters of God are moſt deſpiſed where they are moſt familiarly known; ſometimes the remembrance of their mean original and extraction, ſometimes the poverty of their parents, ſometimes the indecencies of their childhood, ſometimes the follies of their youth, ſometimes the faults of their families and relations are ript up, and made occaſion of contempt; and therefore that prophet which comes from afar, and has not been much known, gains the greateſt reputation amongſt a people, who, being ignorant of his extraction, look upon his breeding as well as his calling to be divine. This good uſe ought to be made of our Saviour's obſervation, that his miniſters be very wiſe and diſcreet in their converſation with their people, not making themſelves cheap and common in every company, nor light and vain in any company: For ſuch familiarity will breed contempt, both of their perſons and their doctrine. But our duty is by ſtrictneſs and gravity of deportment to keep up an awe and eſteem in the conſciences of our people; always tempering our gravity with courteſy and a condeſcending affability. That miniſter which proſtitutes his authority, fruſtrates the end of his miniſtry, and is the occaſion of his own contempt.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, when the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias ſent, ſave unto Sarepta *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſeus the prophet; and none of them was cleanſed, ſaving Naaman the Syrian.

Here our Saviour, by a double inſtance, confirms what he had laſt told his countrymen at Nazareth, namely, that prophets are moſt deſpiſed by their own countrymen and acquaintance, and that ſtrangers oft-times have more advantage by a prophet than his own people. The firſt inſtances of this which our Saviour gives them, is in the days of Elias, though there were many widows then in his own nation, yet none of them were qualified to receive his miracles, but a ſtranger, *a widow of Sarepta*. The ſecond inſtance was in the days of Eliſha: when though there were many lepers in and about the neighbourhood, yet they being his countrymen, deſpiſed him, and none were qualified for a cure but Naaman the Syrian, a man of another country. Thus the prophets of God, like ſome fiſhermen, catch leaſt in their own pond, and do more good by their miniſtry among ſtrangers, than among their own countrymen, kinsfolk, and near relations: *No prophet is accepted in his own country.*

28 And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath, 29 And roſe up, and thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the top of the brow whereon their city was built, that they might caſt him down headlong. 30 But he paſſing through the midſt of them went his way.

Obſerve here, 1. The horrid impiety of the people of Nazareth in thruſting their Saviour out of their city; and their barbarous and bloody cruelty in bringing him to the brow of the hill, with full intent to caſt him down headlong. But Chriſt was to die a clean contrary way, not by throwing down, but by lifting up. O ungrateful and unhappy Nazareth! Is this the return you make that divine gueſt, which for thirty years had ſojourned in your coaſts? No wonder that the ableſt preaching, and moſt exemplary living of the holieſt and beſt of Chriſt's miniſters, obtain no greater ſucceſs at this day amongſt a people, when the preſence of Chriſt at Nazareth, for thirty years together, had no better influence upon the minds and manners of the people; but inſtead of their receiving his meſſage, they rage at the meſſenger. Neither let any of the miniſters of Chriſt think it ſtrange that they are ignominiouſly deſpiſed, when our Maſter before us was in danger of being barbarouſly murdered, and that for his plain preaching to his own people, the men of Nazareth. But, 2. The miraculous eſcape of our bleſſed Lord from the murdering hands of the wicked Nazarites: *He paſſing through the midſt of them, went his way.* How and after what manner he eſcaped is not declared, and therefore cannot without preſumption be determined; although the Romaniſts, to make way for their doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, poſitively affirm, that, contrary to the nature of a body, he penetrated through the breaſts of the people. But whether he ſtruck them with blindneſs, that they did not ſee; or ſmote them with fear, that they durſt not hold him; or whether by a greater ſtrength than theirs (which his Godhead could eaſily ſupply his human nature with) he eſcaped from them; it is neither prudent to inquire, nor poſſible to determine: We know it was an eaſy thing for him, who was God as well as man, to quit himſelf of any mortal enemies; and at the ſame time, when he reſcued himſelf could have ruined them, by frowning them into hell, or looking them into nothing.

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the ſabbath-days. 32 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33 ¶ And in the ſynagogue there was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil; and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art; the holy One of God. 35 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midſt, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and ſpake among themſelves, ſaying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they come out. 37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

Our bleſſed Saviour, being driven out of Nazareth by the fury of his countrymen, departs to Capernaum, where he entered into their ſynagogues and taught. Who can declare the pains that our Saviour took, and the hazards which he ran in preaching the everlaſting goſpel to loſt ſinners? but obſerve the ſmallneſs of his ſucceſs: The people were aſtoniſhed, but not believed; his doctrine produced admiration, but not faith; his auditors were admirers, but not believers. *The people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine:* The reaſon of which aſtoniſhment is added, *For his word was with power;* that is, there was majeſty in his perſon, ſpirituality in his preaching, and powerful miracles accompanying both, and confirming both; of which the Evangeliſt here gives us an account, namely, the caſting out of a devil in one poſſeſſed, verſe 32. *There was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil, and he cried out;* that is, the devil, that unclean ſpirit, did enter into him, and bodily poſſeſs him. Amongſt other calamities which ſin has brought upon our bodies, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſſed by Satan. The devil has an inveterate malice againſt mankind, ſeeking to ruin our ſouls by his ſuggeſtions and temptations, and to deſtroy our bodies by ſome means or other. O! how much is it our intereſt, as well as our duty, by prayer to put ourſelves morning and evening under the divine care and protection, that we may be preſerved from the power and malice of evil ſpirits? 2. The title here given to the devil: He is called the *unclean ſpirit.* The devils, thoſe wicked ſpirits of hell, are moſt impure and filthy creatures: Impure by reaſon of their original apoſtacy; impure by reaſon of their actual and daily ſins, ſuch as murder and malice, lying, and the like, by which they continually pollute themſelves; and impure by means of their continual deſire and endeavonrs to pollute mankind with the contagion of their own ſins. Lord, how foul is the nature of ſin, which makes the devil ſuch a foul and filthy, ſuch an impure and unclean creature! 3 The ſubſtance of the devil's outcry: *Let us alone; what have we to do with thee; art thou come to deſtroy us?* that is, to reſtrain us from the exerciſe of our power: The devil thinks himſelf deſtroyed when he is reſtrained, from doing miſchief. 4. The title given by the devil to our Saviour: He ſtyles him, *The holy One of God.* How comes this acknowledgment out of the devil's mouth? Could an apoſtle make a profeſſion beyond this? But how comes Satan to make it? For no good end, and with no good intention, we may be ſure; for the devil never ſpeaks truth for truth's ſake, but for advantage ſake. Probably, 1. He might make this profeſſion, that ſo he might bring the truth profeſſed into queſtion; hoping that the truth, which received teſtimony from the father of lies, would be ſuſpected. Or, 2. It might perhaps be done to make the people believe our Saviour had ſome familiarity with Satan, and did work miracles by his help, becauſe he did confeſs him, and ſeem to put honour upon him. Hence we may *learn*, That it is poſſible for a perſon to own and acknowledge Chriſt to be the true and only Saviour, and yet miſs of ſalvation by him: If a ſpeculative knowledge, and a verbal profeſſion of Chriſt, were ſufficient for ſalvation, the devil himſelf would not miſs of happineſs. 5. How our Saviour rebukes the devil for this confeſſion, and commands him ſilence: *Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace.* But why was this rebuke given the devil, and his mouth ſtopped, when he ſpake the truth? *Anſw.* 1. Becauſe Chriſt knew that the devil confeſſed this truth on purpoſe to diſgrace truth. 2. Becauſe the devil was no fit perſon to make this profeſſion: A teſtimony of truth from the father of lies, is enough to render truth itſelf ſuſpected. Yet the devil's evidence, That Chriſt was the Holy One of God, will riſe up in judgment againſt the wicked Phariſees, who ſhut their eyes againſt the miracles, and ſtopped their ears againſt the doctrine of the Holy One of God. Laſtly, How the unclean ſpirit obeys the voice of Chriſt, but with reluctancy and regret: When the unclean ſpirit had thrown him in the midſt, he came out. Where *obſerve*, The devil's ſpite at parting: He tears the man, throws him violently from place to place, ſhewing how loath he was to be diſpoſſeſſed. Where Satan has once gotten an hold, and ſettled himſelf for a time, how unwilling is he to be caſt out of poſſeſſion? Yea, it is a torment and vexation to him to be caſt out: It is much eaſier to keep out Satan, than to caſt him out. Satan may poſſeſs the body by God's permiſſion, but he cannot poſſeſs our hearts without our own conſent and approbation. It will be our wiſdom to deny him entrance into our ſouls at firſt, by rejecting his wicked motions and ſuggeſtions; for when he is once entered, he will, like the ſtrong man armed, keep the houſe, till a ſtronger than he caſt him out.

38 And he aroſe out of the ſynagogue, and entered into Simon's houſe: and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they beſought him for her. 39 And he ſtood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her. And immediately ſhe aroſe, and miniſtred unto them.

Here *note*, 1. That St. Peter, a diſciple, yea, an apoſtle, was a married perſon. Neither the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the apoſtles of the New, did abhor the marriage-bed, nor judge themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their Maker. The church of Rome, by denying the lawfulneſs of prieſts marriage, makes herſelf wiſer than God, who ſays, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *Marriage is honourable amongſt all men.* 2. Peter, though a good man, and his wife's mother probably a gracious woman, yet is his family viſited with ſickneſs: Strength of grace, and dearneſs of reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail againſt diſeaſes: God's own children are viſited with bodily ſickneſs as well as others. 3. The divine power of Chriſt manifeſted in this miraculous cure: *He ſtood over her*, ſays St. Luke: *He took her by the hand and lifted her up*, ſays St. Mark. Here was an ordinary diſtemper cured after an extraordinary manner, by a touch of Chriſt's hand, in an inſtant: *Immediately the fever left her, and ſhe aroſe and miniſtered unto them.* That ſhe could ariſe, argued her cure to be miraculous; that ſhe could and did ariſe, and adminiſter to Chriſt and his diſciples, argued her thankfulneſs. After Chriſt hath healed any of us, it ought to be our firſt care to adminiſter unto him; that is, to employ our recovered ſtrength in the ſervice of Chriſt, and to improve our reſtored health to the honour and glory of Chriſt.

40 Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they that had any ſick with divers diſeaſes brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And devils alſo came out of many, crying out, and ſaying, Thou art Chriſt, the Son of God. And he rebuking them, ſuffered them not to ſpeak: for they knew that he was Chriſt.

The Evangeliſt here declares ſundry other cures wrought by our Saviour; he healed the ſick, and diſpoſſeſſed the devils. In our Saviour's time we read of many poſſeſſed with devils, and but of few either before or afterwards. Probably, 1. Becauſe Satan, perceiving the Meſſiah to be come in the fleſh to deſtroy his kingdom, did rage the more, and diſcover the greater malice and enmity againſt mankind. 2. Perhaps almighty God ſuffered Satan at that time to poſſeſs ſo many, that Chriſt might have occaſion to manifeſt his divine power by caſting Satan out. And accordingly we find our Saviour diſpoſſeſſing all that were poſſeſſed by Satan. It is added, *That he ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him*; that is, Chriſt would not be made known to be the Son of God by the preaching of the devil, leſt the world ſhould from thence take occaſion to think that our Saviour held a correſpondence with thoſe wicked ſpirits, and that the miracles which he wrought were performed by the devil's aſſiſtance, as being one in a combination with him. Poſſibly from the devil's owning Chriſt to be the Holy One of God, the Phariſees concluded that there was a compact and agreement betwixt them; and thereupon their affirmation was grounded, *He caſteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils.*

42 ¶ And when it was day, he departed and went into a deſert place. And the people ſought him and came unto him, and ſtayed, him that he ſhould not depart from them. 43 And he ſaid unto them, I muſt preach the kingdom of God to other cities alſo: for therefore am I ſent: 44 And he preached in the ſynagogues of Galilee.

Obſerve here, 1. The great work and buſineſs of our Saviour's life, to preach the goſpel; *I muſt preach the kingdom of God, for therefore came I forth.* Preaching was Chriſt's great work, it is undoubtedly his miniſters'. Chriſt omitted ſome opportunities of working miracles, that he might preach to other cities: This was his great work. 2. It being Chriſt's great deſign to plant and propagate the goſpel, he would not confine his miniſtry to one particular place, not to the great city of Capernaum, but reſolves to preach the word in ſmaller towns and villages; leaving his miniſters herein an inſtructive example, to be willing as to preach the goſpel in the ſmalleſt villages, as in the largeſt and moſt populous cities, if God calls us thereunto. Let the place be never ſo obſcure and mean, and the congregation never ſo ſmall and little, if God ſends us thither, the greateſt of us muſt not think it beneath us to go and inſtruct an handful of people.

CHAP. V.

AND it came to paſs, that as the people preſſed upon him to hear the word of God, he ſtood by the lake of Genneſareth. 2 And ſaw two ſhips ſtanding by the lake: but the fiſhermen were gone out of them, and were waſhing *their* nets. 3 And he entered into one of the ſhips, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thruſt out a little from the land. And he ſat down, and taught the people out of the ſhip.

Here *obſerve*, 1. That our Saviour uſed the ſea as well as the land in his paſſage from place to place to preach the goſpel; and the reaſons why he did ſo, might probably be theſe: (1.) To ſhew nature's intent in making of the ſea, namely, to be ſailed upon, as the land to be walked upon. (2.) That Chriſt might take occaſion to manifeſt his deity, in working miracles upon the ſea; namely, by calming of the waves and ſtilling of the winds. 3. It might be to comfort ſea-faring men in their diſtreſſes, and to encourage them to pray to ſuch a Saviour as had an experimental knowledge of the dangers of the ſea; it were well if ſailors would conſider this, and inſtead of inuring themſelves to the language of hell, when they go down into the deep, would direct their prayer unto Chriſt, and look up to him, who now in heaven has the remembrance of what he himſelf endured and underwent here on earth, and on the ſea. 2. The circumſtance of time, when Chriſt uſed to put forth to ſea: It was uſually after he had wrought ſome extraordinary miracle, which ſet them on admiring and commending of him; as after he had fed ſo many thouſands with a few barley-loaves and fiſhes, preſently he put forth to ſea, ſhunning thereby all popularity and vain-glorious applauſe from the multitude, which he was never ambitious of, but induſtriouſly avoided. 3. That after our Saviour's reſurrection, we never find him ſailing any more upon the ſeas. For ſuch a fluctuating and turbulent condition, which neceſſarily attends ſea voyages, was utterly inconſiſtent with the conſtancy, ſtability, and perpetuity of Chriſt's eſtate when riſen from the grave. The firm land better agreeing with his fixed ſtate, he keeps upon it, till his acceſſion into heaven. 4. That Chriſt ſcruples not to preach to the people in and out of the ſhip; *He ſat down and taught the people out of the ſhip.* Sometimes we find our holy Lord preaching upon a mountain, ſometimes in a ſhip, ſometimes in a houſe, as often as may be in a ſynagogue: He that laid hold of all ſeaſons for preaching the goſpel, never ſcrupled any place which conveniency offered to preach in; well knowing, that it is the ordinance that ſanctifies the place, and not the place the ordinance.

4 ¶ Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon anſwering, ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheleſs, at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they incloſed a great multitude of fiſhes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ſhips, ſo that they began to ſink. 8 When Simon Peter ſaw *it*, he fell down at Jeſus' knees, ſaying, Depart from me; for I am a ſinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fiſhes which they had taken: 10 And ſo *was* alſo James and John, the ſons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not: From henceforth thou ſhalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ſhips to land, they forſook all, and followed him.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour, having delivered his doctrine to the people, confirms his doctrine with a miracle, and with ſuch a miracle as did at once inſtruct and encourage his apoſtles; the miraculous number of fiſh which they caught did preſage and prefigure their miraculous ſucceſs in preaching, planting, and propagating the goſpel. 2. Our Saviour's command to Peter, and his ready compliance with Chriſt's command: *Let down your nets for a draught*, ſays Chriſt: *We have toiled all night*, ſays Peter, *and caught nothing: nevertheleſs, at thy word I will let down the net.* This myſtically repreſents to us, 1. That the fiſhers of men may labour all night and all day too, and catch nothing. This is ſometimes the fiſhermen's fault, but oftener the fiſhes. It is the fiſher's fault that nothing is taken, if he doth only play upon the ſands, and not launch out into the deep; deliver ſome ſuperficial and leſs neceſſary truths, without opening to the people the great myſteries of godlineſs. If they fiſh with broken nets, or deliver unſound doctrine, or lead unexemplary lives; if *they do not caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip*, that is, rightly divide the work, as workmen that need not be aſhamed; and if they do not fiſh at Chriſt's command, but run a-fiſhing unſent, it is then no wonder that they labour all their days and catch nothing. But very often it is the fiſhes fault, rather than the fiſherman's; worldly men are crafty and cunning, they will not come near the net; hypocrites are ſlippery, like eels, the fiſhermen cannot long hold them, but they dart into their holes; priding themſelves in their external performances, and ſatisfying themſelves with a round of duties. The great men of the world break through the net, the divine commands cannot bind them, Jer. v. 5. *I will go to the great men, and ſpeak to them, but they have broken the yoke, and burſt the bonds.* 3. The miraculous ſucceſs which Peter had, when at Chriſt's command he let down the net; *They incloſed ſuch a multitude of fiſhes, that their net brake.* Two things our Saviour aimed at in this miracle, 1. To manifeſt to his diſciples the power of his Godhead, that they might not be offended at the poverty and meanneſs of his manhood: 2. To aſſure them of the great ſucceſs which his apoſtles their ſucceſſors might expect in planting and propagating of the goſpel.—If the miniſters of Chriſt, whom he calls *fiſhers of men*, be faithful in the caſt, his power ſhall be magnified in the draught. Some of our fiſh will cleave eternally to the rocks, others play upon the ſands, more will wallow in the mud, and continue all their days in the filth of ſin, if our Maſter, at whoſe command we let down the net, doth not incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the caſting of it. 4. What influence the ſight of this miracle had upon St. Peter; it occaſioned fear and amazement, and cauſed him to adore Chriſt, and declare himſelf unworthy of his preſence: *Depart from me*, &c. Not that the good man was weary of Chriſt's preſence, but acknowledged himſelf unworthy of it. It is a great diſcovery of our holineſs, to revere God, and fear before him, when he doth wonderful things before us, though they be wonders of love and mercy; here was a wonderful appearance of Chriſt's power and mercy to St. Peter, but it affects him with a reverential fear and aſtoniſhment. 5. How Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles, at Chriſt's call, forſook and all followed him; they left father and friends, ſhip and nets, and followed Jeſus: Who Chriſt calls, he calls effectually; he draws whom he calls, and works their heart to a ready compliance to their duty. And although when they were firſt called to be diſciples, they followed their trades of fiſhing for a time, yet upon their ſecond call to the apoſtleſhip, they left off their trade, and forſook all to follow the miniſtry. *Teaching* the miniſters of the goſpel, that it is their duty to give themſelves wholly up to their great work, and not to encumber themſelves with ſecular affairs and worldly buſineſs. Nothing but an indiſpenſible neceſſity of providing for a family, can excuſe a miniſter's incumbering himſelf with worldly concerns and buſineſs.

12 ¶ And it came paſs, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leproſy: who ſeeing Jeſus, fell on *his* face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will: Be thou clean. And immediately the leproſy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go and ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing according as Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them. 15 But ſo much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Note here, 1. The petitioner, that in a very humble and ſubmiſſive manner ſues unto Chriſt for cure and healing: *A leper fell on his face, aud beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* He doth not queſtion our Lord's power, but diſtruſts his willingneſs to help and heal him. Chriſt's divine power muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly believed by all thoſe that expect benefit by him.—2. The great readineſs of Chriſt to help and heal this diſtreſſed perſon; *Jeſus touched him, ſaying, I will; Be thou clean.* By the ceremonial law, the leper was forbidden to be touched: therefore Chriſt touching this leper, ſhews himſelf to be above the law: that he was the Lord of it, and might diſpenſe with it: and his healing this leper by the word of his mouth and the touch of his hand, ſhewed him to be truly and really ſent of God; for leproſy among the Jews was accounted an incurable diſtemper, called the finger of God; a diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing. Our Saviour therefore, as a proof of his being the Meſſias, tells John's diſciples, *Matt.* xi. 5. *That the lepers were cleanſed, and the dead raiſed by him*; which two being joined together, do imply, that the cleanſing of the lepers is as much an act of divine power, as the raiſing of the dead: and accordingly, 2 *Kings* v. 7. It is ſaid, *Am I a God, that this man ſends unto me to cure a perſon of his leproſy?* 3. The certainty and the ſuddenneſs of the cure was a further proof of Chriſt's divine power. *Immediately the leproſy departed.* Chriſt not only cured him immediately, but inſtantaneouſly; not only without means, but without the ordinary time required for ſuch a cure. Chriſt ſhewed both power and will to cure him miraculouſly, who believed his power, but queſtioned his willingneſs. 4. A twofold charge and command given by Chriſt to the leper, 1. To tell it no man: Where the great modeſty, piety, and humility of our Saviour are diſcovered, together with the prudent care he took of his own ſafety; his modeſty, in concealing his own praiſes; his humility, in ſhunning all vain-glorious applauſe and commendation; his piety, in referring all the honour to God his Father; and the care of his own ſafety appeared, leſt the publiſhing of his miracles ſhould create untimely danger from the Phariſees. 2. The next part of the charge given to the recovered leper, is to go and ſhew himſelf unto the prieſt, and offer the gift which Moſes commanded for a teſtimony unto them; that is, to teſtify to the Jews, that he did not oppoſe the ceremonial law, which required a thank-offering at his hand; and alſo, that the miracle might teſtify that he was the true and promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn* hence, That our bleſſed Saviour would have the ceremonial law punctually obſerved, ſo long as the time of its continuance did endure; though he came to deſtroy that law, yet while it ſtood, he would have it exactly obſerved. See note on St. *Matt.* viii. 2.

16 ¶ And he withdrew himſelf into the wilderneſs, and prayed.

The duty of private and ſolitary prayer is not more ſtrictly enjoined by our Saviour's command, than it is recommended to us by his example. *Obſerve* 1. The duty which our holy Lord performed, *prayer:* We have much more buſineſs with God in prayer than Chriſt had; he had no ſins to be humbled for, no need to pray for any ſanctifying habits of grace, the holy Spirit being given to him without meaſure; yet did our holy Lord ſpend much of his time in prayer; he took delight in paying this homage to his heavenly Father. 2. What kind of prayer our Lord did eminently delight in; it was ſolitary and private prayer. He often went alone, even out of hearing of his own diſciples. The company of our beſt friends is not always ſeaſonable or acceptable. There are times and ſeaſons when a Chriſtian would not be willing that his deareſt relations upon earth ſhould hear that intercourſe which paſſes between him and his God. The place our Lord withdraws to for private prayer, it is *the deſert*; he withdrew into the wilderneſs and prayed, both to avoid oſtentation, and alſo to enjoy communion with his Father. The modeſt Bridegroom of his church, ſays St. Bernard, will not impart himſelf ſo freely to his ſpouſe before company. St. *Mark* i. 35. adds, *That our Saviour roſe up a great while before day, and went into this deſert place to pray. Teaching* us, That the morning is the fit ſeaſon, yea, the beſt of ſeaſons, for private duties; now are our ſpirits freſheſt, and our minds freeſt, before the diſtractions of the day break in upon us: It is certainly much better to go from prayer to buſineſs, than from buſineſs to prayer. Laſtly, That our bleſſed Saviour had no idle hours here in the world; his time did not lie upon his hands as ours does; he was always either preaching, or praying, or working miracles; either paying honour to God, or doing good to man. Lord! help us to imitate this thy inſtructive example, by embracing all opportunities of glorifying God, and doing good to one another.

17 ¶ And it came to paſs on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Phariſees and doctors of the law ſitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem: and the power of the Lord was *preſent* to heal them. 18 And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palſy: and they ſought means to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him. 19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, becauſe of the multitude, they went upon the houſe-top, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midſt before Jeſus. 20 And when he ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto him, Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee. 21 And the ſcribes and Phariſees began to reaſon, ſaying, Who is this that ſpeaketh blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins but God alone? 22 But when Jeſus perceived their thoughts, he anſwering ſaid unto them, What reaſon ye in your hearts? 23 Whether is it eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay, Riſe up and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaid to the ſick of the palſy) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy couch, and go into thine houſe. 25 And immediately he roſe up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own houſe, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to-day.

As the great end of our Saviour's miracles was to confirm his doctrine; ſo commonly after his preaching he wrought his miracles: The ſcribes and Phariſees, though they had no love for our Saviour's perſon, nor value for his miniſtry, yet they frequently accompanied him wherever he went, partly to cavil at his doctrine, and partly out of curioſity to ſee his miracles: But *obſerve* the gracious condeſcenſion of our Saviour, although he well knew that the Phariſees at this time attended upon him with no good intention, yet he put forth his divine power in working miracles before them; *The power of the Lord was preſent to heal*: Not that Chriſt's power was at any time abſent, but it is ſaid now to be preſent, becauſe it was now exerted and put forth at his will and pleaſure. And accordingly at this time before the Phariſees eyes, he miraculouſly cures a perſon ſick of the palſy, as the paragraph before us does inform us. Wherein *obſerve*, 1. The diſeaſed and diſtreſſed perſon, *one ſick of the palſy*, which being a reſolution and weakneſs of the nerves, enfeebles the joints, and confines a perſon to his bed and couch. As a demonſtration of Chriſt's divine power, he was pleaſed to ſingle out the palſy and leproſy, incurable diſeaſes, to work a cure upon. Now this perſon was ſo great a cripple, by reaſon of the palſy, that he could not go, nor be led, but was carried in his bed or couch. 2. As the grievouſneſs of the diſeaſe, ſo the greatneſs of the people's faith. The man and his friends had a firm and full perſuaſion, that Chriſt was clothed with a divine power, and able to help him; and they hope in his goodneſs that he was willing as well as able. And accordingly, the roof of the Jewiſh houſes being flat, they uncover ſome part of it, and let the bed down with the ſick man it, and lay him at the foot of Chriſt, in hopes of help and healing. 3. That no ſooner did they exerciſe their faith in believing, but Chriſt exerts his divine power in healing; yet the object of their faith probably was not Chriſt's divine power as God, but they looked upon him as an extraordinary prophet, to whom God hath communicated ſuch a divine power as Elijah and Eliſha had before him. Yet, ſee the marvellous efficacy even of this faith, which obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected. They deſired only the healing of the body, but Chriſt heals body and ſoul too, ſaying, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* Thereby our Saviour ſignifies to them, that ſin is the meritorious cauſe of ſickneſs, and conſequently, that in ſickneſs the beſt way to find eaſe and deliverance from pain, is firſt to ſeek pardon; for the ſenſe of pardon will in ſome degree take away the ſenſe of pain. 4. The exception which the Phariſees take againſt our Saviour for pronouncing that this man's ſins were forgiven him; they charge him with blaſphemy, urging that it is God's peculiar prerogative to pardon ſin: Indeed their propoſition was true, but their application was falſe. Nothing more true, than that it is the higheſt blaſphemy for any mere man to arrogate and aſſume to himſelf the incommunicable property of God, abſolutely and authoritavely to forgive ſin. But then their denying this power to Chriſt of forgiving ſins, which he had as God from all eternity, and as Mediator, God and man in one perſon, when here on earth, this was blaſphemy in them; but the aſſuming and challenging of it, none in him. 5. To cure, if poſſible, the obſtinacy and blindneſs of the Phariſees, our Saviour gives them a two-fold demonſtration of his godhead; (1.) By letting them underſtand, that he knew their thoughts; *Jeſus perceived their thoughts*, ver. 22. To know the thoughts, to ſearch the hearts, and underſtand the reaſonings of men, is not in the power of angels or men, but the prerogative of God only. (2.) By aſſuming to himſelf a power to forgive ſins; for our Saviour here, by taking upon him to forgive ſins in his own name, and by his own authority, doth give the world an undeniable proof, and a convincing evidence of his Godhead; *For who can forgive ſins but God only?* 6. The effect which this miracle had upon the minds of the people, they marvelled and were amazed, were filled with fear, but not with faith; aſtoniſhed, but did not believe. *Learn* hence, That the ſight of Chriſt's own miracles is not ſufficient to work faith in the ſoul, without the efficacious grace of God; the one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

27 ¶ And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a publican named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaid unto him, Follow me. 28 And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feaſt in his own houſe: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that ſat down with them. 30 But their ſcribes and Phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners? 31 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician: but they that are ſick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

The number of our Lord's apoſtles not being filled up, *obſerve*, 1. What a free and gracious, what an unexpected and undeſerved choice Chriſt makes. Levi, that is, Matthew, (for he had both names) a grinding publican, who gathered the tax for the Roman emperor, and was probably guilty, as others were, of the ſins of covetouſneſs and extortion, yet is he called to follow Chriſt, as a ſpecial diſciple. *Learn* hence, that ſuch is the freeneſs of divine grace, that it ſometimes calls and converts ſinners unto Chriſt, when they think not of him, nor ſeek unto him. Little did Levi now think of a Saviour, much leſs ſeek after him, yet he is here called by him, and that with an efficacious call; Matthew, a publican; Zaccheus, an extortioner; Saul, a perſecutor: all theſe are effectually called by Chriſt, as inſtances and evidences of the mighty power of converting grace. 2. Levi or Matthew's ready compliance with Chriſt's call: *He preſently aroſe and followed him:* When the inward call of the holy Spirit accompanieth the outward call of the word, the ſoul readily complies and yields obedience to the voice of Chriſt. Our Saviour, ſays the pious Bp. Hall, ſpeaks by his word to our ears, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his ſpirit efficaciouſly to our hearts, Satan cannot hold us down, the world ſhall not keep us back; but we ſhall with Levi inſtantly ariſe and follow our Saviour. 3. Levi, to ſhew his thankfulneſs to Chriſt, makes him a great feaſt. Chriſt invited Levi to a diſcipleſhip, Levi invites Chriſt to a dinner; the ſervant invites his Maſter, a ſinner invites his Saviour; a better gueſt he could not invite, Chriſt always comes with his coſt with him. We do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any table, he ever refuſed to go; if a publican, if a Phariſee invited him, he conſtantly went; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good: Chriſt feaſts us when we feed him. Levi, to give Chriſt a pledge and ſpecimen of his love, makes him a feaſt. *Learn* thence, That new converts are full of affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive of their love unto him. Levi's heart being touched with a ſenſe of Chriſt's rich love, makes him a royal feaſt. 4. The cavil and exception which the ſcribes and Phariſees made at our Lord's free converſation. They cenſure him for converſing with ſinners: Malice will never want matter of accuſation. Our Saviour juſtifies himſelf, telling them, he converſed with ſinners as their phyſician, not as their companion; *They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick:* As if our Lord had ſaid, With whom ſhould a phyſician converſe, but with ſick patients? And is he to be accuſed for that? Now, this is my caſe. I am come into the world to do the office of a kind phyſician unto men: Surely then I am to take all opportunities of converſing with them, that I may help and heal them, *for they that are ſick need the phyſician*; but as for you ſcribes and Phariſees, who are well and whole in your opinion and conceit, I have no hopes of doing good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole, deſire not the phyſician's help. Now, from this aſſertion of our Saviour, *The whole need not the phyſician but the ſick*, theſe truths were ſuggeſted to us, 1. That ſin is the ſoul's malady, its ſpiritual diſeaſe and ſickneſs. 2. That Chriſt is the phyſician appointed by God for the cure and healing of this diſeaſe. 3. That there are multitudes of ſinners ſpiritually ſick, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. 4. That ſuch, and only ſuch as find themſelves ſin-ſick, and ſpiritually diſeaſed, are ſubjects capable of Chriſt's healing. *They that are whole need not the phyſician, but they that are ſick. I come not*, ſays Chriſt, *to call the* (opinionatively) *righteous, but the* (ſenſible) *ſinner to repentance.*

33 ¶ And they ſaid unto him, Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make long prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 36 ¶ And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, agreeth not with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old

bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh. 38 But new wine muſt be put into new bottles; and both are preſerved. 39 No man alſo having drunk old *wine*, ſtraightway deſireth new: for he ſaith, The old is better.

An objection is here made againſt the diſciples of our Saviour, that they did not faſt ſo much, and ſo often as John the Baptiſt's diſciples did. John's diſciples imitated their maſter, who was a man of an auſtere life; Chriſt's diſciples imitated him, who was of a more free converſation. *Obſerve*, therefore, our Saviour's defence, which he makes for the not faſting of his diſciples; he declares that at preſent it was neither ſuitable nor tolerable; *not ſuitable*, in regard of Chriſt's bodily preſence with them, who being their *bridegroom*, and his diſciples children of the *bride-chamber*, it was now a day of joy and rejoicing to them, and mourning and faſting would be very improper for them. But when the Bridegroom *ſhall be taken away*, that is, Chriſt's bodily preſence removed, then there will be cauſe enough for the diſciples to *faſt* and mourn. *Learn*, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt is the bridegroom of his ſpouſe the church. 2. That this bridegroom was to be taken away. 3. That becauſe of the bridegroom's removal, the church did, ſhall, and muſt faſt; *The days will come when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away, and then ſhall they faſt*. Again, our Saviour declares, that this diſcipline of faſting was not at preſent tolerable for his diſciples, for they were at preſent but raw, green and tender, unable to bear the ſeverities and rigours of religion, any more than an old garment can bear a piece of new cloth to be ſet into it, or any more than old bottles can bear new wine to be put into them. The ſenſe of our Saviour's words ſeems to be this, "My diſciples at preſent are tender and weak, newly called and converted, they cannot therefore at preſent undergo the auſterities of religion, faſtings, weepings, and watchings; but ere long I ſhall leave them, and go to heaven, from whence I will ſend down my holy Spirit upon them, which will enable them to all the duties which the goſpel enjoins." The leſſon of inſtruction which we may probably gather from thence, is this, That it is hurtful and dangerous for young converts, for weak Chriſtians, to be put upon the ſeverer exerciſes of religion, or to be urged to the performance of all ſuch duties as are above their ſtrength, but they ought to be treated with that tenderneſs which becomes the mild and gentle diſpenſation of the goſpel. Our Saviour, ſays one, does here commend prudence to his miniſters, in treating their people according to their ſtrength, and putting them upon duties according to their time and ſtanding: We muſt conſult what progreſs our people have made in Chriſtianity, and manage accordingly.

CHAP. VI.

AND it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the corn-fields; and his diſciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2 And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-days? 3 And Jeſus anſwering them, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, what David did, when himſelf was an hungred, and they which were with him; 4 How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him; which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſts alone? 5 And he ſaid unto them, That the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

In the former part of this chapter we find our bleſſed Saviour defending his diſciples from the clamorous accuſations of the Phariſees for breaking the ſabbath-day, becauſe they plucked the ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands, in order to the ſatisfying of their hunger. Where *note*, 1. The great poverty, the low eſtate, and condition of Chriſt's own diſciples in the world: they wanted bread, and were forced to pluck the ears of corn to ſatisfy their hunger. God may, and ſometimes does ſuffer his deareſt children to fall into ſtraits and to taſte of want, for the trial of their faith and dependance upon his power and goodneſs. 2. How the hypocritical Phariſees blame this action of the diſciples, namely, their plucking of the ears of corn: yet did they not charge them with theft for ſo doing; becauſe to take, in our great neceſſity, ſo much of our neighbour's goods as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that, if he were preſent and knew our circumſtances, he would not deny us, is not theft. But it was the ſervile labour on the ſabbath, in gathering the ears of corn, which the Phariſees ſcruple and object againſt. Where *note*, How hypocrites expend their zeal in and upon the leſſer things of the law, whilſt they neglect the greater; placing all holineſs in the obſervation of outward ceremonies, whilſt they neglect the moral duties. 3. The argument with which our Saviour defends this action of his diſciples. It is taken from the example of David: Neceſſity freed him from fault and blame in eating the conſecrated bread, which none but the prieſts might lawfully eat: For in caſes of neceſſity, a ceremonial precept muſt give place to a moral duty: Works of mercy, for the preſerving of our lives, and the better fitting us for ſabbath-ſervices, are certainly lawful on the ſabbath-day. Laſtly, The argument which our Saviour uſes to prove the ſabbath's obſervation may be diſpenſed with in a caſe of abſolute neceſſity; And that it is drawn from that authority which Chriſt, the inſtitutor and Lord of the ſabbath, had over it; *The Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath*; that is, he has authority and power, as God, and as Mediator, to inſtitute and appoint a ſabbath; to alter and change it; to diſpenſe with a breach of it upon a great and juſt occaſion: And conſequently, acts of mercy, which tend to fit us for works of piety, not only may, but ought to be done upon the ſabbath-day. This action of the diſciples being of that nature, is without juſt cauſe cenſured and condemned by the Phariſees; a ſort of men who were reſolved to cavil at, and quarrel with whatever our Saviour or his diſciples either did or ſaid.

6 ¶ And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath, that he entered into the ſynagogue, and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered: 7 And the ſcribes and Phariſees watched him whether he would heal him on the ſabbath-day; that they might find an accuſation againſt him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the midſt. And he aroſe and ſtood forth. 9 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will aſk you one thing; Is it lawful on the ſabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it?* 10 And looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 11 And they were filled with madneſs; and communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The miraculous cure which our Saviour wrought upon the man which had the withered hand; and, 2. The effect which this miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees. In the former, *note*, The place where our Saviour wrought this miracle, *in the ſynagogue*; the time when, *on the ſabbath-day*; the manner how, by ſpeaking *of a word*; the perſons before whom, namely, the envious and malicious Phariſees: Theſe men were always ſlandering Chriſt's doctrine, and cavilling at his miracles, yet does our holy Lord go on with his work before their faces without diſcouragement. *Learn* thence, That the unjuſt cenſures and malicious cavils of wicked men againſt us, for well-doing, muſt not diſcourage us from doing our duty, either towards God or towards our neighbour. Although the Phariſees watched our Saviour wherever he went, and when they could find no occaſion of quarrel, would invent and make one, yet ſuch was our Lord's courage and reſolution, that *he bids the man that had the withered hand ſtand forth*, to ſhew that he was reſolved to heal him, notwithſtanding their malicious purpoſe to accuſe him for it as a breaker of the ſabbath. Oppoſition met with in doing our duty, muſt not diſcourage us from doing good, if we follow the example of our bleſſed Redeemer. 2. The influence and effect which this miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees: They were filled with madneſs, and took counſel to kill him; inſtead of being convinced by this miracle, they conſpire againſt him for it. The enemies of Chriſt and his holy religion, when arguments fail, fall to violence. It is a certain ſign of a weak cauſe, that muſt be ſupported by paſſion; which is all tongue and no ear.

12 ¶ And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty which our holy Lord performed: The duty of prayer, We have much more buſineſs with God in prayer than Chriſt had: He had no ſins to confeſs, no want of grace to make known, yet did our Lord ſpend much time, even a whole night, in this duty. Lord, what delight didſt thou take in paying this homage to thy heavenly Father! O how does thy zeal and forwardneſs condemn our remiſſneſs and lukewarmneſs! 2. It was ſolitary prayer that our Lord did ſo exceedingly delight in; *He went into the mountain alone to pray*, not ſuffering his very diſciples to be with him. There are times and ſeaſons when a Chriſtian would not be willing that his deareſt relations upon earth ſhould hear that intercourſe which paſſes betwixt him and his God. 3. The place which our Lord withdraws to for privacy in prayer: *He went into a mountain*, as a place of retiredneſs. God delights to meet with his children alone. The modeſt Bridegroom of the church, ſays St. Bernard, will not impart himſelf to his ſpouſe before company. 4. The time when Chriſt retired into this mountain to pray, and to ſpend a whole night in prayer to God. If we look back to the former part of the chapter, we ſhall find that it was at a time when the Phariſees were filled with rage and madneſs againſt him, and conſpired to take away his life. Thence *learn*, That it is our duty at ſuch times, eſpecially when enemies lie in wait to do us hurt, to give ourſelves much unto prayer. Again, if we look forward, the next verſe tells us, that our Saviour was now about to ſend forth his twelve apoſtles to preach and propagate the goſpel. Chriſt thought ſo great a work was not to be done without ſolemn and extraordinary prayer. Accordingly he ſpends a whole night in prayer to God upon that occaſion, leaving herein a moſt inſtructive example to his church, to continue in prayer at all times; but then eſpecially to abound in it, when perſons are to be ſet apart for the momentous work of the miniſtry, that they may enterpriſe it with extraordinary dread and caution; not with aſpiring, but tremendous thoughts; for who is ſufficient for theſe things?

13 And when it was day he called unto him his diſciples: and of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named apoſtles; 14 Simon, whom he alſo named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15 Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which alſo was the traitor.

As the Jewiſh church aroſe from twelve patriarchs, ſo the Chriſtian church became planted by twelve apoſtles. The perſon ſending them forth was Chriſt; none may undertake the work and calling of the miniſtry, but thoſe whom Chriſt appoints and calls, not immediately by himſelf, but mediately by the governors of his church: The perſons commiſſioned were diſciples before they were apoſtles; to *teach* us, that Chriſt will have ſuch as preach the goſpel to be diſciples before they are miniſters; trained up in the faith and doctrine of the goſpel, before they undertake a public charge. Next, How carefully the names of the twelve apoſtles, thoſe laborious perſons in the ſervice of ſouls, are recorded and tranſmitted with honour to poſterity. God will ſignally honour thoſe who ſignally honour him, and are the ſpecial inſtruments of his glory. Of the twelve apoſtles, Peter is named firſt, and Judas laſt; Peter is firſt named, becauſe probably elder than the reſt, or becauſe, for order ſake, he might ſpeak before the reſt; from whence may be inferred a primacy, but no ſupremacy; a priority of order, but no ſuperiority of degree; as a foreman of a grand-jury has a precedency, but no pre-eminency; he is firſt in order before the reſt, but has no authority over the reſt; neither did St. Peter ever aſſume to himſelf a power of deciding controverſies: But we find St. James in their firſt general council, mentioned in *Acts* xv. 13. ſpeaking ſomewhat definitively, *Thus I judge*, or determine the matter, and yet St. Peter was then and there preſent. Had the champions of the church of Rome ſuch a paſſage in all the ſcripture for St. Peter's authority, it would make a louder noiſe than *paſce oves*, Feed my ſheep, *John* xxi. 16. Again, as St. Peter is named firſt, ſo Judas is named laſt, with a brand of infamy upon him, the traitor; the perſon that betrayed his Lord and Maſter: From whence we may gather, that though the truth of grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a miniſter's ſalvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his office, nor hinder the lawfulneſs of his miniſtry. Judas, though a traitor, was yet a lawful miniſter; and a heart-hypocrite is no hypocrite *in foro eccleſiæ*, before the church, though he ſhould be damned for his hypocriſy before God.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain; and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes; 18 And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great zeal and forwardneſs of the people in attending upon our Saviour's miniſtry; he had newly begun to preach in this place, and the people flock after him from all parts, from Judea, from Jeruſalem, from Tyre and Sidon, to hear his doctrine and ſee his miracles. When our Saviour firſt began to preach, the people came unto him from every quarter. His miniſters find it thus: At our firſt coming among a people, our labours are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt good; our people's affections are then warmeſt, and perhaps our own too. (2.) What ſort of people they were who attended thus zealouſly on our Saviour's miniſtry; they were the common and ordinary people: the poor received the goſpel; the learned ſcribes, the knowing Phariſees, thoſe wiſe men after the fleſh, the mighty, the noble, the great and honourable, theſe deſpiſed our Saviour's perſon, ſlighted his miniſtry, yea, ſought to take away his life. Thus from the firſt plantation of the goſpel to this day, the poorer and meaner ſort of people have entertained the glad tidings of ſalvation: It is a ſad but a certain truth, that heaven is a place where few comparatively, but very few, of the great men of the world are like to come; their temptations are many, their corruptions ſtrong, and their great eſtates, through their own abuſe, become fuel to their luſts. Lord! how rare is it to find thoſe that are eminently great, exemplarily good! (3.) The nature of our Saviour's miracles. Moſes's miracles were as great judgments as wonders, but Chriſt's were as great mercies as wonders, they were ſalubrious and healing; *there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.* Chriſt's miracles were, like the author of them, full of goodneſs; yet would not the obſtinate Phariſees be convinced, either by the goodneſs that was in them, or by that omnipotent power which wrought them: All our Saviour's miracles were wonderful; but wonders of love and mercy.

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

As our Saviour's condition in this world was very poor, ſo was his diſciples condition alſo; therefore to relieve them againſt their poverty and low eſtate in the world, he thus beſpeaks them, *Bleſſed be ye poor*; you that believe in me, and follow me, are in a happier condition than thoſe that are rich, and have received their conſolation; *for yours is the kingdom of heaven.* Chriſt was the poor man's preacher, and the poor man's comforter; yet a bare outward poverty, or an avowed voluntary poverty, will entitle none to the bleſſing. It is not a poverty of poſſeſſion, but a poverty of ſpirit, that makes us members of the kingdom of grace, and heirs of the kingdom of glory.

21 Bleſſed *are* ye that hunger now: for ye ſhall be filled. Bleſſed *are* ye that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh.

Hunger and thirſt are not bleſſings in themſelves, nor yet are they curſes in themſelves. Sanctified hunger is a far greater bleſſing than ſurfeiting fulneſs: St. Matthew therefore adds, chap. v. 6. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs. Learn* thence, (1.) That ſuch as ſpiritually hunger and thirſt after Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, are certainly in a happy and bleſſed condition. (2.) That the happineſs of thoſe who do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, conſiſts in being filled. *Bleſſed are ye that weep now, for ye ſhall laugh.* As if he had ſaid, "You my diſciples that are now in a ſad, mournful, and afflicted ſtate, are bleſſed; for there will come a time when ye ſhall be comforted, a time when God ſhall wipe away all tears from your eyes:" Yet muſt we not think that we have nothing to do but to mourn there is a time to rejoice, as well as to mourn; not that bare mourning and weeping in itſelf, and for its own ſake, is acceptable unto God: But when we mourn rationally for our ſins, and the ſins of others, God will comfort us in this world by his word and Spirit, and in the world to come with the ſight of himſelf.

22 Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you *from their company*, and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of man's ſake. 33 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Obſerve here, The ſufferers deſcribed, the diſciples; and their ſufferings foretold, ye ſhall be hated, ſeparated, and reproached, Hatred of Chriſt's diſciples is the bitter root from which perſecution grows: Where there is hatred in the heart, no wonder that reviling is in the lips. And as the diſciples of Chriſt then were for his ſake hated, reproached, and caſt out of the Jewiſh church, ſo now ſuch diſciples as will cordially embrace, and ſtedfaſtly hold faſt the faith delivered by our Saviour, muſt expect and prepare for hatred and perſecution; to be ſeparated from civil ſociety, excommunicated from church-fellowſhip, and all this by them who ſhall call themſelves the guides and governors of an infallible church.

24 But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your conſolation. 25 Wo unto you that are full! for ye ſhall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye ye ſhall mourn and weep.

Obſerve here, (1.) That though St. Luke omits divers of the beatitudes mentioned by St. Matthew, chap. v. yet he reciteth the woes which St. Matthew omitteth. If we will underſtand our Saviour's doctrine fully, we muſt conſult all the evangeliſts thoroughly. (2.) Theſe woes are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but reſtrainedly; the wo does not belong to men becauſe they are *rich*, becauſe they are *full*, becauſe they do *laugh*; but becauſe they place their happineſs in theſe things, take up with them for their portions, and rejoice in them as their chief good, valuing themſelves by what they have in hand, not by what they have in hope: He that is rich and righteous, he that is great and gracious, he that has his hands full of this world, and his heart empty of pride and vain confidence: he that laughs when God ſmiles, he that expreſſes himſelf joyfully when God expreſſes himſelf graciouſly, ſuch a man is rich in grace, who is thus gracious in the midſt of riches: For to be rich and holy argues much riches of holineſs.

26 Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you! for ſo did their fathers unto the falſe prophets.

Our Saviour's deſign in theſe words, is not to condemn any of his diſciples or miniſters, who have, by doing their duty, gained a fair reputation amongſt the men of the world, but to let us underſtand how rarely and ſeldom it is attained; for uſually the beſt of men are the worſt ſpoken of: Neither the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor John Baptiſt, the prophet of the New Teſtament, nor Chriſt himſelf, nor his apoſtles, did ever gain either the good will, or the good word of the men of that generation in which they lived. The applauſe of the multitude, that contingent judge of good and evil, rather attends the vain than the virtuous. None have ever been ſo much reproached by man as the faithful miniſters of God, who have learned to take pleaſure in reproaches: For though grace does not bid us invite reproaches, yet it teaches us to bid them welcome. The world has all along taken effectual care by their cruel mockings, bitter reproaches, ſharp invectives, to free the miniſters of God in all ages from the the danger of our Saviour's wo here denounced; *Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you.*

27 ¶ But I ſay unto which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. 28 Bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you. 29 And unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo.

Obſerve here, (1.) The noble ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and the large extent of Chriſtian charity; the Jewiſh kindneſs was limited and confined to thoſe of their own religion, kindred and nation, their charity began and ended at home; but our Saviour obliges his followers to the exerciſe of a more extenſive charity, even to all mankind, even the worſt of men, our enemies that ſeek our deſtruction. Chriſtianity is ſo far from allowing us to perſecute them that hate us, that it commands us to love them that perſecute us. 2. The nature and quality of the duty enjoined; *Love your enemies*; there the inward affection is required. *Bleſs them that curſe you*; there outward civility and affability is required. *Do good to them that hate you*; here real acts of kindneſs and beneficence are required to be done to the worſt of enemies, though they be guilty of the worſt of crimes, calumny and cruelty; ſtriking both at our reputation and our life. *Learn*, That chriſtianity obliges us to bear a ſincere love to our moſt malicious enemies, to be ready at all times to pray for them, and upon all occaſions to do good unto them. Thus to do, is an imitation of God our Maker, of Chriſt our Maſter: It is for the good of this lower world, and the way to a better; it is the ornament of our religion, and the perfection of our nature, and an high degree and pitch of virtue. To which may be added the next duty, *not to revenge injuries*; where private revenge is the thing forbidden, and we are directed rather to ſuffer a double wrong than to ſeek a private revenge: Chriſtianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently, rather than to revenge one privately, we muſt leave the matter to God and the magiſtrate. The truth is, Revenge is a very troubleſome and vexatious paſſion, the man's ſoul ſwells and boils, and is in pain and anguiſh, and has no eaſe. Beſides by our avenging of one injury, we neceſſarily draw on another, and ſo bring on a perpetual circulation of injuries and revenges; whereas forgiveneſs prevents vexation to others, diſquietment to ourſelves.

30 Give to every man that aſketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, aſk *them* not again.

Theſe and the like precepts of our Saviour, are not to be taken ſtrictly but reſtrainedly; we are thereby obliged to charity according to others neceſſities, and our own abilities, but not bound to give to every one that has the confidence to aſk for what we have. Indeed, every man that really wants is the proper object of our chriſtian charity; and we muſt, with a compaſſionate heart and open hand, relieve him according to his neceſſity, but anſwerable to our ability. Nor muſt the ſecond part of the verſe be underſtood as forbidding chriſtians to ſeek the recovery of their juſt rights, by purſuing thieves, and following the law upon oppreſſors:

but requiring us to forbear all acts of private revenge, as directly contrary to the ſpirit and temper of chriſtianity. As jealouſy is the rage of a man, ſo revenge is the rage of the devil; it is the very ſoul and ſpirit of the apoſtate nature.

31 And as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do you alſo to them likewiſe.

Here our Saviour lays down a moſt excellent rule of life, for all his diſciples and followers to walk by, namely, always to do as we would be done by. The golden rule of juſtice and equity in all our dealing with men is this, *To do as we would be done unto.* It is a full rule, a clear rule, a moſt juſt and equitable rule, which the light of nature, and the law of Chriſt binds upon us. St. Matthew, chap. vii. 14. adds, that *this is the law and the prophets*; that is, the ſum of the Old Teſtament, and the ſubſtance of the ſecond table. The whole of the law is this, To love God above ourſelves, and to love our neighbour as ourſelves.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enimies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be children of the Higheſt: for he is kind to the unthankful, and *to* the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your father alſo is merciful.

The deſign of our bleſſed Saviour in all and every of theſe precepts, is to recommend unto us all ſorts and kinds of mercy and charity; namely, charity in giving, charity in forgiving, charity in lending; it is ſometimes our duty (if we have ability) to lend to ſuch poor perſons as we cannot expect will ever be in a capacity, either to repay or to requite us. This is to imitate the divine bounty, which does good to all, even to the unthankful and to the unholy. Love for love, is juſtice; love for no love, is favour and kindneſs; but love and charity, mercy and compaſſion to all perſons, even the undeſerving and the ill-deſerving, this is a divine goodneſs, a Chriſt-like temper, which will render us illuſtrious on earth, and glorious in heaven. St. Luke ſays here, *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.* St. Matthew ſays, *Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect*; implying, that love and mercy, charity and compaſſion, is the perfection of a chriſtian's graces: he that is made perfect in love, is perfect in all divine graces in the account of God. Perfection in graces, but eſpecially in love and charity, ought to be our aim in this life, and ſhall be our attainment in the next.

37 Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven:

This prohibition, *Judge not*; is not to be underſtood of ourſelves but our neighbours. Self-judging is a great and neceſſary duty; raſh judging of others is an heinous and grievous ſin, which expoſes to the righteous judgment of God: it is private judging and private condemning of perſons which Chriſt forbids. It follows, *Forgive and ye ſhall be forgiven.* Not that a bare forgiving of others, is all that God requires in order to our forgiveneſs, but is one part part of that obedience which we owe to God, without which it is in vain to expect forgiveneſs from God, *Forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven.* See the note on Matt. vii. 1.

38 Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

I think there is not any one text in ſcripture that declares the bounty of God more fully in rewarding acts of charity and mercy than this before us. O how liberal a paymaſter is God! How ſure and bountiful are the returns Chriſt makes to us for the relief given to him in his members! He promiſes here (1.) Not bare meaſure, but *good meaſure.* (2.) *Preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over*; nothing adds more to the meaſure than the ſhaking of the buſhel, the crowding and preſſing of the corn, and heaping till the meaſure runneth over; now a meaſure will run over as long as you will pour. *Learn* hence, That charities done in faith, in obedience to God, and with an eye to the glory of God, will produce a certain and plentiful increaſe. Liberality is the way to riches; giving is the beſt and ſureſt way of thriving. A little charity from us, if we have but a little, is looked upon by God as a great deal. But it is the greateſt imprudence as well as impiety, to do but a little when we have ability to do much; for he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully; *good meaſure*, &c.

39 And he ſpake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch?

Our Saviour doubtleſs applied theſe words to the ſcribes and Phariſees, the Jewiſh leaders, doctors and teachers, who being ignorant of the ſpiritual ſenſe of the law (interpreting it only to reſtraining of the outward man) were very unfit to inſtruct and lead others; for where one blind man leads another, both are in danger of the ditch; that is, to run into ruin and deſtruction. *Learn*, 1. That ignorant, erroneous, or unfaithful miniſters, are the greateſt plague and ſoreſt puniſhment that can befal a people. 2. That Chriſt having forewarned us of ſuch guides, to follow them will be an inexcuſable ſin and folly, and never free us from the danger of deſtruction, but rather be an aggravation of our condemnation: *If the blind follow the blind, both will*, inevitably, yet inexcuſably, *fall into the ditch.*

40 The diſciple is not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his maſter.

The application of theſe words, no doubt, our Saviour intended to his own diſciples, partly to comfort them under ſufferings, and partly to encourage them to obedience: Did they ſuffer hard things from an unkind world? The remembrance of what their maſter ſuffered before them may ſupport them. Did they meet with hard and difficult duties, ſuch as loving enemies, doing good to them that hate and perſecute them? Their Lord's example may encourage and inſtruct them, who loved them when they where enemies, who prayed for his murderers, and offered up his blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it.—*Learn* hence, That the perfection of a chriſtian in this world, conſiſteth in his imitation of Chriſt Jeſus, *in being as our Maſter*; in coming as near to his example as it is poſſible for perſons clothed with fleſh and blood to arrive at.

41 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceiveſt not the beam that is thine own eye? 42 Either how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyſelf beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

By the mote in our brother's eye, is meant ſome ſmall and little ſins diſcerned, or ſome ſin ſuſpected. By the beam in our own eye, ſome greater ſin undiſcerned: Now, ſays our Saviour, there is no greater ſign of hypocriſy than to be curious in ſpying out the ſmaller faults in others, and at the ſame time indulge greater in ourſelves. *Learn* hence, That there is no ſuch way to teach us charity in judging of others, as to exerciſe ſeverity in judging of ourſelves. 2. That thoſe who deſire others ſhould look upon their failings with a compaſſionate eye, muſt not look upon the failings of others with a cenſorious eye; *For with what meaſure we mete*, &c.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they grapes. 45 A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh.

Our Saviour here and elſewhere frequently compares perſons to trees, the heart of man is as the root, the actions as the fruit; as the root is the principle from which the fruit ſprings, ſo the heart of man is the principle from which all human actions flow; an holy heart will be accompanied with an holy life; where there is a vital principle of grace within, there will be an acting of grace without; a good conſcience will be accompanied with a good converſation. Farther, A double treaſure diſcovered in the heart of man. 1. An evil treaſure of ſin and corruption, from whence flow evil things; but why ſhould ſin be called a treaſure? Not for the preciouſneſs of it, but for the abundance of it; a little doth not make a treaſure: And alſo for the continuance of it; for though ſin be perpetually overflowing in the life, yet doth the heart continue full. The treaſure of original corruption in man's heart and nature, though by ſanctifying grace it be drawn low, yet it is never in this life drawn dry. 2. Here is a good treaſure of grace diſcovered in a ſanctified and renewed man; which is the ſource and ſpring from whence all gracious actions do proceed and flow; namely, a ſanctified and renewed heart and nature. When once the will of man is made conformable to the will of God, it doth will and deſire, chuſe and embrace, take pleaſure and delight in what God approves, commands, and loves: And it will lay an injunction upon all the members of the body to act conformably thereunto.

46 ¶ And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? 47 Whoſoever cometh to me, and heareth my ſayings, and doeth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like: 48 He is like a man which built an houſe, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an houſe upon the earth, againſt which the ſtream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that houſe was great.

Our Saviour here concludes his ſermon with an elegant ſimilitude: He compares the faithful doer of the word to a wiſe builder, which founded his houſe upon a rock. Others he reſembles to a fooliſh builder, that built his houſe upon the ſand: The *houſe* is the hope of heaven and eternal life; the *rock* is Chriſt; the building upon the ſand, is reſting upon the bare performance of outward duties; the *rain*, the *winds*, and the *floods*, are all kinds of afflicting evils, ſufferings and perſecutions that befal us. The ſum is, Men's hopes of ſalvation built upon any other beſides Chriſt, or built upon Chriſt without a ſincere and uniform obedience to him, are vain hopes, deceitful hopes; for when the ſtorm ariſes, when affliction or perſecutions comes, their confidence will fail them, their foundation will be ſhaken. *Learn*, 1. That the obedient believer is the only wiſe man, that builds his hopes of heaven upon a ſure and abiding foundation; Chriſt is the rock that he builds upon, and one Chriſt is before a thouſand creatures, one rock better than millions of ſands to build upon. 2. That ſuch profeſſors as reſt in the bare performance of outward duties, are fooliſh builders; their foundation is weak and ſandy, and all their hopes of ſalvation vain and deceitful. Lord! how does the carnal world build all their hopes upon the ſand, on the wiſdom of the fleſh, on their policies, counſels, friends and riches! They bottom their very ſouls upon fancies, preſumptions, deluſions, and vain hopes; they expect to be happy without being holy, which is to expect to be eaſy, without being healthy. Wo to that man whoſe portion lies in the creatures hands, who builds all his hopes upon this earth; for when the earth is ſhaken, his hopes are ſhaken, his heart is ſhaken, and he is even at his wits end; whereas the chriſtian, that builds upon the rock, ſtands firm and ſure; for if ever the chriſtan falls, Chriſt muſt fall with him: He ſhall never be diſappointed of his hopes, unleſs faithfulneſs can diſappoint; he ſhall never be deceived, unleſs truth itſelf can deceive. If it be impoſſible for God to lie, then it is impoſſible for the obedient, holy, and circumſpect chriſtian finally to miſcarry.

CHAP. VII.

The former part of this chapter relates to us a double miracle wrought by our bleſſed Saviour, the one in raiſing the centurion's ſervant from his bed, the other in raiſing the widow's ſon from his bier; both of them eminent acts and inſtances of his divine and almighty power. The hiſtory of the former ſtands thus:

NOW when he had ended all theſe ſayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum: 2 And a certain centurion's ſervant, who was dear unto him, was ſick, and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jeſus, he ſent unto him the elders of the Jews, beſeeching him that he would come and heal his ſervant. 4 And when they came to Jeſus, they beſought him inſtantly, ſaying, That he was worthy for whom he ſhould do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a ſynagogue. 6 Then Jeſus went with them. And when he was now not far from the houſe, the centurion ſent friends to him, ſaying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyſelf: for I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt enter under my roof; 7 Wherefore neither thought I myſelf worthy to come unto thee: but ſay in a word, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 8 For I alſo am a man ſet under authority, having under me ſoldiers; and I ſay unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. 9 When Jeſus heard theſe things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and ſaid unto the people that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael. 10 ¶ And they that were ſent, returning to the houſe, found the ſervant whole that had been ſick.

In our Saviour's miraculous cure of the centurion's ſervant we have ſeveral particulars very *obſervable*, as, 1. The perſon applying himſelf to our bleſſed Saviour for help and healing; he was a gentile, an heathen, a Roman ſoldier, an officer and commander; yet he believes in, and relies upon the power of Chriſt. *Note*, That ſuch is the freeneſs of divine grace, that it extends itſelf to all ſorts and ranks, to all orders and degrees without exception; even the bloody trade of war yields worthy clients to Chriſt; he doth not ſo much regard what we are, and whence we are, as with what diſpoſitions and deſires, with what purpoſes and inclinations we come unto him. 2. The perſon whom the centurion came to Chriſt for: not for himſelf, not for his ſon; but for his ſervant. *His ſervant was ſick*; He doth not drive him out of doors, nor ſtand gazing by his bed-ſide, but looks out for help and relief for him: A worthy example of humanity! Some maſters have not ſo much regard for their ſick ſervants as they have to their oxen and their ſwine. But he is not worthy of a good ſervant that in time of ſickneſs is not willing to ſerve his ſervant. 3. Unto whom the centurion ſeeks, and with what zeal and application; he ſeeks not to wizzards and conjurors, but to the phyſician, for his ſick ſervant; yea to Chriſt, the chief Phyſician; and this not with a formal relation in his mouth, but with a vehement aggravation of his diſeaſe, *My ſervant lies ſick of the palſy grievouſly tormented*, St. *Matt.* viii. 6. where the maſter's condolency, and tender ſympathy with his afflicted ſervant, is both matter of commendation and imitation. 4. The happy mixture of humility and faith which was found in this centurion. See his humility, in not thinking himſelf worthy to come into Chriſt's preſence, or that Chriſt ſhould come under his roof. The beſt men have always the loweſt thoughts of themſelves; when we eſteem ourſelves unworthy of any favours, Chriſt accounts us worthy of all. See alſo his faith in Chriſt's divine power; he believed that Chriſt was able, at a diſtance, and by a ſingle word, to command off the diſtemper of his ſervant; he tells him that diſeaſes were as much at Chriſt's command, as his ſervants were at his command. Humility, we ſee, is both the fruit and the companion of faith. An humble ſoul has evermore an high eſteem of Chriſt's power, and a low eſteem of itſelf. 5. How our bleſſed Saviour exceeds not only the centurion's deſires, but his expectations alſo, St. Matt. viii. 7. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him.* O wonderful condeſcenſion! In St. John iv. 47. we read of a certain nobleman and ruler that twice intreated our Saviour to come to his houſe and heal his ſon, but our Lord refuſed. Here the centurion doth but barely tell Chriſt of his poor ſervant's ſickneſs, and Chriſt, unaſked and undeſired, ſays, *I will come and heal him.* O how far is Chriſt from ſeeming in the leaſt to honour riches and deſpiſe poverty! He that came in the form of a ſervant, goes down to viſit a ſick ſervant upon his poor pallet-bed, who did not come near the rich couch of the ruler's ſon. 6. The notice and obſervation which our Saviour takes of the centurion's faith; he wondered at it from him: Admiration agreed not to Chriſt as God, but as man it did. Chriſt wrought faith as God, and wondered at it as man. What can be more wonderful than to ſee Chriſt wonder? We find not our Saviour wondering at worldly pomp and greatneſs; when the diſciples wondered at the magnificence and ſtately buildings of the temple, Chriſt rather rebuked them, than wondered with them: But when he ſees the gracious act and exerciſe of faith he is raviſhed with wonder. Let it *teach* us, to place our admiration where Chriſt fixes his; let us be more affected with the leaſt meaſures of grace in a good man, than with all the gaities and glories of a great man; let us not envy the one, but admire and imitate the other. Laſtly, Chriſt doth not only admire the centurion's faith, but publiſhes it; *Verily I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael*; that is, among the generality of the Jewiſh nation. For as to particular perſons, ſeveral had ſhewed a greater faith than this, as Joſeph and Mary. This expreſſion lets us know, that where the means of faith are but ſmall, the noble acts and exerciſe of faith are wonderful and ſoul-amazing.

11 ¶ And it came to paſs the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his diſciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and he ſaid unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him ſtood ſtill. And he ſaid, Young man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe. 15 And he that was dead, ſat up, and began to ſpeak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, ſaying, That a great prophet is riſen up among us; and, that God hath viſited his people. 17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

There were three perſons raiſed from death to life by the powerful word of Chriſt's mouth; namely, Jarus's daughter, mentioned by St. Matthew; Lazarus, recorded by St. John; and here the widow's ſon, only taken notice of by St. Luke. The place where this miracle was wrought was the city of Nain: out of their cities, and not within them, the Jews were wont to bury their dead. Our Saviour at the gates of the city meets with the ſad pomp of a funeral, a ſorrowful widow attended with her mournful neighbours, following her only ſon to the grave. Where *note*, 1. The doleful and diſtreſſed condition of the widow. There were manv heart-piercing circumſtances in her affliction: 1. It was the death of a ſon. To bury a child rends the heart of a parent, for what are children but the parent multiplied? But to lay a ſon in the grave, which continues the name, and ſupports the family, is a ſore affliction. 2. This ſon was a young man in the ſtrength and flower of his age; not carried from the cradle to the coffin: Had he died an infant, he had not been ſo much lamented; but then, when the mother's expectations were higheſt, and the endearments greateſt, even in the flower of his age he is cut off. 3. He was not only a ſon, but an only ſon; one in whom all his mother's hopes and comforts were bound up. The death of one out of many, is much more tolerable, than of all in one: The loſs of that one admits of no conſolation. 4. Still to heighten the affliction, it is added, that *ſhe was a widow*; ſhe wanted the counſel and ſupport of a loving yoke-fellow; Had the root been left entire, ſhe might better have ſpared the branch; now both are cut down, and ſhe has none left to comfort her in her comfortleſs ſtate of widowhood. In this diſtreſſed condition, Chriſt, the God of comfort, meets her, pities her, relieves her. 2. The compaſſion of Chriſt towards this diſtreſſed widow: *He ſaw her, and had compaſſion on her*. Chriſt ſaw her, ſhe did not ſpeak to him: No tears, no prayers, can move Chriſt ſo much as our afflictions and his own compaſſion. Chriſt's heart pitied her; his tongue ſaid to her, *Weep not*; his feet went to the bier; his hand *touched the coffin*; and the power of his Godhead *raiſed the dead*. But how ſtrange doth Chriſt's counſel ſeem! To bid a mother not weep for ſuch a loſs, was to perſuade her to be miſerable, and not feel it; to feel it, and not regard it; to regard it, and yet conceal and hide: It it not the decent expreſſion of our ſorrow then which Chriſt condemns, but the undue exceſs and extravagancies of it, which our Saviour blames. And the leſſon of inſtruction which we *learn* from hence, is this, That Chriſtians ought to moderate their ſorrow for their dead relations, how many afflicting circumſtances and aggravations ſoever do meet together in their death: Here was a child, that child a ſon, that ſon an only ſon, that only ſon carried to the grave in the flower of his age; yet Chriſt ſays to the penſive mother, a ſorrowful widow, *Weep not*. 3. The power of Chriſt in raiſing the widow's ſon to life. The Lord of life arreſts the ſerjeant Death, and reſcues the priſoner out of his hand. Chriſt ſays not, In the name of God, young man ariſe; but, *I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*: Chriſt had a power in himſelf, and of himſelf, to command the dead to ariſe: And the ſame powerful voice which raiſed this young man, ſhall in the laſt day raiſe up our dead bodies; for it is as eaſy for Omnipotency to ſay, Let them be repaired, as to ſay at firſt, Let them be made. The Socinians here own, that Chriſt raiſed this young man by a divine power which God had communicated to him, yet deny him at the ſame time to be eſſentially God: But let them prove, if they can, that a divine power, which is proper to God alone, ever was, or ever can be communicated to a creature, without the communication of the divine nature: True, we find St. Peter, Acts ix. 40. commanding Tabitha to ariſe; but we find all he did was by faith in Chriſt, and by prayer unto Chriſt, Acts ix. 34. *Jeſus Chriſt healeth thee, ariſe*: But Chriſt here raiſed the widow's ſon without prayer, purely by his own power, which undeniably proves him to be God. 4. The reality of the miracle: *He ſits up, he begins to ſpeak*, and *is delivered to his mother*. Death has no power to hold him down, whom the Son of God bids riſe up; *Immediately he that was dead ſat up*. And the ſame power which raiſed one man, can raiſe a thouſand, a million, a world: No power can raiſe one man, but an almighty power; and that which is almighty can raiſe all men. It was not ſo much for the child's ſake as the mother's ſake, that the ſon was raiſed: It was an injury to the ſon, though a kindneſs to the mother; for he muſt twice paſs through the gates of death, to others once; it returned him from reſt to labour, from the peaceful harbour back again to the tempeſtuous ocean. Laſtly, What effects this miracle had upon the multitude.

Seeing the divine power thus manifeſtly exerted, they are filled with aſtoniſhment and amazement; they look upon our Saviour with awful and admiring looks; *They glorify and praiſe God for ſending a great prophet amongſt them*; accounting it a great act of favour that God had in this wonderful manner viſited his people: Yet a prophet was the higheſt name they could find for him, whom they ſaw like themſelves in ſhape, but above themſelves in power; *A great prophet is riſen up amongſt us, and God hath viſited his people.*

18 ¶ And the diſciples of John ſhewed him all theſe things. 19 And John calling unto him two of his diſciples, ſent *them* unto Jeſus, ſaying, Art thou He that ſhould come? or look we for another? 20 When the men were come unto him, they ſaid, John Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come? or look we for another? 21 And in that ſame hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil ſpirits; and unto many that were blind he gave ſight. 22 Then Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have ſeen and heard: *how* that the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed,—

About the time of our Saviour's appearing in the world, there was a general expectation of a great prince that ſhould come out of Judea, and govern all nations: This prince the Jews called the Meſſias, or the Anointed, and waited for his appearance. Accordingly, when John the Baptiſt appeared in the quality of an extraordinary prophet, the Jews ſent to know of him, whether he was the Meſſias or not, John i. 19. He anſwered, that he was not, but only the harbinger and forerunner of the Meſſias: So that it was very evident that it was not for John's own information that he ſent two of his diſciples to Chriſt, to know whether he was the Meſſias or not; for John was aſſured of it himſelf by a voice from heaven at our Saviour's baptiſm, Matt. iii. But it was for his diſciples ſatisfaction that he ſent them to Jeſus; becauſe John's diſciples were unwilling to acknowledge Chriſt to be the Meſſias, out of a great zeal for the honour of him their maſter; they were not willing to own any perſon greater than John their maſter, leſt ſuch an acknowledgment ſhould eclipſe and cloud him. From whence we may *note*, How the judgments of the beſt of men are very apt to be biaſſed and perverted by faction or intereſt. No doubt John's diſciples were good men, and no doubt their Maſter had often told them, as he did others, that he was not the Meſſias; yet they will not believe their own maſter, when they apprehend him to ſpeak againſt their own intereſt; for they knew that they muſt riſe and fall in their reputation and eſteem, as their maſter did: Therefore, that John's diſciples might receive full ſatisfaction from Chriſt, he ſends two of his diſciples to him to hear his doctrine, and ſee his miracles; for John perceiving his diſciples to be ill affected towards our Saviour, and hearing them ſpeak with ſome envy of his miracles, he ſent them to him, that being eye-witneſſes of what he did, they might be convinced who he was. Next, The way and means which our Saviour takes to convince and ſatisfy John's diſciples that he was the true Meſſias: He appeals to the miracles wrought by himſelf, and ſubmits thoſe miracles to the judgment and examination of their ſenſes; *Go and ſhew John the miracles which you hear and ſee*; *the blind receive their ſight*, *the lame walk*, *the deaf hear*. Chriſt was all this in a literal and ſpiritual ſenſe alſo: He was an eye of underſtanding to the ignorant, a foot of power to the weak; he opened an ear in deaf hearts to receive the word of life, and the poor receive and embrace the goſpel. Miracles are the higheſt atteſtation, and the greateſt external confirmation and evidence that can be given to the truth and divinity of any doctrine. Now our Saviour's miracles, for their nature, were divine and God-like; they were healing and beneficial to mankind, freeing men from the greateſt calamities of human life: For their number, they were many: For the manner of their operation, they were publicly wrought in the ſight and view of multitudes of people: To free them from all ſuſpicion of fraud and impoſture, he wrought them before his enemies, as well as in the preſence of his friends and followers: And this not once or twice, or in one place, but at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral places, wherever he came; and this for a long time, even for three years and a half: So that our bleſſed Saviour had all the atteſtation that miracles can give, to evidence himſelf the true and promiſed Meſſias. *The blind ſee*, *the lame walk*, *the lepers are cleanſed*, *the deaf hear*, *the dead are raiſed.*

—To the poor the goſpel is preached.

The poor hear and receive the goſpel, ſee Matt. xi. 5. It was propheſied of the Meſſias, that he ſhould preach the goſpel to the poor, Iſa. lxi. 1. accordingly they were the poor whom Chriſt preached unto; for the Phariſees and Rabbies neglected them as the people of the earth, Job vii. 49. And Grotius ſays, that they had a proverb, That the Spirit of God never reſts but upon a rich man. *Note*, That all along, in our Saviour's time and ſince, the poor of the world have been more diſpoſed to hear and embrace the goſpel than other men: And the reaſons of it are theſe: 1. Becauſe the poor have no worldly intereſt to engage them to reject Chriſt and his goſpel. The high prieſt, the ſcribes and Phariſees, had a plain worldly intereſt to engage them to oppoſe Chriſt and his doctrine; but the poor were free from theſe incumbrances and temptations: They had nothing to loſe, therefore our Saviour's doctrine went down more eaſily with them, becauſe it did not contradict their intereſt, as it did the intereſt of thoſe who had great poſſeſſions. 2. Thoſe that are poor, and enjoy little of the good things of this life, are willing to entertain the glad tidings of happineſs in another life: Such as are in a ſtate of miſery here, are glad to underſtand that it ſhall be well with them hereafter, and are willing to liſten to the good news of a future happineſs: Whereas the rich, who have had their conſolation here, are not much concerned what will become of them hereafter.

23 And bleſſed is *he* whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

No doubt our Saviour uttered theſe words with particular reſpect and reference to John's diſciples, who, out of an extraordinary zeal for the honor of their maſter, were prejudiced againſt our Saviour. But the general import of the words doth ſhew, That there are many to whom Chriſt is a rock of offence. The Jews were offended at the meanneſs of his extraction, at the poverty of his parents, at the lowneſs of his breeding, at his ſuffering condition: From their traditions they expected the Meſſias ſhould be a temporal prince; whereas the prophets declared, he ſhould be a *man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief*; be deſpiſed, and put to death. Thus, at this day, many are offended at Chriſt: Some are offended at the aſſerted divinity of his perſon and the meritoriouſneſs of his ſatisfaction; ſome are offended at the ſublimity of his doctrine, others at the ſanctity and ſtrictneſs of his laws; ſome are offended at the free diſpenſation of his grace, others, that the terms of Chriſtianity are very hard, and lay too great a reſtraint upon human nature: *But bleſſed is he*, ſays Chriſt, *that ſhall not be offended in me*; intimating, that ſuch as, inſtead of being offended at Chriſt, do believe in him, and ground their expectations of heaven and ſalvation wholly upon him, are in a happy and bleſſed condition: *Bleſſed is he that ſhall not be offended in me.*

24 ¶ And when the meſſengers of John were departed, he began to ſpeak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeouſly apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. 26 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? Yea, I ſay unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27 This is *he* of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

Our Saviour having given, as we may ſuppoſe, full ſatisfaction to John's diſciples, and ſent them away, he enters upon a large commendation of John himſelf: where we have *obſervable*, 1. The perſons whom he commended John before, not before his own diſciples, but before the multitude: for John's diſciples had too high an opinion of their maſter already, inſomuch, that they envied our Saviour for overſhadowing their maſter; John vii. 26. *Behold, Chriſt baptizeth, and all men come unto him.* It was a great eye-ſore to John's diſciples, that Chriſt had more hearers and followers than their maſter; therefore not before John's diſciples but before the multitude is John commended: for as John's diſciples had too high, ſo the multitude had too low an opinion of John; poſſibly becauſe of his impriſonment and ſufferings: there was a time when the people had high thoughts of John's perſon and miniſtry: but being now clouded with ſufferings, they diſeſteem and undervalue him. *Learn* hence, How vain it is for any men, but eſpecially for the miniſters of the goſpel, to value themſelves by popular applauſe. The people contemn to-day, whom they admired yeſterday; he who to-day is cried up, to-morrow is trodden down: the word and miniſters are the ſame, but this proceeds from the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of the people; nothing is ſo mutable as the mind of man; nothing ſo variable as the opinion of the multitude. 2. The time when our Saviour thus commended John, *when he was caſt into priſon by Herod:* Not when he was in proſperity, when the people flocked after him, when he preached at court, and was reverenced by Herod: but when the giddy multitude had forſaken him, when he was diſgraced at court, and had preached himſelf into priſon, now it is that Chriſt proclaims his worth, maintains his honour, and tells the people, that the world was not worthy of ſuch a preacher. *Learn* thence, That Chriſt will evermore ſtand by, and ſtick faſt unto his faithful miniſters, when all the world forſakes them: Let the world ſlight and deſpiſe them at their pleaſure, yet Chriſt will maintain their honour, and ſupport their cauſe: as they bear a faithful witneſs to Chriſt, ſo Chriſt will bear witneſs to their faithfulneſs for him. 3. The commendation itſelf. Our Saviour commends John for four things; for his conſtancy, for his ſobriety, for his humility, for his goſpel-miniſtry. 1. For his conſtancy, he was not a *reed ſhaken with the wind*; that is, a man of an unſtable and unſettled judgment, but fixed and ſteady. 2. For his ſobriety, auſterity, and high degrees of mortification and ſelf-denial; he was no delicate voluptuous perſon, but grave, ſober, and ſevere: He was mortified to the glory and honour, to the eaſe and pleaſures of the world: John wrought no miracles, but his converſation was almoſt miraculous, and as effectual as miracles to prevail upon the people. 3. For his humility; John might once have been what he would, the people were ready to cry him up for the Meſſias, the Chriſt of God; but John's humble and lowly ſpirit refuſes all: *He confeſſed, and denied not*; *ſaying, I am not the Chriſt*, but a poor miniſter of his, willing, but not worthy to do him the meaneſt ſervice. This will commend our miniſtry to the conſciences of our people; when we ſeek not our own glory, but the glory of Chriſt. 4. Our Saviour commends John for his clear preaching the goſpel, and for his making known the coming of the Meſſias to the people; *He was more than a prophet*, becauſe he pointed out Chriſt more clearly and fully than any of the prophets before him; The ancient prophets beheld Chriſt afar off, but John ſaw him face to face. They propheſied of him, he pointed at him, ſaying, *This is he.* The clearer any miniſtry is in diſcovering of Chriſt, the more excellent and uſeful it is.

28 For I ſay unto you, Among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

Our Saviour having highly commended John in the former verſes, here he ſets bounds to the honor of his miniſtry; adding, that though John was greater than all the prophets that went before him, ſeeing more of Chriſt than all of them, yet he ſaw leſs than thoſe that came after him. The meaneſt goſpel miniſter that preaches Chriſt as come, is to be preferred before all the old prophets, who propheſied of Chriſt to come. That miniſter who ſets forth the life and death, reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, is greater in the kingdom of heaven, that is, has an higher office in the church, and a more excellent miniſtry than all the prophets, yea, than John himſelf. The excellency of a miniſtry conſiſts in the light and clearneſs of it: Now though John's light did exceed all that went before him, yet it fell ſhort of them that came after him; and thus he that was leaſt in the kingdom of grace on earth, much more he that was leaſt in the kingdom of glory in heaven was greater than John. See note on Matt. xi. 11.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, juſtified God, being baptized with the baptiſm of John. 30 ¶ But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him.

Theſe words are our Saviour's farther commendation of John the Baptiſt; he tells us, that John had two ſorts of hearers. 1. The common people and publicans 2. The Phariſees and lawyers; and declares the different effect which John's miniſtry had upon theſe two different ſorts of perſons. As to the former, the common people and the publicans; the common people were accounted by the Jewiſh doctors as the dregs of mankind, an ignorant and rude mob; the publicans were eſteemed notoriouſly wicked, guilty of great injuſtice, oppreſſion, and extortion: yet theſe perſons were converted ſooner than the knowing men of the time, the ſelf-juſtifying Phariſees and lawyers; for it is ſaid, *The publicans were baptized of John, and juſtified God*; that is, they looked upon John as a prophet ſent of God; they owned his miniſtry, received his meſſage, and ſubmitted to his baptiſm. Thoſe who believe the meſſage that God ſendeth, and obey it, juſtify God; they who do not believe and obey, accuſe and condemn God. But of the others it is ſaid, namely, of the Phariſees and lawyers, That *they rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves*: That is, the revealed will of God, refuſing to be baptized of him. This rejecting the counſel of God we are guilty of, when we have low and undervaluing thoughts of Chriſt and his goſpel, when we are aſhamed, in times of perſecution, to own and profeſs him, when we ſtop our ears to the voice of his miniſters and meſſengers, when we ſubmit not ourſelves to the reaſonable laws and commands of Chriſt; and this rejection of Chriſt at the great day, will render our condition worſe than the condition of heathens, that never heard of a Saviour; than the condition of Jews, which crucified their Saviour; yea, than the condition of devils, for whom a Saviour never was intended! Lord! where ſhall we appear, if we either reject, or neglect thy great ſalvation? The chief thing then obſervable here, is this, That in rejecting John's baptiſm and miniſtry, they are ſaid to reject the counſel of God towards themſelves; that is, the gracious deſign of God in calling them to repentance, by John's miniſtry, by which refuſal they declared, that they approved not of God's counſel as juſt and righteous in calling them to repentance, who were ſuch zealots for the law, and ſo unblameable in their converſation, that it became a proverb amongſt them, That if but two perſons went to heaven, one of them muſt be a Phariſee. They therefore judged it an incongruous thing to call ſuch righteous perſons to repentance, as they took themſelves to be, and to threaten them with ruin, who were ſo dear to God: But the publicans and common people, being conſcious to themſelves of their ſin and guilt, did approve of this counſel which God ſent them by his meſſenger, and ſubmitted to this baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins, to which God by the Baptiſt now called them.

31 And the Lord ſaid, Whereunto then ſhall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept. 33 For John the Baptiſt came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye ſay, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye ſay, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners. 35 But wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

Our bleſſed Saviour, in theſe words, deſcribes the perverſe humour of the Phariſees, who nothing could allure to the embracing of the goſpel, neither John's miniſtry, nor Chriſt's. This our Saviour ſets forth two ways, allegorically and properly; by way of allegory he compares them to ſullen children, whom nothing would pleaſe, neither mirth nor mourning; if their fellows piped before them, they would not dance; if they ſang mournful ſongs to them, they would not lament: That is, the Phariſees were of ſuch a cenſorious and capricious humour, that God himſelf could not pleaſe them, although he uſed variety of means and methods in order to that end. Next our Lord plainly interprets this allegory, by telling them, that John came to them neither eating nor drinking; that is, not ſo freely and plentifully as other men, being a very auſtere and mortified man, both in his diet and habit, all which was deſigned by God to bring the Phariſees to repentance and amendment of life. But inſtead of this, they cenſure him for having a devil, becauſe he delighted in ſolitude, and was not ſo free in converſation as ſome men, according to the ancient obſervation, "That he that delighteth in ſolitude is either an angel or a devil," either a wild beaſt or a god. John being thus rejected, Chriſt himſelf comes to them, who being of a free and familiar converſation, not ſhunning the ſociety of the worſt of men, no, not of the Phariſees themſelves, but complying with their cuſtoms, and accompanying them innocently at their feaſts, yet the freedom of our Saviour's converſation diſpleaſed them as much as John's reſervedneſs of temper; for they cry, *Behold a man gluttonous, a friend of publicans and ſinners*: Chriſt's affability towards ſinners they account an approbation of their ſins; and his ſociable diſpoſition, looſeneſs and luxury. *Learn* hence, That the faithful and zealous miniſters of Chriſt, let their temper and converſe be what it will, cannot pleaſe the enemies of religion, and the haters of the power of godlineſs, neither John's auſterity, nor Chriſt's familiarity, could gain upon the Phariſees: It is the duty of the miniſters of God, in the courſe of their miniſtry, to ſeek to pleaſe all men for their good, but after all our endeavours to pleaſe all, if we ſtrenuouſly oppoſe the errors and vices of the times, we ſhall pleaſe but very few. But if God and conſcience be of the number of thoſe few, we are ſafe and happy. 2. That it has been the old policy of the devil, that he might hinder the ſucceſs of the goſpel, to fill the minds of perſons with an invincible prejudice againſt the miniſters and diſpenſers of the goſpel. Here the Phariſees are prejudiced unreaſonably both againſt John and againſt Chriſt, that the ſucceſs of both their miniſteries muſt be fruſtrated and diſappointed. 3. That after all the ſcandalous reproaches caſt upon the chriſtian religion, and the miniſters and profeſſors of it, ſuch as are wiſdom's children, wiſe and good men will juſtify religion, that is, approve it in their judgments, honour it in their diſcourſes, and adorn it in their lives: *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.*

36 ¶ And one of the Phariſees deſired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Phariſee's houſe, and ſat down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſat at meat in the Phariſee's houſe, brought an alabaſter-box of ointment; 38 And ſtood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

Obſerve here, 1. The Phariſee's civility, and our Saviour's courteſy; the Phariſee invites Chriſt to eat with him, Chriſt readily accepts the invitation, never refuſing any opportunity for doing good. There is a duty of civil courteſy which we owe to the worſt of men; none are ſo bad but we may ſoberly eat and drink with them; only let us take care, that if our converſe do not make them better, their example may not make us worſe. 2. What an opportunity our Saviour lays hold upon, in the Phariſee's houſe, of doing good to a ſinful woman; who coming to Chriſt bowed down in a ſorrowful ſight and ſenſe of her ſins, finds an hearty welcome to him, and is diſmiſſed with comfort from him. The hiſtory runs thus: *Behold, a woman in the city which was a ſinner*, that is, a Gentile, ſay ſome; a remarkable, notorious, and infamous ſinner, ſay others; probably a lewd, unclean woman; ſhe is led in with a note of admiration, *Behold, a woman that was a ſinner!* *Learn*, That to ſee a ſenſual and notorious ſinner, out of true remorſe of conſcience, ſeek unto a Saviour, is a rare and wonderful ſight. *Obſerve* farther, It is not ſaid, Behold, a woman that ſinned; but, *Behold a woman that was a ſinner:* One action does not denominate a perſon a ſinner, but an habit and trade of ſin. Again, it is ſaid, *Behold a woman in the city*; the place where ſhe acted her lewdneſs, added to the heinouſneſs of her ſin, it was in the city; the more public the offence, the greater the ſcandal. Sin is ſin though in the deſart, where no eye ſees it, but the offence it aggravated by the number and multitude of beholders: Yet obſervable it is, that there is no mention made, either of the woman's name, or of the city's name; and it is both preſumption and injuriouſneſs for any to name her, whoſe name God has been pleaſed to conceal; for this is not the ſame woman that anointed Chriſt's feet, Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. and John vii. that was in Bethany, this in Galilee; that in the houſe of Simon the leper, this of Simon the Phariſee. 3. The behaviour and demeanour of this poor woman, ſhe appears in the poſture of a penitent: *She ſtood at Chriſt's feet behind him, weeping.* Where *note*, 1. The great change wrought in this ſinful woman, and the evident effects of it; her eyes, which had been formerly lamps of fire by luſt, are now an holy fountain of penitential tears; her hair, which ſhe had uſed as a net to catch her fond and fooliſh lovers, doth now become a towel for her Saviour's feet. Verily, ſuch an heart, as has once felt the ſting and ſmart of ſin, will make plentiful expreſſions of the greatneſs of its ſorrow. Again, 2. *She ſtands behind Chriſt, and weeps*: this proceeded, no doubt, from an holy baſhfulneſs; ſhe that was wont to look boldly upon the face of her lovers, dares not now behold the face of her Saviour: She that was wont to ſend her alluring beams forth into the eyes of her wanton lovers, now caſts her dejected eyes down upon the earth, and behold the plenty of her tears, they flow in ſuch abundance, that ſhe waſhes Chriſt's feet with them. *She began to waſh his feet*, ſays the text, but we read not when ſhe ended: never were our Saviour's feet bedewed with more precious liquor than this of remorſeful tears. Thus doth an holy penitent account no office too mean that is done to the honour of its Saviour.

39 Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw *it*, he ſpoke within himſelf, ſaying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman *this is*, that toucheth him: for ſhe is a ſinner. 40 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on. 41 There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt? 43 Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt rightly judged.

Obſerve here, 1. How unreaſonably the Phariſee was offended with Chriſt, for permitting this poor woman to come near him and touch him. Admit ſhe had been the greateſt of ſinners, might not ſuch come to Chriſt, when he was come from heaven for them. Oh bleſſed Saviour! there is merit enough in thy blood, and mercy enough in thy bowels, to juſtify and ſave the vileſt ſinners, which by repentance and faith do make a timely application to thee.

2. The parable which Chriſt makes uſe of for the Phariſee's conviction, and the woman's comfort, namely, the parable of two debtors, one of whom owed a greater ſum, and the other a leſs, who both having nothing to pay, were both freely forgiven: and both upon their forgiveneſs loved their creditor much, but he moſt to whom moſt was forgiven. Now from this parable we gather theſe leſſons of inſtruction: 1. That great is the debt which all mankind have contracted, and lie under to the juſtice of God: 'Tis here expreſſed by *five hundred pence*. Our debt is infinite, and had not miraculous mercy interpoſed, divine juſtice could never have been ſatisfied, but by undergoing an infinite puniſhment. 2. That yet all ſinners ſtand not alike indebted to the juſtice of God: ſome owe more and others leſs, all are guilty, but not all alike, ſome owe five hundred talents, others fifty pence. 3. That be men's debt greater or leſs, their ſins more or fewer, it is utterly impoſſible for any perſon of himſelf to clear his debt, and make ſatisfaction, they that owe leaſt ſtand in need of mercy and forgiveneſs: *He forgave them both.* 4. That the forgiveneſs that is in God, is a free, gratuitous and gracious forgiveneſs: he frankly forgave them both. *Gracious art thou, O Lord, in thy doings towards thy children, and thy tender mercy is over all thy works!*

44 And he turned to the woman, and ſaid unto Simon, Seeſt thou this woman? I entered into thine houſe, thou gaveſt me no water for my feet: but ſhe hath waſhed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gaveſt me no kiſs: but this woman, ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſs my feet. 46 Mine head with oil thou didſt not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I ſay unto thee, Her ſins, which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven; the ſame loveth little. 48 And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven. 49 And they that ſat at meat with him, began to ſay within themſelves, who is this that forgiveth ſins alſo? 50 And he ſaid to the woman, Thy faith hath ſaved thee; go in peace.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Saviour recounts and ſums up the ſeveral particular inſtances of this woman's love and reſpect towards himſelf; ſhe waſhed, wiped, kiſſed, and anointed his feet, according to the cuſtom of thoſe eaſtern countries. Love will creep where it cannot go, it will ſtoop to the meaneſt offices, and is ambitious of the higheſt ſervices, for and towards the perſons we ſincerely love. 2. The words of comfort given by our Saviour to this poor woman, *Thy ſins, which are many, are forgiven thee.* Thence *learn*, That the pardoning mercy of God is boundleſs and unlimited; it is not limited to any ſort of ſins or ſinners; it is not limited to any degree of ſins or ſinners; *Thy ſins, that are many, are forgiven thee*; and thy ſins, which are heinous, are forgiven alſo. 3. What is the effect and fruit of great pardoning mercy? It is great love; her ſins, which are many, are forgiven, *for ſhe loved much.* Her love to Chriſt was the effect of his pardoning love to her, and not the cauſe of it: She did not firſt love much, and then Chriſt forgave her; but Chriſt firſt forgave her, and then ſhe loved much. Her love was a love of gratitude, becauſe ſhe was pardoned, and not a love of merit to purchaſe and procure her pardon. The papiſts interpret this word (*for*) as if it were the antecedent cauſe of her forgiveneſs; whereas it is a conſequential ſign and evidence, that the free grace and mercy of Chriſt had forgiven her; her many and great ſins were forgiven her, and therefore ſhe loved much. The debt is not forgiven becauſe the debtor loves his creditor; but the debtor therefore loves, becauſe the debt is forgiven. Forgiveneſs goes before, and love follows after. Hence *learn*, That much love will follow great forgiveneſs. Love will work in the heart towards God, in ſome proportion to that love which we have experienced from God. Laſtly, The very gracious diſmiſſion which this woman meets with from our bleſſed Saviour: What could ſhe deſire that is not here granted to her? Here is remiſſion, ſafety, faith, and peace; all theſe here meet to make a contrite ſoul happy: remiſſion is the ground of her ſafety, faith the ground of her peace, peace the fruit of her faith, and ſalvation the iſſue of her remiſſion. O woman! great was thy ſin, great was Chriſt's pardoning grace, and great was thy joy and comfort: *Thy ſins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace.*

CHAP. VIII.

AND it came to paſs afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and ſhewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him;

Obſerve here, The great work and buſineſs, which not only the apoſtles, but Chriſt himſelf was engaged in, and employed about, namely, preaching the goſpel, thoſe glad tidings of ſalvation to a loſt world. Where *note*, That Chriſt himſelf laboured in this work of public preaching; he did not ſend forth his apoſtles as his curates to work and ſweat in the vineyard, whilſt he himſelf took his eaſe at home; but he accompanieth them himſelf, yea, he goes before them himſelf, in this great and excellent work: *Jeſus went preaching the glad tidings of the goſpel, and the twelve were with him*, *Learn* thence, That preaching of the goſpel is a great and neceſſary work, incumbent upon all the miniſters of Chriſt, let their dignity and pre-eminece in the church be what it will. Surely none of the ſervants are above their Lord and Maſter! Did he labour in the word and doctrine? Well may they. 2. The places where Chriſt and his apoſtles preached, not only in the populous cities, but in the poor country villages: *They went through every city and village preaching the goſpel.* Some will preach the goſpel, provided they may preach at court, or in the capital cities of the nation; but the poor country villages are overlooked by them. Our Saviour and his apoſtles were not of this mind; it is true, they were itinerary preachers, we are ſettled; but be the place never ſo mean, and obſcure, and the people never ſo rude and barbarous, we muſt not think it beneath the greateſt of us to exerciſe our miniſtry there, if God calls us thither: *Chriſt went through the villages*, as well as cities, *preaching*.

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil ſpirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went ſeven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's ſteward, and Suſanna, and many others, which miniſtered unto him of their ſubſtance.

Amongſt the number of thoſe that did accompany our Saviour and his apoſtles, mention is here made of certain women, who had been healed by Chriſt of evil ſpirits and infirmities; that is, of ſpiritual and corporeal diſeaſes, for the Jews were wont to call vices and evil habits by the name of devils, as the devil of pride, the devil of malice, &c. Now as concerning theſe women following of Chriſt, and adminiſtering to him, ſeveral circumſtances are *obſervable*; *as* 1. That women did make up a conſiderable number of Chriſt's followers, ay, and of his apoſtles followers too, *The devout women not a few*, Acts xvii. 4. And verily it is no diſgrace or ſhame, but matter of glory, and cauſe of thankfulneſs, if our miniſtry be attended by, and bleſt unto the weaker ſex. I believe, in many of our congregations, and at moſt of our communions, are found two women for one man: God grant them knowledge anſwerable to their zeal, and obedience proportionable to their devotion. 2. One of theſe women that followed Chriſt was *Joanna the wife of Herod's ſteward*. What! one of Herod's family tranſplanted into Chriſt's houſhold! O the freeneſs of the grace of God! Even in the worſt ſocieties and places God has a number to ſtand up for his name, and bear witneſs to his truth; we read of a Joſeph in Pharaoh's court; of an Obadiah in Ahab's court; of a Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court; of a church in Nero's houſe, and of a Joanna here in bloody Herod's family, who had put John the Baptiſt to death. 3. The holy courage and reſolution of our Saviour's female followers: no doubt they met with taunts and jeers, with ſcoffs and ſcorns enough, and perhaps from their huſbands too, for following the carpenter's ſon, and a few fiſhermen; but this does not damp, but inflame their zeal. The holy Ghoſt acquaints us with ſeveral inſtances of maſculine courage, and manly reſolutions in the women that followed Chriſt as his female diſciples. At our Saviour's trial, the women clave to him, when his diſciples fled from him; they accompanied him to his croſs, they aſſiſted at his funeral, they attended at his hearſe to the grave, they watched his ſepulchre, fearing neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the rudeneſs of the ſoldiers. Theſe feeble women had more courage than all the apoſtles. *Learn*, That courage is the ſpecial and peculiar gift of God; and where he gives courage, it is not in man to make afraid. 4. The pious and charitable care of theſe holy women, to ſupply the wants and outward neceſſities of our Saviour; *They adminiſtered to him of their ſubſiſtance*. Where *note*, 1. The great poverty of Chriſt; he lived upon the baſket, he would not honour the world ſo far as to have any part of it in his own hand, but was beholden to others for what he eat and drank; yet muſt we not ſuppoſe that either Chriſt or his apoſtles were common beggars, but it is probable there was a bag or common purſe amongſt them, which upon occaſion ſupplied their neceſſities; and there were certain αδελφαι, ſiſters, or chriſtian women, as the learned Dr. Hammond obſerves, who accompanied Chriſt and his apoſtles in their travels, and provided neceſſaries for them, when they went up and down preaching the goſpel. *Note* alſo, 2. The condeſcending grace and humility of Chriſt; he was not aſhamed either of theſe women following of him, or adminiſtering to him, becauſe of their former vicious courſe of life; it is not what we formerly were, but what we now are, that Chriſt conſiders; it is a glory to him, to have great and notorious ſinners brought to a cloſure and compliance with him. The reproach is not, that they have been ſinners, for Chriſt did not give himſelf for a people that were pure and holy, without ſpot and wrinkle, but to make them ſo by his word and Spirit, Eph. v. 26. Chriſt is only aſhamed of thoſe that eat of his bread, and lift up the heel againſt him.

4 ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he ſpake by a parable: 5 A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed: and as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way*ſide*; and it was troden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And ſome fell upon a rock; and as ſoon as it was ſprung up, it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture. 7 And ſome fell among thorns; and the thorns ſprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and ſprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable is, to ſhew what are the cauſes of men's improving or not improving under hearing of the word, and to let us know, that there are three ſorts of bad hearers, and but one good one. The carel eſs and inconſiderate hearer is like the *highway ground*, where the ſeed is trodden down and trampled upon. Hard-hearted ſinners, whom the mollifying word doth not ſoften, theſe are like *ſtony ground*, where the ſeed takes no root, the word makes no impreſſion. Thoſe whoſe heads and hearts are ſtuffed with the cares of the world, are like the *thorny ground*, in which the ſeed is choked, which ſhould fructify to an holy immortality: this is the ſcope of the parable. Now from the ſubject matter of it, *learn*, 1. That by the *ſower* you are to underſtand Chriſt and his apoſtles, and their ſucceſſors, the miniſters of the goſpel.—Chriſt the principal ſower, they the ſubordinate ſeedſmen. Chriſt ſows his own field, they ſow his field; he ſows his own ſeed, they his ſeed. Wo unto us, if we ſow our own ſeed and not Chriſt's. 2. The ſeed ſown is the word of God: Fabulous legends, and unwritten traditions, which the ſeedſmen of the church of Rome ſow, are not ſeed, but chaff; or if ſeed (for they fructify too faſt in the minds of their people) their own, not Chriſt's. Our Lord's fields muſt be all ſown with his own ſeed, with no mixt grain. *Learn* thence, That the word preached is like ſeed ſown in the furrows of the field. Seed, as a fructifying, growing and increaſing nature, has in it an active principle, and will ſpring up, if not killed by accidental injuries, ſuch a quickening power has the word of God to regenerate and make alive dead ſouls, if we ſuffer it to take deep root in our hearts; yet is this ſeed not alike fruitful in every ſoil; all ground is not alike, neither doth the word fructify alike in the ſouls of men; there is a difference, both from the nature of the ſoil, and the influence of the Spirit; for though no ground is naturally good, yet ſome is worſe than other; nay, even the beſt ground doth not bring forth increaſe alike: Some good ground brings forth an hundred fold, others but ſixty, and ſome but thirty: In like manner, a chriſtian may be a profitable hearer of the word, although he doth not bring forth ſo great a proportion of fruit as others, provided he bring forth as much as he can.

9 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, What might this parable be? 10 And he ſaid, Unto you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand.

Here we have the diſciples queſtion, and our Saviour's reply; their inquiry is concerning the ſenſe and ſignification of the parable; they own their ignorance, and deſire better information. It is no ſhame for the beſt of miniſters, yea, for the beſt of men, to acknowledge their own ignorance in the myſteries of religion, and to attend upon the means of inſtruction, in order to their farther information. In our Saviour's anſwer, *To you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom*, &c. *Note* 1. That the doctrines of the goſpel are great myſteries. 2. That it is an invaluable privilege rightly to underſtand and know goſpel-myſteries. 3. That this privilege all are not ſharers in, and partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given. 4. That it is a righteous thing with God to give ſuch perſons over to farther blindneſs and ignorance in ſpiritual things, who wilfully reject the truth, and ſhut their eyes, againſt the evidence of it. The Phariſees had all along ſhut their eyes, and ſaid, they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their eyes judicially, and ſays, they ſhall not ſee.

11 Now the parable is this: The ſeed is the word of God. 12 Thoſe by the way-*ſide*, are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved. 13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and theſe have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleaſures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honeſt and good heart having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Here our Saviour applies himſelf to interpret and explain the foregoing parable to his diſciples; he tells them, *The ſeed is the word*; the *ſower* is the preacher; the *ſoil*, or *ground*, is the heart and ſoul of man: Some hearers he compares to the *highway ground*, in which the ſeed lies uncovered for want of the harrow of meditation; others to *ſtony ground*, in which the word has no root; no root in their underſtanding, no root in their wills, or in their affections, but they are inſtantly offended, either at the depth and profoundneſs of the word, or at the ſanctity and ſtrictneſs of the word, or elſe at the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it. Again, ſome hearers our Lord compares to *thorny ground*. Worldly deſires and inordinate cares for the things of this life choke the word, as thorns overſhadow the corn, draw away the heart of the earth from it, hinder the influence of the ſun from cheriſhing it; the like ill effects have worldly affections and deſires in the ſoul of man, rendering the ſeed of the word unfruitful. But the good chriſtian hears the word attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, practiſes it univerſally, and brings forth fruit perſeveringly. *Learn* hence, 1. That no hearers are in Chriſt's account good hearers of the word, but ſuch as bring forth fruit anſwerable to their hearing. 2. That a perſon may be a good hearer of the word in Chriſt's account, if he bring forth the beſt fruit he can, though not in ſo great a proportion as others do; as ſome ground brings forth *thirty*, ſome *ſixty*, ſome *an hundred-fold*; in like manner do all the ſincere hearers of the word, they all bring forth fruit, though not all alike; all in ſincerity, though not all equally, and none to perfection.—3. That it is not ſufficient, that we do at preſent believe, approve, and practiſe the truth delivered to us, or that we are affected with the word, and receive it with ſome kind of joy, delight, and pleaſure; unleſs we perſiſt and perſevere in obedience to all its precepts, and continue to bring forth fruit with patience,

16 ¶ No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a veſſel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but ſetteth it on a candleſtick, that they which enter in may ſee the light. 17 For nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be made manifeſt; neither any thing hid, that ſhall not be known and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear, for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given; and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken, even that which he ſeemeth to have.

In theſe words, Chriſt declares his end and deſign in revealing unto his diſciples the foregoing parable, and why he communicated to them the light of ſcripture-knowledge and goſpel-myſteries, that they may communicate it to others, and to keep it cloſe unto themſelves; even as the candle in an houſe diffuſes and diſperſes its light to all that come within the reach of it. Such as are enlightened by God in any meaſure, with knowledge and underſtanding of his word, ought not to conceal and hide this knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and improve it for the good and benefit of others. *Obſerve* alſo, The argument which our Saviour makes uſe of to quicken his diſciples to communicate their knowledge, and improve the grace they had received for the good and advantage of others. *To him that hath ſhall be given*, that is, ſuch as improve their ſpiritual gifts, ſhall have them increaſed; ſuch as improve them not, ſhall have them blaſted. *Learn* hence, That there is no ſuch way to thrive in grace, and increaſe in gifts, as to exerciſe and improve them; he that hides his talent, forfeits it, is in danger of loſing it, and alſo of being puniſhed for not improving it. *Obſerve* laſtly, How our Lord ſhuts up this parable of the ſower and the ſeed, with a cautionary direction to all his auditors, to take heed how they hear the word, *Take heed therefore how ye hear:* Such as would profit by hearing the word, muſt diligently attend to the matter of the doctrine which they hear, and alſo the manner how they hear: ſuch is the majeſty and authority of the perſon that ſpeaks to us in the word, ſuch is the ſublimity and ſpirituality of the matter, and ſo great is our danger if we miſcarry under the word, that it nearly concerns us to take heed both what we hear, who we hear, and how we hear.

19 ¶ Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the preſs. 20 And it was told him *by certain*, which ſaid, Thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſee thee. 21 And he anſwered, and ſaid unto them, My mother and my brethren are theſe which hear the word of God, and do it.

Two things are here obſervable, 1. The truth and verity of Chriſt's human nature: he had affinity and conſanguinity with men, perſons near in blood to him by the mother's ſide, called here his kinſmen. 2. That Chriſt's ſpiritual kindred were much dearer to him than his natural. Alliance by faith is more valued by Chriſt, than alliance by blood; to bear Chriſt in the heart, is a greater honour than to carry him in the womb. Bleſſed be God, this great and gracious privilege is not denied us even now. Although we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may; his bodily preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his ſpiritual preſence is not denied to us. Though Chriſt be not our's in houſe, in arms, in affinity, and conſanguinity, yet in heart, in faith, in love and ſervice, he is, and may be ours. Verily ſpiritual regeneration bringeth men into a more honourable relation to Chriſt, than natural generation ever did. O how dear are obedient chriſtians to Chriſt! he prefers them in eſteem before thoſe of his own fleſh and blood; *My brethren are theſe which hear the word of God and do it.*

22 Now it came to paſs on a certain day, that he went into a ſhip with his diſciples: and he ſaid unto them, Let us go over unto the other ſide of the lake. And they launched forth. 23 But as they ſailed, he fell aſleep: and there came down a ſtorm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Maſter, Maſter, we periſh. Then he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceaſed, and there was a calm. 25 And he ſaid unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondered, ſaying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Here *obſerve*, 1. Our Saviour and his diſciples no ſooner put forth to ſea, but difficulty attends them, and danger overtakes them; a tempeſt aroſe, and that ſhip was covered with waves which Chriſt himſelf was in with his diſciples. *Learn* hence, That the preſence of Chriſt itſelf doth not exempt his diſciples and followers from trouble and danger. Here was a great tempeſt about the diſciples ears, though Chriſt himſelf was in their company. 2. The poſture our Saviour was in when this tempeſt aroſe; being wearied with the labours of the day, he was laid down to ſleep; thereby ſhewing himſelf to be truly and really man: and that he not only took upon him the human nature, but the infirmities of that nature alſo; he was ſubject to pain and wearineſs, to hunger and thirſt. 3. The diſciples' application made to Chriſt; they awake him with a ſad outcry, *Maſter, maſter, we periſh*; here was faith mixed with human frailty. They believed that he could ſave them, but being aſleep, they concluded he muſt be awaked before he could ſave them. Whereas, though his human nature was aſleep, yet his divine nature neither ſlumbered nor ſlept. *Learn* hence, That the prevalency of fear in a time of great and imminent danger, though it may evidence weakneſs of faith, yet it is no evidence of a total want of faith; in the midſt of the diſciples fears, they believed our Lord's power and ability to ſave them: *Maſter, ſave us, we periſh.* 4. A double rebuke given by our Saviour, (1.) To the winds. (2.) To the fears of his diſciples: *Chriſt rebuked the winds, and inſtantly they were calm*; when the ſea was as furious as a madman, Chriſt with a ſingle word calms it. *Learn* thence, That the moſt raging winds, and outrages ſeas, cannot ſtand before the rebukes of Chriſt; Chriſt as God, lays a law upon the moſt lawleſs creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt lawleſsly. Farther, Chriſt rebukes his diſciples fears, and their want of faith, *Why are ye fearful? Where is your faith?* No ſooner was the ſtorm up, but their fears were up, and their faith was down. They forgot that the Lord High-Admiral of the ocean was now on board their ſhip, and were as much overſet with their boiſterous paſſions, as the ſhip was with tempeſtuous winds; and accordingly Chriſt rebukes the tempeſt within, before he calms the ſtorm without: firſt, he quickens their faith, then he quiets the ſea. *Note* from hence, That great faith in the habit, may appear but little in act and exerciſe. The diſciples faith, in forſaking all and following Chriſt, was great faith; but in this preſent act, their faith was weak through the prevalency of their fear: Oh the imperfect compoſition of the beſt of ſaints! Faith and fear will take their turns, and act their ſeveral parts, whilſt we are here; ere long our fears will be vanquiſhed, and our faith ſwallowed up in viſion, our hopes in fruition. Then ſhall we obey with vigour, praiſe with cheerfulneſs, love without meaſure, fear without torment, truſt without deſpondency. Lord ſtrengthen our faith in the belief of this deſirable happineſs, and ſet our ſouls a-longing for the full fruition and final enjoyment of it.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over-againſt Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* houſe, but in the tombs. 28 When he ſaw Jeſus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God moſt high? I beſeech thee, torment me not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean ſpirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderneſs.) 30 And Jeſus aſked him, ſaying, What is thy name? and he ſaid, Legion; becauſe many devils were entered into him. 31 And they beſought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there an herd of many ſwine feeding on the mountain: and they beſought him that he would ſuffer them to enter into them. And he ſuffered them. 33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the ſwine: and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them, ſaw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city, and in the country. 35 Then they went out for to ſee what was done; and came to Jeſus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36 They alſo which ſaw *it*, told them by what means he that was poſſeſſed of the devils was healed. 37 ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, beſought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ſhip, and returned back again. 38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed, beſought him that he might be with him: but Jeſus ſent him away, ſaying, 39 Return to thine own houſe, and ſhew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and publiſhed throughout the whole city, how great things Jeſus had done unto him. 40 And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

This piece of hiſtory gives us a very ſad relation of a perſon that was poſſeſſed with a legion of devils; we read of few, if any, in the Old Teſtament that were thus poſſeſt, but of many in the New. Our Saviour came into the world to deſtroy the works of the devil; therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome human bodies, to ſhew his divine power in caſting him out. *Obſerve* here, 1. That the evil angels by their fall loſt their purity, but not their power: for with God's permiſſion they have power not only to enter men's bodies, and to poſſeſs them, but alſo to diſtemper their minds, and to drive them to frenzy and madneſs; ſuch was the deplorable caſe here. 2. That the reaſon why the evil angels do not oftener exert their power in doing miſchief to the bodies and lives of men, is from the reſtraining power of God; the devil cannot do all the miſchief he would, and he ſhall not do all he can. 3. The place where theſe evil ſpirits delighted to make their abode, *amongſt the tombs* or graves, places deſolate, forlorn, and ſolitary, which are apt to breed horror of mind, and to give advantage to temptation: From whence I gather, That it is very dangerous and unſafe for perſons, eſpecially in whom melancholy prevails, to give themſelves too much to ſolitarineſs, to frequent deſolate places, and to affect being much alone; for it gives advantage to Satan, to ſet upon them with powerful temptations. It is much better to frequent human ſociety, eſpecially to delight in the communion of the ſaints, by means whereof we may be more and more ſtrengthened againſt Satan's temptations. 4. How the devils own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and pay unwillingly worſhip and homage unto him, yielding ſubjection to him as his ſlaves and vaſſals, not free and voluntary ſervice, *They cried unto him, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God?* Thereby owning him to be a Saviour, but none of their Saviour, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus?* Oh! what an uncomfortable expreſſion is this, to own Chriſt to be a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know and declare, that he is none of our Saviour! *Quid eſt Deus, ſi non ſit meus?* "What is God, if he be not my God?" What comfort in a Saviour?— 5. What a multitude of theſe evil and malicious ſpirits do enter into one man. Oh! the extreme and inexpreſſible malice and enmity of the devil againſt mankind, in that ſo many of theſe wicked ſpirits ſhould at once afflict and torment a ſingle perſon; a whole legion, that is, many thouſands of them! *Note* likewiſe, The unity and agreement which is amongſt theſe wicked and malicious ſpirits in doing miſchief; though there was a multitude of them in this one perſon, yet have they all but one name. We ſee theſe devils have a ſort of unity among themſelves, and in their malicious and miſchievous deſigns againſt mankind, they are as one. Oh! happy were it, if good men were as united in their deſigns and endeavours for the honour and glory of God, and the good of one another, as theſe wicked ſpirits conſpire and contrive againſt them.— *Obſerve* 6. The requeſt which theſe wicked ſpirits make to our Saviour, *We beſeech thee, torment us not.* From whence we may gather, 1. That there are puniſhments and torments appointed to the ſpiritual and depraved nature of wicked and evil angels. Their puniſhment will be without end, and repentance will not avail them, nor mitigate their torments; ſuch will be their condemnation.

2. That the evil angels, or devils, are not ſo full of torment as they ſhall be, although they are as full of ſin and diſcontent as they can be : there will be a time when their torments ſhall be increaſed, therefore they pray, *Torment us not before the time* ; that is, do not increaſe our torments before the appointed time of their increaſe. 7. The devil's requeſt for permiſſion and leave to go into the herd of ſwine. Where *note*, 1. The devil's malice, he will hurt the poor beaſts, rather than not hurt at all. 2. His powerful reſtraint, he cannot hurt a poor pig without permiſſion, *Suffer us to enter*. Satan's malice indeed is infinite, but his power is bounded : It is *poteſtas ſub poteſtate*, a power under a power : if he could not hurt the ſwine, much leſs can he afflict the children of men without leave. 8. How Satan's requeſt is yielded to by our Saviour, *he ſuffered them to go* into the ſwine, not to gratify their deſire in doing miſchief, but, firſt, hereby Chriſt ſhewed his power over the devils, that they could not act without his permiſſion and leave ; next, to ſhew how great the malice and power of the devil is, if not reſtrained ; and laſtly, that the miracle of caſting out ſo many devils might be the greater. *Learn* hence, That ſometimes almighty God, for wiſe ends and juſt cauſes, doth ſuffer the devil to enjoy his deſire, in doing miſchief unto the creatures. 9. What a bad effect this miracle had upon the minds of the Gadarenes, inſtead of believing and owning Chriſt's divine power, the loſs of their ſwine enrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt's departure from them. *Learn*, That carnal hearts prefer their ſwine before their Saviour, and would rather loſe Chriſt's preſence than their worldly profit, *They beſought him to depart from them*. Sad is the condition of thoſe from whom Chriſt's departs, more ſad the condition of ſuch, who ſay unto Chriſt, Depart ; but moſt ſad the condition of them who beſeech and entreat Chriſt to depart from them.—Thus did the Gadarenes here, and we do not read that Chriſt ever returned more to them. 10: How deſirous the poſſeſſed man was to continue with Chriſt after he was come to himſelf, *he prayed that he might be with him* : This he might deſire partly to teſtify his thankfulneſs to Chriſt, partly out of fear of being repoſſeſſed again by Satan, or perhaps to have the opportunity of hearing Chriſt's doctrine, and ſeeing his miracles ; for ſuch as have once taſted that the Lord is gracious, and experienced the pleaſure and profit of Chriſt's company, are very deſirous of the continuance of it, and exceeding loath to part with it. However, our Saviour at this time did not think fit to ſuffer him, knowing that more glory would redound to God by publiſhing this miracle among his friends. Chriſt expects after imminent deliverances wrought for us, that we ſhould be the publiſhers of his praiſes, and declare to all, far and near, the great and wonderful things which he has done for us. *Obſerve* laſtly, How Chriſt aſcribes that power to God, by which he had wrought this miracle of healing ; *Shew how great things God has done for thee*. From whence the Socinians infer, that had he been God moſt high, and the author of that power by which he wrought this miracle, he would have aſcribed it to himſelf. *Anſwer*, Chriſt doth this as not ſeeking his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him : That is, as executing his prophetic office in his Father's name, and caſting out devils by that Spirit, which he had received from his father.

41 ¶ And behold, there came a man named
Jairus, and he was a ruler of the ſynagogue : and he
fell down at Jeſus feet, and beſought him that he
would come into his houſe: 42 For he had one
only daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay
a dying. (But as he went the people thronged
him.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon deſcribed who came to Chriſt on behalf of his ſick daughter, by his name *Jairus* ; by his office, *a ruler of the ſynagogue* ; by his geſture, *he fell down at Jeſus's feet* : This geſture of his was not only a ſign of tender affection in him towards his daughter, but alſo an evidence of his faith in our bleſſed Saviour ; he believed him either to be God, or an extraordinary man, who had a miraculous power of healing. 2. How readily Chriſt complies with Jairus's requeſt, *Jeſus went with him*. Although his faith was but weak, yet our Saviour doth not reject him, or deny his ſuit : O how ready ſhould we be to go to Chriſt in all our diſtreſſes, who is ſo ready to hear, and ſo forward to help us, if we ſeek him in ſincerity, though our faith be weak and feeble ; 3. The great humility of our bleſſed Saviour in ſuffering himſelf to be thronged by poor people ; much people followed him and thronged him. O humble and lowly Saviour ! how free was thy converſation from pride and haughtineſs ! how willing to converſe with the meaneſt of the people for their advantage ! Chriſt did not only ſuffer them to come near him, but even to throng him. Let not then the greateſt perſons upon earth, deſpiſe or diſdain the pooreſt of the people ; but look upon ſome with an eye of favour, upon others with an eye of pity, upon none with an eye of contempt.

43 ¶ And a woman having an iſſue of blood
twelve years, which had ſpent all her living upon
phyſicians, neither could be healed of any, 44 Came
behind him, and touched the border of his garment;
and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtaunched. 45
And Jeſus ſaid, Who touched me? When all denied,
Peter and they that were with him, ſaid, Maſter, the
multitude throng thee, and preſs *thee*, and ſayeſt thou,
Who touched me? 46 And Jeſus ſaid, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is
gone out of me. 47 And when the woman ſaw
that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came trembling, and falling down before him, ſhe declared unto him before
all the people, for what cauſe ſhe had touched him,
and how ſhe was healed immediately. 48 And he
ſaid unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy
faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.)

As our Saviour was on his way to Jairus's houſe, a diſeaſed woman cometh behind, toucheth his clothes, and is preſently healed. The virtue lay not in her finger, but in her faith ; or rather in Chriſt, which her faith inſtrumentally drew forth. *Obſerve*, 1. The diſeaſed woman, with a bloody flux : Let women here take notice of the miſeries which the ſin of the firſt woman brought upon all women; amongſt which this is one, that it has made their bodies ſubject to preternatural iſſues and fluxes of the blood. 2. The long continuance of this diſeaſe; *twelve years.* It pleaſes God to lay long and tedious afflictions upon ſome of his children in this life; and particularly, to keep ſome of them a very long time under bodily weakneſs, to manifeſt his power in ſupporting them, and to magnify his mercy in delivering them. 3. This poor woman was found in the uſe of means: ſhe ſought to phyſicians for help, and is not blamed for ſo doing, although ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon them. The uſe and help of phyſic is by no means to be neglected by us in times of ſickneſs, eſpecially in dangerous diſeaſes of the body: to truſt to means is to neglect God; and to neglect the means is to tempt God. The health of our body ought to be dear unto us, and all lawful means uſed both to preſerve it, to recover it, and to confirm it. 4. The actings of this poor woman's faith: her diſeaſe was unclean by the ceremonial law, and ſhe to be ſeparated from ſociety; accordingly ſhe is aſhamed to appear before Chriſt, but comes behind him to touch his clothes; being firmly perſuaded, that Chriſt had a power communicated to him miraculouſly to cure incurable diſeaſes: And ſee how our Saviour encouraged her faith; he ſaith, *Thy faith hath made thee whole.* *Learn* hence, That faith oft-times meets with a better welcome from Chriſt than it did or could expect: This poor woman came to Chriſt trembling, but went away triumphing. 5. Chriſt would have this miracle diſcovered; he therefore ſays, *Who toucheth me? For I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.* Chriſt ſays this, firſt in reference to himſelf, to manifeſt his divine power, that by the touch of his clothes he could cure ſuch an incurable diſeaſe. Secondly, in relation to the woman, that ſhe might have opportunity to give God the praiſe and glory for the cure. And, thirdly, with reſpect to Jairus, that his faith might be ſtrengthened in the belief of Chriſt's power to raiſe his daughter.

49 ¶ While he yet ſpake, there cometh one from the ruler of the ſynagogue's *houſe*, ſaying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Maſter. 50 But when Jeſus heard *it*, he anſwered him, ſaying, Fear not: Believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the houſe, he ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept and bewailed her: but he ſaid, Weep not; ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to ſcorn, knowing that ſhe was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, ſaying, Maid, ariſe. 55 And her ſpirit came again, and ſhe aroſe ſtraightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were aſtoniſhed: but he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what was done.

Obſerve here, 1. The doleful news brought to Jairus's ear, *Thy daughter is dead.* The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer the faith and patience of his children to be greatly exerciſed and tried. The loſs of dear relations, particularly of children, eſpecially of an only child, is one of the greateſt ſorrows of human life; a trial which has often ſhocked an ordinary patience and conſtancy of mind. 2. Our Saviour's ſeaſonable word of advice and comfort, *Fear not, only believe.* Chriſt ſtands ready to comfort believers in the hour of their greateſt trials and temptations. 3. Chriſt's application of himſelf, in order to the raiſing to life Jairus's dead daughter. And here, (1.) He goes into the houſe only with three of his diſciples, and the father and mother of the maid, which was ſufficient to bear witneſs to the truth of the miracle. Our Saviour, to avoid all ſhew of vain-glory, would not work this miracle publicly before all the people. (2.) Our Saviour rebukes them for the ſhew they made of immoderate grief and ſorrow for the dead damſel; they wept and wailed greatly, with minſtrels making a noiſe, ſay the other Evangeliſts, according to the cuſtom of the heathens, who by a mournful ſort of muſic, did ſeek to ſtir up the paſſion of grief at their funerals. To mourn immoderately for the dead is an heatheniſh cuſtom and practice; 'tis hurtful to the living, 'tis diſhonourable to the dead, nor is it an argument of more love, but an evidence of leſs grace. (3.) Chriſt adds a reaſon for this rebuke given by him, *for the damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth; Vobus mortua, mihi dormit:* "She is dead to you, but aſleep to me;" not ſo dead as to be beyond my power to raiſe her to life. Souls departed are under the conduct of angels to their ſeveral regions of bliſs or miſery: It is very probable, that the ſoul of this damſel was under the guard of angels, near her dead body, waiting the pleaſure of God, in order to its diſpoſal, either to reſtore it again to the body, or to tranſlate it to its eternal manſion. *Obſerve* farther, The nature of death in general, and of the ſaints death in particular; 'tis a ſleep. Sleep is a ſtate of reſt, ſleep is a ſudden ſurpriſal; in ſleep there is an inſenſible paſſage of our time, the perſon ſleeping ſhall certainly awake. O how much is it our wiſdom to prepare for the bed of the grave; and ſo to live, that when we lye down in it, there may be nothing to diſturb our reſt. Farther, With what facility and eaſe our Saviour raiſes the dead damſel with a word ſpeaking, and St. Mark tells us what the words were, *talithi cumi*, Syriac words, to ſhew the truth of the miracle; not like a conjuror muttering a charm in an unknown tongue. The miracles which Chriſt wrought were real miracles, and carried their own evidence along with them. Laſtly, The charge given by our Saviour, not to publiſh this miracle; he charged them to tell no man what was done, that is, divulge it not imprudently to ſuch of the ſcribes and Phariſees as would not be convinced by it, but only cavil at it, and be the more enraged againſt him for it, and ſeek his death before his appointed time was come.—Again, tell it no man unſeaſonably, and all at once, but gradually and by degrees: For it was the will of God, that the divine glory of Chriſt ſhould not be manifeſted to the world all at once, and on the ſudden, but by little and little, during his ſtate of humiliation; for his reſurrection was the time appointed by God for the full manifeſtation of Chriſt's Godhead. Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the reſurrection from the dead.*

CHAP. IX.

THEN he called his twelve diſciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diſeaſes. 2 And he ſent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the ſick. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither ſtaves nor ſcrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats a-piece. 4 And whatſoever houſe ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And whoſoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, ſhake off the very duſt from your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. 6 And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the goſpel, and healing every where.

We heard before, chap. vi. 13. of our Saviour's chuſing his twelve apoſtles, and their ſeveral names; they were firſt choſen diſciples, to be with Chriſt, to learn of him, and be inſtructed by him, and to be witneſſes of what he ſaid and did: Now after ſome time thus ſpent in preparing and fitting them for public ſervice, our Saviour ſends them forth to preach the goſpel, and gives them a power to confirm their doctrine by miracles. *Obſerve* here, 1. The perſon that ſends the apoſtles forth to preach the goſpel; it is Chriſt himſelf. *Learn* thence, that none ought to take upon them the office of preaching, or any other miniſterial function of the church, till thereunto called by Chriſt himſelf. The apoſtles were called by Chriſt, and immediately ſent forth by himſelf. The miniſters of the goſpel are now called mediately, and receive authority from Chriſt by the hand of the governors of the church. 2. The power given to the apoſtles by our Saviour to work miracles, for confirming that doctrine which they preached, *He gave them power over unclean ſpirits*, &c. Now this miraculous power given to the apoſtles was neceſſary, partly to procure reverence to their perſons, being poor and unlearned men; but principally to gain credit and authority to their doctrine; for the doctrine of faith in the Meſſiah as now come, and exhibited in the fleſh, being a ſtrange and new doctrine to the Jews, the truth and certainty of it was to be extraordinarily ratified by miracles, which are the broad ſeal of heaven, to teſtify that ſuch a doctrine comes from God. 3. The charge here given by Chriſt to his apoſtles at the time of their ſending forth, and this is three-fold. Firſt, Touching their preparation for their journey; he forbids them to take much care, or to ſpend much time in furniſhing themſelves with victuals, money, or clothes; becauſe they were to finiſh their journey ſpeedily, and to return again to Chriſt their Maſter. This command of our Saviour to his apoſtles, not to incumber themſelves, when going forth to preach the goſpel, teaches his miniſters their duty to free themſelves as much as poſſibly they can from worldly incumbrances, which may hinder them in their miniſterial ſervices, 2 Tim. ii. 14. *No man that wareth, entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life.* Secondly, Touching their lodging in their journey; Chriſt adviſes them not to change it, during their ſtay in one place; *But into whatſoever houſe they entered, they ſhould there continue till they departed out of that place*, that ſo they might avoid all ſhew of lightneſs and inconſtancy, and teſtify all gravity and ſtayedneſs in their behaviour; this being a ſpecial mean to gain reverence to their perſons, and authority to their doctrine. Thirdly, Chriſt gives a ſpecial charge to his apoſtles concerning their carriage towards ſuch as ſhould refuſe to give entertainment to them and their doctrine, they were to denounce the judgments of God againſt ſuch contemners, *by ſhaking off the duſt of their feet for a teſtimony againſt them.* This action was emblematical, ſignifying that almighty God would in like manner ſhake them off, as the vileſt duſt; for wherever the word is preached, it is for a teſtimony, either a teſtimony for, or againſt a people; for if the duſt of a miniſter's feet whilſt alive, and the aſhes of his grave when dead, do bear witneſs againſt the deſpiſers of his goſpel, their ſermons much more.

7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, becauſe that it was ſaid of ſome, that John was riſen from the dead: 8 And of ſome, that Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again. 9 And Herod ſaid, John have I beheaded: but who is this of whom I hear ſuch things? And he deſired to ſee him.

The hiſtory of the holy Baptiſt's beheading by Herod, is briefly hinted at by St. Luke, but not ſo largely ſet forth by him, as we find it by St. Matthew, chap. xiv. and St. Mark, chap. vi. See the *notes* there. That which St. Luke takes particular notice of, is, that great perplexity of mind, which Herod's guilty conſcience did occaſion; he had murdered John, and now is afraid his ghoſt haunted him: *Herod was perplexed.* *Learn* hence, That guilt is naturally troubleſome and uneaſy; it diſturbs the peace and ſerenity of the mind, and fills the ſoul with ſtorms and thunder. Guilt is always full of fear; every thing affrights the guilty; a bad man is a terror to himſelf, and needs no farther diſquietment, than what his own guilty conſcience doth occaſion him.

10 ¶ And the apoſtles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aſide privately, into a deſart place, belonging to the city called Bethſaida. 11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

St. Luke here gives a ſhort account of ſeveral material paſſages, as 1. Concerning the apoſtles return to Chriſt after their firſt miſſion and ſending forth, they acquaint their Maſter how they had executed their office, and diſcharged the truſt he had repoſed in them. 2. He withdraws privately into a deſert place from the multitude, that he might enjoy himſelf and his diſciples, but there the people find him out, and flock after him; and Chriſt, whoſe meat it was by day, and ſleep by night, to do good, embraces the opportunity, beſtowing upon their ſouls inſtruction,

ſtruction, reproof, and counſel; upon their bodies, health and healing; teaching us by his example, to mix ſpiritual alms with bodily relief. We muſt be in fee with the body ſometimes, that we may come at the ſoul. Happy is that Chriſtian whom God hath made both able and willing to intermix ſpiritual alms with corporeal, and knows how to feed two at once, ſoul and body both: This is the duty of all, but eſpecially of ſpiritual perſons: The Lord give us wiſdom and grace to manage it to advantage!

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and ſaid unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a deſart place. 13 But he ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat, And they ſaid, We have no more but five loaves and two fiſhes; except we ſhould go and buy meat for all this people. 14 For they were about five thouſand men. And he ſaid to his diſciples, Make them ſit down by fifties in a company. 15 And they did ſo, and made them all ſit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed them, and brake, and gave to the diſciples to ſet before the multitude. 17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baſkets.

This miracle of our Saviour's feeding five thouſand with five loaves and two fiſhes, is recorded by all the evangeliſts, and in the hiſtory of it, we have theſe obſervable particulars: 1. The ſeaſonable expreſſion of the diſciples pity towards the multitude, who had long faſted, and wanted now the ordinary comforts and ſupports of life; it well becomes the miniſters of Chriſt to have reſpect to the bodily wants, as well as to the ſpiritual neceſſities of their people. 2. The motion which the diſciples make to Chriſt in behalf of the multitude; *Send them away; that they may go into the towns and country and get victuals.* Here was a ſtrong charity, but a weak faith; a ſtrong charity in deſiring the people's relief, but a weak faith in ſuppoſing that they could no other way be relieved, but by ſending them away; forgetting that Chriſt who had healed the multitude miraculouſly, could alſo feed them miraculouſly whenever he pleaſed; all things being equally eaſy to an almighty power. 3. Our Saviour's ſtrange reply to the diſciples' requeſt, *They need not depart, give ye them to eat.* Need not depart! Why, the people muſt either feed or famiſh; victuals they muſt have, and a dry deſart will afford none: Yet ſays Chriſt to his diſciples, *Give ye them to eat.* Alas! poor diſciples, they had nothing for themſelves to eat, how then ſhould they give the multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us what we of ourſelves are unable to perform, it is to diſcover to us our own impotency and weakneſs, to provoke us to look up to him, and to depend by faith on his almighty power. 4. What a poor and ſlender proviſion the Lord of the whole earth has for himſelf and his family, *Five barley loaves and two fiſhes*; teaching us, that theſe bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pampered. Our belly muſt not be our maſter, much leſs our god. The end of food is to ſuſtain nature; we muſt not ſtifle her with a gluttonous variety. And as the quality of the victuals was plain, ſo the quantity of it was ſmall, *five* loaves, and *two* fiſhes; well might the diſciples ſay, *What are theſe among ſo many?* The eye of ſenſe and reaſon ſees an utter impoſſibility of thoſe effects which faith can eaſily apprehend, and a divine power more eaſily produce. 5. How Chriſt, the great maſter of the feaſt, doth marſhall his gueſts, *He commands them all to ſit down by fifties in a company.* None of them reply, "Sit down! but to what? Here are the mouths, but where's the meat? We may ſoon be ſet, but whence ſhall we be ſerved?" Not a word like this, but they obey and expect. Lord! how eaſy is it to truſt thy providence, and rely upon thy power, when there is corn in the barn, bread in the cupboard, money in the purſe; but when our ſtores are empty, when we have nothing in hand, then to depend upon an inviſible bounty, is a noble act of faith indeed. 6. The actions performed by our bleſſed Saviour; *He bleſſed and brake, and gave the loaves, to his diſciples and they to the multitude.* 1. *He bleſſed them,* teaching us by his example, never to uſe or receive the good creatures of God, without prayer and praiſe; never to ſit down to our food, as a beaſt to his fodder. 2. Chriſt *brake* the loaves: He could have multiplied them whole; why then would he rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us that we may rather expect his bleſſing in the diſtribution of his bounty, than in the preſervation of it. Scattering is the way to increaſing, liberality is the way to riches. 3. Chriſt *gave* the loaves thus broken to his diſcſples, that they might diſtribute to the multitude. But why did Chriſt diſtribute by his diſciples' hands? Doubtleſs to gain reſpect to his diſcipes from the people; and the ſame courſe doth our Lord take in a ſpiritual diſtribution: He that could feed the world by his own immediate hand, chuſes rather by the hands of his miniſters to divide the bread of life amongſt his people. 7. The certainty and greatneſs of the miracle *They did all eat and were filled*; they did all eat, not a crumb or bit, but to ſatiety and fulneſs; all that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied; and yet *twelve baſkets of fragments remain:* more is left than was at firſt ſet on. 'Tis hard to ſay, which was the greateſt miracle, the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they left, we may wonder that they ate any thing; if what they ate, that they left any thing. Laſtly, Theſe fragments, though of barley-loaves and fiſh-bones, muſt not be loſt, but at our Saviour's command gathered up; the great houſekeeper of the world will not allow the loſs of his orts. Lord! how tremendous will their accounts be, who having large and plentiful eſtates, do conſume them upon their luſts! how will they wiſh they had been born to poverty and want, when they appear to make up their accounts before God!

18 ¶ And it came to paſs, as he was alone praying, his diſciples were with him: and he aſked them, ſaying, Whom ſay the people that I am? 19 They anſwering, ſaid, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay,*

Elias: and others *ſay*, that one of the old prophets is riſen again. 20 He ſaid unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? Peter anſwering, ſaid, The Chriſt of God. 21 And he ſtraitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing; 22 Saying, The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day.

Theſe verſes relate to us a private conference which our Saviour had with his diſciples, touching their own and others opinion concerning himſelf. Where *obſerve*, 1. Our Saviour's inquiry, what the generality of the people thought and ſaid of him. *Whom do men ſay that I am?* Not as if Chriſt were ignorant, or did vain-gloriouſly inquire after the opinion of the multitude; but his intention and deſign was to ſettle and more firmly eſtabliſh his diſciples in the belief of his being the true and promiſed Meſſias. The diſciples tell him, ſome took him to be *John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, ſome one of the prophets.* It is no new thing, it ſeems, to find diverſity of judgments and opinions concerning Chriſt and the affairs of his kingdom. 2. Peter, as the mouth of all the apoſtles, and in their names, makes a full and open confeſſion of Chriſt, acknowledging him to be the true and promiſed Meſſias; *Thou art the Chriſt of God. Learn* thence, That the veil of Chriſt's human nature did not keep the eye of his diſciples faith from diſcerning him to be truly and really God, *Thou art the Chriſt of God.* 3. The charge and ſpecial injunction given by Chriſt *to tell no man of him*; that is, not commonly to publiſh, and openly to declare him to be the Son of God, becauſe, being in a ſtate of humiliation, the glory of his divinity was to be concealed till his reſurrection; *He was then declared to be the Son of God with power*, Rom. i. 4. Laſtly, The great wiſdom of our Saviour in acquainting his diſciples with the near approach of his death and ſufferings; *The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things*, &c. This our Saviour did, 1. To prevent that ſcandal and offence which otherwiſe they might have taken at his ſufferings. 2. The better to prepare them to bear that great trial when it did come. 3. To correct the error which they had entertained concerning the temporal kingdom of the Meſſias, and that he was to be a mighty prince upon earth; for theſe reaſons did Chriſt frequently acquaint his diſciples with his ſufferings.

23 ¶ And he ſaid to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me. 24 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Saviour recommends his religion to every perſon's election and choice, not compelling any one by force and violence to embrace or entertain it: *If any man will be my diſciple*, that is, if any man chuſes and reſolves to be a Chriſtian. 2. Our Saviour's terms propounded, namely, ſelf-denial, goſpel-ſuffering, and goſpel-ſervice. 1. Self-denial, *let him deny himſelf*; by which we are not to underſtand, either the denying of our ſenſes in matters of faith, or the renouncing of our reaſon in matters of religion; but a willingneſs to part with all our earthly comforts and temporal enjoyments for the ſake of Chriſt, when called thereunto. They to whom we bear the greateſt natural affection, even the wife of our boſom, and the offspring of our bowels, and thoſe to whom we yield the higheſt reverence, and to whoſe commands we owe moſt entire obedience, as our fathers and mothers; if the authority of natural, civil, or eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors ſhould combine to tempt us to do what Chriſt forbids, yet Chriſt muſt be loved more than theſe, and obeyed before all theſe; yea, all theſe muſt be comparatively hated in reſpect of him. Farther, this precept requires us to deny our honour and reputation, our wealth and outward eſtate, our whole ſubſiſtance, and all our temporal good things, even life itſelf, when the intereſt of Chriſt and religion calls for it; otherwiſe we cannot be his diſciples. 2. Goſpel-ſufferings; he muſt take up his croſs daily; an alluſion to a Roman cuſtom, when a malefactor was to be crucified, he took up his croſs upon his ſhoulder, and carried it to the place of execution. Here *note*, That not the taking of the croſs, but patient bearing of it, when God has made it, and laid it upon our ſhoulder, is the duty enjoined; *let him take up his croſs.* 3. Goſpel-ſervice: *Let him follow me*, ſays Chriſt; that is, obey my commands, and imitate my example: He muſt ſet my life and doctrine continually before him, and be daily correcting and reforming of his life by that rule and pattern. 4. The arguments urged by our Saviour, to induce men to a willingneſs to lay down their lives for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion; *He that will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and he that is willing to loſe his life for the ſake of the goſpel, ſhall find it*; intimating to us, 1. That the love of this temporal life is a great temptation to men to deny Chriſt, and to renounce his holy religion. 2. That the ſureſt way to attain eternal life, is chearfully to lay down our temporal life, when the glory of Chriſt and the honour of religion require it at our hands.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away?

Here our Saviour goes on to ſhew the folly of thoſe that for ſaving their temporal lives will expoſe their eternal life, or the life of their ſouls to hazard and danger; yea ſometimes, by refuſing to lay down our temporal life for Chriſt, we loſe that alſo; which renders it the greateſt folly in the world to refuſe to part with any enjoyment, even life itſelf, at the call and command of Chriſt.

26 For whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

That is whoſoever ſhall deny and diſown me, either in my perſon, in my doctrine, or my members, for any fear or favour of man, he ſhall with ſhame be diſowned by me, and rejected of me at the great day. There are two paſſions which cauſe men to diſown Chriſt in the day of temptation; namely, fear and ſhame. Many good men have been overcome by the former, as St. Peter and others, but we find not any good man in ſcripture guilty of the latter, namely, that denied Chriſt out of ſhame; this argues a rotten, unſound, and corrupt heart: If any man think it beneath his honour and quality to own the oppoſed truths, and deſpiſed members of Chriſt, Chriſt will think it beneath him to own ſuch perſons at the great day. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as are aſhamed of Chriſt's doctrine or members, are in God's account aſhamed of Chriſt himſelf. 1. That ſuch as either for fear dare not, or for ſhame will not, own the doctrine and members of Chriſt now, ſhall certainly find Chriſt aſhamed to own and confeſs them at the great day.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not taſte of death till they ſee the kingdom of God.

There is a threefold ſenſe and interpretation of theſe words given by expoſitors. 1. Some refer the words to the times of the goſpel after Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion, when the goſpel was propagated far and near, and the kingdom of God came with power. *Learn* thence, That where the goſpel is powerfully preached, and chearfully obeyed, there Chriſt cometh moſt gloriouſly in his kingdom. 3. Others underſtand theſe words, of Chriſt's coming and exerciſing his kingly power, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which ſome of the apoſtles, then ſtanding by, lived to ſee. 3. Others (as moſt agreeable to the context) underſtand the words with reference to our Saviour's tranſfiguration; as if he had ſaid, “Some of you (meaning Peter, James, and John) ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon mount Tabor, and that in ſuch ſplendour and glory, as ſhall be a preludium, a ſhadow and repreſentation of that glory which I ſhall appear in, when I ſhall come with power to judge the world at the great day.” And whereas our Saviour ſaith not, there are ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not die, but *which ſhall not taſte of death*, till they have ſeen the glorious ſight; this implies two things, 1. That after they had ſeen this tranſfiguration, they muſt taſte of death as well as others: 2. That they ſhould but taſte of it, and no more. From whence *learn*, 1. That the moſt renowned ſervants of Chriſt, for faith, holineſs, and ſervice, muſt at length, in God's appointed time, taſte and have experience of death as well as others. 2. That although they muſt taſte, yet they ſhall but taſte of death; they ſhall not drink of the dregs of that bitter cup: though they fall by the hand of death, yet ſhall they not be hurt by it, but in the very fall be victorious over it.

28 ¶ And it came to paſs about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white and gliſtering 30 And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moſes and Elias: 31 Who appeared in glory, and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem. 32 But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him. 33 And it came to paſs, as they departed from him, Peter ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias: not knowing what he ſaid. 34 While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud, and overſhadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 36 And when the voice was paſt, Jeſus was found alone. And they kept *it* cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.

Here we have recorded the hiſtory of our holy Saviour's tranſfiguration; when he laid, as it were, the garments of our frail humanity aſide for a little ſeaſon; and put on the robes of his divine glory, to demonſtrate and teſtify the truth of his divinity: for this divine glory was an evidence of his divine nature, and alſo an emblem of that glory which he and his diſciples, and all his faithful ſervants and followers, ſhall enjoy together in heaven. *Obſerve*, 1. The deſign of our Saviour in this his tranſfiguration, namely, to confirm his diſciples faith in the truth of his divine nature; he was therefore pleaſed to ſuffer the rays of his divinity to dart forth before their eyes ſo far as they were able to bear it; his face ſhined with a pleaſing brightneſs, and his raiment with ſuch a glorious luſtre, as did at once both delight and dazzle the eyes of his diſciples. 2. The choice which our Saviour makes of the witneſſes of his tranſfiguration, his three diſciples, Peter, James, and John: But why diſciples? why three diſciples? and why theſe three? 1. Why diſciples? Becauſe this tranſfiguration was a type of heaven: Chriſt vouchſafes therefore the earneſt and firſt fruits of that glory only to ſaints upon earth, on whom he intended to beſtow the full crop in due time. 2. Why three diſciples? Becauſe three were ſufficient to witneſs the truth of this miracle. Judas was unworthy of this favour, yet leſt he ſhould murmur or be diſcontented, others are left out as well as he. 5. But why theſe three rather than others? Probably, 1. Becauſe theſe three were more eminent for great zeal and love towards Chriſt; now the moſt eminent manifeſtations of glory are made to thoſe that are moſt excelling in grace. 2. Becauſe theſe three diſciples were to be witneſſes of Chriſt's agony and paſſion. To prepare them for which, they are here made witneſſes of his tranſfiguration. This glorious viſion upon mount Tabor, fitted them to abide the terror of mount Calvary. 3. The glorious attendants upon our Saviour at his tranſfiguration; they were two; theſe, two men; thoſe two men, Moſes and Elias. This being but a glimpſe of heaven's glory, and not a full manifeſtation of it, only two of the glorified ſaints attended it, and theſe two attendants are not two angels, but two men; becauſe men were more nearly concerned than angels, in what was done. But why Moſes and Elias rather than any other men? 1. Becauſe Moſes was the giver of the law, and Elias the chief of the prophets: Now both theſe attending upon Chriſt, did ſhew the conſent of the law and the prophets with Chriſt, and their accompliſhments and fulfilling in him. 2. Becauſe theſe two men were the moſt laborious ſervants of Chriſt; both adventured their lives in God's cauſe, and therefore were highly honoured by him; for thoſe that honour him he will honour. 4. The carriage and behaviour of the diſciples upon this great occaſion. (1.) They ſupplicate Jeſus; they do not pray to Moſes or Elias, but to Chriſt, *Maſter, it is good being here:* O what a raviſhing comfort and ſatisfaction is the communion and fellowſhip of the ſaints! but the preſence of Chriſt amongſt them, renders their joy tranſporting. (2.) They proffer their ſervice to further the continuance of what they did enjoy; *Let us make three tabernacles:* Saints will ſtick at no coſt or pains for the enjoyment of Chriſt's preſence and his people's company. *Learn* hence, That a glimpſe of heaven's glory is ſufficient to raiſe a ſoul into ecſtaſy, and to make it out of love with worldly company. (3.) That we are apt to deſire more of heaven upon earth than God will allow us; we would have the heavenly glory to come down to us, but are not willing by death to go up to that. 5. How a cloud was put before the diſciples eyes, when the divine glory was manifeſted to them, partly to allay the luſtre and reſplendency of that glory, which they were ſwallowed up with; the glory of heaven is inſupportable in this imperfect ſtate, we cannot bear it unveiled; and partly did this cloud come to hinder their looking and prying farther into this glory: We muſt be content to behold God through a cloud darkly here, ere long we ſhall ſee him face to face. 6. The teſtimony given out of the cloud by God the Father, concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son; *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* Where *note*, 1. The dignity of his perſon, he *is my Son*, for nature co-eſſential, and for duration co-eternal with his Father. 2. The endearedneſs of his relation, *He is my beloved Son*, becauſe of his conformity to me, and compliance with me; likeneſs is the cauſe of love, and an union or harmony of wills, cauſes a mutual endearing of affections. 3. The authority of his doctrine, *Hear ye him*; "Not Moſes and Elias, who were ſervants, but Chriſt my Son, whom I have authoriſed and appointed to be the great prophet and teacher of my church; therefore adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Lawgiver." The obedient ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing eye, the adoring knee, or the applauding tongue.

37 And it came to paſs, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him: 38 And behold, a man of the company cried out, ſaying, Maſter, I beſeech thee look upon my ſon: for he is mine only child. 39 And lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him. 40 And I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out; and they could not. 41 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you, and ſuffer you? bring thy ſon hither. 42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jeſus rebuked the unclean ſpirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon brought to Chriſt for help and healing, one bodily poſſeſt by Satan, who rent and tore him, but rather to torment than to diſpatch him: O how does Satan delight to do hurt to the bodies, as well as the ſouls of mankind! Lord! abate his power, ſince his malice will not be abated. 2. The perſon who repreſented his ſad condition to our Saviour; his compaſſionate father, who kneeled down and cried out. Need will make a perſon both humble and eloquent; every one has a tongue to ſpeak for himſelf, happy he that keeps a tongue for others. 3. The phyſicians which this diſtreſſed perſon is brought unto, firſt to the diſciples, and then to Jeſus: We never apply ourſelves importunately to the God of power, till we deſpair of the creatures help. But what hindered the diſciples that they could not caſt this evil ſpirit out? Why it was their unbelief; *O faithleſs generation!* *Learn* thence, That the great obſtacle and obſtruction of all bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, coming to us, is our wretched infidelity and unbelief. 4. The ſovereign power and abſolute authority which Chriſt had when on earth over the devil and his angels! *Jeſus rebuked him, caſt him out, and charged him to return no more into him.* This was a proof and demonſtration of the Godhead of our Saviour, that in his own name, that is, by his own power and authority, he could and did caſt the devils out.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 44 Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to aſk him of that ſaying.

Obſervable it is, how frequently our Saviour forewarned his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings, and as the time of his ſufferings drew nearer, he did more frequently warn them of his death. But all was little enough to arm them againſt the ſcandal of the croſs; and to reconcile them to the thoughts of his ſuffering condition; how an ordinary prophet ſhould be delivered into the hands of men they could eaſily underſtand, but how the Meſſiah ſhould be ſo treated, they could not apprehend; for the diſciples had taken up the common opinion, That the Meſſias was to be a temporal prince, and ſhould conquer and reign here upon earth; and how to reconcile this with being killed, they could no ways apprehend: and they were afraid to be too particular in their enquiries about it. Now, from Chriſt's ſo frequently warning his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings, we may gather, That we can never hear, either too often, or too much, of the doctrine of the croſs, nor be too frequently inſtructed in our duty to prepare for a ſuffering ſtate; as Chriſt went from his croſs to his crown, from a ſtate of abaſement to a ſtate of exaltation, ſo muſt all his diſciples and followers expect likewiſe.

46 ¶ Then there aroſe a reaſoning among them, which of them ſhould be greateſt. 47 And Jeſus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child

and ſet it by him, 48 And ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth him that ſent me: for he that is leaſt among you all, the ſame ſhall be great.

It may juſtly ſeem a wonder, that when our bleſſed Saviour diſcourſed ſo frequently with his diſciples about his ſufferings, that they ſhould at the ſame time be diſputing about precedency and pre-eminency, which of them ſhould be the greateſt, the firſt in place, and the higheſt in dignity and honour. But from this inſtance we may *learn*, That the holieſt and beſt of men are too prone to ambition, ready to catch at the bait of honour, to affect a precedency before, and ſuperiority over others: Here the apoſtles themſelves were touched with the itch of ambition; to cure this, our Saviour ſets before them a little child, as the proper emblem of humility; ſhewing that we ought to be as free from pride and ambition as a young child, which affects nothing of precedency. Such as are of the higheſt eminency in the church, ought to be ſingularly adorned with the grace of humility, looking upon themſelves as lying under the greateſt obligation to be moſt eminently uſeful and ſerviceable to the church's good.

49 And John anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, becauſe he followeth not with us. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not againſt us, is for us.

Obſerve here, 1. St. John's relation of a matter of fact to our Saviour, namely, his forbidding one to caſt out devils in Chriſt's name, that did not follow Chriſt as they did. Though only the diſciples which followed Chriſt had a commiſſion to work miracles, yet were there others, no enemies to Chriſt, who, in imitation of the diſciples, did attempt to do the like; and God was pleaſed, for the honour of his Son, in whoſe name they caſt out devils, to give them ſometimes ſucceſs. 2. The action of his diſciples towards this perſon: We forbade him, *becauſe he followeth not with us.* Where is obſervable, their raſhneſs, in forbidding him of their own heads, before they had conſulted Chriſt about it; and their envy and emulation, in that they were grieved and diſcontented that good was done, becauſe they did not do it: It is as hard a matter to look upon the gifts of others without envy, as it is to look upon our own without pride. 3. Our Saviour's reply; *Forbid him not:* Becauſe our Saviour knew, that this action of caſting out devils in his name, would ſome ways redound to his glory, although he undertook the matter without direction from Chriſt: We ought not to cenſure and condemn thoſe, who do that which is good in itſelf, though they fail in the manner of their doing it.

51 ¶ And it came to paſs, when the time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go to Jeruſalem,

The time now drew on, wherein our Saviour was to be received up into heaven; and accordingly, he ſets his face to go to Jeruſalem, that he might there ſuffer, and from thence aſcend. Now here we have obſervable, 1. That although Jeruſalem was the neſt of his enemies, the ſtage on which his bloody ſufferings were to be acted, the fatal place of his death, yet, nothing terrified with danger, he ſets his face for Jeruſalem; that is, come what will, he will go with an invincible courage and reſolution. *Learn* thence, That although Chriſt had a perfect and exact knowledge of all the bitter ſufferings he was to undergo, for and on behalf of his members, yet did it not in the leaſt diſhearten him in, or diſcourage him from, that great and glorious undertaking. 2. That though Chriſt was to ſuffer before he did aſcend, and to be lifted up upon the croſs before received up into heaven, yet is there no mention of his death here, but of his aſcenſion only; as if all thoughts of death were ſwallowed up in his victory over death; teaching us, by his example, to overlook our ſufferings and death, as not worthy to be named or mentioned with that glory which we are received into after death. The Evangeliſt does not ſay the time was come when he ſhould ſuffer, but when he ſhould be received up.

52 And ſent meſſengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, becauſe his face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem.

Our Saviour was now going from Galilee to Jeruſalem; and being to paſs through a village of Samaria, he ſent meſſengers before him to prepare entertainment for him. The Son of God, who was heir of all things, ſends to, and ſues for lodgings in a Samaritan cottage. O bleſſed Saviour, how can we be abaſed enough for thee, who thus neglected thyſelf for us! It was thy will to appear, not in the figure of a prince, but in the form of a ſervant; yet the people in the Samaritan villages would not receive him. Strange! to hear the Son of God ſue for a lodging, and be denied: But the reaſon was, the difference of religion which was between the Jews and Samaritans: The Jews worſhipped at the temple in Jeruſalem; the Samaritans at a temple of their own, built upon mount Gerizim. Upon the building of this new temple, there aroſe ſo great a feud between the Jews and Samaritans, and in proceſs of time ſuch an implacable hatred, that they would not ſhew common civility one to another. A Samaritan's bread to a Jew, was no better than ſwine's fleſh: They would rather thirſt than drink of Samaritan water. Hence we *learn*, That no enmity is ſo deſperate, as that which ariſes from matters of religion.

54 And when his diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did?

Here *obſerve*, 1. The crime which the Samaritans were guilty of. No affront muſt be accounted little, no indignity light, that is offered to the Son of God: But theſe men did not revile Chriſt, nor any of his retinue, that we read of; they did not violently aſſault him, they did not follow him with ſtones in their hands, or blaſphemies in their mouths; but the wrong and injury was only negative, *They received him not:* They denied him a night's lodging, and this not out of any diſlike of his perſon, but from an antipathy againſt his nation. 2. The carriage of the diſciples upon this occaſion. It was thus far commendable, that, from the endeared love which they bore to their Maſter, they did highly reſent the churliſh denial of an act of kindneſs towards him: A gracious heart is holily impatient at the ſight of any indignity offered to Chriſt. But their fault was, that they were too far tranſported with paſſion and revenge, even to deſire the death and deſtruction of the uncivil Samaritans: *Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and conſume them?* They did not ſay, Maſter, will it pleaſe thee, who art Lord of the creature, to command fire to come down; Nor did they ſay, If it be thy pleaſure, command us to call down fire: But, Wilt thou that we command fire? This ſavours too much of pride, cruelty, and revenge; ſo dangerous is a miſguided zeal.

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave *them*. And they went to another village.

Here we have our Saviour's cenſure of the raſh and hot motion of his diſciples, which proceeded firſt from ignorance of themſelves, *Ye know not what ſpirit ye are of:* Ye are not now under the rough and ſour diſpenſation of the law, but under the calm and gentle inſtitution of the goſpel, which deſigns univerſal love, peace, and good will to all mankind. Hence *learn*, firſt, That a cruel and revengeful ſpirit is directly contrary to the deſign and temper of chriſtianity. Secondly, That no difference in religion, no pretence of zeal for God, can warrant and juſtify ſuch a ſpirit and temper. Again, this raſhneſs in the diſciples proceeded from their ignorance of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, as well as of themſelves; *The Son of man did not come to deſtroy men's lives but to ſave them*; that is, the proper intent and deſign of my coming was to ſave and not deſtroy, though the accidental event of it may be otherwiſe, through the malice and perverſeneſs of men. *Learn*, That it was the deſign of Chriſt, and his holy religion, to diſcountenance all fierceneſs, rage, and cruelty, in men one towards another; and to inſpire them univerſally with a ſpirit of love and unity. Chriſt is ſo far from allowing us to perſecute them that hate us, that he forbids us to hate them that perſecute us.

57 ¶ And it came to paſs, that as they went in the way, a certain *man* ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 58 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

Obſerve here, 1. A perſon reſolving to follow Chriſt; a good reſolution, if made deliberately and wiſely, not for ſiniſter ends, or ſecular advantages, which it is to be feared was the caſe here, by our Saviour's anſwer; *For,* ſays he, *Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head:* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "My condition in the world is very poor, I have no houſe of reſidence that I call my own, the birds of the air have their fixed neſts, and the beaſts of the earth have their dens and holes, but I have no fixed habitation; therefore if you think to follow me for the ſake of worldly advantage, you will find yourſelf greatly diſappointed." *Learn* hence, That ſuch men will find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, and greatly diſappointed, who expect to gain any thing by following of Chriſt, but their ſouls ſalvation. It was a common opinion among the Jews, that the diſciples of the Meſſiah ſhould get wealth and honour by following of him. 'Tis likely what this perſon ſaid, proceeded from this opinion: Accordingly, Chriſt diſcourages him from ſuch expectation, by laying before him, his mean, poor, and low condition, in which he was to be followed by his diſciples; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "If you expect temporal advantages by following of me, you will be much miſtaken, for I have nothing I can call my own."

59 And he ſaid unto another, Follow me. But he ſaid, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 60 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

We are not to ſuppoſe by this prohibition, that Chriſt diſallows or diſapproves of any civil office from one perſon to another, much leſs of a child to a parent, either living or dying: but he lets us know, 1. That no office of love and ſervice to man muſt be preferred before our duty to God, to whom we owe our firſt and chief obedience. 2. That lawful and decent offices become ſinful, when they hinder greater duties. 3. That ſuch as are called by Chriſt to preach the goſpel, muſt mind that alone, and leave inferior duties to inferior perſons; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Others will ſerve well enough to bury the dead, but thou that art called to miniſter unto God, muſt do that unto which thou art called." Under the law the prieſts might not come near a dead corpſe, nor meddle with the interment of their own parents; unto which our Saviour here probably alludes.

61 And another alſo ſaid, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me firſt go bid them farewel which are at home at my houſe. 62 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Here we have another perſon that promiſeth to follow Chriſt, but deſireth leave firſt to ſettle the affairs of his family, and to take leave of his friends: Our Saviour tells him, If he would be one of his miniſters, he muſt be like a ploughman, who looks forward, and not backward, or he will never make his furrows right, they will be either too deep, or too narrow, he muſt mind his plough only. Thus muſt they that are called to the work of the miniſtry, mind it wholly, attend to that alone; their whole time, their whole ſtrength muſt be devoted to it: The things of the world are things behind them, they muſt not look back upon them: Nothing can juſtify a miniſter concerning himſelf with the incumbrances of worldly buſineſs, but only perfect neceſſity for the ſupport of himſelf and his family. Again, Ploughing-work is hard work, a ſtrong and ſteady hand is required for it; he that ploughs muſt keep on, and make no baulks of the hardeſt ground he meets with: Verily no difficulties muſt diſcourage either miniſters or people in the way of their duty.

CHAP. X.

AFTER theſe things, the Lord appointed other ſeventy alſo, and ſent them two and two before his face into every city, and place, whither he himſelf would come.

The captain-general of our ſalvation, Chriſt Jeſus, having called, commiſſioned, and ſent forth his twelve apoſtles, as great commanders, to ſubdue his native kingdom of Iſrael to himſelf, at the ſixth chapter of this goſpel; in this chapter he ſendeth after them a band of ſeventy auxiliary forces to aid and aſſiſt them. Where *note*, 1. The perſon commiſſioning and ſending them forth; Chriſt himſelf. Thence *learn*, That none ought to take upon them the office of preaching, or other miniſterial functions in the church, till thereunto called by Chriſt himſelf. The twelve apoſtles, and ſeventy diſciples, had an immediate miſſion from Chriſt himſelf: All his miniſters now are called mediately, and receive their authority from Chriſt by the hands of the governors of his church. 2. The manner of their ſending, two and two in a company, partly to make their meſſage of more authority, partly to teſtify their mutual conſent in the doctrine they taught, and partly to comfort and encourage, to help and ſtrengthen, to aſſiſt and ſupport each other. In imitation of this example, the Jeſuits ſend forth their emiſſaries by pairs, *Jeſuitæ ſemper ſunt bini, &c.* *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of the goſpel do ſtand in great need of the mutual help and comfort, of the united aſſiſtance and encouragement of each other, in the weighty duties of their calling and function. Our Saviour, in the next verſe, compares his miniſters to harveſt labourers, who are to help and aſſiſt one another, the ſtrong endeavouring to ſtrengthen the hands of the weak. But Lord! what tears are ſufficient to bewail the want of love and unity, yea the prevalency of that envy and malignity which is found too often among the miniſters of the goſpel? ſo that inſtead of going forth two by two, happy is he that is alone in a place. Well might Melancthon bleſs God, when he lay a-dying, that he was going to a place where he ſhould be freed from the implacable hatred of divines; this is, and ought to be for a lamentation.

2 Therefore ſaid he unto them, the harveſt truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

Note here, 1. That God's church is an harveſt field. 2. That the miniſters of God are labourers in his harveſt, under God, the Lord of the harveſt. 3. That to God alone doth it belong to ſend forth labourers into his harveſt, and none muſt thruſt themſelves in till God ſends them forth. *Pray ye the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers.* 4. That the number of faithful labourers is comparatively ſmall and few: The ſcribes and Phariſees in the Jewiſh harveſt field are many; yet, ſays Chriſt, *The labourers are few.* 5. That it is the church's duty to pray, and that earneſtly and inceſſantly, to God the Lord of the harveſt, to increaſe the number of faithful labourers; and to ſend forth more labourers into his harveſt.

3 Go your ways: behold, I ſend you forth as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither purſe, nor ſcrip, nor ſhoes: and ſalute no man by the way.

Our Saviour, 1. Arms his diſciples againſt the difficulties, dangers and diſcouragements which they might meet with in the courſe of their miniſtry, by telling them, that he ſent them forth as lambs among wolves; thereby intimating, that the enemies of the goſpel have as great an inclination, from their malicious nature, to devour and deſtroy the *miniſters* of Chriſt, as wolves have from their natural temper to devour lambs; *Behold I ſend you forth as lambs among wolves.* 2. Our Saviour directs them in this their firſt expedition to preach the goſpel, to commit themſelves to the gracious care and good providence of God, both for proviſion and protection; *carry neither purſe, nor ſcrip, nor ſtaff,* ſays St. Matthew; as if he had ſaid, Truſt God with the care of your lives, rely upon his providence both for protection and proviſion: Yet muſt we take notice, that this was only a temporary command, given to the diſciples for this particular journey, which they were quickly to diſpatch; for in the general, Chriſt allows his miniſters, as well as others, to exerciſe a prudent and provident care for themſelves, and their families. And as it is the miniſter's duty to truſt God in the uſe of prudential means for their maintenance, ſo it is the people's duty to take care for their miniſters' comfortable ſubſiſtence. *The workman is worthy of his meat,* ſays our Saviour; that is, of all neceſſary ſupplies; he is worthy of a comfortable ſubſiſtence, and, where it may be had, of an honourable maintenance.

5 And into whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace *be* to this houſe. 6 And if the ſon of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it: if not, it ſhall turn to you again.

Here our bleſſed Saviour directs his diſciples how to manage themſelves in the executing of their office; *Into whatſoever houſe ye enter,* firſt ſay, *Peace be to this houſe.* They muſt wiſh peace to the ſons of peace, yea to the enemies of peace alſo; and as their peace ſhall reſt upon the one, ſo ſhall it return from the other. *Peace be to this houſe* is a fit ſalutation for them to uſe, who were the diſciples and ambaſſadors of the Prince of peace; and very agreeable to the goſpel they were to preach, which was a goſpel of peace: And it was a prayer as well as a ſalutation; the diſciples were to ſpeak it not from the lips only, but from the heart alſo. Peace is the muſic which both men and angels are delighted with, and the chriſtian religion is the greateſt promoter and preſerver of it, that commands us to *pray for peace, to follow after peace, to part with our coat and cloke,* that is, with our civil rights, *for peace; and, if it be poſſible, to live peaceably with all men.* 2. As the injunction given by our Saviour to his diſciples to deliver a meſſage of peace, firſt ſay, *Peace be to this houſe;* ſo the prediction of what ſhould befal them in the delivery of this their meſſage. Their ſalutation, though it be peace, yet will not find a welcome and entertainment with all perſons, but only with the ſons of peace. *If the ſons of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it.* 3. An encouragement not to be afraid of delivering their meſſage, though it wanted ſucceſs, *If your peace reſt not, it ſhall return to you again. Learn,* 1. That as there was at the firſt preaching of the goſpel, ſo there is, and always will be, ſome that are ſons of peace, and others that are enemies unto peace. 2. That this peace will reſt on none but thoſe that are fit to receive it. 3. That though it doth not reſt, yet it ſhall not be loſt but return again to thoſe that publiſh it. Miniſters can but ſay, *Peace be to this houſe,* they cannot make it reſt there; we can offer terms of peace to a loſt world, but cannot compel men to accept them; and if they finally refuſe them, *we ſhall be a ſweet ſavour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them,* &c.

7 And in the ſame houſe remain, eating and drinking ſuch things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from houſe to houſe. 8 And into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat ſuch things as are ſet before you: 9 And heal the ſick that are therein, and ſay unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, 11 Even the very duſt of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you: notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12 But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

Here our Saviour gives his diſciples ſundry directions how to manage themſelves in this expedition for preaching the goſpel. He enjoins them, 1. To obſerve the rules of decency in going from place to place, having entered an houſe to continue there, not changing their lodging and going from from houſe to houſe, thereby avoiding all ſhew of lightneſs and inconſtancy, and teſtifying all gravity and ſtayedneſs in their behaviour; this being a ſpecial mean to win authority to their perſons and miniſtry. 2. He gives them a power to work miracles for the confirming of the doctrine which they preached; *Heal the ſick that are therein.* This was neceſſary, partly to procure reverence to their perſons, being poor and unlearned men; and partly to gain credit to their doctrine: For the doctrine of faith in the Meſſias, as now come and exhibited in the fleſh, being a ſtrange and new doctrine to the Jews, the truth and certainty of it was to be extraordinary ratified and confirmed by working miracles; one ſort of which was healing of diſeaſes in an extraordinary manner. 3. How Chriſt encourages his diſciples againſt the want of ſucceſs; he bids them denounce the judgments of God againſt ſuch contemners of their doctrine *by ſhaking off the duſt of their feet;* which action was emblematical, and ſignified, that God in like manner would ſhake off them, and eſteem them no better than the vileſt duſt. *Learn* hence, That thoſe which deſpiſe the meſſage that the miniſters of the goſpel bring, ſhall hereafter find the duſt of their feet, and the aſhes of their graves, to give a judicial teſtimony againſt them in the day of Chriſt: Wherever the word is preached, it is for a teſtimony, either a teſtimony for, or againſt a people. For, if the duſt of a miniſter's feet bear witneſs againſt a people, their ſermons much more. Laſtly, The dreadful judgment denounced by our Saviour againſt the contemners of his diſciples doctrine; Verily it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Where *note,* 1. That there ſhall be a day of judgment. 2. That in the day of judgment ſome ſinners ſhall fare worſe than others. 3. That of all ſinners, the condition of ſuch ſhall be ſaddeſt at the day of judgment, who living under the goſpel, die after all in their impenitency and infidelity.

13 Wo unto thee, Chorazin: wo unto thee, Bethſaida: for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, ſitting in ſackcloth and aſhes. 14 But it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, ſhalt be thruſt down to hell.

Theſe cities in Galilee, Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum, having been the places where Chriſt preached and wrought his miracles, they have a wo denounced here againſt them, for their contempt of Chriſt, and the offers of his grace; *Wo unto thee, Chorazin,* &c. The higher a people riſe under the means, the lower they fall if they miſcarry. They that have been neareſt to converſion, being not converted, ſhall have the greateſt condemnation when they are judged: Capernaum's ſentence will exceed Sodom's for ſeverity, becauſe ſhe exceeded Sodom in the enjoyment of means and mercy. *Obſerve* here, 1. Capernaum's privilege enjoyed, *She was lifted up to heaven;* that is, enjoyed privileges above all other places, namely, the preſence, preaching, and miracles of our Saviour. 2. Capernaum's doom pronounced, *Thou ſhalt be thruſt down to hell;* that is, thy condition ſhall be ſadder than thoſe that never heard of a Saviour, even Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, thoſe rude and barbarous nations, out of the pale of the church, ſhall be in an eaſier ſtate and condition, than thoſe that have enjoyed goſpel-ordinances and church-privileges, but not improved them. *Learn* hence, 1. That goſpel-ordinances enjoyed, are a mighty honor and advancement to the pooreſt perſons and obſcureſt places, *Thou, Capernaum, art exalted to heaven.* 2. That goſpel-ordinances, and church-privileges enjoyed, but not improved, provoke almighty God to inflict the ſoreſt judgments upon a people: *Thou that art exalted to heaven ſhalt be thruſt down to hell.*

16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that

deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me: and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

Here our Saviour encourages his miniſters to faithfulneſs in their office, by aſſuring them, that he ſhould reckon and eſteem all the kindneſs ſhewn to them, as done unto himſelf. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Where *note,* That all the offices of love and reſpect, of kindneſs and charity, which we ſhew to the miniſters or members of Chriſt for his ſake, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf. *Note* farther, That the contempt of the meſſage and meſſengers of the goſpel runs much higher than men are aware of. They think it no great matter to ſlight or neglect the meſſengers of Chriſt; but verily, that contempt flies in the face and authority of Chriſt himſelf, who gave them their commiſſion; yea in the very face of God the Father who gave Chriſt his commiſſion; accordingly they are called God's mouth, Jer. xv. 19. their meſſage and their miſſion being both from him. Nay farther, this ſin ſtrikes at our own ſouls, and we are injurious to them as well as unto Chriſt, *he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me;* yet certainly no age was ever deeper drenchd in the guilt of this ſin than the preſent age is.

17 ¶ And the ſeventy returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy name. 18 And he ſaid unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſeventy diſciples return to give Chriſt an account of the ſucceſs of their expedition: They return as victors with joy and triumph, ſhewing Chriſt the trophies of their conqueſt, *Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy name;* the weapons of their warfare were not carnal but ſpiritual, and mighty through Chriſt; the powers of darkneſs cannot ſtand, but muſt fall before the power of Chriſt; the devils are no match for Chriſt, no not for the meaneſt of the miniſters of Chriſt, who go forth in his name, armed with his authority and power. 2. Our Saviour's reply to the ſeventy diſciples upon this occaſion: *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* A twofold interpretation is given of theſe words: 1. Some look upon them as a ſecret rebuke given by our Saviour to the ſeventy, for that exceſs of joy, and mixture of vainglory which was found with them upon the account of thoſe extraordinary gifts and abilities of caſting out devils, and healing diſeaſes, which were conferred upon them. *I beheld Satan,* ſays Chriſt, *falling like lightning from heaven;* as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Take heed of being puſt up with pride, upon account of thoſe endowments which I have beſtowed upon you: Remember Lucifer, the prince of pride, how he fell from heaven by his arrogancy, and and labour you to aſcend thither by humility." The words in this ſenſe afford this inſtruction, That thoſe whom Chriſt has beſtowed the greateſt meaſure of ſpiritual graces, miniſterial gifts, and temporal bleſſings upon, ought to be very watchful againſt that hateful ſin of pride, which has ruined and deſtroyed ſo many thouſands of angels and men. 2. Some underſtand this fall of Satan not literally, but figuratively and myſtically, of his ruin by the power and preaching of the goſpel; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "I know that this is no vain boaſt of yours, no vaunt nor brag of your valour, that devils are conquered by your courage; for when I firſt ſent you forth to preach the goſpel, and armed you with divine power, I eaſily foreſaw that the devil's kingdom would ſhake about his ears, and that his power would be ruined by the power of the goſpel, and that wherever you preached, Satan's ſtrength and power ſhould vaniſh like a flaſh of lightning ſuddenly and irrecoverably." *Learn* hence, That the powerful and efficacious preaching of the goſpel is the ſpecial means ordained and appointed by Chriſt, for the ruin and ſubverſion of Satan's kingdom in the world; as the goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation to them that believe and obey it, ſo it is the power of God unto deſtruction to Satan, and all that fight under his banner againſt it.

17 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you.

Our Lord, finding that his ſeventy ambaſſadors had managed their former commiſſion ſo well, he here enlarged it, adding thereunto a promiſe of divine protection; *Behold I give you power to tread on ſerpents, and nothing ſhall hurt you;* as if Chriſt had ſaid, Go forth again in this armor of power, with which I have girt you, and I warrant you ſword-free and ſhot-free, nothing ſhall by any means hurt you, neither ſtrength nor ſtratagem ſhall overcome you: Neither the power, the preſence, nor protection of God ſhall be wanting to any of Chriſt's miniſters or members, who go forth in his ſtrength againſt the ſpiritual enemies of their ſalvation. As we have a promiſe of power in this text to enable us to reſiſt the devil, ſo we have a promiſe of ſucceſs elſewhere, upon our reſiſting him; *Reſiſt the devil, and he will fly from you,* St. James iv. 7.

20 Notwithſtanding, in this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you: but rather rejoice, becauſe your names are written in heaven.

In theſe words of our Saviour there is ſomething corrective and ſomething directive. The corrective part lies in the firſt words, wherein Chriſt checks the ſuſpected exceſſes of their joy for victories gained over evil ſpirits: *In this rejoice not;* that is, let not your hearts too much overflow with joy upon this occaſion: The negation is not abſolute, but comparative only; Chriſt doth not forbid, but only qualify and moderate their joy, *that the ſpirits are ſubject to you,* that is, the devils. Where *note,* 1. That though the evil angels, by their fall, have loſt their happy condition, yet not their original conſtitution; their honour, but not their nature: They are ſpirits ſtill. 2. The ſubjection of thoſe evil ſpirits to the power of Chriſt, is not a free and profeſſed, but an involuntary and impoſed ſubjection, like that of a ſlave to his Lord, whether he will or no. *Learn* hence, 1. That evil ſpirits are ſubject to the power of Chriſt, not only to his perſonal, but to his miniſterial power. 2. That it is matter of great joy to ſee evil ſpirits brought into ſubjection by the power of Chriſt: To ſee the evil ſpirit of pride and contention, of envy and malice, of error and falſehood, of jealouſy and ſelf-love, of animoſity and diviſion, not only chained but changed; to ſee not only an unwilling ſubjection, but a ſubjection of the will given to Chriſt, is matter of great joy and unſpeakable rejoicing. The directive part of our Saviour's words lies in the latter part of the verſe; but *rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*: There are no literal records in the court of heaven, no pen or ink, paper or parchment; but, *to be written in heaven*, is to have a title to eternal life, and to be made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. *Learn*, 1. That God has in heaven a book of life; a book written with the golden rays and beams of his own eternal love. 2. That there are names written in this book. 3. That perſons may know that their names are written in that book, otherwiſe they could not rejoice, for no man can rejoice in an unknown good. 4. That it is greater matter of joy and rejoicing, to know that our names are written in heaven, than to have a power to caſt out devils here on earth. A man may have power to caſt forth devils out of others, and yet at the ſame time the devil may have power in and over himſelf. *Therefore in this rejoice not, that the devils are ſubject unto you, but rather rejoice, that your names are written in heaven.* If you ſay, With what ſpectacles ſhall we read that at ſuch a diſtance? Who will aſcend up into heaven, to ſee whether his name be written there? Or who can ſend a meſſenger thither, to ſearch the records? I anſwer, Turn thine eyes inward; if the name of God be written in thy heart, thy name is certainly written in heaven; if you in your daily actions write out a copy of God's book (the bleſſed Bible) here below, aſſure yourſelves the hand of God has written your names in his book above; that is, you ſhall certainly be ſaved.

21 ¶ In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo, Father, for it ſeemed good in thy ſight. 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

Here we find our bleſſed Saviour glorifying his Father, and magnifying himſelf. 1. He glorifies his Father for the wiſe and free diſpenſation of his goſpel-grace to the meaneſt and moſt ignorant perſons, whilſt the great and learned men of the world undervalued and deſpiſed it: *I thank thee, Father, that thou haſt revealed theſe things to babes. Learn* hence, 1. That till God reveals himſelf, his nature and will, no man can know either what he is, or what he requires; *Thou haſt revealed.* 2. That the wiſe and knowing men in the world have in all ages deſpiſed the myſteries of the goſpel, and have therefore been judicially blinded by God: *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent.* When men ſhut their eyes againſt the cleareſt light, and ſay they will not ſee, God cloſes their eyes and ſays they ſhall not ſee. 3. That the moſt ignorant, if humble, and deſirous of ſpiritual illumination, are in the readieſt diſpoſition to embrace the goſpel-revelation: *Thou haſt revealed them unto babes.* 4. That this is not more pleaſing to Chriſt than it is the pleaſure of his Father: *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Obſerve*, 2. Our Saviour magnifies himſelf: 1. His authority and commiſſion: *All things are delivered unto me*; that is, all power is committed unto me, as Mediator, from God the Father. 2. His office to reveal his Father's will to a loſt world: *No man knoweth the Father but the Son, or the Son but the Father*; that is, no man knoweth their eſſence and nature, their will and pleaſure, their counſel and conſent, their mutual compact and agreement betwixt themſelves, for ſaving a loſt world, but only themſelves, *and thoſe to whom they have revealed it. Learn* thence, That all ſaving knowledge of God, is in, by, and through Chriſt; he, as the great prophet of his church, reveals unto us the mind and will of God for our ſalvation: *None knoweth, but he to whom the Son revealeth.*

23 ¶ And he turned him unto *his* diſciples, and ſaid privately, Bleſſed *are* the eyes which ſee the things that ye ſee. 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

From the very firſt giving out of the promiſe of Chriſt to Adam after the fall, Gen. iii. 15. there was in all good men a longing deſire and expectation to ſee that perſon who ſhould be ſo great a bleſſing to mankind; the prophets and kings deſired to ſee the promiſed Meſſiah. Now, ſays our Saviour to his diſciples, *Bleſſed are you, for you have ſeen* with the eyes of your body, what others only ſaw with the eyes of their mind; with your bodily eyes ye have ſeen the promiſed Meſſias coming in the fleſh; and alſo the miracles, to confirm you that I am he, have been wrought before your eyes; therefore bleſſed are the eyes of your body, which have beheld me corporally; and bleſſed alſo are the eyes of your mind, which have beheld me ſpiritually. A ſight of Chriſt by a believing eye, much more by a glorified eye, is a bleſſed ſight. Bleſſed are thoſe eyes which ſee Chriſt in his diſpenſations of glory hereafter.

25 ¶ And behold, a certain lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He ſaid unto him, What is written in the law? how readeſt thou? 27 And he anſwering, ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyſelf. 28 And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live.

Here we have a lawyer, that is, an expounder of the law of Moſes, tempting our Saviour; that is, making trial of him, whether he would deliver any doctrine contrary to the law of Moſes: He propounds therefore a queſtion, *What he ſhould do to inherit eternal life?* Where *note*, 1. He believed in the certainty of a future ſtate. 2. He profeſſes his deſire of an eternal happineſs in that ſtate. 3. He declares his readineſs to do ſomething in order to the obtaining of that happineſs. Hence *learn*, That all religion, both natural and revealed, teaches men that good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, or that ſomething muſt be done by them who deſire to enter into life: *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, that entitles us to heaven and eternal ſalvation; and this the very light of nature teaches. 2. Our Saviour's anſwer: *What is written in the law? how readeſt thou?* Intimating to us, That the word and law of God, is the rule and meaſure of our duty; our guide to direct us in the way to eternal life. The man replies, That the law of God requires, *that we love God with all our hearts, ſoul, and ſtrength, and our neighbour as ourſelves.* Where *note*, 1. That the fervor of all our affections, and particularly the ſupremacy of our love, is required by God as his right and due. Love muſt paſs through, and poſſeſs all the powers and faculties of our ſouls. The mind muſt meditate upon God, the will muſt chuſe and embrace him, the affections muſt take complacency and delight in him: The meaſure of loving God is to love him without meaſure. 2. That the beſt evidence of our ſincere love to God, is, the unfeigned love of our neighbour: Love to man, is both a fruit and teſtimony of our love to God; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? 3. That as it is every man's duty to love himſelf, ſo is he to love his neighbour as himſelf; not as he does love himſelf, but as he ought to love himſelf; not with the ſame meaſure and degree of love, but in the ſame manner and kind of love, that we love ourſelves. Do we love ourſelves freely and readily, ſincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and perſeveringly? So ſhould we love our neighbour alſo: Though we are not required to love our neighbour as much as we love ourſelves, yet are we commanded to love him like as we love ourſelves. Laſtly, Our Lord's reply: *Thou haſt anſwered right: This do, and thou ſhalt live.* Where *note*, That Chriſt intimates to him, that the law conſidered in itſelf, could give life; but then a perſon muſt keep it perfectly and exactly, without the leaſt deficiency, which is impoſſible to man in his fallen ſtate; for the law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that, Rom. viii. 3. the law becomes weak through the weakneſs of our fleſh: Such as ſeek ſalvation by the works of the law, muſt keep the law perfectly and exactly; which being impoſſible in our fallen eſtate, Chriſt has obtained of his Father, that for his ſake, our ſincere, though imperfect obedience, ſhall find acceptance with God, and be available to our ſalvation.

29 But he willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain prieſt that way; and when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other ſide. 32 And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and paſſed by on the other ſide. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him he had compaſſion *on him*, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two-pence, and gave *them* to the hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again I will repay thee. 36 Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he ſaid, He that ſhewed mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

The deſign of our Saviour in this parable, is to convince the lawyer, who put that queſtion to him, *Who is my neighbour?* ver. 29. that every one is, and ought to be accounted our neighbour, to whom God affords us an opportunity of doing good; contrary to the ſtrait notion of the Phariſees, that, by the word neighbour, underſtood friends and kinſfolk, brethren by blood, neighbours by habitation, and perſons of the ſame religion. Our Saviour, by this parable, taught him, that even ſtrangers and profeſſed enemies, every one that needeth our help and relief, is to be accounted our neighbour. To convince him hereof, Chriſt propounds this parable of a Jew that fell among thieves, who was neglected by his own countrymen, but relieved by a Samaritan, who, though a profeſſed enemy upon the ſcore of religion, yet was ſo exceeding kind and charitable, that he became phyſician, ſurgeon, and hoſt, and a real neighbour to the unknown traveller, wounded by thieves in his journey to Jericho. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That every perſon in miſery is the object of our mercy, our neighbour, and capable of our charity. 2. That no difference in religion, much leſs in ſome doubtful opinion, will excuſe us from exerciſing acts of charity and compaſſion towards ſuch as are really in want, and need our aſſiſtance: Our holy and merciful religion, makes all perſons the object of our compaſſion, who are indigent and helpleſs; though they be ſtrangers and foreigners, heathens or heretics, friends or enemies; yea, be they good or bad, holy or wicked, as we *have opportunity, we muſt do good unto all, and imitate the example of our merciful God, who is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.* 3. That real charity is an active, operative thing; it conſiſts not in good words given to the diſtreſſed, nor in a compaſſionate beholding of them, nor in a pitiful mourning over them, but in poſitive acts of kindneſs towards them. The Samaritan here is an example of a real and thorough charity; he turns his face towards the forlorn man, his feet haſten to him, his hand pours in wine and oil into his wounds, after which he ſets him upon his own beaſt, brings him to the inn, ſtays with him all night; and the next day, becauſe his recovery would be a work of time and expence, he leaves him, but firſt leaves money with the hoſt, and a ſpecial charge to take care of him; with a punctual promiſe, that whatever was expended more, ſhould be repaid. Behold here an inſtance and pattern of a complete charity, managed with as much diſcretion as compaſſion; well might our Lord ſay to this perſon, and in him to every one of us, *Go, and do thou likewiſe.*

38 ¶ Now it came to paſs, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her houſe.

Obſerve here, 1. The great work and buſineſs of our Saviour's life, it was to go about preaching the goſpel. 2. The nature of the place which Chriſt at this time preached in, it was a poor village, Bethany, as ſome think. Chriſt did not only take care of populous cities and great towns, but private villages and obſcure places enjoyed alſo the bleſſing of his miniſtry. Our Saviour's example herein, is inſtructive to his miniſters, not to affect great auditories, and to preach only in populous cities, but to ſcatter the ſeed of the word in country villages, where are like precious ſouls to be taken care of, and provided for; as Chriſt was ſent himſelf, ſo he ſends his miniſters to preach the goſpel to the poor. 3. The party that entertained him in the village. *Martha received him into her houſe*; Martha is named, becauſe ſhe was probably the owner of the houſe: Though Chriſt had no houſe of his own, yet he had as many as he pleaſed at his command; for wherever he had an heart, he was ſure to have an houſe; *Martha received him into her houſe.*

39 And ſhe had a ſiſter, called Mary, which alſo ſat at Jeſus' feet, and heard his word.

Obſerve, 1. Both theſe ſiſters were holy and devout women, both had an honor and reverence for Chriſt, and both are forward to entertain him; theſe were ſiſters by grace as well as by nature; yea they both for a time attended upon Chriſt's preaching. Mary (alſo) ſat at Jeſus' feet, implying, that Martha ſat there too, till houſhold occaſions called her away: O how happy is that family, where all parties are agreed to receive and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt! 2. No ſooner is Chriſt entered into Martha's houſe, but he falls a preaching; whilſt they provide bodily food for him, he prepares ſpiritual bread for them; O that in our place and meaſure we might all imitate Chriſt in this! Can we come into any houſe or company, and find nothing to ſay or do for God! 3. The holy and humble deportment of Mary upon this occaſion, *She ſat at Jeſus' feet and heard his words.* When Chriſt was ſpeaking, Mary was hearing, and little things could not take her off. Lord! how carefully ſhould we take the preſent opportunity for our ſouls, to hear and learn of thee, as Mary did: She was not ſure of another opportunity, therefore hears humbly, attentively, affectionately, as if it were her laſt hearing ſeaſon.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much ſerving, and came to him, and ſaid, Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me.

Obſerve here, 1. Martha's behaviour, *She was cumbered about much ſerving*; that is, much taken up with providing for the entertainment of Chriſt and his friends; all which conſidered in itſelf was no miſcarriage, but a token of Martha's endeared reſpect to her beſt friend. A perſon th
ſincerely loves Chriſt, as Martha did, thinks he can nev
ſhew enough of reſpect unto him. Martha having ſuch
gueſt to honour her houſe, puts forth herſelf all ſhe ca
yea more than ſhe was able, to give him entertainment, *S*
was cumbered about much ſerving. 2. Martha's complai
to Chriſt concerning her ſiſter's not joining with her in t
work that lay ſo hard upon her; *Lord, doſt not thou ca*
that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? Bid her thereſ
that ſhe help me; as if Martha had ſaid, Is it a fit thing th
both thyſelf, and all this company ſhould be unprovid
for? Or is it reaſonable, that the whole burden ſhould
upon me, whilſt Mary ſits ſtill, and does not touch the le
houſhold buſineſs with one of her fingers? Lord! what i
firmity and weakneſs intermixes and mingles with the v
tues and graces of the beſt of thy ſervants, eſpecially wh
they give way to their diſtempered paſſions! This go
woman at this time did not attend upon Chriſt's preachi
herſelf, but interrupts him with a frivolous complaint abo
her ſiſter, *Bid her that ſhe help me.* But why did not Ma
tha ſpeak to her ſiſter herſelf and whiſper in her ear, a
acquaint her how ſhe wanted her help, but makes her mo
to Chriſt? *Anſwer*, It is like ſhe thought her ſiſter was
tied by the ear with thoſe adamantine chains of Chri
heavenly doctrine, that until Chriſt was ſilent ſhe had
power to ſtir; doubtleſs ſhe believed that Mary would
move, unleſs Chriſt ſpake to her ſo to do. 3. That
this while, Mary ſpeaks not one word for herſelf; no dou
it troubled her, good woman, to hear her ſiſter complain
her to Chriſt, and to find herſelf blamed for her piety, a
implicitly condemned for laying hold upon ſuch a ſw
opportunity of hearing the beloved of her ſoul, whoſe
dropped as the honey comb; however, ſhe ſpeaks not
word in her own vindication, but leaves her anſwer to
Saviour. *Learn* thence, That when we are complain
of for well-doing, it is our duty, and may be our pruden
to ſeal up our lips in ſilence, and to expect our vindicati
from above. Mary ſays nothing, but Chriſt ſpeaks for
in the next verſes.

41 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto her, Ma
tha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about m
ny things: 42 But one thing is needful. And Ma
hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be tak
away from her.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, Martha, Martha, I well know th
doeſt all this in love to me, and it is no more than wha
thy duty in its proper ſeaſon, but thou hadſt now an
portunity to hear my word, which thou canſt not ha
every day, and it would have pleaſed me better, to wh
it is meat and drink to feed ſouls, if I had ſeen thee fitt
with thy dear ſiſter at my feet, and yielding an attent
regard to my holy doctrine, than to find thee performi
a neceſſary civility to my perſon. Thou haſt not mad
bad choice, but Mary has made a better; ſhe has laid
aſide to attend upon my miniſtry, and the fruit of it
continue with her to all eternity; *It is that good part wh*
ſhall never be taken away from her. *Note* here, 1. T
unexpectedneſs of our Saviour's anſwer to Martha, h

contr

contrary it was to her expectation; ſhe thought that her ſiſter ſhould have been ſent away with a check, and herſelf with thanks, but ſhe is quite miſtaken; for all her good cheer that ſhe had provided for Chriſt, he ſpares not to tell her of her fault; *Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things.* *Learn* hence, That no obligations to any particular perſons ſhould ſo inthral us, but that our tongues ſhould be at liberty to reprove the faults of our beſt friends, wherever we find them. Martha, though a pious and good woman, though a friendly and kind woman, though a woman greatly beloved by Chriſt, yet is ſhe reproved by Chriſt. 2. The reproof given to Martha, *Thou art troubled about many things*; where Chriſt condemns not her hoſpitality, but her ſolicitude and ſuperfluity, her diſtraction and perplexity. O how prone are we to exceed in things lawful and neceſſary, and to go beyond our bounds in them: When we are ſatisfied in the matter, we are prone to exceed in the meaſure. Martha's entertainment of Chriſt was a noble ſervice, but ſhe was too anxious and ſolicitous about it; ſhe was *cumbered*, ſhe was *careful*, ſhe was *troubled*. 3. Our Saviour's admonition, *But one thing is needful*; that is, there is one thing which ought firſt and principally to be regarded by us, and is of the greateſt concernment to us; namely, the buſineſs of religion, and the care of our ſoul's ſalvation. *Learn* hence, That the care of religion, and our ſoul's ſalvation, is the one thing neceſſary, and that which every man is concerned in the firſt place, and above all other things, to regard and mind. 4. Our Saviour's juſtification of Mary's choice, *Mary hath choſen that good part*; "Non tu malam, ſed illa meliorem." Chriſt did not tell Martha ſhe had choſen a bad part, but her ſiſter had choſen the better. Martha's entertainment of Chriſt was good, but Mary's attendance upon Chriſt's miniſtry was better and more pleaſing unto Chriſt, Chriſt was better pleaſed to ſee Mary in the chapel, than Martha in the kitchen; though he doth not condemn the one, yet he extols the other; Mary had choſen the good part. *Learn* hence, That religion and the ſervice of God muſt be the matter of our election and choice; we muſt chuſe the good part, and it being once choſen by us, it ſhall never be taken away from us.

CHAP. XI.

AND it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples.

The learned Mr. Mede upon this place apprehends, that it was the cuſtom of the Jewiſh doctors to deliver ſome certain form of prayer to their diſciples to uſe, at leaſt that John Baptiſt had done ſo to his diſciples: Thereupon our Saviour's diſciples beſought him, that he alſo would give them in like manner ſome form of his own compoſing, that they might pray with their maſter's ſpirit, as John's diſciples did with his. Accordingly our Saviour gives them here a form of his own, and commands them when they pray to uſe it. Indeed he had given them this prayer, about a year and a half before, in his ſermon upon the mount, Matt. vi. 9. *After this manner pray ye*; where it is probable, that the diſciples looked upon it only as a pattern of prayer, and not as a form; for had they thought that Chriſt had given them a form of prayer before, they had not aſked him for one now: Therefore, ſays Chriſt, *When ye pray, ſay.* Certainly this gives us to underſtand, that our Saviour intended and commended it for a ſet form of prayer unto his church. *Learn* hence, That the Lord's prayer is both a pattern and platform, according to which all our prayers ought to be framed; and alſo an exact form of prayer, which ought to be uſed by us in our addreſſes to the throne of grace: *After this manner, pray ye*, ſays St. Matthew: *When ye pray, ſay*, ſays St. Luke.

2 And he ſaid unto them, When ye pray, ſay,

Obſerve here, The favor which Chriſt does us in preſcribing a form of prayer to us; a great favor no doubt, though the world grows weary of it: We know not, alas! what to aſk, but he himſelf teaches us, and frames our ſupplication for us, that it may be accepted. Should a king's ſon draw a petition for a poor ſubject, to be put up to his father, what a ground of hope would there be, that whatever is deſired would be obtained? If any of us then think meanly of our Lord's prayer, O how meanly may he think of us, and of our prayers!

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven ſo in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The ſenſe and ſignification of this beſt of prayers, is this, "O thou our Father in Jeſus Chriſt! who remaineſt in thy "throne in heaven, and art there perpetually praiſed and "perfectly obeyed by glorious angels and glorified ſaints, "Grant that thy name may be glorified, thy throne ac-"knowledged, and thy holy will obeyed here on earth be-"low, by us thy ſons and ſervants, as readily, as cheerfully, "and ſincerely, and in ſome degree of proportion to what is "done in heaven above. And becauſe, by reaſon of the "frailty of our natures, we cannot ſubſiſt without the com-"forts and ſupports of life, we crave our daily bread at thy "bountiful hand; even ſuch a proportion of the good things "of this life as thy wiſdom ſhall ſee convenient for us.— "And knowing, that thy holineſs and juſtice doth oblige "thee to puniſh ſin and ſinners, we plead with thee, for the "ſake of thy Son's ſatisfaction, to forgive us our daily "treſpaſſes; for it is our deſire and endeavour, heartily to "forgive thoſe that have offended us; and ſeeing this wicked "world wherein we live is ſo full of ſnares and temptations "of all ſorts, we pray, that by the power of thy grace, and "the concurrence of our own careful endeavours, we may "be kept from Satan's temptations, from the world's al-"lurements, and from our own evil inclinations; and be "preſerved unblameable to thine everlaſting kingdom; and "in teſtimony of our deſires and aſſurance to be heard, we "ſay, *Amen*, ſo be it, ſo let it be, even ſo, O Lord, let it "be for ever." *Learn*, 1. That God is the Father of all his people; as a Father he knows all his children, he loves them and takes care of them; as his children, it is our duty to honour him, to obey him, to imitate him, to caſt our care upon him, and to long for the enjoyment of him. 2. From the word *our*, *learn*, That it is our duty to pray for others, as well as for ourſelves; we cannot pray acceptably for ourſelves, if we pray only for ourſelves. 3. That the hallowing, honouring, and ſanctifying of God's name, as it is the firſt thing we are to pray for, ſo it ought to be preferred before all other things whatſoever; we pray for it before we pray for our own ſalvation; we ſay, *Hallowed be thy name*, before we ſay, *Forgive us our debts*. 4. *Learn*, That ſins are debts, and ſinners are indebted to divine juſtice. Sin is an infinite debt, a multiplied debt, an inexcuſable debt, and if not diſcharged by our Surety, we muſt lie in priſon to all eternity, for nonpayment of this debt. 5. That God has made our forgiveneſs of others the condition of his forgiving us: The word *as*, is not a note of equality, but of ſimilitude; we cannot equal God in forgiving, but we muſt imitate him. 6. No ſooner is ſin pardoned, but Satan will be buſy with his temptation.—*Forgive us our ſins and lead us not into temptation*. 7. That it is a greater mercy to be delivered from the evil of temptation, than from temptations to evil. The evil of temptations is the evil of ſin, but temptation to evil is at moſt but the evil of puniſhment. *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; ſuffer us not to be led into temptation, or, if ſo, leave us not when we are tempted.

5 And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him: 7 And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not: the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. 8 I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him becauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.

The deſign of our bleſſed Saviour in theſe, and the following verſes, is to excite and ſtir up his diſciples to fervency, importunity and conſtancy in the duty of prayer, and to this purpoſe he makes uſe of a double argument, the one of a friend, and the other of a father. 1. He lays before them the parable of a friend, coming to his friend at midnight, and by his importunity obtaining that of him which otherwiſe he muſt have gone without. From whence our Lord leaves us to infer, That if an impudent and bold beggar can obtain ſo much from man, what cannot an humble, earneſt, and daily petitioner obtain from God? What friend ſo faithful and helpful to his deareſt friend, as God is to us his children? From the whole, *note*, 1. That a man muſt be brought into a ſtate of friendſhip and reconciliation with God, if he hopes his prayers ſhall be accepted. 2. That when any of the friends of God are in neceſſities and ſtraits, he allows them the liberty at all hours to call upon him, and pray unto him; at midnight, as well as at mid-day, God's ear is open to his praying friends. 3. That almighty God takes pleaſure in being urged in prayer by the holy importunity of his friends; Never is he better pleaſed, than when his people, with holy Jacob, *wreſtle with him, and will not let him go till he hath bleſſed them*. 4. That ſuch holy and humble importunity ſhall not only obtain what we deſired, but more than we expected; only three loaves were deſired here, but becauſe of importunity, he had as many as he needed; more is given in the conceſſion, than was deſired in the ſupplication. The original word here rendered *importunity*, ſignifies *impudence*, according to that ſaying among the Jews, The impudent man overcomes the modeſt and the baſhful: how much more God, who is goodneſs itſelf?

9 And I ſay unto you, Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that aſketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.

Our Saviour here goes on, to urge us to importunity and conſtancy in prayer; he bids us *aſk, ſeek, and knock*, and aſſures us we ſhall be accepted, heard, and anſwered. Here *note*, 1. That man is a poor indigent creature full of wants, but unable to ſupply them. 2. As man is an indigent and inſufficient creature, ſo God is an all-ſufficient good, able to ſupply the wants, and relieve the neceſſities of his creatures. 3. That almighty God ſtands ready to ſupply all our wants, not temporal only, but ſpiritual alſo, affording his grace, and the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit to them that aſk it. 4. If therefore we want the grace of God, and the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, it is our own fault, and not God's; it is either for want of ſeeking, or for want of earneſtneſs in aſking; for our Saviour expreſsly aſſures us, that God denies it to none; *but every one that aſketh receiveth*.

11 If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if *he aſk* a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? 12 Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion? 13 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more ſhall *your* heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him.

The ſecond parable which our Saviour makes uſe of, is that of a father to his children: Chriſt repreſents the care and kindneſs of God towards us by the affections which earthly parents bear to their natural children, who though they be many times evil themſelves, yet are not wont to deny their children neceſſary good things, when they dutifully and decently beg them at their hands: *If ye being evil——how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit*; that is, the continual preſence and influence of his holy Spirit, to all the purpoſes of guidance and direction, of grace and aſſiſtance, of comfort and ſupport in our chriſtian courſe. *Learn* hence, That the preſence and aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit, to enable us to do what God requires, ſhall never be wanting to thoſe that deſire it, and endeavour after it. But we muſt always remember, that the aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit, though it be offered and tendered to us, yet it is not forced upon us; for if we beg the holy Spirit and his aſſiſtance, but refuſe to make uſe of it, or if we cry to him for his help to mortify our luſts, but do not put forth our own endeavours, we forfeit the divine aſſiſtance, and God will certainly withdraw his holy Spirit from us.

14 ¶ And he was caſting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to paſs when the devil was gone out, the dumb ſpake: and the people wondered. 15 But ſome of them ſaid, He caſteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. 16 And others tempting *him*, ſought of him a ſign from heaven. 17 But he knowing their thoughts ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation: and a houſe *divided* againſt a houſe, falleth. 18 If Satan alſo be divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall his kingdom ſtand? becauſe ye ſay that I caſt out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your ſons caſt them out? therefore ſhall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God caſt out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

A relation is here given of a famous miracle wrought by our Saviour in caſting a devil out of a poſſeſſed man: It is called a dumb devil, becauſe of the effect upon the poor poſſeſſed perſon in reſtraining the uſe of his tongue. *Learn* here, 1. That among the many calamities which ſin has rendered human nature liable and obnoxious to, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſſed by Satan. 2. That one demonſtration of Chriſt's divine power, and a convictive evidence of his being truly and really God, was his caſting out devils by the word of his power. 3. What a ſad and contrary effect this miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees, through their own blindneſs, obſtinacy, and malice: Inſtead of magnifying his divine power, they maliciouſly accuſe him for holding a correſpondence with the devil, and acting by a power derived from him; as if Satan ſhould lend our Saviour a power againſt himſelf, and that for the deſtruction of his own kingdom. Lord! how dangerous is a wilful oppoſition againſt the truth: It provokes the Almighty to deliver perſons up to the moſt unreaſonable infidelity, and obſtinate obduracy. 4. Our Saviour knowing their thoughts makes a juſt apology for himſelf, by ſhewing how improbable and unlikely, how unreaſonable and abſurd it is once to imagine or ſuppoſe, that Satan ſhould caſt out himſelf, and any wiſe ſeek to oppoſe or deſtroy his own kingdom; now, if I have received (ſays Chriſt) my power from Satan, for caſting out Satan, then is the devil like a family divided within itſelf, and divided like a kingdom againſt itſelf, which can never ſtand, but muſt be brought to deſtruction. Laſtly, Our Saviour tells the Phariſees, that they might with as much reaſon attribute all other miracles to the power of the devil, as thoſe wrought by himſelf; for there were certain Jews among them that caſt out devils in the name of the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; now our Saviour aſks them by what power theſe their children caſt them out? They acknowledged what they did was by the power of God, and there was no cauſe, but their malice, why they ſhould not acknowledge that what he did was by the ſame power. *If I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your ſons caſt them out? But if I with the finger of God caſt them out, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you*; that is, the long expected kingdom of the Meſſias is certainly come, and I having wrought theſe miracles by my own power, is a demonſtrative proof that I am the promiſed Meſſias.

21 When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoils. 23 He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth. 24 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt: and finding none, he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe, whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* ſwept and garniſhed. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt.

Our Saviour having ſufficiently ſhewn, that he did not work his miracles by the power of the devil, he next informs the Phariſees from whence he had that power, even from God himſelf; accordingly, he compares Satan to a ſtrong man armed with weapons to defend his houſe; and himſelf clothed with divine power, he compares to one that is ſtronger than the ſtrong man: So that the argument runs thus, The devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and there is no power but only God's that is ſtronger than his; If then, ſays Chriſt, I were not aſſiſted with a divine power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong man, who reigns in the bodies and ſouls of men, as in his houſe; for it muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong man, that ſhall bind Satan, and who is he but the God of ſtrength? *Learn* thence, That only Chriſt's divine power is ſuperior to Satan's ſtrength; he only can vanquiſh and over-rule him at his pleaſure, and drive him out of that poſſeſſion, which he holds either in the bodies or ſouls of men: *The ſtrong man armed keeps the houſe, till,* &c. *Note* here, 1. That Satan is an unclean ſpirit, he hath loſt his original purity, his holy nature in which he was created, and is by ſin become univerſally ſinful and impure: No means being allowed him by God, for the purging of his filthy and impure nature; yea, he is a perfect enemy to purity and holineſs; maligning all that love it and would promote it. 2. That Satan is a reſtleſs and unquiet ſpirit, being caſt out of heaven, he can reſt no where; when he is either gone out of a man by policy, or caſt out by power, he has no content or ſatisfaction, till he returns into a filthy heart, where he delights to be, as the ſwine, in miry places. 3. That wicked and profane ſinners have this unclean ſpirit dwelling in them; their hearts are Satan's houſe and habitation, and the luſts of pride and unbelief, malice and revenge, envy and hypocriſy, theſe are the garniſhings and furniture of Satan's houſe: man's heart was God's houſe by creation, it is now Satan's by uſurpation and judiciary tradition. 4. That Satan, by the preaching of the goſpel, may ſeem to go out of perſons, and they become ſober and civilized; yet may he return again to his old habitation, and the latter end of that man may be worſe than the beginning.

27 ¶ And it came to paſs, as he ſpake theſe things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked. 28 But he ſaid, Yea, rather bleſſed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Obſerve here, 1. How ready we are to admire perſons for their external privileges, and the favours of divine providence, and to pronounce ſuch bleſſed; *Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee.* 2. That Chriſt makes another judgment of perſons, and pronounces them more bleſſed, that bear him in their hearts by faith, than his own mother, who bare him in her womb by ſenſe. The bleſſedneſs of being an obedient believer, is far greater than that of being the mother of our bleſſed Saviour. Bleſſed be God, this great and gracious privilege is not denied to us now; although we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may; his bodily preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his ſpiritual gracious preſence is not denied us: Though Chriſt be not ours in houſe, in arms, by affinity, by conſanguinity; yet in heart, in faith, in love, in ſervice, he is, or may be ours; verily ſpiritual regeneration, and an obediential doing of God's will, bringeth men into a more honourable relation to Chriſt, than natural generation ever did; *Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

29 ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to ſay, This is an evil generation: they ſeek a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it, but the ſign of Jonas the prophet. 30 For as Jonas was a ſign unto the Ninevites, ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for ſhe came from the utmoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon: and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. 32 The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and behold a greater than Jonas *is* here.

The ſign which the Phariſees here deſired of our Saviour, was a miracle wrought by him: Now our Saviour, though he was very ready to work miracles, to encourage and confirm his hearers' faith, yet not to ſatisfy the unbelieving Phariſees' curioſity: And accordingly he tells them, they ſhould have no other ſign than that of his reſurrection, which Jonas was a type of. Next he threatens them for their obſtinacy and infidelity, which he aggravates from the example of the queen of the South, and the men of Nineveh. From thence *learn*, That the ſins of infidelity and impenitency are exceedingly heightened, and their guilt aggravated, from the means afforded by God to bring men to faith and obedience. The ſin of the Phariſees was infinitely greater in rejecting the evidence of Chriſt's miracles, than the ſin of the Ninevites would have been in refuſing to hearken to Jonas's miniſtry; therefore, the Ninevites ſhall condemn the Phariſees.

33 No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a ſecret place, neither under a buſhel; but on a candleſtick, that they which come in may ſee the light. 34 The light of the body is the eye: Therefore when thine eye is ſingle, the whole body alſo is full of light: but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body alſo is full of darkneſs. 35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs. 36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole ſhall be full of light, as when the bright ſhining of a candle doth give the light.

Our Saviour, in theſe words, does theſe two things: 1. He declares, that although his miniſtry had no effect upon the proud and obſtinate Phariſees, yet he would not hide the light which he came into the world to bring, nor conceal that heavenly doctrine which his Father had committed to him to communicate to the children of men: Teaching us, That ſuch as are enlightened by God with the knowledge of his word and will, ought not to conceal and hide this knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and improve it for the good and benefit of others; *No man that lighteth a candle, putteth it under a buſhel.* 2. Our Saviour here diſcovers the reaſon why the Phariſees continued blind under ſo clear a light as that of his miniſtry: namely, becauſe the eye of their underſtanding was darkened, not ſo much with ignorance as with prejudice, whereby they oppoſed Chriſt and his holy doctrine; for if the mind be clearly enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, that light will diffuſe and ſpread itſelf in the ſoul, as the bright ſhining of a candle doth in the houſe; enlightening all the inward faculties, and directing all the outward actions, and communicating its light alſo to the enlightening of others.

37 ¶ And as he ſpake, a certain Phariſee beſought him to dine with him: and he went in, and ſat down to meat. 38 And when the Phariſee ſaw *it*, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner. 39 And the Lord ſaid unto him, Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs. 40 *Ye* fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo?

Obſerve here, 1. The free converſation of our bleſſed Saviour, how readily he complies with the Phariſee's invitation to dine with him. I do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any table, that ever he refuſed to go: If a

Phariſee, if a publican invited him, he conſtantly went; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good. Chriſt feaſts us when we feed him: He ſays of himſelf, that he came eating and drinking; that is, allowing himſelf a free though innocent converſation with all ſorts of perſons, that he might gain ſome. 2. The exception which the Phariſee takes at our Saviour's not waſhing his hands before dinner. This they made (but without any warrant for it) a religious act, abounding in external waſhings, but neglecting the inward purgation of their hearts and conſciences from ſin and uncleanneſs. Thus Phariſaical hypocriſy puts God off with outward cleanſing, inſtead of inward purity; regarding more the outward cleanneſs of the hand, than the inward purity of the heart. 3. Our bleſſed Saviour does not condemn any external decency and cleanlineſs in converſation, but his deſign is to ſhew the vanity of outward purity without inward ſanctity, and to convince them of the neceſſity of cleanſing the heart, in order to the purifying and reforming the life. The Phariſee waſhed his hands clean, but left his ſoul full of uncleanneſs, not conſidering, that he that made the ſoul as well as the body, requires that both ſhould be kept pure, all the impiety of men's lives proceeding from the impurity of their hearts and natures.

41 But rather give alms of ſuch things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, The way to purify your meats and drinks, and eſtates, from all pollution cleaving to them, and to have them ſanctified bleſſings to you, is (in conjunction with other graces) by doing works of mercy, and by liberal alms-giving, according to your ability. *Learn*, That charity and alms-giving, according to our ability and opportunity, is a ſpecial mean to ſanctify our eſtates to us, and to cauſe us holily and comfortably to enjoy whatever we do poſſeſs; *Give alms of ſuch things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Your temporal enjoyments are unclean; that is, unlawful to be uſed by you, till you have ſanctified them by ſome act of charity, which will procure a bleſſing upon your ſubſtance.

42 But wo unto you, Phariſees: for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and paſs over judgment, and the love of God: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Our Saviour here denounces a wo againſt the Phariſees, for their ſtrict and ſcrupulous obſerving the leſſer things of the law, as tithing mint and rue, whilſt they were regardleſs of the principle and ſubſtantial duties, which they owed both to God and man. *Learn* hence, That although ſome duties are of greater moment and importance than others, yet a good man will omit none, but make conſcience of all, both great and ſmall, in obedience to the command of God: There is no duty ſo little as to be neglected, no command ſo ſmall as to be diſobeyed; but yet there is a difference in duties, and our firſt regard ought rather to be to the greater than to the leſs. Chriſt doth not condemn them for tithing mint and rue, but *for paſſing over judgment and the love of God.*

43 Wo unto you, Phariſees: for ye love the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets.

The next wo denounced againſt the Phariſees, is for their ambition, pride, and popularity, affecting the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and ſalutations in the markets: Where their fault was, not in taking, but affecting theſe uppermoſt places: God is the God of order; there may and ought to be a precedency amongſt perſons: Honour is given to whom honour is due, and that by God's command: But pride and ambition are deteſtable vices, eſpecially in ſuch as are preachers, and ought to be patterns of humility.

44 Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them*, are not aware *of them.*

Another wo is here denounced againſt the Phariſees, for cheating and deceiving the people with an outward ſhew and appearance of piety and religion. They were like graves and ſepulchres grown over with graſs, which, though they held dead men's bones, yet the putrefaction not outwardly appearing, men walked unawares over them, and ſo were polluted by them; intimating, that the inward rottenneſs and filthy corruptions of the Phariſees not appearing unto men, the people were eaſily deceived by outward ſhews of Phariſaical ſanctity, and ſo fell into a dangerous imitation of them. *Learn* thence, That the great deſign of hypocrites, is to cheat the world with an empty ſhew of piety; the hypocrite's ambition is to be thought good, not to be ſo. 2. That nothing is more fatally dangerous to the ſouls of men, and draws perſons to an admiration and imitation of hypocritical profeſſors, like their outward ſhews of ſanctity, and their extraordinary appearances of devotion and piety. This it was that gained the Phariſees ſuch a veneration and eſteem among the people, that it became a proverb amongſt them, "If but two men went to heaven, the one muſt be a Phariſee:" But their counterfeit piety being double iniquity, they did receive for it double damnation.

45 ¶ Then anſwered one of the lawyers, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, thus ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo. 46 And he ſaid, Wo unto you alſo, ye lawyers: for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourſelves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

The former woes were denounced by our Saviour againſt the Phariſees, who had their names from an Hebrew word, which ſignifies *to ſeparate*, becauſe they were perſons ſeparated and ſet apart for ſtudying the law of God, and teaching it to others. The next wo is here denounced againſt the lawyers, that is, the ſcribes of the law; of which there were two ſorts, the civil ſcribe, and the eccleſiaſtical ſcribe; the civil ſcribe was a public notary, or a regiſter of the ſynagogue, employed in writing bills of divorce, and ſentences in the phylacteries. The eccleſiaſtical ſcribe, was an expounder of the ſcripture, an interpreter of the law; men of great learning and knowledge, whoſe decrees and interpretations the Phariſees ſtrictly obſerved.—

This lawyer here inſolently calls our Saviour's reproof a reproach: However, our Saviour, who never feared the face, nor regarded the perſon of any man, gives them their portion, and lets them know wherein they were faulty as well as the Phariſees; and accordingly pronounces a wo unto them alſo, for a threefold crime: 1. For their laying heavy burdens upon others ſhoulders, which they would not touch with one of their fingers. Theſe burdens, in general, were a rigid exaction of obedience in the whole ceremonial law; and, in particular, the burden of traditions, certain auſterities and ſeverities, which they impoſed upon the people, but would not undergo any part of them themſelves. In vain do we hope to oblige our hearers to follow thoſe rules of life, which we refuſe or neglect to put in practice ourſelves.

47 Wo unto you: for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly, ye bear witneſs that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres. 49 Therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God, I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and *ſome* of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute: 50 That the blood of all the prophets which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the altar and the temple: Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be required of this generation.

The ſecond crime which Chriſt reproves in theſe men, is their grand hypocriſy, in pretending great honour to the ſaints departed, building their tombs, and garniſhing their ſepulchres, declaiming againſt their fathers impiety, that had they lived in their days they would not have been partakers with them in their ſins. Now their hypocriſy appeared in three particulars: 1. In that they continued in their own wickedneſs, and yet commended the ſaints departed; they magnify the ſaints, but multiply their ſins, and, inſtead of imitating their virtues, they content themſelves with garniſhing their ſepulchres. 2. In profeſſing great reſpect to the dead ſaints, and at the ſame time perſecuting the living: Palpable hypocriſy! and yet, as groſs as it is, it prevails to this day. The church of Rome, who magnify martyrs, and canonize ſaints departed, have yet added to their number, by ſhedding of their blood. 3. In taking falſe meaſures of their love to the ſaints departed, from their building their tombs, and garniſhing their ſepulchres; whereas the beſt evidence of our love to them, is the imitating their virtues, and cheriſhing their followers. It is groſs hypocriſy to pay reſpect to the relics of ſaints, and veneration to their images, and at the ſame time to perſecute and hate their followers. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the world has all along loved dead ſaints better than living ones, *Mortui non mordent*: The dead ſaint's example, how bright ſoever, is not ſo ſcorching and troubleſome at a diſtance, and he himſelf ſtands no longer in other men's light; whereas the living ſaint's example is a cutting reproof to ſin and vice. 2. That there is a certain civility in human nature, which leads men to a juſt commendation of the dead, and to a due eſtimation of their worth. The Phariſees here, though they perſecuted the prophets whilſt alive, yet did they pretend to a mighty veneration for their piety and virtue after they were dead, and thought no honour too great to be done unto them. 3. That it is the greateſt hypocriſy imaginable to pretend to love goodneſs, and at the ſame time to hate and perſecute good men. Theſe Phariſees and lawyers pretended highly to piety and religion, and at the ſame time killed the prophets. 4. That the higheſt honour we can pay to the ſaints departed, is not by raiſing monuments, and building tombs to their memories, but by a careful imitation of their piety and virtue, following the holineſs of their lives, and their patience and conſtancy at their death. Laſtly, *learn*, That it is a righteous thing with God to puniſh children for the impiety of their parents, when they walk in their ungodly parents footſteps. Upon you ſhall come the blood of all the prophets, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias: Yet muſt this be underſtood of temporal evils, not of eternal puniſhments; no man for his father's ſins ſhall lie down in everlaſting burnings: As our father's faith will not let us into heaven, ſo neither will their impiety ſhut us into hell: At the day of judgment, every man ſhall be ſeparately conſidered according to his own deeds.

52 Wo unto you lawyers: for ye have taken away the key of knowledge, ye entered not in yourſelves, and them that were entering in, ye hindered.

The laſt wo pronounced by our Saviour againſt the ſcribes and Phariſees, is for perverting the holy ſcriptures, and keeping the true ſenſe and knowledge of them from the people: This St. Luke here calls, *The taking away the key of knowledge from men*; alluding to a cuſtom among the Jews, in admiſſion of their doctors: Thoſe that had authority given them to interpret the law and the prophets, were ſolemnly admitted into that office, by delivering to them a key and a table-book; ſo that by the key of knowledge is meant the interpretation and underſtanding of the ſcriptures: And by taking away that key, is ſignified, 1. That they arrogated to themſelves the ſole power of underſtanding and interpreting the holy ſcriptures. 2. That they kept the true knowledge of the ſcriptures from the people, eſpecially the prophecies which concern the kingdom and coming of the Meſſias; and ſo they hindered men from embracing our Saviour's doctrine, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it. *Learn*, 1. That the written word is the key whereby an entrance into heaven is opened unto men. 2. That the uſe of this key, or the knowledge of the word of God, is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary in order to ſalvation. 3. That great is the guilt, and inexcuſable the fault of thoſe who deny the people the uſe of this key, and deprive them of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, which alone can make them wiſe unto ſalvation. 4. That ſuch as do ſo, ſhut the kingdom of heaven againſt men, endeavouring what in them lies to hinder their ſalvation: Men may miſcarry with their knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh for lack of knowledge.

53 And as he ſaid theſe things unto them, the

ſcribes and the Phariſees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things:
54 Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him.

Obſerve here, How our bleſſed Saviour's plain and faithful dealing with theſe men, doth enrage, inſtead of reforming them; they are filled with anger and indignation. 2. Their wrath ſets their wits on work to enſnare him. Lord! when any of thy faithful miniſters and ambaſſadors meet with the like uſage and treatment from a wicked world; when any lie in wait to catch ſomething out of our mouth, that therewith they may enſnare us; give us thy prudence and thy patience, that we may cut off occaſion from thoſe that ſeek occaſion againſt us, and diſappoint them of their purpoſe; or elſe furniſh us with ſuch meaſures of meekneſs and patience as becomes perſons of our holy character and profeſſion, that we may glory in reproaches, in perſecutions, and diſtreſſes, for Chriſt's ſake; and that the ſpirit of glory and of God may reſt upon us.

CHAP. XII.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inſomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to ſay unto his diſciples firſt of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy. 2 For
there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed;
neither hid, that ſhall not be known. 3 Therefore,
whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light: and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe tops.

In this chapter our bleſſed Saviour furniſhes his diſciples with inſtructions for the worthy diſcharge of their function in preaching the goſpel; particularly he recommends unto them two gracious qualifications, namely, uprightneſs and ſincerity, ver. 1—3. Secondly, courage and magnanimity, ver. 4, 5. 1. He recommends unto them the grace and virtue of ſincerity; *Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees which is hypocriſy. Learn* hence, That hypocriſy is a dangerous leaven, which miniſters and people are chiefly and eſpecially to beware of, and to preſerve themſelves from. Hypocriſy is a vice in vizor, the face is vice, the vizor is virtue; God is pretended, ſelf-intended. Hypocriſy is reſembled to leaven, partly for its ſourneſs, partly for its diffuſiveneſs. Leaven is a piece of ſour dough, that diffuſes itſelf into the whole maſs or lump of bread with which it is mixed. Thus hypocriſy ſpreads over all the man; all his duties, parts and performances are leavened with it. Again, leaven is of a ſwelling as well as of a ſpreading nature; it puffs up the dough, and ſo doth hypocriſy the heart. The Phariſees were a ſour and proud ſort of people; they were all for pre-eminence, chief places, chief ſeats, chief titles, to be called *Rabbi, Rabbi:* In a word, as leaven is hardly diſcerned from good dough at firſt ſight, ſo is hypocriſy hardly diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from ſincerity. The Phariſees outwardly appeared righteous unto men, but within were full of hypocriſy and iniquity. Next, The argument which Chriſt uſes to diſſuade men from hypocriſy; *There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed*; as if he had ſaid, The day is coming, when a rotten and corrupt heart ſhall no longer paſs under the vizor and diſguiſe of a demure look: In the day of judgment, hypocritical ſinners ſhall walk naked; God, angels and men ſhall ſee their ſhame. *Learn* hence, That God will certainly, ere long, waſh off all the varniſh and paint the hypocrite has put upon the face of his profeſſion, and lay him open to the terror of himſelf, and the aſtoniſhment of the world.

4 And I ſay unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more
that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom
you ſhall fear: fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell: yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.

The ſecond duty which our Saviour preſſes upon his diſciples, is that of holy courage and reſolution: As if Chriſt had ſaid, The preaching of the goſpel will ſtir up many enemies againſt you; which will malign and oppoſe you, vex and perſecute you; but I ſay unto you, fear them not who can only kill the body; but fear him who, if you fail in your duty, can caſt both the body and ſoul into hell. Here *note*, 1. An unwarrantable fear condemned, and that is, the ſinful, ſervile, ſlaviſh fear of man; *Fear not them that kill the body.* 2. An holy, awful, and prudential fear of the omnipotent God commended; *Fear him that is able to kill both body and ſoul.* 3. The perſons whom this duty of fear is recommended to, and bound upon; diſciples, miniſters, and ambaſſadors, all the friends of Chriſt: They not only may, but ought to fear him; not only for his greatneſs and goodneſs, but upon the account of his punitive juſtice, as being able to caſt both ſoul and body into hell. Such a fear is not only lawful but laudable; not only commendable, but commanded, and not miſbecoming the friends of Chriſt. The miniſters of God may uſe arguments from fear of judgments, both to diſſuade from ſin, and to perſuade to duty. It is not unſuitable to the beſt of ſaints to keep in heaven's way for fear of hell; it is good to bid a friend fear, when that fear tendeth to his good.

6 Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings,
and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But
even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

Obſerve here, 1. The doctrine which our Saviour preaches to his diſciples, and that is, the doctrine of the divine providence, which concerns itſelf for the meaneſt of creatures: Even the birds of the air, and the hairs of our heads, do fall within the compaſs of God's protecting care. 2. The uſe which our Saviour makes of this doctrine, namely, to fortify his diſciples ſpirits againſt all diſtruſtful fears and diſtracting cares. *Learn* hence, 1. That the conſideration of the divine care, and gracious providence of God over us and ours, ought to antidote our ſpirits againſt all diſtruſtful fears whatſoever. If an hair from the head falls not to the ground without a providence, much leſs ſhall the head itſelf: If the very excreſcences of the body (ſuch are the hairs)

hairs) be taken care of by God, ſurely the more noble parts of the body, but eſpecially the nobleſt part of ourſelves, our ſoul, ſhall fall under his peculiar regard.

8 Alſo I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the Son of man alſo confeſs before the angels of God. 9 But he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the angels of God.

Note here, 1. That not to confeſs Chriſt, is in his account to deny him, and to be aſhamed of him. 2. That whoſoever ſhall deny or be aſhamed of Chriſt, either in his perſon, in his goſpel, or in his members, for any fear or favour of man, ſhall with ſhame be diſowned, and eternally rejected by him at the dreadful judgment of the great day. Chriſt may be denied three ways; doctrinally, by an erroneous and heretical judgment; verbally, by oral expreſſions; vitally by a wicked and unholy life: but wo to that ſoul that denies Chriſt any of theſe ways.

10 And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven.

Although never man preached or lived as Chriſt did, yet there were thoſe that ſpake againſt him; the perſon of Jeſus was contemned and reproached, for the meanneſs of his birth, for the poverty of his condition, for the freedom of his converſation; but this ſin did not exclude the hope of pardon: *Whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him*; all the reproaches caſt upon Chriſt, as man, were pardonable; *but whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him*; that is, whoever affirms that divine power by which I do all my miracles, to be the power of the devil, ſuch blaſphemy will be unpardonable, becauſe it is to reſiſt the laſt remedy, and to oppoſe the beſt means of men's conviction: For what could be done more to convince men that Chriſt was the true and promiſed Meſſias, than to work ſo many miracles before their eyes to that purpoſe? Now theſe miracles, though evidently wrought by the power of God, the Phariſees aſcribed to the power of the devil, which our Saviour calls *blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, and a ſin unpardonable.

11 And when they bring you unto the ſynagogues, and *unto* magiſtrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye ſhall anſwer, or what ye ſhall ſay: 12 For the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you, in the ſame hour, what ye ought to ſay.

Here our Saviour acquaints his apoſtles, that for preaching his doctrine, and profeſſing his religion, they ſhould be brought before all ſorts of magiſtrates, and into all kinds of courts; but adviſes them when they ſhould be ſo brought, not to be anxiouſly thoughtful, or ſolicitouſly careful, what they ſhould ſay, for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt what they ſhould ſpeak in that hour. Thence *note*, That though the truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his holy Spirit, and furniſh them with ſuch arguments to defend the truth, as all their adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay; *In that hour the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you what you ought to ſay.*

13 ¶ And one of the company ſaid unto him, Maſter, ſpeak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he ſaid unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?

Whilſt our Saviour was thus inſtructing his diſciples and the reſt of his auditors in things appertaining to the kingdom of heaven, one of the company being more intent, as it ſeems, upon his temporal than his eternal concerns, deſired him to ſpeak to his brother, to divide the inheritance with him. Chriſt tells him, he would be neither judge nor arbitrator in any civil affairs, or ſecular concerns. This work, as if Chriſt had ſaid, belongs to the civil magiſtrate, to divide inheritances, and decide controverſies betwixt man and man; but my work is of another nature, namely, to preach the goſpel to a loſt world, and to direct men how to ſecure an inheritance in heaven, not to divide inheritances here on earth: *Teaching* us, That matters of civil juſtice do not belong to thoſe whom Chriſt ſends forth to preach the goſpel; that work alone is ſufficient for them: The proper work of a miniſter is work enough; one branch of which is, to manage a perſuading taſk betwixt neighbour and neighbour, to prevent differences, and to compoſe them: But as Chriſt's commiſſioners, and miniſters of the goſpel, they have no authority to intermeddle in civil judgments; *Who made me a judge over you?* ſaid our great Maſter; that is, a judge in civil affairs.

15 And he ſaid unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs: for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.

Our Saviour, upon the occaſion given him in the foregoing verſes, admoniſhes all his diſciples and followers to take heed and beware of the ſin of covetouſneſs; aſſuring them, that neither the comfort nor continuance of man's life doth conſiſt in an abundance; for though ſomething of this world's goods is neceſſary to the comfort and happineſs of life, yet abundance is not neceſſary. Here *obſerve*, 1. The manner of our Lord's caution; he doubles it; not ſaying, *Take heed* alone, or *beware* only; but, *Take heed*, and *beware* both: This argues, that there is a ſtrong inclination in our natures to this ſin; the great danger we are in of falling into it, and of what fatal conſequence it is to them, in whom this ſin reigns. 2. The matter of the caution, of the ſin of which our Saviour warns his hearers againſt, and that is covetouſneſs; *Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*; where, under the name and notion of covetouſneſs, our Saviour doth not condemn a provident care for the things of this life, nor a regular induſtry and diligence for obtaining of them, nor every degree of love and affection to them; but by covetouſneſs is to be underſtood, an eager and inſatiable deſire after the things of this life, or uſing unjuſt ways and means to get or increaſe an eſtate; ſeeking the things of this life, with the neglect of things infinitely better, and placing their chief happineſs in riches. 3. The reaſon of this caution; *Becauſe a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.* Human life is ſuſtained by a little; therefore abundance is not neceſſary, either to the ſupport or comfort of it. 'Tis not a great eſtate and vaſt poſſeſſion that makes a man happy in this world, but a mind ſuited to our condition, whatever it be.

16 And he ſpake a parable unto them, ſaying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my fruits? 18 And he ſaid, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, *and* be merry. 20 But God ſaid unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided? 21 So *is* he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.

The deſign and ſcope of our Saviour in this parable, is to ſhew men the vileneſs and vanity of the ſin of covetouſneſs, or an eager and inſatiable deſire after the things of this world; when men heap up riches, and lay up treaſures in this life, taking no care to be rich towards God in faith and good works. Our Saviour illuſtrates this by the parable of a rich man, whom God had bleſſed with great plenty, yet his deſire of more wealth was never ſatisfied, but he is projecting how he may lay up goods in ſtore for many years. Where *note*, 1. That the parable doth not intimate any indirect and unjuſt ways of gain which this man uſed to increaſe his eſtate, but condemns his inſatiable deſire and thirſt after more. So that hence we may *learn*, That an eager and inordinate deſire after the things of this world, though it be free from injuſtice, and doing wrong to others, is one ſpecies or kind of the ſin of covetouſneſs. 2. How this rich man looked no farther than himſelf, not looking upon himſelf as God's ſteward, but his own carver, he cries out, *What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to lay my fruits?* Not conſidering, that the houſes of the poor ſhould have been his granaries for the abundance of his increaſe. Charity to the neceſſitous is the beſt way of beſtowing our abundance. God's extraordinary bounty is to be laid out for the relief of others neceſſities, not for the gratifying of our own luxurious deſires. 3. The brand of infamy which the wiſe God fixes upon this covetous rich man: *Thou fool,* ſays God. *Learn* thence, That it is an act and inſtance of the moſt egregious folly imaginable, for perſons to ſpend their time and ſtrength in getting and laying up treaſure upon earth; in the mean time neglecting to be rich towards God in faith and good works; *Thou fool.* 4. The doleful tidings, and threatning news brought unto him; *This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.* *Learn* hence, 1. That all a man's wealth is not able to preſerve his life, much leſs to ſave his ſoul; and if wealth cannot ſave a man's life, why ſhould men endanger their lives, nay, hazard their ſouls, to get or increaſe wealth? 2. That God takes away men's lives many times when they leaſt ſuſpect it; *This night*, ſays God; *Many years*, ſays he: God will not have us think of reſt in a place of diſquiet, nor of certainty in a condition of inconſtancy; we are dependent creatures, and our time is in God's hand; *This night ſhall thy ſoul be taken from thee.* 3. That the ſouls of ungodly men are taken from them by force and compulſion; *Thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee.* Good men have the ſame reluctances of nature which others have, yet they ſweetly reſign their ſouls into the hands of God in a dying hour; whereas a wicked man, though he ſometimes dies by his own hand, yet he never dies with the conſent of his own will; he chuſes rather to eat duſt (with the ſerpent) than to return to duſt. *Obſerve* 5. The expoſtulatory queſtion, *Whoſe then ſhall theſe things be which thou haſt provided?* Intimating, 1. That they ſhould not be his: A man's wealth laſts no longer than his life, neither has he any longer the comfort of it; lay up gold, and it periſhes with thee; but treaſure up grace, and it ſhall accompany thee: *Whoſe ſhall theſe things be?* Not thine undoubtedly. 2. As theſe things ſhall not be thine, when thou art gone, ſo thou knoweſt not whoſe they ſhall be after thou art gone; whether they ſhall fall into the hand of a child or a ſtranger, of a wiſe man or a fool; the wealthieſt man cannot be certain who ſhall be his heir, and whoſe goods his ſhall be. Laſtly, The application which our Saviour makes of this parable to his diſciples, *So is every one that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.* *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are not rich in grace, rich in good works, ſhall find no benefit by, and take no comfort in all their worldly riches in the time of their greateſt need, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. *Learn* farther, How brutiſh and unworthy of a man it was, for this perſon to cheer up his ſoul with the hopes of worldly proviſions, to bid his ſoul eat, drink, and be merry: Alas! the ſoul can no more eat, drink, and be merry with carnal things, than the body can with ſpiritual and immaterial things; it cannot feed upon bread that periſheth; but bring it to a reconciled God in Chriſt, to the covenant of grace, and ſweet promiſes of the goſpel; ſet before it the joys and comforts of the Spirit; and if it be a ſanctified and renewed ſoul, it can make a rich feaſt upon theſe: ſpiritual things are proper food for ſpiritual ſouls, Deſervedly then is this perſon branded with the name of *fool*, for ſaying, *Soul thou haſt goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry.*

22 ¶ And he ſaid unto his diſciples, Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat; neither for the body, what ye ſhall put on. 23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment. 24 Conſider the ravens: for they neither ſow nor reap; which neither have ſtorehouſe nor barn; and God feedeth them: How much more are ye better than the fowls? 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his ſtature one cubit? 26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is leaſt, why take ye thought for the reſt? 27 Conſider

the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they ſpin not: and yet I ſay unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. 28 If then God ſo clothe the graſs, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven: how much more *will he* clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And ſeek not ye what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all theſe things do the nations of the world ſeek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things.

There is a twofold ſenſe and interpretation given of theſe verſes. Some take them as ſpoken only to the apoſtles, directing them abſolutely to caſt off all care for the things of this life, that ſo they might attend upon Chriſt's perſon, and wholly give themſeves to that work to which he had called them: And therefore St. Luke here takes notice, that after he had cautioned his hearers in general againſt covetouſneſs, he applies himſelf particularly to his diſciples, and tells them, that he would have them ſo far from this ſin of coveteouſneſs, that they ſhould not uſe that ordinary care, and common induſtry about the things of this life, which is not only lawful but neceſſary for men in all ordinary caſes, ver. 22. *And he ſaid unto his diſciples, Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat or drink.* But if we underſtand the words in this ſenſe, we muſt look upon it only as a temporary command given to the apoſtles for that time only; like that in St. Matthew, x. 9. *Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes, neither coat nor ſcrip*; which no man ever underſtood as a general law to all Chriſtians, but as a particular precept to the apoſtles at that time. 2. Others underſtand theſe injunctions of our Saviour, to be conſiſtent with a prudent and provident care for the things of this life, not forbidding a regular induſtry and diligence for the obtaining of them, but condemning only an anxious, vexatious, tormenting care, and an over-ſolicitous diligence for the things of this life; and taking our Saviour's words for a general and ſtanding rule to all Chriſtians, they only forbid diſtruſtful thoughtfulneſs, diſtracting cares, which drive a man's mind this way and that way, (like meteors or clouds in the air, as the word ſignifies.) Now againſt this vexatious care, and ſolicitous thoughtfulneſs; our Saviour propounds many weighty arguments or conſiderations: Four eſpecially. He tells us, ſuch cares are needleſs, fruitleſs, heatheniſh, and brutiſh. 1. It is needleſs; *your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things*; and will certainly provide for you; and what need you take care, and God too? Caſt your care upon him. 2. It is fruitleſs; *Which of you by taking care can add one cubit to his ſtature?* We may ſooner by our carping care add a furlong to our grief, than a cubit to our comfort. All our care, without God's help, will neither feed us when we are hungry, nor nouriſh us when we are fed. 3. It is heatheniſh; *After all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*, Matt. vi. 32. The ends and objects of a Chriſtian's thoughts ought to be higher and more ſublime than that of heathens. Laſtly, It is brutiſh, nay worſe than brutiſh. The birds of the air, the beaſts of the field, the ravens of the valley, all are fed and ſuſtained by God, without any care of their own, much more his children. Has God a breakfaſt ready for every little bird that comes chirping out of its neſt, and for every beaſt of the field that comes leaping out of its den, and will he not much more provide for you? Surely, that God that feeds the ravens when they cry, will not ſtarve his children when they pray.

31 ¶ But rather ſeek ye the kingdom of God, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Let your chief care be to promote the kingdom of grace in this world, and to ſecure the kingdom of glory in the next, and then fear not the want of theſe outward comforts; they ſhall be added in meaſure, though not in exceſs; to ſatisfy, though not to ſatiate; for health, though not for ſurfeit." *Learn*, 1. That Chriſtians ought not to be ſo ſolicitous about the neceſſaries and conveniences of this life, as about the happineſs of the next; *rather ſeek ye the kingdom of God*. 2. That heaven or the kingdom of God, muſt be ſought in the firſt place; that is, with our principal care and chief endeavours. 3. That heaven being once ſecured by us, all earthly things ſhall be ſuperadded to us as God ſees needful and convenient for us. But few men like our Saviour's method; they would ſeek the things of this world in the firſt place, and get heaven at laſt; they would be content to ſeek the world, and to have heaven thrown in without their ſeeking; but this will not be granted; if we make religion and the ſalvation of our ſouls, our firſt and chief care, *all other things ſhall be added unto us*, ſo far as the wiſdom of God ſees them fit and convenient for us.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.

That is, fear not the want if any of theſe outward comforts, and be not over-ſolicitous for them; for your Father, which has provided a kingdom for you hereafter, will not ſuffer you to want ſuch things as are needful for you here. *Learn*, 1. That the diſciples of Chriſt are very ſubject to diſquieting and perplexing fears, but muſt by no means cheriſh, but oppoſe them; a fear of preſent wants, a fear of future ſufferings, a fear of death approaching, a fear that they ſhall not find acceptance with God, a fear leſt they ſhould fall foully or finally from God; the fear of all theſe evils doth oftentimes diſturb them, and diſcompoſe them. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is the great ſhepherd of his church; the love and care, the compaſſion and tenderneſs, the prudence and providence, the guidance and vigilance of a good ſhepherd, are found with him. 3. As Chriſt is the church's ſhepherd, ſo the church is Chriſt's flock, though a little flock, in oppoſition to the huge herds and droves of the men of the world. 4. That God the Father has a kingdom in ſtore for his little flock, his church and children. 5. That the good will and gracious pleaſure of God is the original ſpring, and formal cauſe, from whence all divine favours do proceed and flow; *It is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.*

33 Sell that ye have and give alms: provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the

heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

The next duty which our Saviour exhorts his diſciples to, is the duty of alms-giving; that they ſhould be ſo far from diſtruſting God's proviſion for themſelves, that they ſhould be always forward to a ready diſtribution towards others; yea, in caſes of neceſſity, to be willing to ſell their goods to relieve others; yet this precept is not to be taken as if it concerned all perſons, at all times, and in all places; but reſpects only caſes of extreme neceſſity, or if it concerns all, it is only as to the readineſs and preparation of the mind; that when neceſſity calls for it, we be found willing to part with any thing we have for the relief of Chriſt in his members. *Obſerve* alſo, The argument uſed to excite to this duty of alms-giving; hereby we lay up our treaſure in a ſafe hand, even in God's, who will reward us openly. The bellies of the poor are bags that wax not old; what is lodged there is laid up ſecurely out of the reach of danger. We imitate the wiſe merchant in tranſmitting our eſtates into another world, by bills of exchange, where we are ſure to receive our own with uſury.

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning: 36 And ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

The next duty Chriſt exhorts his diſciples to, is that of watchfulneſs, with reference to his ſecond coming. *Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning*; the words may be underſtood two ways, ſpoken either in a martial phraſe, as to ſoldiers: or in a domeſtic, as to ſervants: If as to ſoldiers, then let your loins be girded, and your lights burning, is as much as that we ſhould be always ready for a march, having our armour on, and our match lighted, ready to give fire at the alarm of temptation. If the words are ſpoken as to ſervants, then our maſter bids us carefully expect his ſecond coming, like a lord's returning from a wedding ſupper (which uſed to be celebrated in the night) that they ſhould not put off their clothes, nor put out their lights, but ſtand ready to open, though he comes at midnight. When Chriſt comes, that ſoul only ſhall have his bleſſing, whom he finds watching.

37 Bleſſed *are* thoſe ſervants whom the lord when he cometh ſhall find watching: verily, I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them. 38 And if he ſhall come in the ſecond watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* ſo, bleſſed are thoſe ſervants. 39 And this know, that if the good man of the houſe had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken through. 40 Be ye therefore ready alſo: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Here our Saviour makes uſe of ſeveral arguments to enforce the duty of watchfulneſs upon his diſciples; the firſt is drawn from the tranſcendent reward which Chriſt will beſtow upon his watchful ſervants. *He will gird himſelf, make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them*; a very high metaphorical expreſſion; as if a maſter ſhould be ſo tranſported with the diligence and faithfulneſs of his ſervant, as to vouchſafe not only to let him ſit down to meat in his preſence, but to take the napkin upon his arm, and wait upon him himſelf at his table. Lord! how poor and how inconſiderable is that ſervice, which the beſt of us to do for thee, and yet thou ſpeakeſt of it, as if thou wert beholden to us for it. Thou doſt not only adminiſter to us a ſupper, but thou miniſtereſt and waiteſt upon us at ſupper; *he will gird himſelf and ſerve them*. The ſecond argument to excite to watchfulneſs, is drawn from the benefit which we ſhall receive by watching in this life; that let the Lord come when he will, whether in the ſecond or third watch, they ſhall be found ready, and in a bleſſed condition, who are found diligent in his ſervice, and waiting for his appearance. *Note* here, 1. The Son of man will certainly come at one hour or other. 2. At what hour the Son of man will come, cannot certainly be known. 3. That there is no hour wherein we can promiſe ourſelves that the Son of man will not come. 4. Very joyful will the coming of the Son of man be, if we be found upon our watch, and ready for his coming; *Be ye therefore ready alſo, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

41 ¶ Then Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42 And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom *his* lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give *them their* portion of meat in due ſeaſon? 43 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant, whom his lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. 44 Of a truth I ſay unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Theſe words may be applied theſe two ways: Firſt, to all the faithful ſervants of God in general; and then the *note* is this, That for a chriſtian to ſpend and end his days in the ſervice of Chriſt, and doing his will, gives a good aſſurance of a happy and bleſſed condition: *Bleſſed is that ſervant*. Secondly, Theſe words may be applied to the miniſters of the goſpel in ſpecial; and then *obſerve*, 1. The character and duty of a goſpel-miniſter, he is the ſteward of Chriſt's houſhold, to give them their meat in due ſeaſon. 2. A double qualification requiſite in ſuch ſtewards; namely, prudence and faithfulneſs. Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward? 3. The reward inſured to ſuch ſtewards, with whom are found theſe qualifications; *bleſſed is that ſervant*. *Learn* hence, 1. That the miniſters of the goſpel are in a ſpiritual ſenſe ſtewards of Chriſt's houſhold. 2. That faithfulneſs and prudence are the indiſpenſable qualifications of Chriſt's ſtewards. 3. That where theſe qualifications are found, Chriſt will graciouſly and abundantly reward them. Our faithfulneſs muſt reſpect God, ourſelves, and our flock; and includes integrity of heart, purity of intention, induſtry of endeavour, and impartiality in all our adminiſtrations. Our prudence muſt appear in the choice of ſuitable ſubjects, in the choice of fit language, in exciting our own affections in order to the moving of our people's. Miniſterial prudence alſo muſt teach us, by the ſtrictneſs and gravity of our deportment, to maintain our authority, and keep up our eſteem in the conſciences of our people; it will alſo aſſiſt us to bear reproach, and direct us to give reproof: He that is ſilent cannot be innocent; reprove we muſt, or we cannot be faithful; but prudently, or we cannot be ſucceſsful.

45 But and if that ſervant ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to beat the men-ſervants, and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken: 46 The lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers: 47 And that ſervant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himſelf*, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many *ſtripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few *ſtripes*. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.

Our Lord in theſe verſes deſcribes a negligent and unfaithful ſteward of his houſhold, and then declares that dreadful ſentence of wrath which hangs over him. The unfaithful ſteward, or negligent miniſter of the goſpel is deſcribed, 1. By his infidelity; he believeth not Chriſt's coming to judgment, though he preaches it to others; *He ſaith in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.* 2. He is deſcribed by his hatred, envy and malignity againſt his fellow-ſervants, that were more faithful than himſelf; *He begins to ſmite them*, at leaſt with the virulence of his tongue, if not with the violence of his hand. 3. He is farther deſcribed by his aſſociating with the wicked, and ſtrengthening their hands by his ill-example, *He eateth and drinketh with the drunken*; that is, as their aſſociate and fellow-companion. Thus the negligent ſteward and unfaithful miniſter is deſcribed: Next is ſentence is declared. 1. Chriſt will ſurprize him in his ſin and ſecurity, *by coming in an hour when he looketh not for him.* 2. He will execute temporal vengeance upon him, *he will cut him in pieces*, as the Jews did their ſacrifices, dividing them into two parts. Hence ſome *obſerve*, That God ſeldom ſuffers ſlothful ſenſual miniſters to live out half their days. 3. Chriſt will puniſh them with eternal deſtruction alſo, *Appoint them their portion with unbelievers*: *Teaching* us, That ſuch miniſters as neglect the ſervice of God, and the ſouls of their people, as they are ranked amongſt the worſt of ſinners in this life, ſo ſhall they be puniſhed with them in the ſevereſt manner in the next. When Satan deſtroys the ſouls of men, he ſhall anſwer for it as a murderer only, not as an officer that was intruſted with the care of ſouls. But if the ſteward doth not provide, if the ſhepherd doth not feed, if the watchman doth not warn, they ſhall anſwer, not only for the ſouls that have miſcarried, but for an office neglected, for a talent hidden, and for a ſtewardſhip unfaithfully managed. Wo unto us, if at the great day we hear diſtreſſed ſouls roaring out their complaints, and howling out that doleful accuſation againſt us, ſaying, "Lord! our ſtewards "have defrauded us, our watchmen have betrayed us, our "guides have miſled us," ver. 48.—*For unto whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required: And to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk more.* Here we *learn*, 1. That whatever we receive from God, is both a gift and a talent. 2. That every one has ſome gift or talent from God to be improved for God. 3. That God's gifts or talents are not given to all in the ſame meaſure. 4. That whether we receive little or much, all is in order to an account. 5. That anſwerable to our preſent talents will be our future accounts. The greater opportunities a man has of knowing his duty, and the greater ability he has for doing good, if he do it not, the greater will be his condemnation; becauſe the neglect of his duty in this caſe, cannot be without a great deal of wilfulneſs and contempt, which is an heinous aggravation. If thy gifts be mean, the leſs thou haſt to account for: If greater than others, God expects thou ſhouldeſt do more good than others, *For where much is given, much will be required.*

49 I am come to ſend fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50 But I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed! 51 Suppoſe ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather diviſion. 52 For from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe divided, three againſt two, and two againſt three. 53 The father ſhall be divided againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father: the mother againſt the daughter, and the daughter againſt the mother: the mother-in-law againſt her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law.

Our Saviour in theſe verſes declares what will be the accidental event and effect, but not the natural tendency of his religion; ſo that we muſt diſtinguiſh between the intentional aim of Chriſt's coming, and the accidental event of it. Chriſt's intentional aim, was to plant, propagate, and promote peace in the world; but through the luſts and corruptions of men's natures, the iſſue and event of his coming is war and diviſion; not that theſe are the genuine and natural fruits of the goſpel; but occaſional and accidental only. Hence *learn*, That the preaching of the goſpel, and ſetting up the kingdom of Chriſt, though it be not the genuine and natural cauſe, yet it is the accidental occaſion of all that war and tumult, of all that diſſention and diviſion, of all that diſtraction and confuſion, which the world abounds with; *I am come to ſend fire on the earth.* He is ſaid to ſend the fire of diſſention, becauſe he foreſaw this would be the certain conſequence, though not the proper and natural effect of the preaching of the goſpel. There was another fire of Chriſt's ſending, the holy Spirit; this was a fire to warm, not to burn; or if ſo, not men's perſons, but corruptions; but that ſeems not to be intended in this place. *Obſerve* farther, the metaphor by which Chriſt ſets forth his own ſufferings. He ſtiles them a baptiſm; *I have a baptiſm to be baptized with.* There is a threefold baptiſm ſpoken of; a baptiſm with water, a baptiſm of the Spirit; both theſe Chriſt had been baptized with; but the third was the baptiſm of blood, he was ſoon to be drenched and waſhed in his own blood, in the garden, and on the croſs; and he was ſtraitened or pained with deſire, like a woman in travail, till his ſufferings were accompliſhed.

54 ¶ And he ſaid alſo to the people, When ye ſee a cloud ariſe out of the weſt, ſtraightway ye ſay, There cometh a ſhower: and ſo it is. 55 And when *ye ſee* the ſouth wind blow, ye ſay, There will be heat; and it cometh to paſs. 56 Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, and of the earth: but how is it, that ye do not diſcern this time? 57 Yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?

Our Saviour in theſe words does at once upbraid the ſtupid ignorance of the Jews in general, and the obſtinate infidelity of the Phariſees in particular, in that they could make a judgment of the weather by the ſight of the ſky, by the appearance of the heavens, and the motion of the winds, but could not diſcern this time of the Meſſias, though they had ſo many miraculous ſigns and evidences of it, and for this he upbraids them with hypocriſy; *Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, but you do not diſcern this time. Learn* thence, That to pretend either more ignorance, or greater uncertainty in diſcerning the ſigns of goſpel times (the time of our gracious viſitation) than the ſigns of the weather, is great hypocriſy; *Ye hypocrites, can ye not diſcern this time? Obſerve* farther, That Chriſt does not here condemn the ſtudy of nature, or making obſervations of the ſtate of the weather by the face of the ſky: For almighty God, by natural ſigns, gives us warning of a change in natural things, and in like manner by his providential diſpenſations, he gives us warning of a change in civil things. *He that is wiſe will obſerve both,* and by their obſervation will come *to underſtand the pleaſure of the Lord.*

58 ¶ When thou goeſt with thine adverſary to the magiſtrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayeſt be delivered from him; leſt he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer caſt thee into priſon. 59 I tell thee, thou ſhalt not depart thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.

In theſe words our Saviour adviſes perſons to uſe the ſame prudence in divine matters, which they uſe in wordly affairs, and the ſame endeavours to ſeek reconciliation with God, which they put forth in order to their being reconciled to men; for in ſuch a caſe, when they ſee an action bringing againſt them, wherein they are ſure to be caſt, their beſt way is preſently to ſeek to reconcile their adverſary, and make their peace with him, that ſo they may eſcape the threatening danger: In like manner ſhould they do here, lay hold of the preſent opportunity of mercy now offered to them; becauſe it is a fearful a thing to die without reconciliation with God. *Note* here, 1. That God and man were once friends. 2. That God and man are now adverſaries. 3. That man, and not God, is averſe to reconciliation and agreement. 4. That it is the wiſdom, the duty, and intereſt of fallen man, ſpeedily to accept of terms of peace and reconciliation with God. 5. That an eternal priſon will be their portion, who die in their enmity againſt God.

CHAP. XIII.

THERE were preſent at that ſeaſon, ſome that told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſacrifices. 2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

There were two eminent ſects among the Jews in our Saviour's time, namely, the Herodians and Galileans: The former ſtood ſtiffly for having paid tribute to the Roman emperor, whoſe ſubjects the Jews now were: but the Galileans (ſo called probably from Judas of Galilee, mentioned Acts v. 37.) oppoſed this tribute, and often raiſed rebellion againſt the Roman power. Pilate takes opportunity, when theſe Galileans were come up at the paſſover, and ſacrificing in the temple, to fall upon them with his ſoldiers, and barbarouſly mingled their own blood with the blood of the ſacrifices which they offered: Neither the holineſs of the place (the temple) nor the ſacredneſs of the action (ſacrificing) could divert Pilate from his barbarous impiety. Our Saviour underſtanding that ſome of his hearers then preſent concluded theſe perſons to be the greateſt ſinners, becauſe they were the greateſt ſufferers, he corrects their error in this matter, and aſſures them, that the ſame or like judgments did hang over all other ſinners, as well as theſe, if timely and ſincere repentance prevented not. *Learn* hence, 1. That a violent and ſudden death is no argument of God's diſfavour. 2. That notwithſtanding, perſons are exceeding prone to paſs raſh cenſures and an uncharitable judgment upon ſuch as die ſuddenly, eſpecially if they die violently. 3. That none juſtly can conclude ſuch perſons to have been the greateſt ſinners, who have been in this world the moſt ſignal ſufferers. 4. That the beſt uſe we can make of ſuch inſtances and examples of God's ſeverity, is to examine our own lives, and by a ſpeedy repentance to prevent our own perdition. *I tell you, Nay, &c.*

4 Or thoſe eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and ſlew them, think ye that they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in Jeruſalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

Another inſtance our Saviour gives of perſons that fell by a ſudden death; even eighteen, that were ſlain by the fall of a tower in Jeruſalem: He takes occaſion from thence to caution the Jews, that they do not rigidly cenſure the ſufferers, or conclude that thoſe have wrought the moſt ſin, who are brought to moſt ſhame. Oh! how ready are we to judge of men's eternal condition, by their preſent viſitation; and to conclude them the greateſt offenders, upon whom God inflicts the moſt viſible puniſhments! Our Saviour forbids this, and adviſes every one to look at home; telling the whole body of the Jews, That if they did not repent, they ſhould all likewiſe periſh; and that two ways: 1. *Certitudine pœnæ*; by as certain a puniſhment as theſe did. 2. Ye ſhall likewiſe periſh, *ſimilitudine pœnæ*, by the ſame kind of puniſhment; you ſhall periſh by the ruin of your whole city, as they did by the downfall of that tower, if a timely and ſincere repentance doth not intervene. *Learn* hence, That we muſt judge perſons by their converſation towards God, not by God's diſpenſation towards them. All things here fall alike to all: A ſudden death, yea, a violent death, as it comes upon many men, ſo it may come upon the beſt of men, as well as others: Think not, ſays Chriſt, that thoſe eighteen were ſinners above all that dwelt in Jeruſalem, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things; *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh:* Teaching us, that repentance is the only way and means to prevent puniſhment here, and periſhing hereafter: *Except ye repent, ye ſhall periſh.*

6 ¶ He ſpake alſo this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then ſaid he unto the dreſſer of his vineyard, Behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?

Our bleſſed Saviour, that he might excite the Jews to the practice of the laſt-mentioned duty of repentance, ſets forth his long-ſuffering with them, and forbearance towards them, by the parable of the fig-tree, whom the maſter of the vineyard had long expected fruit from, but found none.—Where *note*, 1. The great care that God takes to make poor ſinners happy: He plants them in his church, as in a vineyard, that by the cultivating care of his miniſters, and the fructifying influences of his Spirit, they may be fruitful in good works. 2. That God keeps an exact account or reckoning, what means and advantages every place and people have enjoyed: *Theſe three years* have I come ſeeking fruit; alluding to the three years of his own miniſtry among them. God keeps a memorial how many years the goſpel has been amongſt a people; how many miniſters they have had, and how long with them: What pathetical exhortations, what preſſing admonitions, what cutting reproofs! All are upon the file and muſt be accounted for. 3. That God expects ſuitable and proportionable fruit from a people, according to the time of their ſtanding in his vineyard, and anſwering to the coſt and culture which his miniſters have expended upon them, and the pains they have taken with them. Farther, 4. That although God doth, and juſtly may expect fruit from ſuch as are planted in his vineyard, to wit, the Chriſtian Church, yet he expects it with much patience and forbearance, waiting from year to year, to ſee if time will work amendment: *Theſe three years I have come ſeeking fruit and found none.* Laſtly, If, after all the coſt that God haſt beſtowed upon a people by his miniſters and ordinances, they continue unfruitful, there is nothing to be expected but exciſion and final deſtruction: *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.*

8 And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Lord, let it alone this year, alſo, till I ſhall dig about it, and dung *it*. 9 And if it bear fruit, *well*; and if not, *then* after that thou ſhalt cut it down.

Obſerve here, 1. The vine-dreſſer's petition and requeſt: *Lord, let it alone this year alſo.* This points out unto us, the office and duty of the miniſters of God, who are labourers in his vineyard, to be interceſſors with God, for ſparing a barren and unfruitful people. Lord! ſpare them a little longer; *Let it alone this year alſo.* If they cannot abſolutely prevent judgment coming upon an unfruitful people, yet they endeavour to reſpite it, and delay its coming, all they can. 2. The condition upon which the vine dreſſer's petition is grounded; *Till I ſhall dig about it, and dung it:* Phraſes which intimate unto us the nature and quality of the miniſterial work and ſervice, ſignifying it to be a very difficult and laborious ſervice. Digging is a painful work, and a ſpending work, and ſuch is our miniſterial work, if followed as it ought to be: We deal in myſteries, in the deep things of God which are not received without much digging. 3. A double ſuppoſition here made by the vine-dreſſer: Firſt, Of future fruitfulneſs; *If it bear fruit, well*: Secondly, Of future incorrigibleneſs; *If not, after that thou ſhalt cut it down.* 1. Here is a ſuppoſition of future fruitfulneſs; *If it bear fruit, well*: That is, it will be well for the maſter of the vineyard; herein is he glorified, when his fig-trees bear much fruit: Well for the dreſſer of the vineyard; it rejoices the miniſters of God to ſee their people bring forth fruit unto God: Well for the vineyard, and the reſt of the trees that are in it; but, more eſpecially, well for the tree itſelf, whereby avoiding the puniſhment of barrenneſs, and procuring the reward of fruitfulneſs: Thus, *If it bear fruit, well.* Here is a ſuppoſition of future incorrigibleneſs; *After that thou ſhalt cut it down:* That is, After thou haſt ſpared it, and I have pruned it; after thy patience, and my pains; after thou haſt forborn it, and I have manured it, digged and dunged it; if, after all this, it bear no fruit, then I have not a word more to ſay; *Thou ſhalt cut it down:* Thou mayeſt cut it down; nobody will go about to hinder thee. From hence *learn*, That a people's continued unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, doth in time take off the prayers and interceſſions of the miniſters of God for them, and provokes God to bring his judgments unavoidably and irrevocably upon them: *After that, thou ſhalt cut it down.*

10 And he was teaching in one of the ſynagogues on the ſabbath. 11 ¶ And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe

lift up *herſelf.* 12 And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called *her* to him, and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath-day, and ſaid unto the people, There are ſix days on which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the ſabbath-day. 15 The Lord then anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the ſabbath looſe his ox or *his* aſs from the ſtall, and lead *him* away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the ſabbath-day? 17 And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Obſerve here, 1. The afflicted perſon; a woman which had a ſore diſeaſe inflicted upon her by the devil for eighteen years, which almoſt bowed her together. There is nothing that the devil delights more in than the miſeries and calamities of mankind: Satan is not ſatisfied barely to infect the mind, and poiſon the ſouls of men: but he delights to afflict and hurt the body, where and when he can obtain leave. 2. Chriſt's compaſſion towards her, and his miraculous healing of her: *Jeſus called her to him*, and with a word ſpeaking healed her. Where *note*, That the inveterateneſs of the diſeaſe, and the inſtantaneouſneſs of the cure, made the miracle evident. She that had been bowed down eighteen years, in an inſtant is made ſtraight, and only by a word of Chriſt's mouth: Such a miraculous operation was an evident teſtimony of his divine miſſion, that he was the Son of God. 3. How the heart of the poor woman is affected with Chriſt's hand: She glorified God; that is, ſhe gave thanks to God, and attributed the miracle to him. As the chief end of all God's extraordinary works either of power or mercy, is the exaltation of his own glory; ſo the only way that we can ſet forth his glory, is by celebrating his praiſes, and expreſſing our own thankfulneſs; *He that offereth me praiſes and thanks, glorifies me*, Pſalm l. ult. 4. The unreaſonable anger, and unjuſt indignation which was found with the ruler of the ſynagogue againſt our holy Lord, for working this miraculous cure on the ſabbath-day: There is no perſon ſo holy, no action ſo innocent, but may fall under unjuſt cenſure, eſpecially where malice and ignorance are combined. What a ſevere reflection doth this man make upon our bleſſed Lord, for performing a work of mercy on the ſabbath-day! 5. Our Lord's vindication of himſelf from calumny and falſe accuſation. 1. He charges his accuſer with hypocriſy: *Thou hypocrite, doth not each of you looſe his ox, or his aſs, from the ſtall on the ſabbath-day, and water him?* It is one note of an hypocrite, to condemn that in another which he doth himſelf: The Jews held it lawful to looſe and lead a beaſt to watering on the ſabbath-day, which was a work of ſervile labour, and yet would condemn Chriſt for healing a poor woman, only with a word ſpeaking. 2. Chriſt vindicates his own action, by comparing it with theirs, which they judged lawful on the ſabbath-day. Was their looſing and watering the beaſt, a work of neceſſity? much more was his: Was their's a work of mercy? his much more: Their compaſſion was to a brute beaſt, his to a rational creature, to a woman, and that not a ſtranger, an heathen woman, but one of their own, a Jewiſh woman, a daughter of Abraham. Nay, farther, Chriſt's act was an act of far greater neceſſity, and more eſpecial mercy than their's. The beaſt might live a day without water; the beaſt might not be ſick; but this woman was in ſore diſtreſs, and had been ſo for eighteen years; nay, ſhe was in the hands of the enemy of mankind, bound by Satan: Was it not then a greater act of mercy and compaſſion, to looſe her, than to lead a beaſt. 6. What effect our Lord's vindication of himſelf had upon the hearers of it: *His adverſaries were aſhamed, and the people rejoiced*, ver. 17. His accuſers were aſhamed, and probably convinced, perhaps ſilenced; but we read not that they confeſſed their error, or acknowledged their unjuſt cenſure, or craved Chriſt's pardon.—When perſons' judgments are under conviction of an error or miſtake, it is very hard to bring themſelves to confeſs and own their miſtake; becauſe all men ſtand very much upon the credit and reputation of their underſtandings, and look upon it as a reproach to own themſelves miſtaken; though it is really otherwiſe. But though our Saviour's adverſaries were only aſhamed, others rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then ſaid he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto ſhall I reſemble it? 19 It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took, and caſt into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20 And again he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Our Saviour's deſign in both theſe parables, is to keep his diſciples and followers from being offended at the ſmall beginnings of his kingdom, and to foretel the future great ſucceſs of the goſpel, notwithſtanding the preſent ſmall appearance of the efficacy of it. To this purpoſe he compares the kingdom of God, that is, the goſpel-church, *to a grain of muſtard-ſeed*, which being one of the leaſt ſeeds, yet in that country grew into ſo large a tree, that the birds did rooſt and lodge in the boughs of it. He alſo likens it to *leaven*, which quickly diffuſes itſelf through the whole maſs and lump, inſtantly turning a great heap of meal into its own nature. Chriſt ſhews hereby of what a ſpreading nature the doctrine of the goſpel would be, notwithſtanding all the malice and oppoſition of wicked men. *Learn hence*, That how ſmall beginnings ſoever the goſpel had in its firſt plantation, yet, by the fructifying bleſſing of God, and the influence of the holy Spirit, it has had, and ſhall have a wonderful increaſe.

22 And he went through the cities and villages teaching, and journeying towards Jeruſalem. 23 ¶ Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

Obſerve here, 1. The unwearied pains and diligence of our holy Lord in preaching and publiſhing the glad tidings of the goſpel to loſt ſinners: *He went through the cities and villages teaching*; not in great and populous cities only, but in poor and obſcure villages alſo; not preaching by his exemplary life only, but by his holy doctrine likewiſe. Let ſuch preachers who look upon the work of preaching as the leaſt part of their buſineſs, conſider the indefatigable pains which our Lord took in that work; and how will his diligence ſhame our negligence? 2. A curious queſtion put to our Saviour concerning the number of thoſe that ſhould be ſaved, whether they ſhould be few or many: *Lord, are there few that be ſaved?* Where *note*, How curiouſly inquiſitive we naturally are after the knowledge of things that do not concern us, how forward to pry into unrevealed ſecrets, and to ſearch into God's hidden council: it concerns us rather to underſtand what ſort of perſons ſhall be ſaved, than how many ſhall be ſaved, and to make ſure that we be of that ſort. 3. Our Saviour gives no direct anſwer to the curioſity of this inquirer, but turns his ſpeech from him to the people; *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, &c. For the clear underſtanding of which expreſſion, we muſt know, that Chriſt alludes to the feaſts and marriage-ſuppers amongſt the Jews; they that were invited, did enter by a gate which was very ſtrait and narrow, and, as ſoon as the invited were once entered, the gate was ſhut, and opened no more: Here Chriſt bids them ſtrive to enter into the kingdom of heaven, before the gate is ſhut againſt them, and their entrance, by means of their coming too late, be made impoſſible to them: *Strive to enter*, &c. *for many will ſeek*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The metaphor which Chriſt is pleaſed to ſet forth heaven and the happineſs of a future ſtate by: He compares it to a *ſtraight gate*; to a *gate*, to denote the poſſibility of entering; to a *ſtrait gate*, to denote the difficulty of entrance; a gate ſuppoſes the entrance poſſible, but a ſtraight gate beſpeaks the entrance difficult. 2. Here is a duty urged and enforced upon all thoſe that expect the happineſs of another life, and deſire to enter in at this ſtrait gate; and that is, a diligent and induſtrious ſtriving: *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* 3. We have a forcible argument and motive to excite and quicken us to the practice of this duty, drawn from the paucity, or ſmall number of thoſe that ſhall obtain ſalvation in a dying hour: *Many will ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able. Learn* thence, 1. That heaven, or the happineſs of a future ſtate, is attainable. 2. That it is not attainable without labour and difficulty. 3. That all thoſe difficulties may be happily overcome by a diligent and induſtrious ſtriving.

25 When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then ſhall ye begin to ſay, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. 27 But he ſhall ſay, I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourſelves* thruſt out. 29 And they ſhall come from the eaſt, and *from* the weſt, and from the north, and *from* the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, there are laſt which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt which ſhall be laſt.

Our Saviour having exhorted all his followers in the foregoing verſes to make ſure of heaven and ſalvation to themſelves, whilſt the door of hope and ſalvation is open to them, by this parable of a maſter of a family inviting gueſts to his table, and waiting for their coming, and at laſt ſhutting the door againſt them, becauſe they either denied or delayed coming, Chriſt hereby repreſented to the Jews the great danger they were in, if they neglected the preſent ſeaſon of grace and ſalvation, which now they did enjoy; telling them farther, how little it would profit them at the day of judgment, to alledge that they had eaten and drank in his preſence, and that they had heard him preach in their ſtreets, if they did not forſake their ſins, and obey his goſpel. Adding farther, that it would be an heart-piercing ſorrow, a ſoul-rending grief to them at the great day, to ſee not only the patriarchs and prophets, and other Jews, but even the deſpiſed Gentiles from all quarters and nations, whom they thought accurſed, admitted into the kingdom of heaven, and themſelves eternally ſhut out: *For the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt*; that is, the Gentiles who were afar off, ſhall receive the goſpel, when you for rejecting it ſhall be caſt off. From the whole, *note*, 1. That there is a determinate time when ſouls muſt (if ever) accept of the offers of grace and ſalvation, which are made unto them; now is the door open, and perſons invited in. 2. That ere long Jeſus Chriſt, who now ſtands at every one of our doors waiting for our compliance with his goſpel-terms, will wait no longer upon us, nor ſtrive any farther by the motions of his holy Spirit with us, *when once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door*. 3. That doleful is the condition of ſuch miſerable ſouls againſt whom the door is ſhut; the door of repentance, the door of hope, the door of ſalvation; all ſhut, eternally ſhut; and that by him who ſhutteth, and none can open. 4. That all would be ſaved at laſt; all will cry for mercy when it is too late, even ſuch as now ſinfully undervalue and ſcornfully deſpiſe it; *ye ſhall ſtand without, and knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. Note*, 5. That it is no good plea for admittance into heaven, becauſe we have been church-members here on earth; no outward privileges, though Chriſt has taught in our ſtreets; no external acts of communion, though we have eaten and drank in his preſence, and at his holy table, will juſtify our hopes of entering into heaven when we die, if we be workers of iniquity whilſt we live; *Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy preſence; but he ſhall ſay, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity. Note*, 6. That as hell will be a ſecond heaven to the glorified, ſo heaven will be a ſecond hell to the damned. Hell will be a ſecond heaven to the glorified, that is, it will add exceedingly to the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, to ſee and be ſenſible of that miſery which they eſcaped, and the damned endure; and on the other hand, heaven will be a ſecond hell to the damned; that is, it will increaſe their torments, and add to the vexation of their ſpirits, to ſee ſome in heaven whom they little expected to have ſeen there; ſome that never ſaw nor heard, nor enjoyed what they had done; ſtrangers, yea, heathens taken in, when the children of the kingdom, that is, the members of the viſible church, are ſhut out: *They ſhall come from the eaſt, from the weſt, from the north, and from the ſouth, and ſit down in the kingdom of God, but the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt into outer darkneſs.*

31 ¶ The ſame day there came certain of the Phariſees, ſaying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence; for Herod will kill thee. 32 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I caſt out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I ſhall be perfected. 33 Neverthele*ſ*s, I muſt walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem.

It may ſeem ſtrange, that the Phariſees, who had no kindneſs for our Saviour ſhould come here and acquaint him with a danger that he was in from Herod: *Get thee hence, for Herod will kill thee.* It is probable they had a deſign to drive him out of the country, becauſe his reputation was ſo great amongſt the people, who were admirers of his perſon, hearers of his doctrine, and witneſſes of his miracles. But what intention ſoever they had in acquainting Chriſt with this danger, it is very evident that our Saviour ſlighted it, by the meſſage which he ſent to Herod; *Go and tell that fox:* Where we muſt not ſuppoſe, that our Lord did fix this name of *fox* upon Herod as an opprobious title, thereby reflecting the leaſt diſhonour upon him as a king; but it was as a prophet, to let him know, that being about his Father's work, he feared neither his power or his policy; neither his cruelty or his craft; and that nothing ſhould take him off from finiſhing the work of man's redemption. *Learn* hence, that when God calls forth any of his ſervants to any ſpecial ſervice for him, all the combined power and policy of the prince of darkneſs, and his inſtruments, ſhall never be able to hinder them, till they have finiſhed their courſe, and done the ſervice which God deſigned; *I muſt work to day and to-morrow, and the day following*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Let Herod know that my time is not in his hand; and as to this matter, I am not under his command or power: ere long my work will be finiſhed, and then I ſhall be perfected." *Obſerve* here, That to impoſe this ignominious but agreeable name on Herod, is not contrary to the command, not to ſpeak evil of the ruler of the people; it being the office of a prophet, not to ſpare kings when they reprove their offences. Accordingly Chriſt here uſes his prophetic call and power, in giving this tyrant a name ſo ſuitable to his actions, go tell that *fox*, from me, a prophet ſent of God, and therefore authoriſed ſo to ſtyle him, That I am haſtening to Jeruſalem to lay down my life there, not fearing to be killed by him in the way; for it cannot be, that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem; where the Sanhedrim ſit, who are to paſs judgment upon me.—— Dr. *Whitby*.

34 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, which killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not! 35 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate: And verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me until the time come when ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Our Lord concludes this chapter with a compaſſionate lamentation over Jeruſalem, the place where he was to ſuffer. His ingemination, or doubling of the word, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* ſhews the vehemency of his affection towards them, and the ſincerity of his deſires for their ſalvation. *Obſerve* 1. The kindneſs and compaſſion of Chriſt to the Jews in general, and Jeruſalem in particular, ſet forth by a lively metaphor and ſimilitude, namely, that of a hen gathering her chickens under her wings: As the hen doth tenderly cheriſh, and carefully hide and cover her young from the eye of the deſtroyer, ſo would Chriſt have ſhrouded and ſheltered this people from all thoſe birds of prey, and particularly from the Roman eagle, by whoſe talons they were at laſt deſtroyed. Again, as the hen continueth her call to her young ones from morning to night, and holds out her wings for ſhelter to them all the day long, ſo did Chriſt wait for this people's repentance and converſion; for it was more than forty years after they had killed his prophets, and murdered himſelf, before they met with a final overthrow. 2. The amazing obſtinacy and wilfulneſs of this people, in rejecting the grace and favour, the kindneſs and condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *I would have gathered you, but ye would not.* 3. The fatal iſſue of this obſtinacy, *Behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate*; is left, that is, certainly and ſuddenly will be left deſolate (the preſent tenſe being put for the *paulo poſt futurum)* which denotes both the certainty and proximity of this people's ruin. *Learn* 1. That the ruin and deſtruction of ſinners is wholly chargeable upon themſelves, that is, on their own wilfulneſs and impenitency, on their own obſtinacy and obduracy. *I would have gathered you*, ſays Chriſt, *but ye would not.* 2. How deplorably and inexcuſably they will periſh, who periſh by their own wilfulneſs and obduracy under the goſpel. 3. That there is no deſire like unto God's deſire of a people's repentance, no longing like unto God's longing for a people's ſalvation. *O Jeruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thee? When ſhall it once be?* Jer. xiii. 27.

CHAP. XIV.

AND it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe
of one of the chief Phariſees to eat bread on
the ſabbath-day, that they watched him. 2 And
behold, there was a certain man before him, which
had the dropſy. 3 And Jeſus anſwering, ſpake
unto the lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, Is it lawful
to heal on the ſabbath-day? 4 And they held their
peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let
him go: 5 And anſwered them, ſaying, Which of
you ſhall have an aſs or an ox fallen into a pit, and
will not ſtraightway pull him out on the ſabbath-day?
6 And they could not anſwer him again to
theſe things.

Several particulars are here worthy of our obſervation and imitation. *Note* 1. The freedom of our Lord's converſation with men; he delighted in human ſociety, and was of a ſociable temper; we do not find, that whenever he was invited by a ſinner, that he diſdained to go; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good. 2. The houſe he goes into, and is entertained in, one of the chief Phariſees, who were ſome of his chiefeſt enemies; a great inſtance of our Lord's humanity, humility, and ſelf-denial, in that he refuſes not the converſation of thoſe whom he knew did not affect him; teaching us to love our enemies, and not to ſhun converſing with them, that thereby we may gain an opportunity of being reconciled to them. 3. The day when our Saviour dined publicly at the Phariſee's houſe, among the lawyers and Phariſees, it was on the ſabbath-day. *Learn* hence, That it is not ſimply unlawful for us to entertain our friends and neighbours with a plentiful meal on the Lord's day: it muſt be acknowledged, that feaſting upon any day is one of thoſe lawful things which is difficultly managed without ſin, but more eſpecially upon that day, that it does not unfit us for the duties of the ſabbath: However, our Lord's example in going to a public dinner amongſt lawyers and Phariſees, evidently ſhews the lawfulneſs of feaſting on that day, provided we uſe the ſame moderation in eating and drinking, that he did, and improve the opportunity as a ſeaſon for doing good, as he has taught us by his example. 4. How contrary to all the laws of behaviour, the decency of converſation, and the rules of hoſpitality, the Phariſees watched him, making their table a ſnare to catch him, hoping they might hear ſomething from him, or ſee ſomething in him, for which they might accuſe him; *He entered into the houſe of the Phariſee to eat bread, and they are watched.* 5. Our Saviour choſe the ſabbath-day as the fitteſt ſeaſon to work his miraculous cures in; in the Phariſees houſe he heals a man that had the dropſy, on the ſabbath-day. Chriſt would not forbear doing good, nor omit any opportunity of helping and healing the diſtreſſed, though he knew his enemies the Phariſees would carp and cavil at it, calumniate and reproach him for it: it being the conſtant guiſe of hypocrites, to prefer ceremonial and ritual obſervations, before neceſſary and moral duties. 6. How our Saviour defends the lawfulneſs of his act in healing the diſeaſed man, from their own act in helping a beaſt out of the pit on the ſabbath-day; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Is it lawful for you on the ſabbath-day to help a beaſt? and is it ſinful for me to help a man?" *Note*, laſtly, How the reaſon and force of our Saviour's argument ſilenced the Phariſees; convinced them, no doubt, but we read nothing of their converſion; the obſtinate and malicious are much harder to be wrought upon, than the ignorant and ſcandalous; it is eaſier to ſilence ſuch men than to ſatiſfy them; to ſtop their mouths than to remove their prejudices; for obſtinacy will hold the concluſion, though reaſon cannot maintain the premiſes; *They could not anſwer him again to thoſe things.*

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to thoſe which
were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out
the chief rooms; ſaying unto them, 8 When thou
art bidden of any man to a wedding, ſit not down
in the higheſt room: leſt a more honourable man
than thou be bidden of him: 9 And he that bade
thee and him, come and ſay to thee, Give this
man place; and thou begin with ſhame to take the
loweſt room. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and
ſit down in the loweſt room; that when he that bade
thee cometh, he may ſay unto thee, Friend, go up
higher: then ſhalt thou have worſhip in the preſence
of them that ſit at meat with thee. 11 For whoſoever
exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that
humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.

It was obſerved before, That our bleſſed Saviour dined publicly on the ſabbath-day, with ſeveral Phariſees and lawyers; that which is here worthy of our notice is this: How holy and ſuitable our Lord's diſcourſe was to the ſolemnity of that day; may it be the matter of our imitation. It is not unlawful for friends to dine together on the Lord's day, provided their diſcourſe be ſuitable to the day, ſuch as our Lord's here; for obſerving how the company then at the table did affect precedency, and taking place one of another; he that before their eyes had cured a man of a bodily dropſy, attempts to cure the perſons that dined with him of a tympany of pride. Where *note*, that it is not the taking, but the affecting of the higheſt places and uppermoſt rooms that our Saviour condemns. There may and ought to be a precedency amongſt perſons; it is according to the will of God, *That honour be given to whom honour is due*; and that the moſt honourable perſons ſhould ſit in the moſt honourable places; for grace gives a man no exterior preference: It makes a man glorious indeed, but it is glorious within. *Note* farther, The way and courſe, the method and means which our Saviour directs perſons to, in order to their attaining real honour, both from God and men, namely, by being little in our own eyes, *and in lowlineſs of mind, eſteeming others better than ourſelves*; as God will abaſe, and men will deſpiſe the proud and haughty, ſo God will exalt, and men will honour the humble perſon: *Whoſoever exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.*

12 ¶ Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompence thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.

Obſerve here, That this is not an abſolute denial of calling brethren and kinsfolk, and rich neighbours; but Chriſt forbids the bidding of them alone, and requires that the poor be refreſhed at, or from our table: For when the rich feaſt one another, and let the poor faſt and pine, this is very ſinful. Accordingly our Saviour, obſerving how the Phariſees that invited him to dinner, invited only the rich, over-looking and neglecting the poor, he exhorts him and the company, that whenever they make entertainments for the time to come, they ſhould not only invite their rich neighbours and friends, who can and will invite them again; but remember the poor. Here *note*, 1. That civil courteſies, and hoſpitable entertainments of kindred and friends, for maintaining and preſerving love and concord, is not only lawful, but an expedient and neceſſary duty; *Uſe hoſpitality to one another*, (ſays St. Peter) *without grudging*. 2. That though it be not unlawful to invite and feaſt the rich, yet it is moſt acceptable to God, when we feed and refreſh the poor; *When thou makeſt a feaſt, call rather the poor, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed*. We muſt prefer the duties of Chriſtian charity, before the acts of common civility; bleſſed are thoſe feaſt-makers, who make the bowels of the hungry to bleſs them. 3. That God oft-times rewards our liberality to the poor very ſignally in this life; but if it be deferred, we ſhall not fail to receive it at the reſurrection of the juſt; *The poor cannot recompence thee, but thou ſhalt be recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt*.

15 ¶ And when one of them that ſat at meat with him, heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *is* he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 ¶ Then ſaid he unto him, A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many: 17 And he ſent his ſervant at ſupper-time to ſay to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one *conſent* began to make excuſe. The firſt ſaid, I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it: I pray thee have me excuſed. 12 And another ſaid, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed. 20 And another ſaid, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that ſervant came and ſhewed his Lord theſe things. Then the maſter of the houſe being angry, ſaid to his ſervant, Go out quickly into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the ſervant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord ſaid unto the ſervant, Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled. 24 For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.

One of them which ſat at meat with our Saviour in the Phariſee's houſe, hearing Chriſt ſpeak of being recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt, repeats that known ſaying among the Rabbins, *Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God*; that is, who ſhall be partaker of the joys of heaven. Hereupon Chriſt utters the parable of the marriage-ſupper, recorded here by St. Luke, with ſmall variation from what was delivered by St. Matthew, chap. xxii. The firſt intention of our Saviour in that parable ſeems to be this, to ſet forth that gracious offer of mercy and ſalvation which was made by the preaching of the goſpel unto the Jews, and to declare God's purpoſe of receiving the Gentiles into the fold of Chriſt, upon the Jews deſpiſing and rejecting this ineſtimable favour. But beſides this, it has an aſpect upon us Chriſtians, who have embraced the doctrine of the goſpel. Here *note*, 1. That the goſpel for its freeneſs and fulneſs, for its varieties and delicacies, is like a marriage-ſupper: For, 1. It does create the ſame relation between Chriſt and believers, that marriage doth between huſband and wife. 2. It intitles to the ſame privileges that a conjugal relation doth; to the ſame endearing love and tenderneſs, to the ſame care and protection, to the ſame honour, and to the ſame happineſs. 3. It obliges to the like duties, namely, unſpotted love and fidelity, chearful obedience to his commands, reverence to his perſon, ſubmiſſion to his authority. 4. It produceth the ſame effects; as the effect of marriage is increaſe of children, ſo the fruit of the goſpel is *bringing many ſons to God*. *Note*, 2. That goſpel invitations are mightily diſeſteemed; they made light of the invitation, and offered frivolous excuſes for their refuſal of it. 3. That the preference which the world has in men's eſteem, is a great cauſe of the goſpel contempt; *One had purchaſed a piece of ground*, another had *bought five yoke of oxen*. 4. The deplorable ſadneſs of their condition who refuſe, upon any pretence whatever, to comply with the goſpel-tender of reconciliation and mercy. *The king was wroth*, pronounced them *unworthy of his favour, and reſolved they ſhould not taſte of his ſupper*; but ſends forth his ſervants to invite others to his ſupper. 5. The notion under which the Gentiles are ſet forth unto us, ſuch as were in *lanes*, *ſtreets*, and *highways*; that is, a rude, ruſtic, and barbarous people, whom the Jews deſpiſed, yea, whom they held accurſed; yet even theſe are called and accepted, whilſt the Jews, the firſt intended gueſts, are excluded by means of their own contempt.—Laſtly, The means uſed to bring in the Gentiles to the goſpel-ſupper; *Go and compel them to come in*; not by violence, but perſuaſion; by argumentation, not compulſion; the plain and perſuaſive, the powerful and efficacious preaching of the word, with the motions and influences of the holy Spirit, are the compulſions here intended; not external force, nor temporal puniſhments, not outward violence, *Non religionis eſt cogere religionem*, ſays Tertullian; " No man ought by force and violence to be compelled to the profeſſion of the true faith." *Obſerve* then, How vainly theſe words are brought to prove, that men may be compelled by the ſecular arm to embrace the chriſtian faith.—This appears, 1. From the nature of a banquet, to which none are compelled by force, but by perſuaſion only. 2. From the ſcope of the parable, which reſpects the calling of the Gentiles, who believed by the great power of God.

25 ¶ And there were great multitudes with him: and he turned, and ſaid unto them, 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. 27 And whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſciple.

Our Saviour by theſe expreſſions doth not condemn natural love and affection, either to our relations, or our own lives, but only regulates and directs it; ſhewing, That our firſt and chief love muſt be beſtowed upon himſelf; we may have, and ought to cheriſh, tender and relenting affections towards our near and dear relations: But then the conſideration of Chriſt's truth and religion muſt take place of theſe; yea, of life itſelf; and when they ſtand in competition with theſe, we are to regard them no more, than if they were objects of our hatred. *Learn* hence, 1. That no man can be a ſincere diſciple of Chriſt, who gives any relation, or outward enjoyment, a preference to Chriſt in his heart and affections. Chriſt muſt be loved above all, or we love him not at all; leſs love he accounts and calls *hatred*. That which we can leave for Chriſt, we hate, in compariſon of that love which we bear to Chriſt. It is both impious and impoſſible to hate father and mother, and ourſelves abſolutely: It muſt then be underſtood comparatively only; what we love leſs, we are comparatively ſaid to hate. 2. That all the diſciples of Chriſt muſt be ready and willing, whenever called to it, to quit all their temporal intereſts and enjoyments, even life itſelf, and ſubmit to any temporal inconveniences, even death itſelf, and this willingly and cheerfully, rather than diſown their relation to Chriſt, and quit the profeſſion of his holy religion: Upon eaſier terms than theſe, can none of us be the diſciples of Jeſus.

28 For which of you intending to build a tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether ye have *ſufficient* to finiſh *it?* 29 Leſt haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finiſh *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finiſh. 31 Or what king going to make war againſt another king, ſitteth not down firſt, and conſulteth whether he be able with ten thouſand to meet him that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand? 32 Or elſe, while the other is yet a great way off, he ſendeth an ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.

Our bleſſed Saviour by theſe two parables, adviſes all his followers to ſit down and conſider, to weigh well, and caſt up beforehand, what it is like to coſt them to go through with their profeſſion of religion: This, he tells us, common prudence will direct men to do in other caſes; particularly, when they either go to build or to fight. As a man that intends to build, will conſult whether he is able to defray the charges; and a king that goeth forth to war, will conſider what ſtrength he has to make oppoſition; in like manner ſhould perſons engage in religion; not raſhly, but adviſedly, with conſideration and judgment: It is good to remember the iſſues of action before we act; before we engage in the ſpiritual combat, to conſider the difficulty of the battle, what proud leviathans we have to conflict with, what mighty giants to contend and ſtrive againſt, even the world, the fleſh, and the devil. But then we muſt take great care that our deliberation and conſideration of difficulties and dangers may not deter us from, but work in us a ſteady reſolution for, the combat, looking up to Chriſt for his auxiliary aid and ſtrength to render us victorious, who, though of ourſelves we can do nothing, yet *may do all things through that ſtrengthens us. Learn* from hence, That ſuch as take up a profeſſion of Chriſtianity, without conſidering the dangers and difficulties, the trials and troubles, the afflictions and temptations which may accompany it, will never hold out in the ſpiritual warfare, but either fall in it, or run from it.

34 ¶ Salt *is* good: but if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men caſt it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Our Saviour here compares his diſciples to ſalt, thereby denoting their uſefulneſs, ſalt being one of the moſt uſeful things in nature; and pointing alſo out their duty, which is to ſeaſon themſelves and others with ſound doctrine. But hypocritical profeſſors are like unſavoury ſalt; they are neiſavoury in themſelves, nor ſerviceable to others. Our Saviour compares ſuch Chriſtians, who have no ſavour of piety and goodneſs upon their ſpirits, to ſalt, that having loſt its goodneſs, is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; that is, being of a blackiſh nature, it is wholly unfit to manure the ground, and will rather occaſion barrenneſs than any fruitfulneſs or increaſe. *Learn* hence, That ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are and will be as ſalt of the earth; that is, good and ſavoury in themſelves, and endeavouring by exhortation and good example to ſeaſon others: But hypocritical profeſſors and apoſtatizing Chriſtians will be caſt out, and trampled upon as unſavoury ſalt.

CHAP. XV.

This chapter conſiſts of three parables: 1. Of a man ſeeking diligently a ſheep that he had loſt, and having found it, rejoiced greatly, and invited his neighbours to partake of his joy. 2. Of a woman having loſt a piece

piece of ſilver, and ſeeking till ſhe had found it, and then in like manner rejoicing with her friends. 3. Of a prodigal ſon, who having ſpent his time, and conſumed his eſtate in riot and exceſs, at length returns to his father's houſe, and is joyfully received.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and ſinners for to hear him. 2 And the Phariſees and ſcribes murmured, ſaying, This man receiveth ſinners, and eateth with them.

The publicans and ſinners, as they had done ſeveral times before, came to hear our Saviour's inſtructions; he treated them very kindly, and converſed familiarly with them; at this the Phariſees were diſpleaſed and murmured, cenſured our Saviour for too much familiarity with thoſe men, whom they looked upon as ſcandalous to converſe with; not conſidering that he converſed with them as their phyſician, not as their companion; and therefore his proper work and employment lay among his patients: And, that he might give all poſſible encouragement to the repentance of the greateſt ſinners, he ſets forth at once the tender care of God in recovering ſuch loſt ſinners, and the inexpreſſible joy that is found in heaven at the welcome news of their recovery: For thus it follows in the parables.

3 ¶ And he ſpake this parable unto them, ſaying, 4 What man of you having an hundred ſheep, if he loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his ſhoulders rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoice with me: for I have found my ſheep which was loſt. 7 I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance.

In this parable Chriſt compares ſinners to ſheep going aſtray, and God the Father to a tender and careful ſhepherd, ſeeking his ſtray ſheep; wherein he ſecretly taxes the Phariſees for their uncharitableneſs in cenſuring him for converſing with publicans and ſinners, and for their envy at the recovery of ſuch ſinners by repentance; aſſuring them, that they are far from the temper of the holy angels, who rejoice more at the news of one notorious ſinner's converſion, than for many righteous perſons who went not aſtray; like as a father is touched with a more ſenſible joy, for the recovery of one ſon who was dangerouſly ſick, than for the health of all the reſt who were in no ſuch danger. From the whole *note*, 1. That the creature's aberration may ſerve for our inſtruction; the ſheep's ſtraying away from us, ſhould put us in mind of our wandering away from God. 2. That Chriſt the great Shepherd of his church, with vigilance and care, ſeeketh up, and findeth out his loſt ſheep, and will never give over his ſearch till he hath found them. 3. That the recovery of one loſt ſinner by repentance, is matter of exceeding joy and rejoicing to Chriſt the great Shepherd, and to all the bleſſed company of heaven; *There is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth*, or changeth the whole courſe of his life, *more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons that need no ſuch repentance*. The opening of a ſinner's heart to Chriſt, makes joy in heaven, and occaſions triumph in the city of our God above: As when a young prince is born, all the kingdom rejoiceth, and the conduits run wine; ſo when a ſoul is born to Chriſt under the goſpel, O what a mighty ſatisfaction is it to the heart of Chriſt, and to all the angels and ſaints, that another ſoul is eſpouſed to him. "O ſinner, Chriſt never rejoiced over thee before, thou haſt grieved him, and wounded him a thouſand times, but he never rejoiced in thee till now."— And if there be ſuch joy in heaven at the converſion of a ſinner, Lord, what rejoicing muſt there be at the glorification of ſaints!

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one piece, doth not light a candle, and ſweep the houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find *it?* 9 And when ſhe hath found *it*, ſhe calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had loſt. 10 Likewiſe I ſay unto you, There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.

The ſcope of this parable is the ſame with the former. 1. To expreſs the joy that is found with God and his holy angels, at the recovery and converſion of a notorious ſinner. 2. To juſtify Chriſt in converſing with ſuch ſinners, in order to their repentance and converſion, from the malicious reflections of the Phariſees made upon our Saviour for ſo doing. The ſenſe of the words ſeems to be this: "If you do all juſtify the diligence and care of a woman, uſing all poſſible means to recover the loſs of a piece of ſilver that has Cæſar's image upon it, why (might our Saviour ſay) will you Phariſees cenſure and condemn me for ſeeking to recover and ſave loſt ſinners, that have the image of an holy God inſtamped upon them?" *Learn* hence, 1. That the converſion of a ſinner from a courſe and ſtate of ſin and wickedneſs, is highly acceptable and pleaſing unto God. 2. That it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the holy angels in heaven do conceive a new joy at the notice and news of a ſinner's repentance and converſion unto God: How the angels come by this knowledge, whether by virtue of their miniſtry here below, or whether God is pleaſed to reveal it to them above, as a thing extremely welcome and delightful to good ſpirits, it is neither material to enquire, nor poſſible to determine. But their happineſs not being intenſively infinite, it is certain that they may be happier than they are. 3. That God is not only willing to receive and embrace repenting and returning ſinners, but the news of their repentance is entertained with ſo much joy in heaven, that if it be poſſible for the bleſſed inhabitants of that place to have any thing added to their happineſs, this will be a new acceſſion to it: For though the happineſs of God himſelf be intenſively infinite, and can have nothing added to it, yet the happineſs of angels and glorified ſpirits being but finite, is capable of addition; and as their knowledge and love do increaſe, ſo their felicity may be growing and improving to all eternity: So that it is reaſonable enough to ſuppoſe, that there is really joy among the angels and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, over every ſinner that repenteth.

11 ¶ And he ſaid, A certain man had two ſons: 12 And the younger of them ſaid to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living. 13 And not many days after, the younger ſon gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living. 14 And when he had ſpent all, there aroſe a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himſelf to a citizen of that country, and he ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the huſks that the ſwine did eat; and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himſelf, he ſaid, How many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger! 18 I will ariſe, and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy ſon: make me as one of thy hired ſervants. 20 And he aroſe, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him. 21 And the ſon ſaid unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon. 22 But the father ſaid to his ſervants, Bring forth the beſt robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on *his* feet; 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry. 24 For this my ſon was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found. And they began to be merry.

In the two former parables, of the loſt ſheep and loſt groat, was repreſented to us the great pains and care which Chriſt takes for the recovery of loſt ſinners. In this third parable of the prodigal ſon, is ſhadowed forth unto us, with what great readineſs, joy and gladneſs, our heavenly Father receives repenting and returning ſinners. In the face of this prodigal, as in a glaſs, we may behold, firſt, A riotous ſinner's averſion from God; ſecondly, a penitent ſinner's converſion to God; thirdly, A pardoned ſinner's acceptance and entertainment with God. From the whole, *learn*, 1. What is the nature of ſin, and the practice of ſinners: Sin is a departing from God, and every ſinner doth voluntarily, and of his own accord, depart from him; *he took his journey into a far country*. 2. The great extravagancy which ſinners run into when they forſake God, and give up themſelves to the conduct of their luſts and vile affections; he waſted all his ſubſtance *with riotous living*; that is, ſpent his time, and conſumed his treaſure in riot and exceſs. 3. That ſin will certainly bring men into ſtraits, but ſtraits do not always bring off men from ſin; *he began to be in want*, yet thinks not of returning to his father's houſe. 4. That ſinners will try always, and go through the greateſt hardſhips and difficulties before they will leave their ſins, and return home to their heavenly Father; *he joined himſelf to a citizen of that country, and went into the fields to feed ſwine:* He chuſes rather to feed at the hogs' trough, than to feaſt in his father's houſe. 5. At laſt the happy fruits of a ſanctified affliction; they put the prodigal upon ſerious conſideration; *he came to himſelf:* Upon wiſe conſultation; *I periſh with hunger:* And upon a fixed reſolution; *I will ariſe, and go to my father*. Serious conſideration, and ſolid reſolutions, are great ſteps to a ſound converſion and thorough reformation. 6. The affectionate tenderneſs and compaſſion of the father towards the returning prodigal; though he had deſerved to be ſharply reproved, ſeverely corrected, and finally rejected and ſhut out of doors, yet the father's compaſſion is above his anger; not a word of his miſcarriages drops from his father's mouth, but as ſoon as ever the ſon looks back, mercy looks out, and the father expreſſes, 1. His ſpeedy readineſs to receive his ſon, *he ran unto him*; the ſon did only ariſe and go, but the father made haſte and ran; mercy has not only a quick eye to ſpy out a penitent, but a ſwift foot; it runs to embrace a penitent. 2. Wonderful tenderneſs, *he fell upon his neck*; it had been much to have looked upon him with the eye, more to have taken him by the hand, but moſt of all to fall upon his neck. Divine mercy will not only meet a penitent, but embrace him alſo. 3. Strong affectionateneſs, *he kiſſed him*; giving him thereby a pledge and aſſurance of perfect friendſhip and reconciliation with him. *Learn* hence, That God is not only ready to give demonſtrations of his mercy to penitent ſinners, but alſo, to give the ſeals and tokens of his ſpecial reconciled favour to them; they ſhall now have the kiſſes of his lips, who formerly deſerved the blows of his hand: *The father ran unto him, fell on his neck, and kiſſed him.* Laſtly, The great joy that appeared in the whole houſe, as well as in the father's heart, upon this great occaſion, the prodigal ſon's returning, *they all began to be merry*, there was muſic and dancing. *Learn* hence, That ſincere converſion brings the ſoul into a joyful, into a very joyful ſtate and condition. The joy that converſion brings is an holy and ſpiritual joy, a ſolid and ſubſtantial joy, a wonderful and tranſcendent joy, an increaſing and never-fading joy. Our joy on earth is an earneſt of the joys of heaven, where there will be rejoicing in the preſence of our heavenly Father and his holy angels to all eternity; *becauſe we were dead, but are now alive again; we were loſt, but are found.*

25 Now his elder ſon was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the houſe, he heard muſic and dancing. 26 And he called one of the ſervants, and aſked what theſe things meant. 27 And he ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, becauſe he hath received him ſafe and ſound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and

intreated him. 29 And he anſwering, ſaid to *his* father, Lo, theſe many years do I ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gaveſt me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as ſoon as this thy ſon was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou haſt killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he ſaid unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found.

By the murmuring of the elder ſon at the prodigal's returning to, and reception with his father, ſome think the Jews in general are to be underſtood, whoſe peeviſhneſs to the Gentiles, and the repinings at the offer of ſalvation made unto them by the goſpel, is very evident from many places of ſcripture: Others underſtand it of the ſcribes and Phariſees in particular, who, preſuming on their own righteouſneſs, as if they had never trangreſſed God's commandments at any time, murmured at our Saviour for converſing with ſinners, though it were in order to the bringing of them to repentance; which inſtead of being frowardly diſcontented at, they ought to have rejoiced at. *Learn* hence, There is ſuch an envious ſpirit in men, yea, even in the beſt of men, as inclineth them to repine at ſuch diſpenſations of divine grace and favour, as others receive, and they want. 2. That to indulge ſuch a ſpirit and temper in ourſelves, argues great ſin and great folly: Great ſin, in being diſatisfied with God's diſpenſations, and affronting his wiſdom and juſtice; and great folly, in making another's good our grief, as if we had leſs becauſe another has more. *The eldeſt ſon was angry, and would not go in*; it follows, *therefore came the father out and intreated him:* This ſhews the meekneſs of God in dealing with us under our frowardneſs; and the high ſatisfaction he takes in a ſinner's converſion and returning to his duty. Laſtly, This points out unto us our duty to imitate God, and be followers of him as dear children: Doth he rejoice at a ſinner's return to his duty? ſo ſhould we. It is the devil's temper to regret and envy the good and happineſs of others; he gnaſhes his teeth, when the prey he thought himſelf ſure of is ſnatched out of his jaws: But to God and all his holy angels, nothing is ſo agreeable as the repentance and converſion of a ſinner from the error of his ways, and the ſaving of a ſoul from death: this is looked upon as a reſurrection from the dead, and a ground of the greateſt joy and rejoicing; *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found.* Whence *note,* That regeneration is the term from which all true pleaſure commences. We never live a merry day till we begin to live unto God: When the prodigal ſon returned to his father, then, and not till then, they began to be merry.

CHAP. XVI.

AND he ſaid alſo unto his diſciples, There was a certain rich man which had a ſteward; and the ſame was accuſed unto him that he had waſted his goods. 2 And he called him, and ſaid unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy ſtewardſhip: for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward. 3 Then the ſteward ſaid within himſelf, What ſhall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the ſtewardſhip: I cannot dig; to beg I am aſhamed. 4 I am reſolved what to do, that when I am put out of the ſtewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes. 5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and ſaid unto the firſt, How much oweſt thou unto my lord? 6 And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of oil. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and ſit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then ſaid he to another, And how much oweſt thou? And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of wheat. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourſcore.

Our Lord begins this chapter with the parable of a rich man's ſteward, who being called upon by his maſter to give up his accounts, in order to his being diſcharged from his office, caſt about with himſelf what courſe he had beſt to take to provide for his ſubſiſtence, when he ſhould be turned out of his employment; at laſt he reſolves upon this courſe, That he will go to his lord's debtors, and take a favourable account of them, writing down fifty for an hundred, that by this means he might oblige them to be kind to him in his neceſſity; this is the ſum of the parable. Now the ſcope and deſign of it is this, To exhort all men that are entruſted by God here, with eſtates, honours, and authority, to make uſe of all theſe unto ſpiritual ends, the glory of God, and the benefit of others; for we are not proprietors and owners, but ſtewards only of the manifold gifts of God, and muſt be accountable unto him for all at laſt; but, in the mean time, to uſe, employ, and improve our Lord's goods to the beſt advantage for ourſelves, whilſt we are entruſted with them; this is the ſcope of the parable. Now, the obſervations from it are theſe; 1. That all perſons, even the higheſt and greateſt of perſons, are but ſtewards of the good things of God. 2. That our ſtewardſhip muſt and ſhall have an end; we ſhall not be always, nay, we ſhall not be long ſtewards. 3. That when we are put out of our ſtewardſhip, we muſt give an account of our carriage therein; and the greater our truſt was, the heavier will our reckoning be. 4. That therefore it will be our higheſt prudence, whilſt we are intruſted with our Maſter's goods, ſo to uſe and improve them, as may make moſt for our comfort and advantage, when we give up our account.

8 And the lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, becauſe he had done wiſely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiſer than the children of light.

Wiſely, that is, diſcreetly, according to the wiſdom of the men or this world, whoſe concern is only for the good things of this life. Chriſt commends him not abſolutely, as a fit example to be followed in waſting his maſter's goods, but comparatively, as being worthy to be ſo far imitated by the children of light, as to take the ſame care to ſecure heaven as others do to get the world. Chriſt commends him no farther, than we do a perſon, when we ſay, ſuch a one is a ſhrewd man for the world. In a word, the ſteward is here commended, not for his diſhoneſty, but for his policy, ſhrewdneſs and ſagacity, having done cunningly for himſelf, though knaviſhly for his maſter; from whence our Saviour draws this concluſion. *That the children of this world are in their generation wiſer than the children of light.*—Hence *note*, That the generality of men are not ſo wiſe and provident for the ſoul, and the concernments of another world, as worldly men are for the intereſt and concerns of this life. It is ſeldom ſeen, that good men are ſo wiſe for the concerns of their ſouls, as worldly men are for their worldly intereſts.

9 And I ſay unto you, Make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs: that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.

Here our Saviour makes application of the foregoing parable to his diſciples. Where *note*, 1. The title given by our Saviour to wealth and riches; he calls it *mammon*, and *mammon of unrighteouſneſs*; Mammon was the name given by the heathens to the God of riches; the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, is riches unrighteouſly gotten. 2. The advice given by our Saviour to the men of wealth, *Make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs:* that is, make God your friend by a charitable diſtribution, that he may bleſs you; make the poor your friends, that they may unitedly engage their prayers for you; make your own conſciences your friends, that they may not reproach and ſhame you, ſting and torment you. 3. The argument uſed to excite the rich to this improvement of their wealth, *That when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations: When ye fail*, that is, when ye die, and your riches fail you, and can ſtand you in no farther ſtead; *They may receive you*; What they? Some underſtand it of the holy Trinity, others of the bleſſed angels, whoſe office it is to convey the charitable and good man's ſoul to heaven, its eternal habitation. Some underſtand it of riches themſelves, *They may receive you*; that is, your eſtates, laid out for God in works of piety and charity, may enter before you into heaven, and open the gates of eternal life for you, not in a way of merit, but in a way of means. Laſtly, *They may receive you*: Some underſtand it of the poor themſelves, whoſe bowels our charity hath refreſhed, that they will welcome us to heaven, and receive us with joyful acclamations into the eternal manſions, which are prepared for the merciful. Others ſay, the words, *They may receive you*, are imperſonally put, for, That you may be received into heaven when you die. This is to imitate the wiſe merchant in ſending over money into another country by bills of exchange.

10 He that is faithful in that which is leaſt is faithful alſo in much: and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt is unjuſt alſo in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true *riches?* 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall give you that which is your own?

Our bleſſed Saviour having declared to his followers, in the foregoing verſes, the great advantage they ſhall reap by a charitable diſtribution of temporal good things, he acquaints them in theſe verſes with a great detriment and diſadvantage that will redound to them if they do otherwiſe. 1. If they be not faithful in right employing temporal riches, they muſt not expect that God will entruſt them with ſpiritual and heavenly, which are the true riches: God will deal with his ſervants, as we deal with ours, never truſt them with much, whom we find unfaithful in a little. 2. If they be not faithful in the improvement of theſe outward things, which God entruſts them with but for a time, and muſt ſhortly leave them to others; how can they expect that God ſhould give them thoſe ſpiritual good things, which ſhall never be taken away from them to whom they are given? Where *note*, 1. That the riches we have, are called not our own, but another man's; *If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's:* becauſe God hath not made us proprietors, but diſpenſers; not owners, but ſtewards of theſe things; we have them for others, and muſt leave them to others; we are only truſtees for the poor; if much be put into our hands, it is to diſpenſe to others according to our maſter's orders: Let us be faithful then in that which is another man's; that is, with what God puts into our hand for the benefit of others. 2. That though our gifts are not our own, yet grace or ſpiritual goods are our own; others may have all the benefit of our gifts, but we ſhall have the benefit and comfort of our own grace; this treaſure we cannot leave to others, and it ſhall never be taken away from ourſelves. 3. That God is juſt, and will be eternally juſtified in denying his ſpecial grace to thoſe who do not make uſe of his common gifts: Would men be faithful in improving a little, God would entruſt them with more; did they not abuſe the truſt of his common gifts, he would not deny them the treaſure of his ſaving grace, called here, *The true riches.*

14 ¶ No ſervant can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

Obſerve here, A two-fold maſter ſpoken of, God and the world: God is our maſter by creation, preſervation, and redemption; he has appointed us our work, and ſecured us our wages: The world has become our maſter by intruſion, uſurpation, and a general eſtimation; too many eſteeming it as their chief good, and delighting in it as their chief joy. 2. That no man can ſerve theſe two maſters, who are of contrary intereſts, and iſſue out contrary commands: When two maſters are ſubordinate, and in their commands ſubſervient to each other, the difficultly of ſerving both is not great; but where commands interfere, and intereſts claſh, it is impoſſible: No man can ſerve God and the world, but he may ſerve God with the world; we may be ſerved of riches and yet ſerve God; but we cannot ſerve riches, but we muſt diſſerve God; we cannot ſerve God and the world both, and ſeek them as our chief good and ultimate end, becauſe no man can divide his heart betwixt God and the world. *Learn* hence, That to love the world as our chief good, to ſeek it as our higheſt intereſt, and to ſerve it as our chief commander, cannot ſtand with the love and ſervice which we hear and owe to God our maker. The world's ſlaves, while ſuch, can be none of God's free men.

14 And the Phariſees alſo, who were covetous, heard all theſe things: and they derided him.

The Phariſees were notoriouſly given to the ſin of covetouſneſs, accounting no man happy but them that were rich; and becauſe the promiſes made to the Jews were generally (though not only) of temporal bleſſings, they looked upon poverty as a curſe, and eſteemed the poor accurſed, John vii. 49. The Phariſees hearing their covetouſneſs reproved, and the doctrine of charity and alms preached and enforced by our Saviour, they derided him in the ſhamefulleſt manner, with the higheſt contempt and ſcorn, wringing the noſe, and making mouths at him, as the original word ſeems to import. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſinners grow very angry and impatient under the miniſtry of the word, when they hear their darling ſin, their beloved luſt, ſtruck at, and ſharply reproved. 2. That covetous men, who make wealth their idol, when they hear the doctrine of an holy contempt of the world preached, and the great duty of alms-giving urged and enforced, they make it the matter of their contempt and deriſion; *The Phariſees heard and derided him.*

15 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men, is abomination in the ſight of God.

Here our Saviour ſharply reproves the Phariſees for their horrible pride, their ſelf-juſtification, and vain affectation of the opinion and eſteem of others: As if Chriſt had ſaid, "You bear up yourſelves, and take a pride in this, that men know no ill by you, that no man can ſay, Black is your eye; but God can ſee, that black is your heart. You think, that becauſe you glory in your own excellencies, that God glories in you too; but who is highly eſteemed by you, is abominated by God." *Learn,* That no man ought to think himſelf approved of God, barely becauſe he is approved by himſelf; for all who juſtify themſelves upon the goodneſs of their works are not good.

16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: ſince that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man preſſeth into it. 17 And it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* huſband, committeth adultery.

Our Saviour in theſe words gives the Phariſees to underſtand that their contempt of his perſon and doctrine was the more inexcuſable, becauſe they lived in and under the cleareſt light of the goſpel: The preaching of the law and the prophets continued but till John the Baptiſt came among you; ſince which time the goſpel has been clearly preached both by him, and myſelf, unto you; and it hath pleaſed God to give my doctrine great acceptation in the world. Though you Phariſees reject it; yet every one, that is, very many, paſs into it: ſo that the doctrine which you mock, the holy doctrine of the goſpel, others will embrace. Yet leſt, whilſt Chriſt ſpake thus highly of the goſpel, the Phariſees ſhould reproach him as a deſtroyer of the law, he ſhews that the obligation of the moral law was of eternal force, and that heaven and earth ſhould ſooner paſs, than the obligation of that law ceaſe; which yet the Phariſees moſt ſhamefully violated, particularly the ſeventh commandment, which they brake by permitting and practiſing divorces, upon unjuſtifiable grounds. *Learn* hence, That the moral law, in all the branches of it, which is ſummarily comprehended in the ten commandments, is an eternal rule of life and manners, which is to ſtand in force as long as the world ſtands, and the frame of heaven and earth endures.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day. 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of ſores, 21 And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his ſores.

Our Saviour, in his parabolical hiſtory of Dives and Lazarus, inſtructs us concerning the right uſe of riches, which is to capacitate us to do good to others, declaring, That in the life to come, the pious poor man ſhall be eternally happy, whilſt the unmerciful rich man ſhall be intolerably miſerable. Here *obſerve,* 1. The different ſtate and condition of good and bad men in the other world, from what they are in this; here the wicked proſper, grow rich and great, and the good and virtuous are in calamity, ſuffer poverty and diſtreſs, which has ſtaggered many men, yea, the beſt of men, in the belief of a divine providence. 2. That our Saviour did not cenſure the rich man for being rich, but for being ſenſual; not for wearing coſtly apparel, and keeping a plentiful table (which if managed according to men's qualities and eſtates is a commendable virtue) but his ſenſuality and luxury, and forgetting to feed the hungry with the ſuperfluities of his table: theſe are the things for which he is cenſured. From whence we may *learn,* That pride and luxury, intemperance and ſenſuality, are ſuch abuſes of worldly riches, as worldly men are very prone and incident to. Rich men too often make their back and their belly their God; ſacrificing and devoting all they have to the ſervice of thoſe idols. 3. That a poor and mean condition is the lot of many good men, nay, perhaps of the moſt in this world. 4. That a man may be poor and miſerable in this world, and yet be very dear to God; the grace of ſanctification is ſometimes beſtowed moſt eminently, where the gifts of Providence have been diſpenſed more ſparingly: Conſequently, from the preſent ſtate of men in this world, we can make no judgment of their future condition in the world to come.

22 And it came to paſs that the beggar died, and

was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom: the rich man alſo died, and was buried: 23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Saviour repreſents all men, both good and bad, paſſing immediately out of life into a ſtate of happineſs or miſery; *Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's boſom* Thence *note*, 1. That the ſouls of men ſurvive in ſenſibility and activity, after the diſſolution of their bodies, and do not ſleep with the body till the day of the reſurrection. 2. That all holy ſouls, and amongſt the reſt the godly poor, are inſtantly, after death, conveyed by angels to their place of reſt and bleſſedneſs. *The rich man alſo died*; this is added, to let us know, That riches, for all men's confidence in them, will not deliver us from death; the rich man might be ſurfeited by faring deliciouſly every day, whilſt Lazarus was famiſhed. *And he was buried*; Here is no mention of Lazarus's burial, probably he had none, but was flung out of the way into ſome hole or pit; or if he had a burial, a very mean one which is paſt over in ſilence: All the advantage which a rich man has by a great eſtate after he is dead, is only to have a pompous funeral, which yet ſignifies nothing to him, becauſe he is not ſenſible of it. *And in hell he lift up his eyes, &c.* He feels at once both his own miſery, and ſenſibly perceives Lazarus's happineſs. Thence *note*, That the ſouls of wicked men, whilſt their bodies lye in the grave, are in a ſtate of the greateſt miſery, which is aggravated by the ſenſe they have at the ſame time of the ſaints happineſs. For probably the bleſſed ſhall ſee the torments of the damned, and the damned probably ſhall ſee the glory of the bleſſed.

24 And he cried, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Obſerve here, 1. The place where the rich man ſuffers, it is in hell; the ſouls of wicked men, when they leave their bodies, do certainly go into a place of torment, which is not only beyond expreſſion, but our apprehenſion alſo; *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, thoſe* dreadful *things which God has prepared for them that* hate *him*. 2. The ſin for which he ſuffers, it is the ſin of unmercifulneſs. Thence *learn*, That uncharitableneſs and unmercifulneſs to the poor, is a very great ſin, and ſuch a ſin as alone, and without any other guilt, is ſufficient to ruin a man for ever; there is found in this ſin great impiety towards God, and great inhumanity to our own nature. 3. The nature and quality of his ſufferings, they are exquiſitely painful, and void of the leaſt degree of comfort; not a drop of water is granted to cool an inflamed tongue. *Learn* thence, That the leaſt refreſhments are impatiently deſired by damned ſouls in hell, but righteouſly denied and with-held from them; a drop of water was deſired, but not granted. No cup of water, no bowls of wine in hell; there is but one full cup in hell, and that is the cup of God's wrath, without any mixture of mercy or pity. That throat will be for ever parched with thirſt then, which is drenched and drowned with exceſs now; the ſons of the drunkard here will be turned into howlings and lamentations there.

25 But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Obſerve, 1. The title given to the rich man by Father Abraham, *ſon*: He doth not revile him, though a very bad man; if we revile the good, we are unjuſt, they deſerve it not; if we revile the bad, we are unwiſe, we ſhall get nothing by it; a wiſe man knows not what it is to give bad language. 2. The admonition given, *Remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedſt thy good things*; thy good things which thou placedſt all thy happineſs; thy good things which thou lookedſt upon thyſelf as the proprietor, and not as the diſpenſer of; now remember what thou hadſt, and what thou abuſedſt. *Learn* hence, That the outward bleſſings which are afforded to wicked men upon earth, will be ſadly remembered in hell: *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things*. 2. That no man ought to meaſure his happineſs hereafter by his temporal felicity here; we may receive our good things here, and yet be tormented hereafter. 3. That no man ought to be exceſſively troubled if he meets with hardſhips here, becauſe thoſe for whom God deſigns good things hereafter may have their evil things here: *Son, thou hadſt thy good things, and Lazarus evil things*. 4. The word (*Remember*) implies, that human ſouls, in their ſtate of ſeparation, do exerciſe memory, thought, and reflection on the paſt occurrences and actions of their lives; and conſequently, that they do not ſleep or fall into a ſtate of inſenſibility and inactivity at death till the reſurrection.

26 And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that *would come* from thence.

The meaning is, That there neither is, nor can be any commerce or intercourſe between the glorified ſaints and damned ſinners; but the ſtate of ſouls at death is unalterably fixed and ſtated. *Learn*, That the miſerable condition of damned ſouls in the next world, and the bleſſed condition of glorified ſouls is unchangeably and unalterably ſuch, the power of God is irreſiſtible, and the will of God is invariable, the oath of God is immutable; *I have ſworn that they ſhall never enter into my reſt*.

27 Then he ſaid, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldeſt ſend him to my father's houſe: 28 For I have five brethren: that he may teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment.

Here the rich man is repreſented as retaining even in hell ſome tenderneſs for his relations on earth; yet others think, that the kindneſs intended, was rather to himſelf than to his relations; fearing, that their ſinning by his example ſhould be an aggravation of his own torments. *Note* thence, That the preſence of ſinful relations and companions in hell, may be ſuppoſed to make a conſiderable addition to the miſeries of the damned; the ſight of thoſe whom they have ſinned with, is a freſh revival of their own guilt; all the circumſtances of their paſt and profligate lives are upon this occaſion continually in their remembrance. Farther, This miſerable wretch is convinced that he could not get out of hell, therefore deſires that no friend of his might come in. He knew well enough, that if they were once there, they would come out no more. Indeed, God will at the great day ſend forth his writ to the grave, to bring out the bodies of the wicked that are ſhut up there; and will ſend out his writ to hell, to bring forth the ſpirits that are ſhut in there; but it is in order to this, that both ſoul and body together may receive an eternal ſentence for an everlaſting impriſonment with the devil and his angels, and there will be no more opening for ever.

29 Abraham ſaith unto him, They have Moſes and the prophets; let them hear them.

That is, they have the inſpired writings of Moſes and the prophets, which ſufficiently declare the mind and will of God to mankind, and therefore it is unreaſonable to expect any farther revelation. *Learn* thence, That a ſtanding revelation of God is evidence ſufficient for divine things; it is a more certain way of conveyance, and more ſecured from impoſture. Secondly, That there is ſufficient evidence that Moſes and the prophets, and the writings of the holy ſcriptures are of divine authority, are therefore to be read and heard, to believed and aſſented to; *They have Moſes*, &c.

30 And he ſaid, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

As if he had ſaid, they have always had Moſes and the prophets in their hands, but yet their hearts remain impenitent; but if a ſpecial meſſenger be ſent to them from the deed, this will not fail to awaken them, and bring them to repentance. *Learn* hence, How prone we are to diſlike God's method and means which he has appointed for reclaiming us from our ſins, and imagine ſome methods of our own would be more ſucceſsful. The ſcriptures read, the word preached, the ſacraments adminiſtered; theſe are the ordinary means which the wiſdom of God has appointed for mens conviction; and if we think a meſſenger from the dead would be a more conducible means, the next verſe will confute us, and thoroughly ſatiſfy us, that whom the ſcripture convinces not, probably nothing will; for thus it follows;

31 And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead.

A very awakening text this is, which ſpeaks dreadfully to perſons ſitting all their days under the miniſtry of the goſpel, and yet find not their underſtandings enlightened, their judgments convinced, their wills ſubdued, and their lives reformed by it. Were it poſſible for ſuch perſons to ſee one come from the dead, yea, from the damned, with the flames of hell about his ears, wringing his hands, and gnaſhing his teeth, bewailing his miſery, and beſeeching them to take warning by his example, and in time to acquaint themſelves with God, and be at peace; all this would have no farther effect upon them, than to move their paſſion a little for the preſent, whilſt the dreadful ſound is in their ears; the ordinances of God, and not his providences, are the inſtituted and appointed means for mens converſion and ſalvation. *Note* then, 1. That no viſions or apparitions, no new revelations concerning external rewards and puniſhments, are to be expected from the other world, in order to mens converſion and ſalvation. 2. That the word of God diſpenſed to us, and the ordinary means of grace enjoyed by us, are more conducible and effectual means to perſuade men to repentance, than if one ſhould ariſe from the dead and preach unto us. A meſſenger from the dead cannot bring with him either a more neceſſary doctrine, or a more certain and infallible doctrine, nor bring with him better arguments for our conviction, than what the ſcriptures do propound to our conſideration; nor can we expect a greater co-operation of the holy Spirit, or a greater concurrence of divine power, to render a meſſage from the dead more effectual than doth ordinarily attend the miniſtry of the word. Henceforward then, let us not wonder, if when a drunkard drops down dead upon the ſpot, the companions ſay to one another, *Drink on*: If ſinners daily tumble one another into the grave, without conſidering the operation of God's hand; this, to thoſe that conſider this text, will not ſeem ſtrange; *For if they hear not Moſes and they prophets, neither will they be converted* though hundreds of ſinners before their eyes drop down dead; nay, *If they hear not Moſes*, &c.

CHAP. XVII.

THEN ſaid he unto the diſciples, It is impoſſible but that offences will come: but wo unto *him* through whom they come! 2 It were better for him that a millſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, than that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones.

Two things are obſervable. 1. The neceſſity of ſcandalous offences, *It muſt needs be that offences come*, if we conſider mens corruptions, Satan's malice, God's permiſſion and juſt judgment. 2. The miſery and miſchief which comes by theſe ſcandals: *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences*; Wo to ſuch as give the ſcandal; this is *væ indignantis*, the wo of one denouncing; and wo to ſuch as ſtumble at offences given; this is *væ dolentis*, the wo of one lamenting. From the whole *note*, 1. That ſcandalous or offenſive actions in the church of Chriſt will certainly happen, and frequently fall out among thoſe that profeſs religion and the name of Chriſt; *It is impoſſible but that offences will come*. Secondly, That ſcandalous and offenſive actions from ſuch as profeſs the name of Chriſt, are baneful and fatal ſtumbling blocks to wicked and worldly men.—— Thirdly, That the offences which wicked men take at the falls of the profeſſors of religion, to the hardening of themſelves in their wicked and ſinful practices, is a matter of juſt and great lamentation; *Wo unto the world becauſe of offences.* Matt. xviii. 7.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourſelves: if thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him.

The doctrine of forgiving an offending brother, is preſſed upon us with many forcible arguments in the New Teſtament, which ſpeaks it to be a duty of indiſpenſible neceſſity. This place is to be underſtood of private offences, and perſonal wrongs and injuries done by one man to another; which we muſt firſt reprove, and then remit: And although it be ſaid, *If he repent, forgive him*; that is not to be underſtood, as if we needed not to pardon our brother, if he neglects to repent and aſk forgiveneſs; but whether he acknowledges his offence or not to us, our hearts muſt ſtand ready to do any office of love and ſervice to our offending brother. *Learn* hence, 1. That to fall often into the ſame offence againſt our brother, is a great aggravation of our offence; *If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day*: That is, very often. 2. That as the multiplication of offences is a great aggravation of offences, ſo the multiplying of forgiveneſs is a great demonſtration of a God-like temper in us: He that multiplieth ſin, doth, like Satan, ſin abundantly; and he that multiplieth pardon, doth, like God, pardon abundantly.

5 And the apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our faith.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſupplicants, *the apoſtles:* 2. The perſon ſupplicated, *the Lord:* 3. The ſupplication itſelf, *Increaſe our faith:* 4. The occaſion of this ſupplication, Our Saviour urging the duty of *forgiving injuries. Learn,* 1. That as all graces in general, ſo the grace of faith in particular, is weak and imperfect iu the beſt of ſaints. 2. That the moſt eminent ſaints (apoſtles not excepted) are very ſenſible of the imperfection of their faith, and very importunate with God daily for the increaſe of it, *Lord, increaſe our faith.* 3. That faith ſtrengthened, enables the ſoul to the moſt difficult duties of obedience, and particularly helps to the practice of forgiving injuries. When our Saviour had preached the doctrine and duty of forgiveneſs, the apoſtles inſtantly pray, *Lord, increaſe our faith.*

6 And the Lord ſaid, If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you.

Here our Saviour tells his diſciples, that if they have the ſmalleſt degree of true faith, lively, operative faith, it will enable them to perform this difficult duty of forgiving injuries, and all other duties, with as much facility and eaſe as a miraculous faith would enable them to remove mountains and tranſplant trees. *Learn,* That there is nothing which may tend to the glory of God, or to our own good and comfort, but may be obtained of God by a firm exerciſe of faith in him: *All things are poſſible to him that believeth.*

7 But which of you having a ſervant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and ſit down to meat? 8 And will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thyſelf, and ſerve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou ſhalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that ſervant, becauſe he did the things that were commanded him; I trow not. 10 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

The deſign and ſcope of this parable is to ſhew, that Almighty God neither is nor can be a debtor to any of his creatures for the beſt ſervice which they are able to perform unto him; and that they are ſo far from meriting a reward of juſtice, that they do not deſerve a return of thanks. Three arguments our Saviour makes uſe of to evidence and prove this; 1. In reſpect to God, who is our abſolute Lord and Maſter; and the argument lies thus, "If earthly maſters do not owe ſo much as thanks to their ſervants, for doing that which is commanded them, how much leſs can God owe the reward of eternal life to his ſervants, when they are never able to do all that is commanded them, in a perfect and ſinleſs manner?" 2. In reſpect to ourſelves, who are his bond-ſervants, his ranſomed ſlaves, and conſequently we are not our own men, but his who has redeemed us; and accordingly do owe him all that ſervice, yea, more than all that we are able to perform unto him: And therefore, whatever reward is either promiſed or given, it is wholly to be aſcribed to the maſter's bounty, and not to the ſervant's merit. 3. To merit any thing by our good works is impoſſible, in regard of the works themſelves, becauſe all that we can do, although we do all that is commanded us, is but our duty. The argument runs thus: "To bounden duty belongs no reward of juſtice; but all the ſervice we do perform, yea, more than we can perform to God, is bounden duty; therefore there is due unto us no reward of juſtice but free mercy." From the whole, *note,* 1. That we are wholly the Lord's, both by a right of creation, and redemption alſo. 2. That as his we are, ſo him we ought to ſerve by doing all thoſe things which he hath commanded us. 3. That when we have done all, we are to look for our reward not of debt, but of grace. 4. That were our ſervice and obedience abſolutely perfect, yet it could not merit any thing at the hand of juſtice: *When ye have done all, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

11 ¶ And it came to paſs, as he went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee, 12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which ſtood afar off: 13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and ſaid, Jeſus, Maſter, have mercy on us.

Obſerve here, 1. Though the Samaritans were bitter enemies to the Jews, and had been guilty of great incivility towards our Saviour, yet our Saviour in his journey to Jeruſalem balks them not, but beſtows the favour of a miracle upon them. Civil courteſy and reſpect may and ought to be paid to thoſe that are the profeſſed enemies of us, and our holy religion. 2. Though the leper, by the law of God, was to be ſeparated from all other ſociety (God thereby ſignifying to his people, that the ſociety of thoſe that are ſpiritually contagious, ought to be avoided) yet the law of God did not reſtrain them from converſing with one another: Accordingly theſe ten lepers get together, and are company for themſelves. Fellowſhip is what we all naturally affect, though even in leproſy; lepers will flock together, where ſhall we find one ſpiritual leper alone? Drunkards and profane perſons will be ſure to conſort with one another! Why ſhould not God's children delight in an holy communion, when the wicked join hand in hand? 3. Though Jews and Samaritans could not abide one another, yet here in leproſy they accord: Here was one Samaritan leper with the Jewiſh: Common ſufferings had made them friends, whom religion had disjoined. O what virtue is there in affliction, to unite the moſt alienated and eſtranged hearts? 4. Theſe lepers apply themſelves to Chriſt the great Phyſician; they cry unto him for mercy, with reſpect to their voice with fervent importunity. Teaching us our duty, to join our ſpiritual forces together, and ſet upon God by troops. O holy and happy violence that is thus offered to heaven! How can we want bleſſings, when ſo many cords draw them down upon our heads?

14 And when he ſaw *them*, he ſaid unto them, Go ſhew yourſelves unto the prieſts. And it came to paſs, that as they went, they were cleanſed.

Obſerve here, 1. The preventing grace and mercy of Chriſt, their diſeaſe is cured ere it can be complained of; *Go, ſhew yourſelves unto the prieſts*, ſays Chriſt, and in going they were cleanſed, they were healed before they could come at the prieſts; that as the power that healed them was wholly Chriſt's, ſo might the praiſe be alſo. 2. A two-fold reaſon why Chriſt commanded them to go to the prieſts. (1.) In compliance with the ceremonial law, which required the leper to be brought to them, to judge whether healed, or not; add if ſo, to receive the offering preſcribed in token of thankfulneſs. (2.) For the trial of their obedience: Had they ſtood upon terms with Chriſt, and ſaid, Alas! to what purpoſe is it to ſhew ourſelves to the prieſts; what good can their eyes do us? We ſhould be glad to ſee ourſelves cured; but why ſhould we go to them to ſee ourſelves loathed! Had they thus expoſtulated, they had not been healed; what command ſoever we receive from Chriſt, we muſt rather conſider the authority of the commander, than the weight of the thing commanded, for God delights to try our obedience by ſmall precepts; happy for theſe lepers, that in obedience to Chriſt, they went to the prieſts, *for as they went they were healed.*

15 And one of them, when he ſaw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. 16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Obſerve here, 1. All were healed, but only one was thankful; the cure is wrought upon the bodies of all, thankfulneſs is found but in the heart of one; the will makes the difference in men, but he makes the difference in wills, who at firſt made the will. All theſe lepers were cured, all ſaw themſelves cured, their ſenſe was alike, their hearts were not alike. 2. The perſon that made this return of thankfulneſs to Chriſt, *he was a Samaritan*; that is, none of the Jewiſh nation, but one that was a ſtranger to the commonwealth of Iſrael; neither place nor parentage can block up the way, or ſtop the current of God's free mercy, which reaches the unworthy and the ill-deſerving. 3. How ſingly he returns his thanks; he gets away from his fellows to make his acknowledgment: there are caſes wherein ſingularity is not only lawful, but laudable; inſtead of ſubjecting ourſelves to others examples, it is ſometimes our duty to reſolve to ſet an example to others; for it is much better to go the right way alone, than to err with company. 4. How ſpeedily he returns his thanks; no ſooner doth he ſee his cure, but he haſtes to acknowledge it, a noble pattern of thankfulneſs! What ſpeed of retribution is here! Late favours of our thankfulneſs ſavours of ingratitude: It were happy for us chriſtians did we learn our duty of this Samaritan.

17 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed? but where *are* the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, ſave this ſtranger. 19 And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

In the face of theſe ten lepers, we may, as in a glaſs, behold the face and complexion of all mankind: How few are there, O Lord! ſcarce more than one in ten, who, after ſignal mercies, return ſuitable thanks. Men howl to God upon their beds, but run away from God as ſoon as they are raiſed up by him. *Obſerve* farther, What an exact account Chriſt keeps of his own diſpenſed favours; *Were there not ten cleanſed?* He forgets our ſins, but records his own mercies: it is one of his glorious titles, A God forgiving and forgetting iniquity, but his mercies are over all his works, and deſerve everlaſting remembrance. God keeps a regiſter of his mercies towards us. O ſhall we not record the favours received from him, at once declare his bounty towards us, and our thankfulneſs towards him.—Laſtly, the thankful leper was a Samaritan, but the nine that were unthankful were Iſraelites. *Learn* thence, That the more we are bound to God, the more ſhameful is our ingratitude to him; where God may juſtly expect the greateſt returns of praiſe and ſervice, he ſometimes receiveth leaſt. God has more rent, and better paid him from a ſmoaky cottage, than he has from ſome ſtately palaces.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould come; he anſwered them, and ſaid, The kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation. 21 Neither ſhall they

ſay, Lo here; or lo there: for behold the kingdom of God is within you.

The generality of the Jews, and particularly the Phariſees, expected that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a temporal prince, and deliver them from the Roman yoke, under which they groaned. Accordingly the Phariſees here demanded of our Saviour, *When the kingdom of God*, of which he had ſo often ſpoken, *ſhould come?* Chriſt anſwers them, *That his kingdom cometh not with obſervation*; that is, with pomp and ſplendour, which men may obſerve and gaze upon: but he tells them, The kingdom of God was now among them, by the miniſtry of John Baptiſt and himſelf; and was already ſet up in the hearts of his people, by the ſecret operations of his holy Spirit. *Learn* hence, That the falſe notion which the Jews had of the Meſſiah and his kingdom, that he himſelf was to be a temporal prince, and his kingdom a ſecular kingdom, to be ſet up with a great deal of noiſe, pomp, and ſplendour, did hinder the generality of them from believing in him. Secondly, That the kingdom which Chriſt deſigned to ſet up in the world, was altogether ſpiritual, not obvious to human ſenſes, but managed in the hearts of his people, by the ſceptre of his Spirit. *My kingdom cometh not with obſervation, but is within you.*

22 And he ſaid unto the diſciples, The days will come when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee *it*. 23 And they ſhall ſay to you, See here, or ſee there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*. 24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, ſhineth unto the other *part* under heaven; ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be in his day. 95 But firſt muſt he ſuffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

In the remaining part of this chapter, our Saviour acquaints his diſciples with what days of tribulation and diſtreſs were coming on the Jewiſh nation in general, and on Jeruſalem in particular. "Days of ſuffering (as if our Saviour had ſaid) are not far off, when you will wiſh for my bodily preſence again among you, to ſupport and comfort you; and when many ſeducers will riſe up, pretending to be deliverers: *but go not you after them*; for after this generation have rejected and crucified me, my coming (ſays Chriſt) to execute vengeance upon my enemies and murderers at Jeruſalem by the Roman ſoldiers, will be ſudden, and like the lightning that ſhines in an inſtant, from one part of the heavens to the other." From this coming of Chriſt to judge Jeruſalem, which was an emblem of the final judgment, we may gather this inſtruction, That the coming and appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the judging of wicked and impenitent ſinners, will be a very certain, ſudden, and unexpected appearance.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, ſo ſhall it be alſo in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark: and the flood came, and deſtroyed them all. 28 Likewiſe alſo as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded: 29 But the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all: 30 Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In theſe verſes our Saviour declares, That Jeruſalem's deſtruction, and the world's final deſolation at the great day, would be like the deſtruction of the old world in the days of Noah, and like the deſtruction of Sodom in the days of Lot, and that both in regard of unexpectedneſs, and in regard of ſenſuality and ſecurity; as they before the flood were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; that is, wholly given up to ſenſuality and debauchery; and did not know, that is, did not conſider the flood's coming, till it ſwept them away; thus was it before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and thus will it be before the end of the world. Hence we *learn*, That as the old world periſhed by infidelity, ſecurity, and ſenſuality, ſo will the ſame ſins be prevailing before the deſtruction of the preſent world. *As it was in the days of Noah, ſo ſhall it be in the days of the Son of man.*

31 In that day, he which ſhall be upon the houſetop, and his ſtuff in the houſe, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewiſe not return back. 32 Remember Lot's wife.

Here our Saviour adviſes them, That when they ſhall ſee the judgments of God breaking out upon Jeruſalem, that they make all poſſible ſpeed to get out of it, as Lot and his family did out of Sodom; and to take heed of imitating Lot's wife, who looking back became a pillar of ſalt, Gen. xix. Where *obſerve*, 1. Her offence, *She looked back*. 2. The puniſhment of her offence, *She became a pillar of ſalt*. Her offence in looking behind her was manifeſt diſobedience to the divine command, which ſaid, *Look not behind thee*; and proceeded either from careleſſneſs, or from covetouſneſs, or from curioſity, or from compaſſion to thoſe that ſhe left behind her, and was undoubtedly the effect of great infidelity, ſhe not believing the truth of what the angel had declared, as touching the certainty and ſuddenneſs of Sodom's deſtruction. The puniſhment of her offence was exemplary, *She became a pillar of ſalt*; that is, a perpetual monument of divine ſeverity for her infidelity and diſobedience. Where *note*, 1. The ſuddenneſs of her puniſhment: the juſtice of God ſurpriſes her in the very act of ſin, with a preſent revenge. 2. The ſeeming diſproportion betwixt the puniſhment and the offence: Her offence was a forbidden look: from whence carnal reaſon may plead "Was it not ſufficient for her to loſe her eyes, but ſhe muſt loſe her life?" But the eaſineſs and reaſonableneſs of the command aggravated her diſobedience; and though her puniſhment may ſeem ſevere, it was not unjuſt. Now, ſays our Saviour, *Remember Lot's wife*; that is, let her example caution all of you againſt unbelief, diſobedience, worldly-mindedneſs, contempt of God's threatenings, and lingerings after the forbidden ſociety of lewd and wicked perſons.

33 Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his life, ſhall
loſe it; and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life, ſhall preſerve
it. 34 I tell you, in that night there ſhall be
two *men* in one bed; the one ſhall be taken, and the
other ſhall be left. 35 Two *women* ſhall be grinding
together; the one ſhall be taken, and the other
left. 36 Two *men* ſhall be in the field; the one ſhall
be taken, and the other left.

In this hour, when judgment is come upon Jeruſalem, Chriſt declares, That whoſoever ſhall take any unchriſtian courſe to preſerve his life, by denying him and his holy religion, he ſhall loſe eternal life; but he that for Chriſt's ſake ſhall loſe his natural life, inſtead of a mortal, ſhall enjoy an immortal life in bliſs and glory. Here we *learn*, 1. That the love of temporal life is a great temptation to men to deny Chriſt and his holy religion in a day of trial. 2. That the ſureſt way to attain eternal life, is chearfully to lay down our temporal life, when the glory of Chriſt, and the honour of religion requires it of us. Chriſt farther adds, That in this terrible night of Jeruſalem's calamity, when deſtruction comes upon her, the providence of God will remarkably diſtinguiſh between one perſon and another: true believers, and conſtant profeſſors, ſhall be delivered, and none elſe; ſuch ſhall eſcape the danger, others ſhall fall by it.

37 And they anſwered and ſaid unto him, Where, Lord? And he ſaid unto them, Whereſoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

The diſciples hearing our Saviour ſpeak of ſuch tremendous calamities, enquire, where theſe judgments ſhould fall? He anſwers them figuratively, and by a proverbial ſpeech, That *where the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together:* Signifying, That Jeruſalem, and the obdurate nation of the Jews, was the carcaſe which the Roman armies, whoſe enſign was the eagle, would quickly find out and feed upon; and that Judea in general, and Jeruſalem, in particular, would be the theatre and ſtage of thoſe tragical calamities. *Learn* thence, That the appointed meſſengers of God's wrath, and the inſtruments of his vengeance, will ſuddenly gather together, certainly find out, and ſeverely puniſh, an impenitent people devoted to deſtruction: *Where the carcaſe is* (that is, the body of the Jewiſh nation) *there will the eagles* (that is, the Roman ſoldiers) *be gathered together.*

CHAP. XVIII.

AND he ſpake a parable unto them, *to this end*,
that men ought always to pray, and not to
faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a Judge,
which feared not God, neither regarded man. 3
And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came
unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of mine adverſary.
4 And he would not for a while: but afterward
he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor
regard man; 5 Yet becauſe this widow troubleth
me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming
ſhe weary me. 6 And the Lord, ſaid, Hear what the
unjuſt judge ſaith. 7 And ſhall not God avenge
his own elect, which cry day and night unto him,
though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you
that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Nevertheleſs,
when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith
on the earth?

There is no duty in Chriſtianity, the practice of which our Saviour preſſeth upon us more frequently than this duty of prayer. To encourage his diſciples (and us in them) to fervency, importunity, and perſeverance in this duty, he propounds here the parable of an unjuſt judge, who was overcome by an importunate widow, to do her juſtice contrary to his inclination; from whence our Saviour argues, That if importunity will prevail with a ſinful man, to grant petitions offered to him; how much more prevalent will ſuch importunity be with the infinitely good God, to relieve the neceſſities of ſuch as devoutly implore his help? And the force of the argument lies thus: "The judge in the parable was an inferior and ſubordinate judge, was an unrighteous and unjuſt judge, was a mercileſs and hard-hearted judge; and yet, upon her importunity, he avenged her; how much more will the ſovereign and ſupreme Judge, the holy and righteous, the merciful and compaſſionate Judge of all the earth, hear and help his praying people, and be the juſt avenger of thoſe that fear him." From the whole, *note*, 1. That prayer, or a liberty of making our requeſts known to God, is an ineſtimable favour and privilege. He that conſiders the nature of God, and the nature of man, cannot queſtion it: God is a being of infinite fullneſs and perfection, a ſelf-ſufficient, and an all-ſufficient good; and man an indigent, helpleſs, dependent creature, full of wants, and obnoxious to dangers. 2. That prayer is not only an ineſtimable privilege, but an indiſpenſible duty: So ſolicitous is God for our welfare and happineſs, that he makes our privilege our duty, by the authority of his command; ſo that we are at once ungrateful to God, and unjuſt to ourſelves, in the moſt exalted degree, if we do not pray to him, and ſpread our wants before him. 3. That this duty of prayer is not an occaſional, but a conſtant duty; *Men ought always to pray:* That is, 1. At all ſeaſonable times and fit opportunities: We are ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably. Now the ſeaſons for prayer are morning and evening. As the morning and evening ſacrifice was conſtant among the Jews, and the fire was always upon the altar, and never went out; ſo he that prays morning and evening, may be ſaid to be *inſtant in prayer, and to pray without ceaſing.* 2. Always to pray, is an endeavour always to keep the heart in a praying frame, and to be very frequent in offering up pious ejaculations, and ſhort mental prayers to God, as occaſion ſhall offer; when in the field, in the ſhop, in the bed when ſleep departs, in the journey when alone, this may be done advantageouſly, without loſs of time, and acceptably, without danger of hypocriſy, which too often mingles itſelf with our more ſet prayers. 4. We muſt not only pray conſtantly, but pray fervently, yea, importunately; if we would pray ſucceſsfully, we muſt cry to God, as the widow to the judge: Vehemency and importunity are both helps and ornaments to prayer; they both fortify and beautify our prayers; they pierce the heavens, and offer an holy violence to God: *Oratia vincit invincibilem et ligat Omnipotentem*; *hæc vis Deo grata eſt*, ſays Tertullian; "God delights in ſuch importunity."

—*Nevertheleſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?* If by *the Son of man's coming*, we underſtand Chriſt's coming in judgment againſt Jeruſalem, then the ſenſe is this; "That when he comes to take vengeance on the obſtinate Jews, and to deſtroy their city, he will find but little faith, and patient waiting for help from God, in the land of Judea, and, conſequently, little importuning him with inceſſant cries and ſupplications, as this poor widow did the unjuſt judge." 2. If by the Son of man's coming, we underſtand Chriſt's coming to judge the world at the laſt day, then the ſenſe is, "When he cometh, he will find but few faithful ones, comparatively ſpeaking; he will find but few ſincere and ſerious chriſtians, in whom the genuine effects and fruits are found." *Learn*, That when Chriſt ſhall come to judgment, he will find, comparatively, very few whoſe hearts have not fainted, and very many, who, through the power that temptation has upon the frailty of human nature, are fallen away: *When the Son of man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?* Verily, but little faith, and few faithful ones.

9 ¶ And he ſpake this parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, and the other a publican. 11 The Phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs. 13 And the publican, ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.

The deſign and ſcope of our Saviour, in this parable, is to reprove and condemn the Phariſees, and in them all other ſelf-juſticiaries, who having an high opinion of, and truſting in, their own righteouſneſs, deſpiſed others, as vile perſons, whoſe religion is not accompanied with oſtentation, and who pretend not to ſuch extraordinary degrees of themſelves. And the parable further ſhews, That an humble, ſelf-condemned priſoner, who, though he has been wicked, is now ſenſible of it, and with ſhame and ſorrow confeſſes it before God, is more acceptable than he that vaunts of his virtue, and reſts in the outward duties of religion; his pride and exaltation of himſelf ſhall abaſe him, while the other's humility ſhall exalt him. This is the general ſcope of the parable: The particular obſervations from it are theſe: 1. The Phariſee and the publican both pray; they both pray together in the place of prayer, the holy temple; and they both pray, *apud ſe*, with and within themſelves. Where the duty and action is the ſame, there may be a vaſt difference in the purpoſe and intention: Doth an humble ſaint pray? ſo may an haughty hypocrite: *Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Phariſee, the other a publican.* 2. The Phariſee's prayer: *He ſtood and prayed with himſelf, God, I thank thee*, &c. Where *note*, His geſture; *He ſtood and prayed:* Standing and kneeling are praying geſtures, but ſitting is a rude indecency, except in caſes of neceſſity. "In prayer (ſays pious Biſhop Hall) I will either "ſtand as a ſervant to my maſter, or kneel as a ſubject to "my prince. *Note* farther, It is ſaid, *he prayed*, but here is not one petition, but thankſgiving; *God, I thank thee*, &c. Whence *learn*, That thankſgiving is a part of prayer: Hannah's prayer, as it is called, 1 Sam. ii. is a canticle, or ſong of praiſe: We then pray beſt, when we praiſe God moſt. Again, See the Phariſee's pride in this his prayer: This proud beggar ſhews not his wounds, but his worth, not his rags but his robes, not his miſery but his bravery; he brings God almighty in a reckoning of his ſervices; *I faſt twice a week, I give alms of all that I poſſeſs*; and thanks God more that others were bad, than that himſelf was good. Had the Phariſee, with an humble mind, thanked God for his reſtraining grace, that though he was not ſo good as he ſhould be, that yet he was not ſo vile and bad as ſome others, this had been no fault; but when he comes before God with a proud and ſcornful mind, inwardly pleaſed that others were ſo bad, and ſo much worſe than himſelf, giving thanks rather for others badneſs than for his own goodneſs; this is a wickedneſs incident to none but deviliſh diſpoſitions. *Learn* hence, That whatſoever ſhews of goodneſs an hypocrite may make, yet he is inwardly glad of, and takes a ſecret delight in, others badneſs: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as this publican*; which was a kind of triumph, and proud inſultation, over the poor publican; he would ſeem to thank God that he vas not ſo bad as the publican, when indeed he was glad that the publican was not ſo good as himſelf. 3. The publican's behaviour: In an humble ſight and ſenſe of his own ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, *he ſtood afar off*, probably in the court of Gentiles, where all ſorts of ſinners might come; acknowledging thereby, that he was unworthy to come near the holy majeſty of God; not preſuming to *lift up his eyes to heaven*, that place of perfect holineſs and purity; but, like a true ſelf-condemned penitent, ſmote upon his breaſt, and, in bitter remorſe of ſoul, ſaid, *God, be merciful to me a ſinner.* Hence *learn*, That a truly humble temper of mind well becomes us in all our approaches and addreſſes to God, and is more acceptable to him than all pompous performances whatſoever. For, laſtly, The publican being thus condemned of himſelf, departs juſtified by God: *He went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the Phariſee:* the Phariſee juſtified himſelf, but the publican was juſtified by God. Thence *learn*, That a penitent ſinner, who is indeed poor in ſpirit, is far more eſteemed of God, than he that makes long prayers, faſts often, tithes all his ſubſtance, and prides himſelf in all this. Without humility all is vain-glory and hypocriſy; and the ſeeming moſt ſanctified perſon, that has it not, is like a painted ſepulchre, beautiful without, but full of rottenneſs within.

15 ¶ And they brought unto him alſo infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* diſciples ſaw *it*, they rebuked them. 16 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſolemn action performed; children, infants, ſucking children, as the word ſignifies, are brought to Chriſt, that he might bleſs them; the parents looking upon Chriſt as a prophet, as a great and extraordinary prophet, perſuade themſelves, that by his prayers, and laying his hands on their children, they ſhould be preſerved from bodily diſeaſes, and from Satan's power, that he would confer upon them all needful bleſſings. *Learn*, 1. That infants are capable of benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt office that parents can perform unto their children, to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made partakers of that benefit. 3. That if infants are capable of benefit by Chriſt, if capable of his bleſſing on earth, and preſence in heaven, if they be ſubjects of his kingdom of grace, and heirs of his kingdom of glory, then may they be baptized; for they that are within the covenant, Acts ii. 39. have a right to the privileges of the covenant, and to baptiſm, the ſeal of the covenant: and if Chriſt denies not infants the kingdom of heaven, which is the greater, what reaſon have his miniſters to deny them the benefit of baptiſm, which is the leſs? 4. That Chriſt will have all his diſciples and followers to reſemble little children in ſuch properties wherein they may be patterns to them, viz. in humility and innocence, in freedom from malice and revenge, in docibility and teachableneſs, in cleaving to, and depending upon their parents, and in contentedneſs with their condition; *Whoſover ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.*

18 And a certain ruler aſked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?

We have here a conſiderable perſon, a ruler, coming to Chriſt with an important queſtion in his mouth, *What muſt I do to inherit eternal life?* Where *note*, 1. He believes the certainty of a future ſtate. 2. He profeſſes a deſire of an eternal happineſs in that ſtate. 3. He declares his readineſs and willingneſs to do ſome good thing in order to the obtaining of that happineſs. Hence *learn*, That the light of nature or natural religion, teaches men that good works are neceſſary to ſalvation; or that ſome good thing muſt be done by them who at death expect eternal life: it is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but living well, that entitles us to heaven and eternal life.

19 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none *is* good, ſave one, *that is* God.

Our Saviour here reproves this perſon for calling him good, when he did not own him to be God; ſaying, *There is none good*, that is, eſſentially and originally good, abſolutely and immutably good, *but God* only; nor any derivatively good, but he that receives his goodneſs from God alſo.

20 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Honour thy father and thy mother.

Note here, That the duties directed to by our Saviour are the duties of the ſecond table, nothing being a better evidence of our unfeigned love to God, than a ſincere performance of our duty to our neighbour: Love to man is a fruit and teſtimony of our love to God. *Learn* thence, That ſuch as are defective in the duties of the ſecond table, charity and juſtice towards man, do make but a counterfeit ſhew of religion, though they pretend to the higheſt degree of holineſs and love towards God.

21 And he ſaid, All theſe have I kept from my youth up.

This aſſertion might be very true, according to the Phariſees ſenſe and interpretation of the law, which condemned only the groſs outward act, not the inward luſts and motions of the heart. An external obedience to the letter of the law this man might poſſibly have performed; this made him think well of himſelf, and conclude the goodneſs of his own condition. *Learn* hence, How prone men are to think beſt of themſelves, and to have too high an opinion of their own goodneſs and righteouſneſs before God; this is very natural, but dangerous and fatal.

22 Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: ſell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Here *obſerve*, 1. Our Lord's admonition, *Yet lackeſt thou one thing*, which was true ſelf-denial, in renouncing the ſin of covetouſneſs, and the inordinate love of worldly wealth. We ought, in the midſt of our abundance, to maintain a readineſs of diſpoſition to part with all, for God's ſake, that is dear unto us in this world. 2. Our Lord's injunction, *Sell all that thou haſt, and give to the poor*. This was not a common, but a ſpecial precept, given particularly to this rich man for trial; like that given to Abraham, Gen. xxii. and to convince him of his corrupt confidence in riches: Yet is the precept thus far for general uſe to us all, to teach us to contemn worldly poſſeſſions, as to be willing to part with them all at God's pleaſure, and when they prejudice our ſalvation.

23 And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich.

Here *note*, The effect which our Saviour's admonition had upon this perſon: *He was ſorrowful*. *Learn* thence, That carnal men are exceedingly ſorrowful when they cannot win heaven in their own way. 2. That ſuch as are wedded to the world will renounce Chriſt rather than the world, when the world and Chriſt ſtand in competition.

24 And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is eaſier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard *it*, ſaid, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And he ſaid, The things which are impoſſible with men, are poſſible with God.

Our holy Lord takes occaſion, from the rich man's departure from him, to diſcourſe concerning the danger of riches, and the difficulties that attend rich men in their way to heaven. From whence we may collect and gather, 1. That rich men do certainly meet with more difficulties in their way to heaven than other men; it is difficult to withdraw their affections from riches, to place their ſupreme love upon God in the midſt of their riches, and to depend entirely upon God in a rich condition; *For the rich man's wealth is his ſtrong tower*. 2. That yet the fault lies not in riches, but in rich men, who, by placing their truſt, and repoſing their confidence in riches, do render their ſalvation difficult, if not impoſſible. 3. Our Lord's proverbial ſpeech *of a camel's going through the eye of a needle*, implies thus much, That it is not only a great difficulty, but an utter impoſſibility, for ſuch as abound in worldly wealth, and place their confidence therein, to be ſaved, without an extraordinary grace and aſſiſtance from God. It is hard for God to make a rich man happy, becauſe he thinks himſelf happy without God. 4. That as difficult and impoſſible as this may ſeem to men, yet nothing is impoſſible with God; he can change the heart of the rich, by the rich and powerful influences of his holy Spirit: *That which is impoſſible with man is poſſible with God.*

28 Then Peter ſaid, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

It was well done, and wiſely done of Peter, to leave all and follow Chriſt: it was the beſt bargain he ever made in all his life. But *obſerve*, How he magnifies that little he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it in with a note of admiration; *Lo! we have left all, and followed thee.* *Learn* hence, That though it be very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and have to forſake upon his account, yet we are prone to magnify and admire it, as if it were of ſome great matter. Lord, ſays Peter, *we have left all*. "What all, man, hadſt thou to leave? A few ragged nets and a tattered fiſher-boat; a great all indeed, next to nothing at all, ſcarce worth mentioning; and yet how it is magnified!" *Behold, wt have left all, and followed thee.*

29 And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's ſake, 50 Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

Obſerve here, The lenity and kindneſs of our Lord's gracious anſwer: he tells his diſciples, That they who had left all and followed him, ſhould be no loſers by him; that is, in this world they ſhall receive manifold. St. Mark ſays, *An hundred fold*: But how ſo? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter*; *von in ſpecie, ſed in valore*; "Not in kind, but in equivalency," not an hundred brethren, and ſiſters, and poſſeſſions in kind, but he ſhall enjoy all that in God, which all creatures would be to him, if they were multiplied an hundred times. O the ſanctifying gifts and ſaving graces, the ſupporting comforts and raviſhing conſolations of the holy Spirit, are a ſufficient compenſation for any thing, for more than all that we can part with for the ſake of Chriſt.

31 ¶ Then he took unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed. 32 For he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on; 33 And they ſhall ſcourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 34 And they underſtood none of theſe things; and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.

We find our bleſſed Saviour very frequently acquainting his diſciples with his approaching ſufferings, to prevent the offence that they might take at them, when the providence of God brought them on: his deſign was, to arm them with expectation of his ſufferings, and to quicken them to preparation for their own; yet it is here ſaid, *That the diſciples underſtood none of theſe ſayings*: Why ſo? were not the words eaſy enough to be underſtood? Yes, but they could not reconcile them to the notion of the Meſſiah which they drank in; they concluded he ſhould be a temporal enemies; but could not conceive how he that ſhould redeem Iſrael ſhould die, and be thus barbarouſly uſed. We had great need to conſider well what notions we have concerning the things of God, before we entertain them; for falſe notiens once taken up, are not without great difficulty laid down.

35 ¶ And it came to paſs, that, as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man ſat by the way ſide begging: 36 And hearing the multitude paſs by, he aſked what it meant. 37 And they told him, that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by. 38 And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, thou Son of David have mercy on me. 39 And they which went before, rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried ſo much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 40 And Jeſus ſtood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he aſked him, 41 Saying, What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee? and he ſaid, Lord, that I may receive my ſight: 42 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Receive thy ſight: thy faith hath ſaved thee. 43 And immediately he received his ſight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they ſaw *it*, gave praiſe unto God.

This chapter concludes with the recital of a famous miracle wrought by our Saviour on a blind man, whom St. Mark calls Bartimeus. Where we have *obſervable*, 1. The blind man's faith, in acknowledging Chriſt to be the Meſſiah; for ſo much the title of *Son of David* did import. 2. His fervency as well as faith; he cried to Chriſt for the mercy of healing. *Have mercy on me, thou Son of David.* A true ſenſe of want, either bodily or ſpiritual, will cauſe a ſoul to cry to Chriſt with earneſtneſs and importunity. 3. The great compaſſion and tenderneſs of Chriſt towards this blind man; *He ſtood ſtill, he called him, and enlightened his eyes.* 4. Before Chriſt would reſtore the blind man to ſight, he muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of ſight, and cry unto him for it. Chriſt knows all his creatures' wants, but takes no notice of them, till they make them known to him by prayer. 5. How much Chriſt magnifies faith, what he attributes to it, and how he rewards the leaſt exerciſe of it; *Jeſus ſaid, Thy faith hath ſaved thee.* *Note*, 6. In what way and manner the blind man doth expreſs his thankfulneſs to Chriſt for his recovered ſight, *he followed him, glorifying God.* Mercy received from Chriſt is then well improved, when it engages us to follow Chriſt; this ſhould be the effect of all ſalvations wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt, that ſerveth him moſt. The life of thankfulneſs conſiſts in the holineſs of the life.

CHAP. XIX.

AND Jeſus entered and paſſed through Jericho. 2 And behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

The hiſtory, which relates the calling and converſion of Zaccheus the Publican, is uſhered in with a note of wonder, *Behold, there was a man named Zaccheus.* It is both great and good news, to hear of a ſoul converted unto God; eſpecially ſuch a remarkable ſinner as Zaccheus was; For, 1. He was by profeſſion a publican; a calling that carried extortion in its face, and bade defiance to his converſion; yet, behold, from the toll-booth is Zaccheus called to be a diſciple, and Matthew an apoſtle: Such is the freeneſs of divine grace, that it often calls the greateſt of ſinners, and triumphs in their powerful converſion. 2. He was a chief publican, and probably one of the chief of ſinners; yet behold him among the chief of ſaints. Lord! what penitent need deſpair of thy mercy, when he ſees a publican, nay the chief of publicans, gone to heaven? 3. It is added, as a farther circumſtance, *that he was rich*; his trade was not a greater obſtacle to his converſion than his wealth: not that there is any malignity in riches, conſidered in themſelves, but they become a ſnare through the corruption of our natures. Zaccheus had not been ſo famous a convert, if he had not been rich; if more difficulty, yet was there more glory in the converſion of rich Zaccheus. To all theſe might be added a fourth circumſtance, namely, That Zaccheus was converted in his old age, after a long habit of ſin contracted. Such inſtances, though few, has God left on record in ſcripture, Abraham and Manaſſes in the Old Teſtament, Zaccheus and Paul in the New.

3 And he ſought to ſee Jeſus whohe was, and could not for the preſs, becauſe he was little of ſtature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycamore-tree, to ſee him; for he was to paſs that way.

Zaccheus deſired to ſee Jeſus; this was a ſight that few rich men deſired to ſee; the ſight of Cæſar's face upon their coin is more pleaſing to them, than to ſee the face of Chriſt in his ordinances; yet it was not ſuch faith, but fancy and curioſity, that made Zaccheus climb the ſycamore-tree to ſee Jeſus; but the curioſity of the eye gave occaſion to the belief of the heart; he that deſires to ſee Jeſus is in the way to enjoy him. 'Tis good to be near the place where Chriſt is, whatever principles bring us thither.

5 And when Jeſus came to the place, he looked up and ſaw him, and ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down; for to-day I muſt abide at thy houſe. 6 And he made haſte, and came down, and received him joyfully.

What an inſtance is here of Chriſt's preventing grace and mercy! Zaccheus climbs up into the ſycamore to ſee Jeſus. Jeſus firſt ſeeks him; little did Zaccheus think, that Jeſus ſhould caſt up his eyes to him; Chriſt's looks are converting looks; there went a divine power along with them, to change the heart of him whom he looked upon; he that could heal a diſeaſe with the hem of his garment, could change an heart with the glance of his eye. *Obſerve* farther, Chriſt does not only note but name Zaccheus; *He bids him come down, for he muſt abide at his houſe.* What a ſweet familiarity was here! Though the difference be infinitely great betwixt our Saviour and ourſelves, yet he treats us, not with a majeſtic ſtatelineſs, but with a gracious affability. Some *note*, That Zaccheus was the firſt man we read of, to whoſe houſe Chriſt invited himſelf. *Obſerve* laſtly, With what ſpeed Zaccheus haſtens down, and with what alacrity he entertains our Saviour; curioſity carried him up, but love brings him down, and he entertains Chriſt joyfully; but alas! it was but for a few hours. Lord, how great is the happineſs of that man that receives and entertains thee, not for a day or a year, or for a million of years, but everlaſting ages! O let us welcome thee into our hearts by faith, whilſt we are here on earth, and then thou wilt make us welcome with thyſelf everlaſtingly in thy kingdom.

7 And when they ſaw *it*, they all murmured, ſaying, That he was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner.

That is, the Phariſees who were here, were highly diſcontented that Chriſt went to a publican's houſe, whom they looked upon as the worſt of men; their eye was evil, becauſe Chriſt's was good. Whither ſhould the phyſician go but to the ſick? The whole need him not. However, the envious Phariſees cenſure and condemn him for it. Lord, who can hope to eſcape the aſperſions of cenſorious tongues, whilſt ſpotleſs innocence, and perfect holineſs, falls under the laſh of them! It is ſufficient for the ſervant to be as the maſter.

8 And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore *him* fourfold.

Two things are here *obſervable*, The greatneſs of his charity, and the juſtneſs of his reſtitution. As to his charity, *obſerve*, 1. The freeneſs of it; not *I lend*, but *I give*. 2. The readineſs of it; not *I will*, but *I do give*. 3. The juſtneſs and honeſty of it; *my goods*, not my ſpoils; what is my own, and not rent from others by rapine or extortion. 4. The largeneſs and extenſiveneſs of his charity; *half of my goods*; not an inconſiderable pittance. 5. The fitneſs of his charity; *to the poor*, not to the rich: not to his heirs, but to his poor neighbours. Again, as his charity was large, ſo his reſtitution was juſt; as he gave half to the poor, ſo he *reſtored fourfold to the wronged*. What an evidence was here of a true penitent! Confeſſion and ſatisfaction are both found with him. Whenever repentance is ſincere and ſaving, there is not only an hatred of former ſins, but a vigorous exerciſe of graces contrary to thoſe ſins.

9 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, forſomuch as he alſo is the ſon of Abraham.

That which Zaccheus gave to the poor, was nothing to what Chriſt gave to him; it was but droſs he gave to them, it was ſalvation Chriſt gave to him. Where is the man that can ſay, God is in his debt for acts of charity and mercy! Where is he that will not own God to be the beſt and quickeſt paymaſter? *This day is ſalvation come to this houſe*; it is thine in title, and ere long it ſhall be thine in poſſeſſion; *For ſo much as he alſo is a ſon of Abraham*; that is, either a natural ſon of Abraham, a Jew; or a ſpiritual ſon, a believer; the heir of Abraham's faith, which was alſo imputed to him for righteouſneſs ſake. O happy Zaccheus! thou haſt climbed up from thy ſycamore to heaven, and by thy charity and juſtice hath purchaſed to thyſelf a kindom that fadeth not away.

10 For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.

Obſerve here, 1. A deſcription of man's deplorable ſtate, and undone condition, he is *loſt*. 2. The care of Chriſt to ſeek and recover man out of that loſt ſtate; *The Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt. Learn* 1. That man's condition is a loſt condition, and every ungenerate man is a loſt man; he has loſt his God, his ſoul, his happineſs, his excellency, his liberty, his ability. 2. The great errand that Chriſt came into the world upon, it was to ſeek and to ſave loſt ſinners; this he does by his blood, by his word, by his Spirit, and by his rod.

11 ¶ And as they heard theſe things, he added, and ſpake a parable, becauſe he was nigh to Jeruſalem, and becauſe they thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear. 12 He ſaid therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15 And it came to paſs that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded theſe ſervants to be called unto him to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the firſt, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he ſaid unto him, Well, thou good ſervant: becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he ſaid likewiſe to him, Be thou alſo over five cities. 20 And another came, ſaying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, becauſe thou art an auſtere man: thou takeſt up that thou laideſt not down, and reapeſt that thou didſt not ſow. 22 And he ſaith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked ſervant. Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not ſow: 23 Wherefore then gaveſt not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with uſury? 24 And he ſaid unto them that ſtood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they ſaid unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I ſay unto you, That unto every one that hath ſhall be given: and from him hath not, even that he hath ſhall be taken away from him. 27 But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay *them* before me.

For the better underſtanding of this parable, we muſt, 1. conſider the occaſion of it; 2. The deſign and ſcope of it; 3. The leſſons of inſtruction which our Saviour intended us by it. As to the former; the occaſion of our Saviour's uttering this parable, ſeems to be this, He was now going up to Jeruſalem to die; ſome of the company were of opinion, That he would immediately enter upon his kingdom, and act as a temporal prince, delivering them from the Romans, and deſtroying his and their enemies: He lets them underſtand the quite contrary; that he muſt die and riſe again, and aſcend into heaven, and then return again and receive the kingdom; and that he was now taking his laſt journey to Jeruſalem, in order to that end. The deſign and ſcope of the parable, together with the interpretation of it, is this, *The nobleman* here mentioned, is our Saviour himſelf, who in his ſtate of great humiliation, was but like a nobleman; *his going into a far country*, ſignifies his return from earth to heaven; *his coming back again*, ſignifies his coming to judgment; *his calling his ſervants, and delivering them their talents*, intimates to us the various gifts which he beſtows upon the ſons of men, all which are to be employed in his ſervice, and improved to his glory; *his calling his ſervants to an account*, plainly ſignifies, That when Chriſt comes to judgment, he will have an account of every individual perſon, how they uſed the gifts, and improved the talents entruſted with them; and that they may expect to be impartially rewarded according to their works, for God will appear a righteous God, and will condemn ſinners out of their own mouths, and a moſt certain and final ruin will be their portion, whilſt thoſe that were faithful in his ſervice ſhall be crowned with his reward. Now from the whole we may *learn* theſe leſſons of inſtruction: 1. That our Lord's ſtate of humiliation and great abaſement on earth being paſſed over, a glorious ſtate of exaltation he is now arrived at in heaven. God has exalted him with great triumph to his kingdom. 2. That clothed with infinite majeſty and power, and attended with an innumerable hoſt of angels and ſaints, this exalted Saviour will come to judge angels and men. 3. That in the mean-time Chriſt variouſly diſpenſes to his ſervants particular talents, to be employed and improved for his own glory and his church's good. 4. That there will moſt certainly be a reckoning-day, or a time when our Lord will take an account of men's improving thoſe gifts and graces, which were given them as ſo many talents to be improved by them. 5. That there will be degrees of happineſs and miſery in the other world, according to men's degrees of faithfulneſs or negligence in this. 6. That it is abominably falſe and impious to charge God, as being rigid and ſevere with men, and requiring impoſſibilities at their hands; *For out of their own mouths will God condemn them.* Laſtly, That the condition of God's faithful ſervants will be unſpeakably happy, and that of the unprofitable ſervant intolerably miſerable, both in this world and in the next; the righteous ſhall enter into the joy of their Lord, and be confirmed therein, with an utter impoſſibility of loſing that happineſs. The wicked, who would not ſubmit to Chriſt's authority, ſhall not be able to reſiſt his power. They that would not ſuffer Chriſt to reign over them, ſhall at the laſt day be brought forth and ſlain before him. *Thoſe mine enemies, that would not that I*, &c.

28 ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, he went before, aſcending up to Jeruſalem. 29 And it came to paſs when he was come nigh to Bethphage, and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he ſent two of his diſciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over againſt *you*; in the which at your entering ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man ſat: looſe him, and bring *him* hither. 31 And if any man aſk you, Why do ye looſe *him?* thus ſhall ye ſay unto him, Becauſe the Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were ſent, went their way, and found even as he had ſaid unto them. 33 And as they were looſing the colt, the owners therefore ſaid unto them, Why looſe ye the colt? 34 And they ſaid, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jeſus: and they caſt their garments upon the colt, and they ſet Jeſus thereon. 36 And as he went, they ſpread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the deſcent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the diſciples began to rejoice and praiſe God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had ſeen, 38 Saying, Bleſſed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt. 39 And ſome of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter, rebuke thy diſciples. 40 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.

Our Lord (as is noted before) was now upon his laſt journey to Jeruſalem, where he was to ſhed his blood, and lay down his life for the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world; and it is obſervable, what a double demonſtration he gives of his great willingneſs and forwardneſs to go up to Jeruſalem, there to die. 1. Both St. Luke here, and St. Mark, ch. x. 32. tells us, That *he went before* the company, leading the way, when he went to ſuffer: Lord! with what alacrity and holy chearfulneſs didſt thou manage the great work of man's redemption? None ever went ſo willingly to a crown, as thou to thy croſs. 2. Our Saviour, who all his life travelled like a poor man on foot, now he goes up to Jeruſalem to die for us, he will ride, to ſhew his great forwardneſs to lay down his life for us: But what was the beaſt he rode upon? an aſs's colt; to fulfil that prophecy, *Zech.* ix. 9. *Tell ye the daughters of Sion, behold, thy King cometh, riding upon an aſs:* yea, it was a colt on which never man rode before; to let us ſee, how the moſt untamed creatures become obſequious to Chriſt, and render themſelves ſerviceable to him at his pleaſure. It was alſo a borrowed aſs, whereby our Saviour's right to all the creatures was manifeſted; and accordingly, he bids the diſciples to tell the owner, *That the Lord had need of him*; not your Lord, or our Lord, but *the* Lord, that is, he that is Lord of the whole earth, *whoſe are the cattle upon a thouſand hills.* Here *note*, What a clear and full demonſtration Chriſt gave of his divine nature; of his omniſciency in forſeeing and foretelling the event; of his omnipotency in inclining the heart and over-ruling the will of the owner to let the colt go; and of his ſovereignty, that as he was Lord of the creatures, he could command and call for their ſervice whenever he needed them. The colt being brought, and our Saviour ſet thereon; *obſerve* next, The actions of the multitude in acknowledging Chriſt to be our King; they ſpread their clothes in the way, caſting their garments on the ground, for him to ride upon, according to the cuſtom of princes when they ride in ſtate: yea, the multitude do not only diſrobe their backs, but expend their breath in joyful acclamations, and loud hoſannahs, wiſhing all manner of proſperity to their meek but mighty prince. In this princely, yet poor and deſpicable pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous city of Jeruſalem.

O how far was our holy Lord from affecting wordly greatneſs and grandeur; he deſpiſed that glory, which worldly hearts fondly admire; yet, becauſe he was a King, he would be proclaimed ſuch; and have his kingdom confeſſed, applauded, and bleſſed: but that it might appear, that his kingdom was not of this world, he abandons all wordly magnificence. O glorious, yet homely pomp! O meek, but mighty prince! Laſtly, The peeviſh envy of the wicked Phariſees, who were then in company; they grudge our Saviour this poor honour, they envy him this ſmall triumph of coming into the city upon an aſs's colt, attended by a company of poor people, ſtrewing the ways with boughs of trees, with hoſannahs and joyful acclamations: Theſe people's mouths they would have ſtopped; *Maſter, rebuke thy diſciples:* They did not like the muſic. But Chriſt tells them, That they labour in vain to ſuppreſs the teſtimony given him by his diſciples, *for if they ſhould be ſilent, the ſtones would cry out*; yea, cry out ſhame of them, for neglecting their duty: As if Chriſt had ſaid, The ſpeechleſs ſtones will ſpeak and give witneſs to me, if men will not. *Learn* hence, They that are owned of God, ſhall not want ownings and witneſſings from man at one time or other, in one way or other, though the envy and malice of men do never ſo much gainſay and oppoſe it.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

No ſooner did our Saviour come within the ſight and view of the city of Jeruſalem, but he burſt out into tears, at the conſideration of their obſtinacy, and wilful rejecting of the offers of grace and ſalvation made unto them; and alſo he wept to conſider the dreadful judgments that hung over their heads for thoſe ſins, even the utter ruin and deſtruction of their city and temple. *Learn* hence, 1. That good men ever have been, and are, men of tender and compaſſionate diſpoſitions, ſorrowing not only for their own ſufferings, but others calamities. 2. That Chriſt ſheds tears as well as blood for the loſt world, *Chriſt wept over Jeruſalem*, as well as bled for her. 3. That Chriſt was infinitely more concerned for the ſalvation of poor ſinners, than for his own death and ſufferings; not the ſight of his own croſs, but Jeruſalem's calamities made him weep.

42 Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

By *the things belonging to their peace*, we are to underſtand the preſence of Chriſt amongſt them, the preaching of the goſpel to them; *She did not know*, that is, ſhe did did not conſider, ſhe did not prize and improve her privileges, as ſhe ought, but ſtopped her ears againſt the words of Chriſt, and cloſed her ears againſt the miraculous works of Chriſt, till at laſt they were hidden from her eyes. *Learn* hence, 1. That the time of a people's enjoying the light and liberty of the goſpel, is a limited day, it is a ſhort day. *If thou hadſt known in this thy day.* 2. That it is the ſad and uſual lot of the goſpel not to be embraced and entertained by a people to whom it is in mercy ſent, till it be too late, and the time of their viſitation be paſt and over; *O that thou hadſt known, but now* thou ſhalt never know, *now they are hid from thine eyes.* But how hid? Was there no more preaching in Jeruſalem; no public miniſtry after that day? Yes, behold the patience and mercy of Chriſt in waiting upon this people. After this, Chriſt ſent the whole college of apoſtles, and they preached there the things belonging to their temporal and eternal peace; but they wanted hearers to conſider, and their ruin was unavoidable.

43 For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide, 44 And ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another: becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation.

Here is a prophetical prediction of the total and final deſtruction of the city of Jeruſalem by the Roman armies, who begirt the city round, burnt the temple, ſtarved the people, and brought ſuch ruin and deſtruction upon the place, as no hiſtory could ever parallel: the reaſon is aſſigned, *becauſe they knew not the time of their viſitation*; that is, the time when God viſited them with his goſpel, firſt by the miniſtry of John; then by the preaching of Chriſt himſelf, and afterwards by his diſciples and apoſtles. Hence *learn*, 1. That when God gives his goſpel to a people, he gives that people a merciful viſitation. 2. That for a people not to know, but neglect the time of their gracious viſitation, is a God-provoking, and a wrath-procuring ſin: *Becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation, therefore the time ſhall come, that thine enemies ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and not leave one ſtone upon another*; which hiſtory tells us, was literally fulfilled, when Turnus Rufus, with his plough, ploughed up the very foundation ſtones upon which the temple ſtood. Lord! how has ſin laid the foundations of ruin in the moſt flouriſhing cities and kingdoms!

45 ¶ And he went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought. 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My houſe is the houſe of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. 47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief prieſts and the ſcribes and the chief of the people ſought to deſtroy him, 48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

No ſooner was our bleſſed Saviour entered Jeruſalem, but his walk was to the temple, and his firſt work was to purge and reform it from abuſes, not to ruin and deſtroy it, becauſe it had been abuſed. But what was the profanation of the temple, that ſo offended our Saviour? *Anſ.* In the court of the Gentiles, the outward court of the temple, there was a public mart or market kept, where were ſold oxen, ſheep, and doves, for ſacrifice, which otherwiſe they muſt have brought up along with them from their houſes: As a pretended eaſe therefore to the people, the prieſts ordered theſe things to be ſold hard by the altar; but our bleſſed Saviour being juſtly offended at this profanation of his Father's houſe, caſt the buyers and ſellers out of the temple; teaching us, that there is a ſpecial reverence due to God's houſe, both for the owner's ſake, and the ſervice ſake: nothing but holineſs can become the place where God is worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs: The reaſon is added, *My houſe is the houſe of prayer*, where, by prayer, is to underſtood, the whole worſhip and ſervice of God, of which prayer is an eminent and principal part. That which gives denomination to an houſe, is moſt certainly the chief-work to be done in that houſe; now God's houſe being called *an houſe of prayer*, implies, that prayer is a chief and principal work to be done in this houſe; yet take we heed, that we ſet not the ordinances of God at variance one with another; we muſt not idolize one ordinance, and vilify another, but reverence them all, and pay an awful reſpect to all divine inſtitutions. Our bleſſed Saviour here in his houſe of prayer, preached daily to the people, as well as prayed with them; and all the people were as attentive to hear his ſermons, as he was conſtant at their prayers. Prayer ſanctifies the word, and the word fits us for prayer. If we would glorify God, and edify ourſelves, we muſt put honour upon all the ordinances of God, and diligently attend them upon all occaſions.

CHAP. XX.

AND it came to paſs, that on one of thoſe days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the goſpel, the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came upon him, with the elders, 2 And ſpake unto him, ſaying, Tell us, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will aſk you one thing, and anſwer me: 4 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay, Why then believed ye him not? 6 But and if we ſay, Of men; all the people will ſtone us: for they be perſuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they anſwered, That they could not tell whence *it was*. 8 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often quarrelled at our Saviour's doctrine before, they call in queſtion his miſſion and authority now, although they might eaſily have underſtood his divine miſſion by his divine miracles; for Almighty God never impowered any to work miracles that were not ſent by him. Our bleſſed Saviour, underſtanding their deſign, gives them no direct anſwer, but replies to their queſtion, by aſking them another; *The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men?* that is, was it of divine inſtitution, or of human invention? plainly implying, That the calling of them who call themſelves the miniſters of God, ought to be from God: *No man ought to take that honour upon him, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. v. 8. The Phariſees reply, That they could not tell whence John had his miſſion and authority, which was a manifeſt untruth; they knew it, but durſt not own it. By refuſing to tell the truth, they fall into a lie againſt the truth; thus one ſin enſnares and draws men on to the commiſſion of more: Such as will not ſpeak exact truth according to their knowledge, they fall into the ſin of lying againſt their knowledge and their conſcience. Our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things:* He did not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you, but I do not, I need not tell you; becauſe the miracles which I work before you, are a ſufficient demonſtration of my divine commiſſion, that I am ſent of God among you; becauſe God never ſet the ſeal of his omnipotency to a lie, nor impowered an impoſtor to work real miracles.

9 ¶ Then began he to ſpeak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to huſbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the ſeaſon he ſent a ſervant to the huſbandmen, that they ſhould give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the huſbandmen beat him, and ſent *him* away empty. 11 And again he ſent another ſervant; and they beat him alſo, and entreated *him* ſhamefully, and ſent *him* away empty. 12 And again he ſent the third; and they wounded him alſo, and caſt *him* out. 13 Then ſaid the lord of the vineyard, What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved ſon; it may be they will reverence *him* when they ſee him. 14 But when the huſbandmen ſaw him, they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they caſt him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore ſhall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He ſhall come and deſtroy theſe huſbandmen and ſhall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they ſaid, God forbid. 17 And he beheld them, and ſaid, What is this then that is written, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner? 18 Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19 ¶ And the chief prieſts and the ſcribes the ſame hour ſought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had ſpoken this parable againſt them.

In the parable before us, the Jewiſh church is compared to a vineyard, God the Father to an *houſholder*, his *planting*, *pruning*, and *fencing his vineyard*, denotes his care to furniſh his church with all needful helps and means to make it fruitful; his *letting it out to huſbandmen*, ſignifies the committing the care of his church to the prieſts and

Levites, the public paſtors and governors of the church; his *ſervants* are the prophets and apoſtles whom he ſent from time to time, to admoniſh them to bring forth anſwerable fruits to the coſt which God had expended on them: *his Son* is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the rulers of the Jewiſh church ſlew and murdered. So that the deſign and ſcope of the parable is to diſcover to the Jews, particularly to the Phariſees, their obſtinate impenitency under all the means of grace, their bloody cruelty towards the prophets of God, their tremendous guilt in crucifying the Son of God: for all which God would unchurch them finally, ruin their nation, and ſet up a church among the Gentiles, that ſhould bring forth much better fruit than the Jewiſh church ever did. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the church is God's vineyard: a vineyard is a place incloſed, a place well planted, well fruited, and exceeding dear and precious to the planter, and the owner of it. 2. That as dear as God's vineyard is unto him, in caſe of barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs, it is in great danger of being deſtroyed and laid waſte by him. 3. That the only way and courſe to engage God's care over his vineyard, and to prevent its being given to other huſbandmen, is to give him the fruits of it; it is but a vineyard that God lets out; it is no inheritance; no people ever had ſo many promiſes of God's favour as the Jews; nor people ever enjoyed ſo many privileges whilſt they continued in his favour, as they did; but for rejecting Chriſt and his holy doctrine, they are a deſpiſed ſcattered people throughout the world. *See note on* Matt. xxi. 39. 44.

20 And they watched *him*, and ſent forth ſpies, which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. 21 And they aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly, neither accepteſt thou the perſon *of any*, but teacheſt the way of God truly. 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæſar, or no? 23 But he perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? 24 Shew me a penny: whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered and ſaid, Cæſar's. 25 And he ſaid unto them, Render therefore unto Cæſar the things which be Cæſar's, and unto God the things which be God's. 26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their peace.

Both Matthew and Mark tell us, That theſe ſpies ſent forth to enſnare our Saviour about paying tribute to Cæſar were the Phariſees and Herodians; the former were againſt paying tribute, looking upon the Roman emperor as an uſurper; the latter were for it. Theſe two oppoſite parties concluded, That, let our Saviour anſwer how he would, they ſhould entrap him; if to pleaſe the Phariſees he denied paying tribute, then he is accuſed of ſedition; if to gratify the Herodians, he voted for paying tribute, then he is pronounced an enemy to the liberty of his country, and expoſed to a popular odium. But *obſerve*, with what wiſdom and caution our Lord anſwers them: he calls for the Roman penny, and aſks them, Whoſe ſuperſcription it bare? They anſwer, Cæſar's. Then ſays he, *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's.* As if he had ſaid, "Your admitting the Roman coin amongſt you, is an evidence that you are under ſubjection to the Roman emperor; becauſe the coining and impoſing of money is an act of ſovereign authority; therefore you having owned Cæſar's authority over you, by accepting of his coin amongſt you, give unto him his juſt dues, and *render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's. Learn* hence, 1. That our Saviour was no enemy to magiſtracy and civil government; there was no truer paymaſter of the king's dues, than he that was King of kings; he preached it, and he practiſed. 2. Where a kingdom is in ſubjection to a temporal prince, whether by deſcent, election, or conqueſt, he derives the title, the ſubjects ought, from a principle of conſcience, to pay tribute to him. 3. That as Chriſt is no enemy to the civil rights of princes, and his religion exempts none from paying their civil dues, ſo princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his divine honour, as he is not to rob them of their civil rights. As Chriſt requires all his followers, *to render Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*; ſo princes ſhould oblige all their ſubjects *to render unto God the things that are God's*.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, (which deny that there is any reſurrection) and they aſked him, 28 Saying, Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If any man's brother die having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 29 There were therefore ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the ſecond took her to wife, and he died childleſs. 31 And the third took her; and in like manner the ſeven alſo. And they left no children, and died. 32 Laſt of all the woman died alſo. 33 Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe wife of them is ſhe? for ſeven had her to wife. 34 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35 But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. 36 Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection. 37 Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Our bleſſed Saviour having put the Phariſees and Herodians to ſilence in the foregoing verſes, here the Sadducees encounter him. This ſect denied the immortality of the ſoul, and the reſurrection of the body; and as an objection againſt both, they propound a queſtion to our Saviour, of a woman that had ſeven huſbands; they demanded whoſe wife of the ſeven this woman ſhould be at the reſurrection? As if they had ſaid, "If there be a reſurrection of bodies at the great day, ſurely there will be a reſurrection of relations too, and the other world will be like this, in which men will marry as they do here, and if ſo, *Whoſe wife of the ſeven ſhall this woman be?* they all having an equal claim to her." Now our Saviour, for reſolving of this queſtion, firſt ſhews the different ſtate of men in this and the other world, *The children of this world*, ſays Chriſt, *marry, and are given in marriage*; but in the reſurrection they do neither: as if our Lord had ſaid, "After men have lived a while in this world, they die, and therefore marriage is neceſſary to maintain a ſucceſſion of mankind; but in the other world, men ſhall become immortal, and live for ever; and then the reaſon of marriage will wholly ceaſe: for when men can die no more, there will be no need of any new ſupplies of mankind." Secondly, Our Saviour having got clear of the Sadducees objection, by taking away the ground and foundation of it, he produces an argument for the proof of the ſoul's immortality, and the body's reſurrection, thus: "Thoſe to whom Almighty God pronounces himſelf *a God*, are alive; but God pronounces himſelf *a God* to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, many hundred years after their bodies were dead, therefore their ſouls are yet alive, otherwiſe God could not be their God;" *for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* From the whole, *note*, 1. That there is no opinion ſo abſurd, no error ſo monſtrous, that having had a mother, will die for lack of a nurſe: the beaſtly opinion of the mortality of the ſoul, and of the annihilation of the body, finds Sadducees to profeſs and propagate it. *Note* 2. The certainty of another life after this, in which men ſhall be eternally happy or intolerably miſerable, accordingly as they behave themſelves here: though ſome men live like beaſts, they ſhall not die like them, neither ſhall their laſt end be like theirs. 3. The glorified ſaints, in the morning of the reſurrection ſhall be like unto the glorious angels; not like them in eſſence and nature, but like them in their properties and qualities, in holineſs and purity, in immortality and incorruptibility; and alſo like them in their way and manner of living; they ſhall no more ſtand in need of meat or drink than the angels do, but ſhall live the ſame heavenly and immortal lives that that the angels live. 4. That all thoſe that are in covenant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their ſouls do immediately paſs into glory, and their bodies at the reſurrection, ſhall be ſharers of the ſame happineſs with their ſouls. If God be juſt, the ſoul muſt live, and the body muſt riſe: for good men muſt be rewarded, and wicked men puniſhed. God will, moſt certainly, one time or other, plentifully reward the righteous, and puniſh the evil doers; but this being not always done in this life, the juſtice of God requires it to be done in the next.

39 ¶ Then certain of the ſcribes anſwering, ſaid, Maſter, thou haſt well ſaid. 40 And after that, they durſt not aſk him any queſtion at all, 41 And he ſaid unto them, How ſay they that Chriſt is David's ſon? 42 And David himſelf ſaith in the book of Pſalms, The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 43 Till I make thine enemies thy foot-ſtool. 44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his ſon?

The deſign of our bleſſed Saviour, in propounding this queſtion to the Phariſees [how Chriſt could be David's ſon, when David by inſpiration called him Lord?] was two-fold: 1. To confute the people's erroneous opinion touching the perſon of the Meſſias, who they thought ſhould be a mere man, of the ſtock and lineage of David only, and not the Son of God. 2. To ſtrengthen the faith of his diſciples touching his Godhead, againſt the time that they ſhould ſee him ſuffer and riſe again. The place Chriſt alludes to, is Pſal. cx. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. The Lord*, that is, God the Father, *ſaid to my Lord*, that is, to God the Son, who was to be incarnate, whom David calleth his Lord, both as God and as Mediator, his Lord by a right of creation and redemption alſo: Now the queſtion our Saviour puts to the Phariſees is this, How Chriſt could be both David's Lord, and David's ſon? no ſon being lord of his own father: therefore, if Chriſt were David's ſovereign, he muſt be more than man. As a man, he was David's ſon, as God-man, he was David's Lord. *Note* hence, 1. That though Chriſt was truly and really man, yet he was more than a mere man, he was Lord unto, and the ſalvation of, his own forefathers. 2. That the only way to reconcile the ſcriptures which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be both God and man in one perſon. The Meſſiah, as man, was to come forth out of David's loins; but, as God-man, was David's Lord, his Sovereign and Saviour: As man, he was David's ſon; as God-man, he was Lord of his own father.

45 ¶ Then in the audience of all the people, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 46 Beware of the ſcribes, which deſire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets and the higheſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the chief rooms at feaſts; 47 Which devour widows houſes, and for a ſhew make long prayers: the ſame ſhall receive greater damnation.

Obſerve, here, What it is that our Saviour condemns: Not civil ſalutations in the market-place; not the chief ſeats in the ſynagogue; not the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts; but their fond affecting of theſe things, and ambitious aſpiring after them: It was not their taking but their loving the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, which our Saviour condemns. God is the God of order; there may and ought to be a precedency among perſons: God commands us to give honour to whom honour is due: but pride and ambition are deteſtable and hateful vices, eſpecially in ſuch as are preachers, who ought to be patterns of humility. 2. 2. How our Saviour condemns the Phariſees for their groſs hypocriſy, in colouring over their abominable coveteouſneſs with a ſpecious pretence of religion, making long prayers in the temple and ſynagogues for widows, and thereupon perſuading them to give bountifully to corban, that is, the common treaſury of the temple; ſome part of of which was employed for their maintenance. Whence we learn, That it is no new thing for deſigning hypocrites to cover the fouleſt tranſgreſſions with the cloke of religion; thus the Phariſees made their prayers a cloke and cover for their covetouſneſs.

CHAP. XXI.

AND he looked up, and ſaw the rich men caſting their gifts into the treaſury. 2 And he ſaw alſo a certain poor widow, caſting in thither two mites. 3 And he ſaid, Of a truth I ſay unto you, that this poor widow hath caſt in more than they all. 4 For all theſe have of their abundance caſt in unto the offerings of God: but ſhe of her penury hath caſt in all the living that ſhe had.

At the door of the temple, through which all the people paſſed in and out, who came up three times a year at the ſolemn feaſts, to worſhip almighty God at his own houſe, there was a cheſt ſet (like the poor man's box in ſome of our churches) into which all perſons caſt in their free-will offerings or oblations, which were employed either for the uſe of the poor, or for the ſervice of the temple; and what was thus given, our Saviour calls an offering to God, verſe 4. *Theſe of their abundance have caſt in unto the offerings of God.* Thence *learn*, That what we rightly give to the relief of the poor, or for the ſervice, and towards the ſupport of God's public worſhip, is conſecrated to God, and as ſuch accepted by him, and ought to be eſteemed by us. 2. With what pleaſure and ſatisfaction our Saviour ſets himſelf to view thoſe offerings; *He beheld the rich men caſting their gifts into the treaſury.* Thence *note*, That our Saviour ſees with pleaſure, and beholds with delight, whatever we have hearts to give unto him; whether for the relief of his members, or for the ſupport of his ſervice. O bleſſed Saviour, while now thou ſitteſt at thy Father's right hand in glory, thou ſeeſt every hand that is ſtretched forth to the relief of thy poor members here on earth. Verſe 2. *But a certain poor widow caſt in two mites.* Several circumſtances, relating both to the perſon and action, are here obſervable: As, 1. The married woman is under the careful proviſion of her huſband; if ſhe ſpends, he earns; but the widow has no hands but her own to work for her. 2. She was *a poor widow*; poverty added to the ſorrow of her widowhood; ſhe had no rich jointure to live upon; it is ſome alleviation of the ſorrow that attends widowhood, when the hand is left full though the bed be left empty; this widow was needy and deſolate, but yet gives; ſome in her circumſtances would have looked upon themſelves as having a right to receive what was given by others, rather than to give any thing themſelves. 3. Her bounty and munificence in giving: *Her two mites* are proclaimed by Chriſt to be more *than all the rich men's* talents; more in reſpect to the mind and affection of the giver; more with reſpect to a proportion of the gift, a mite to her being more than pounds to others; pounds were little to them, two mites were all to her, ſhe leaves herſelf nothing; ſo that the poor woman gave not only more than any of them all, but more than they all: Chriſt's eye looked at once into the bottom of her purſe, and into the bottom of her heart, and judged of the offering, rather by the mind of the giver, than by the value of the gift. From this inſtance we *learn*, 1. That the poorer, yea the pooreſt ſort of people are not exempted from good works; but even they muſt and ought to exerciſe charity according to their ability. This poor widow, that had not a pound, nay not a penny, preſents God with a farthing. 2. That in all works of pious charity which we perform, God looks at the heart, the will, and the affection of the giver, more than at the largeneſs and liberality of the gift. It is not ſaid the Lord loveth a liberal giver, but a chearful giver; *He accepteth the gift according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* O our God, the pooreſt of us thy ſervants have our two mites alſo, a ſoul and a body; perſuade and enable us to offer both unto thee; though they are thine already, yet thou wilt graciouſly accept them; and O, how happy ſhall we be in thy acceptation!

5 ¶ And as ſome ſpake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly ſtones, and gifts, he ſaid, 6 *As for* theſe things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down

Our bleſſed Saviour being now ready to depart from the temple, never more after this entering into it, and his diſciples ſhewing him, with wonder and admiration, the magnificent ſtructures and buildings thereof, apprehending that, in regard of its invincible ſtrength it could not be deſtroyed; not conſidering, that ſin will undermine and blow up the moſt magnificent and famous ſtructures; for ſin brings cities and kingdoms, as well as particular perſons to their end. *Not one ſtone*, ſays Chriſt, *ſhall be left upon another*; which threatening was exactly fulfilled after Chriſt's death, when Titus the Roman emperor deſtroyed the city, burnt the temple, and Turnus Rufus, the general of his army, ploughed up the very foundation on which the temple ſtood: thus was the threatening of God fulfilled, Jer. xxvi. 18. *Zion ſhall be ploughed as a field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become an heap.* *Learn* hence, 1. That ſin has laid the foundation of ruin in the moſt flouriſhing cities and kingdoms; Jeruſalem, the glory of the world, is here by ſin threatened to be made a deſolation. 2. That the threatenings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing improbabilities there may be to the contrary. It is neither the temple's ſtrength, nor beauty, that can oppoſe or withſtand God's power.

7 And they aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſign *will there be* when theſe things ſhall come to paſs

A double queſtion is ſtill here propounded to our Saviour, namely, When the deſtruction of Jeruſalem ſhould be? and, What would be the ſigns of it? From whence *learn*, What an itching curioſity there is in the beſt of men, to know futurities, and to underſtand things that ſhall come to paſs hereafter; and when that hereafter will come to paſs. O how happy were it, if we were as forward to obey the declarations of God's revealed will, as we are to pry into the hidden counſels of his ſecret will.

8 And he ſaid, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs; but the end *is* not by and by. 10 Then ſaid he unto them, Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers places, and famines, and peſtilences: and fearful ſights and great ſigns ſhall there be from heaven.

Obſerve here, Chriſt does not gratify his diſciples curioſity, but acquaints them with their preſent duty: namely, to watch againſt deceivers and ſeducers, who ſhould have the impudence to affirm themſelves to be Chriſts, *ſaying, I am Chriſt:* ſome Chriſt perſonal, or the Meſſias; others Chriſt doctrinal, affirming their erroneous opinions to be Chriſt's mind and doctrine; *Take heed that ye be not deceived,* &c. Farther, The ſigns which our Saviour gives of Jeruſalem's approaching deſtruction; namely, the many broils, and commotions, the civil diſorders and diſſentions, that ſhould be found amongſt the Jews immediately before; *Ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions,* and ſee fearful ſights, and great ſigns from heaven. Joſephus declares, That there appeared in the air chariots and horſemen ſkirmiſhing; and that a blazing ſtar, in faſhion of a ſword, hung over the city for a year together. Hence *learn,* That war, peſtilence, and famine, are judgments and calamities inflicted by God, upon a ſinful people, for their contempt of Chriſt and goſpel grace: *Ye ſhall hear of war, famine, and peſtilence.*

12 But before all theſe, they ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute *you,* delivering *you* up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's ſake. 13 And it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony. 14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer. 15 For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay, nor reſiſt. 16 And ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *ſome* of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death. 17 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake. 18 But there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh. 19 In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.

Our Saviour here goes on in giving farther ſigns of Jeruſalem's deſtruction. He declares, 1. The ſharp perſecution that ſhould fall upon the apoſtles themſelves, *They ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you. Learn* thence, That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt edge of perſecution is uſually turned upon the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the miniſters of God. He acquaints them, 2. That for preaching his holy doctrine, they ſhould be brought before kings and rulers; but adviſes them not to be anxiouſly thoughtful, or exceedingly ſolicitous what they ſhould ſay, for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt, what they ſhould ſay in that hour. *Learn* thence, That though the truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his holy Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch arguments to them, as all their enemies ſhall not be able to gainſay; *I will give you a mouth and wiſdom. Obſerve,* 3. How he deſcribes the bitter enmity of the world againſt the preachers of the goſpel, to be ſuch as would overcome and extinguiſh even the natural affection of neareſt relations; *ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren:* Grace teacheth us to lay down our lives for the brethren; but corruption in general, and enmity to the goſpel in particular, will put brother upon taking away the life of brother, and cauſe parents to hate and perſecute their own bowels. Laſtly, Our Saviour's admonition, *In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.* There are three degrees of chriſtian patience; the firſt conſiſts in a ſilent ſubmiſſion to God's will: the ſecond in a thankful acceptation of God's fatherly rod; the third in ſerious chearfulneſs, under ſorrowful diſpenſations, rejoicing in tribulation, and counting it all joy when we fall into divers temptations; by this patience we poſſeſs our ſouls; as faith gives us the poſſeſſion of Chriſt, ſo patience gives us the poſſeſſion of ourſelves; an impatient man is not in his own hand; for what title ſoever we have to our own ſouls, we have no poſſeſſion of them without patience: *In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.*

20 And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midſt of it depart out: and let not them that are in the countries, enter thereinto. 22 For theſe be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations: and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 ¶ And there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, and in the ſtars; and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity: the ſea and the waves roaring. 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 27 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

The ſenſe is this: "As ſoon as ye ſhall ſee the Roman army appear before the city of Jeruſalem (called by St. Matthew and St. Mark, *The abomination of deſolation*, that is, the army which is ſuch an abomination unto you, and the occaſion of ſuch deſolation wherever it goes) then let every one that values his own ſafety, fly as far and as faſt as he can, as Lot fled from the flames of Sodom; and be glad, if by flight he can ſave his life, though he loſes all beſides." *Learn* thence, That when almighty God is pouring forth his fury upon a ſinful people, it is both lawful, and a neceſſary duty, by flight to endeavour to ſhelter ourſelves from the approaching calamity and deſolation. *When ye ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, flee to the mountains.* *Obſerve* farther, the dreadful relation that our Saviour here gives of thoſe deſolating calamities which were coming upon Jeruſalem, from the Roman army without, and from the ſeditions and factions of the zealots within, who committed ſuch outrages and ſlaughters, that there were no leſs than eleven hundred thouſand Jews ſlain, and ninety-ſeven thouſand taken priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for thirty pence, were now themſelves ſold thirty for a penny. Now did the temple itſelf become a ſacrifice, a whole burnt-offering, and was conſumed to aſhes. Laſtly, What encouragement Chriſt gives to all his faithful diſciples and followers: he bids them look up, and lift up their heads, when theſe calamities came upon others; look up with confidence and joy, for your redemption, ſalvation and deliverance, then approacheth. God had a remnant which he deſigned ſhould ſurvive that deſtruction, to be an holy ſeed: theſe are called upon to look up with chearfulneſs and joy, when the hearts of others were failing them for fear. And thus ſhall it be at the general day of judgment (of which Jeruſalem's viſitation was a type). Lord! How will the glory and terror of that day dazzle the eyes, and terrify the hearts of all the enemies of Chriſt; but delight the eyes and rejoice the hearts of all that love and fear him, that ſerve and obey him: then may the friends of Chriſt *look up, and lift up*, &c.

29 And he ſpake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now ſhoot forth, ye ſee and know of your own ſelves that ſummer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but my words ſhall not paſs away.

In theſe words our Saviour declares the certainty of his coming to viſit Jeruſalem for all her barbarous and bloody cruelty towards himſelf, his prophets and apoſtles; he is pleaſed to ſet forth this by the ſimilitude of the fig-tree, whoſe beginning to bud declares the ſummer at hand; thus our Saviour tells them, That when they ſhould ſee the forementioned ſigns, they might conclude the deſtruction of their city and temple to be nigh at hand; and accordingly, ſome of that generation, then living, did ſee theſe predictions fulfilled. *Learn*, That God is no leſs punctual in the execution of his threatenings upon incorrigible ſinners, than he is faithful in the performance of his promiſes towards his own people: The truth and veracity of God is as much concerned to execute his threatenings, as it is to fulfil his promiſes.

34 ¶ And take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man.

Here our Lord cautions his diſciples againſt ſuch a diſtemper and indiſpoſition of mind, as may render them unfit and unready for his coming and appearance; and to take heed of two dangerous ſins, namely, voluptuouſneſs and earthly-mindedneſs, which above any other ſins will indiſpoſe us for the duty of watchfulneſs. There is a threefold reaſon why our Saviour forwarns us of theſe ſins, with reference to the day of judgment: 1. Becauſe they are *peccata præcurrentia*, certain prognoſtics of the day of judgment approaching: *As it was in the days of Noah, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of man be.* 2. Becauſe they are *peccata accelerantia*, they do not only foretel, but haſten the coming of Chriſt. To ſee the world drowned in voluptuouſneſs and earthly-mindedneſs, in ſecurity and ſenſuality, is not only a ſign to foretel, but a ſin that haſtens judgment, and pulls down vengeance upon a wicked world. 4. Chriſt bids us beware of theſe ſins with reference to the day of judgment, becauſe theſe ſins are *deriſoria judicii*, they beget in men a prophane ſpirit of ſcoffing and deriding at the notices of Chriſt's appearing to judgment, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. *In the laſt days there ſhall come ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming?* Our Saviour having thus warned them of theſe ſins, he next exhorts them to watchfulneſs, *Watch ye therefore, for as a ſnare that day will come upon you:* that is, very ſuddenly, and very unexpectedly: A ſnare has a threefold property, to catch ſuddenly, to hold ſure, to deſtroy certainly. Our Lord's coming to Jeruſalem was very unexpected, and his coming to us by death and judgment will ſteal upon us, if we be not watchful. Watch we then, for our Lord will come; at what hour he will come, cannot certainly be known; there is no time in which we can promiſe or aſſure ourſelves, that our Lord will not come: the time of our whole life is little enough to prepare for his coming. Our preparation for, will be no acceleration or haſtening of, our Lord's coming. And oh! how dreadful will his coming be, if we be found off our watch, and altogether unready for his appearance? Appear we muſt in judgment, but ſhall not be able to ſtand in the judgment; ſee Chriſt we ſhall as a judge, but not as a Redeemer.

37 And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives. 38 And

all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Our Lord had exhorted his diſciples in the foregoing verſes to diligence and prayer: here he ſets an example of both before them. Buſying himſelf in God's ſervice all the day, and at night ſpending much time in prayer; in the day-time he was in the temple preaching, in the evening he was on the mount of Olives praying. Lord! what an example of indefatigable zeal and diligence haſt thou ſet before thy miniſters and members! O that when our Maſter comes, we may be found working, our people watching, and both they and we waiting for the joyful coming of our Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

CHAP. XXII.

NOW the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the paſſover. 2 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

This chapter gives a ſad and ſorrowful relation of the chief prieſts' conſpiracy againſt the life of our bleſſed Saviour; in which we have three particulars *obſervable:* 1. The perſons making this conſpiracy, *the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders*; that is the whole Jewiſh ſanhedrim, or general council; they all lay their malicious heads together, to contrive the deſtruction of the holy and innocent Jeſus.— Thence *learn*, That general councils have erred, and may err fundamentally, both in matters of doctrine and practice; ſo did this general council at Jeruſalem, conſiſting of chief prieſts, doctors and elders, with the high prieſt their preſident: They did not believe Jeſus to be the Meſſias, after all the miracles wrought before their eyes, but ignominiouſly put him to death. 2. The manner of this conſpiracy againſt the life of our bleſſed Saviour: it was clandeſtine, ſecret, and ſubtle. *They conſulted how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.* *Learn* thence, That Satan makes uſe of the ſubtlety of crafty men, and abuſeth their parts as well as their power, for his own purpoſes and deſigns: the devil never ſends a fool on his errand. 3. The circumſtance of time when this conſpiracy was managed, *at the feaſt of the paſſover*. It was a cuſtom among the Jews to execute malefactors at their ſolemn feaſts, at which time all the Jews came up to Jeruſalem to ſacrifice, and then put the malefactors to death, that all Iſrael might ſee and fear, and not do ſo wickedly. Accordingly the feaſt of the paſſover was waited for as a fit opportunity to put our Saviour to death. The only objection was, That it might occaſion a tumult and uproar amongſt the people, there being ſuch a mighty intercourſe at that time in Jeruſalem; but Judas making them a proffer, they readily comply with the motion, and reſolve to take the firſt opportunity to put our Saviour to death.

3 ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas, ſirnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief prieſts and captains, how ne might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promiſed, and ſought opportunity to betray him unto them in the abſence of the multitude.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon betraying our bleſſed Saviour Judas; Judas a profeſſor, Judas a preacher, Judas an apoſtle, and one of the twelve, whom Chriſt had choſen out of the world to be his deareſt friend, one of his family and houſhold: Shall we wonder to find friends unfriendly or unfaithful to us, when our Saviour has a traitor in his own family! 2. The heinous nature of Judas's ſin; he betrayed Jeſus, Jeſus his Maker, Jeſus his Maſter. It is no ſtrange or uncommon thing for the vileſt of ſins, and moſt horrid impieties, to be acted by ſuch perſons as make the moſt eminent profeſſion of holineſs and religion. 3. What was the occaſion that led Judas to the commiſſion of this ſin; it was his inordinate love of money. I do not find that Judas had any particular malice, ſpite, or ill-will againſt our Saviour, but a baſe and unworthy ſpirit of covetouſneſs poſſeſſed him, and this made him ſell his Maſter. Covetouſneſs is the root of ſin; an eager and inſatiable thirſt after the world is the parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural ſins; for which reaſon our Saviour doubles his caution, Luke xii. 15. *Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*; it ſhews us both the great danger of ſin, and the great care that we ought to take to preſerve ourſelves from it.

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the paſſover muſt be killed. 8 And he ſent Peter and John, ſaying, Go and prepare us the paſſover, that we may eat. 9 And they ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10 And he ſaid unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there ſhall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the houſe where he entereth in. 11 And ye ſhall ſay unto the good man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith unto thee, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 12 And he ſhall ſhew you a large upper-room furniſhed: there make ready. 13 And they went and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

The time for the celebration of the paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends two of his diſciples, Peter and John, to Jeruſalem, to prepare what was needful in order thereunto; and here we have *obſervable*, 1. An eminent proof and evidence of Chriſt's divinity, in foretelling to his diſciples all the particular occurrences and circumſtances which they ſhould meet with in the city, as, *a man bearing a pitcher of water*, &c. 2. How readily the heart of the houſholder was diſpoſed to receive our Saviour and his diſciples, and to accommodate them with all things needful upon this occaſion. Our bleſſed Saviour had not a lamb of his own, and peradventure no money wherewith to purchaſe one, yet he finds a more agreeable accomodation in this poor man's houſe, than if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory palace, and had the proviſions of Soloman's table.

When Chriſt has a paſſover to celebrate, he will diſpoſe the hearts of his children and ſervants to a free reception of himſelf. The room that Chriſt will enter into, muſt be a large room, an upper room, a room furniſhed and prepared: *a large room* is the emblem of an enlarged heart, enlarged with love, with joy and thankfulneſs: *an upper room* is an heart exalted, not puffed up with pride, but lifted up with heavenly meditations: and *a room furniſhed* is a ſoul adorned with all the graces of the holy Spirit; into ſuch an heart doth Chriſt enter, and there delights to dwell: *Here is my reſt for ever,* ſays Chriſt, *here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*

14 And when the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve apoſtles with him. 15 And he ſaid unto them, With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer. 16 For I ſay unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide *it* among yourſelves: 18 For I ſay unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God ſhall come. 19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewiſe alſo the cup after ſupper, ſaying, This cup *is* the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you. 21 ¶ But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed. 23 And they began to inquire among themſelves, which of them it was that ſhould do this thing.

Obſerve here, 1. What ardency of deſire, and vehemency of affection, our holy Lord expreſſes to celebrate the paſſover with his diſciples, and to adminiſter the ſacramental ſupper to them before he left them: *With deſire have I deſired to eat with you before I ſuffer.* Thence *learn*, That it is very neceſſary, when ſufferings do appear, eſpecially when death does approach, to have immediate recourſe to the table of the Lord, which affords both an antidote againſt fear, and is a reſtorative to our faith. Chriſt, the night before he ſuffered, communicated with his diſciples. 2. The unexampled boldneſs of the impudent traitor Judas; though he had ſold his Maſter, he preſumes to ſit down at the table with him, and with the other diſciples: Had the preſence of Judas polluted this ordinance to any but himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would not have ſuffered him to approach unto it. It *teaches* us, That although nothing be more ordinary than for unholy perſons to preſs into the holy ordinances of God, which they have no right (whilſt ſuch) to approach unto, yet their preſence pollutes the ordinances only to themſelves. Holy perſons are not polluted by their ſins, therefore ought not to be diſcouraged from coming, by their preſence. 3. Chriſt did not name Judas, and ſay, O thou perfidious traitor; but, *Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.* Doubtleſs Chriſt did not name him, becauſe he would not drive him to deſpair, but draw him to repentance. But, Lord, thou knoweſt us, when thou nameſt us not: O how ſad is it for any of thy family, who pretend friendſhip with thee, to conſpire againſt thee; and after they have eat of thy bread, to lift up the heel againſt thee. 4. That though Judas was not named, yet he ſaw himſelf pointed at by our Saviour; *Behold, the hand that betrayeth me is on the table*; and Judas's heart told him whoſe hand that was; yea, though Judas heard that dreadful ſentence denounced againſt him, *Wo unto the man by whom the Son of man is betrayed*; yet he is no more blanked than innocency itſelf: This ſhameleſs man had the impudence to ſay to our bleſſed Saviour, *Maſter, Is it I?* Though St. Luke ſays it not, the other Evangeliſts tell us, that Chriſt anſwered him, *Thou ſayeſt it.* Did not Judas (think we) bluſh extremely, and hang down his guilty head at ſo galling an intimation? Nothing leſs; we read not of any thing like it. Lord, how does obſtinacy in ſinning, ſteel the brow, and render it incapable of all relenting impreſſions! Immediately after the celebration of the paſſover, followed the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper; where we have *obſervable*, The author, the time, the elements, and the miniſterial actions. 1. The author of this new ſacrament, *Jeſus took bread. Learn* thence, That to inſtitute a ſacrament is the ſole prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt; the church has no power to make new ſacraments; it is only her duty to celebrate thoſe which our Saviour has made. 2. The time of the inſtitution, the night before the paſſion, *The night in which he was betrayed, he took bread.* 3. The ſacramental elements, *bread and wine*; bread, repreſenting the body, and wine the blood of our Redeemer; bread being an abſolutely neceſſary food, a common and obvious food, a ſtrengthening and refreſhing food; and wine being the moſt excellent drink, the moſt pleaſant and delightful, the moſt cordial and reſtorative; for theſe reaſons, amongſt others, did Chriſt conſecrate and ſet theſe creatures apart for thoſe holy purpoſes for which he deſigned them. 4. The miniſterial actions, breaking of the bread, and bleſſing of the cup: *Jeſus took bread*; that is, ſeparated it, and ſet it apart from common uſe, for holy pupoſes; *He bleſſed it*, that is, he prayed for a bleſſing upon it, and *brake it*, thereby ſhadowing forth his body broken upon the croſs; and *he gave it* to his diſciples, ſaying, This broken bread ſignifies my body, which is ſuddenly to be broken upon the croſs, for the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world; *Do you likewiſe this in remembrance of my death.* As to the cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by prayer and thankſgiving, he commands his diſciples to drink all of it; *For*, ſays he, *this cup is the new teſtament in my blood*; that is, the wine in this cup doth repreſent the ſhedding of my blood, by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified and confirmed. *Drink ye all of this*, ſays our Saviour: whence we gather, That every communicant has as undoubted a right to the cup, as he has to the bread in the Lord's ſupper; therefore for the church of Rome to deny the cup to the common people, is ſacrilege, and directly contrary to Chriſt's inſtitution.

24 And there was alſo a ſtrife among them, which
of

of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt. 25 And he ſaid unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and they that exerciſe authority upon them, are called benefactors. 26 But ye *ſhall* not *be* ſo: but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth ſerve. 27 For whether *is* greater, he that ſitteth at meat, or he that ſerveth? *is* not he that ſitteth at meat, but I am among you as he that ſerveth.

If theſe words be not placed out of order by St. Luke here, it may ſeem very ſtrange, that the apoſtles, immediately after the receiving the ſacrament, ſhould entertain their minds with thoughts of precedency and ſuperiority; and much ſtranger yet, that they ſhould diſcourſe openly of ſuch a ſubject as this, eſpecially conſidering what our Saviour had juſt before told them, that, *he was betrayed into the hands of ſinners.* But whether at this time or not, it is moſt certain, at ſome time or other, a ſtrife was found amongſt them. Now that our Saviour might effectually quench thoſe unhappy ſparks of ambition which were kindled in his apoſtles minds, he tells them, that ſupremacy and dominion belong to ſecular princes, not to evangelical paſtors, who ought to carry themſelves with humility and condeſcenſion one towards another. Not that Chriſt directs to a parity and equality amongſt his miniſters, or forbids the pre-eminency of ſome over others; but the affecting of ſuperiority, and the love of pre-eminency, is that which our Saviour diſalloweth. *Learn* 1. That ſo far ought the miniſters of Chriſt to be from affecting a domination and ſuperiority of power over their fellow-brethren, that, in imitation of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves fellow-ſervants. 2. That ſuch miniſters as do love and affect pre-eminency and ſuperiority, are moſt unfit for it, and they deſerve it beſt that ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the dignity and honour which the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly and only affect, is in another world; and the way to be the greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble here; mean in our own eyes, and little in our own eſteem: *Whoſoever is chief,* ſays Chriſt, *let him be your ſervant.*

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

Obſerve here, What an honourable acknowledgment Chriſt makes of the conſtancy of his diſciples love and affection towards him: *Ye are they that continued with me in my temptations:* that is, in my afflictions, trials, and ſufferings. It is an eaſy matter to abide with Chriſt in days of peace, in times of conſolation; but when we are under afflictions, temptations, and troubles, then to abide and keep cloſe to Chriſt, this is the proof of love and friendſhip: And as Chriſt makes an honourable mention of their conſtancy towards him, ſo he preſently aſſures them of an honourable reward; *I appoint unto you a kingdom. Learn* thence, That ſuch as are ſharers with Chriſt in his ſufferings, ſhall certainly communicate with him in his glory; *If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him:* And whereas our Saviour promiſes his apoſtles, *to ſit upon thrones with him, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael;* we may gather, that ſuch miniſters as do moſt ſervice for Chriſt, and forſake moſt to follow him, and continue in temptation and tribulation with him, ſhall in his kingdom partake of moſt honour and dignity with him and from him: *You ſhall eat and drink in my kingdom, and ſit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael:* poſſibly the apoſtles, and all the zealous, faithful, and laborious miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be nearer his throne in heaven, than either ſaints or angels; nearer than the angels, becauſe by Chriſt's aſſuming the human nature, they are more nearly allied to him; he is their friend, but our brother; and nearer than other ſaints, as having done more eminent ſervice for Chriſt, and brought more honour and glory to him by a laborious diligence in their place and ſtation: Dan. xii. 3. *They that turn many to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine,* &c.

31 ¶ And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired *to have* you, that he may ſift *you* as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.

Here I ſhall give, 1. The general ſenſe of the words; 2. The particular matters contained in them; 3. The ſpecial obſervation from them. The ſenſe of the words is this: As for you my diſciples in general, and for thee Peter in particular, I muſt tell thee, that Satan hath accuſed you all before God, and deſires that he may have the ſifting of you all by his winnowing winds of temptation and perſecution, that he may ſhake your faith, and weaken your confidence; but I have prayed for you all, and particularly for thyſelf, who art in greateſt danger of falling, becauſe ſo confident of thine own ſtrength and ſtanding, that thy faith, though ſeverely ſhaken, may not utterly fail; and when by repentance thou art recovered from thy fall, be careful to confirm and ſtrengthen others, that they fall not in like manner. The particular matters contained in theſe words, are theſe; A chriſtian's danger, a chriſtian's ſafety, and a chriſtian's duty. 1. A chriſtian's danger, *Satan hath deſired to ſift you.* Where *obſerve,* 1. The perſon particularly warned of the danger, *Simon, Simon:* The doubling of the word, doubtleſs, carries a ſpecial intimation with it; it denotes the greatneſs and nearneſs of Peter's danger, his own ſecurity and inſenſibleneſs of that danger, and the great affection of Chriſt his monitor to give him warning of his danger. 2. The warning itſelf, and that is of a deviliſh conſpiracy againſt himſelf and all the apoſtles, *Satan hath deſired to have you;* to have you for his own, if it might be; to have you, as believers, rather than other men; to have you as eminent believers, rather than other Chriſtians; and to have you as apoſtles and miniſters, rather than other eminent believers. And as Satan has deſired to have you, ſo to *ſift you too, to winnow you as wheat;* not to fetch out the chaff, but to make the chaff. Here *note*, That Satan has his winnowing winds of temptation, and his tempeſtuous winds of perſecution, for the ſifting of God's children. Farther, That it is the wheat, the good corn that Satan winnows; not chaff, not droſs: Sinners that are all chaff, and nothing but droſs, Satan will not be at the pains to ſift and winnow them: But what is this ſifting? *Anſw.* In ſifting two things are performed; 1. The agitation, ſhaking and toſſing of the corn from ſide to ſide; 2. The ſeparation of the corn from the chaff and duſt; Satan intends the former, God effects the latter; *Cribratione non perditur, ſed pergatur frumentum: The corn is improved, not impaired by winnowing.* The ſaints of God ſhall be no loſers in the end by Satan's temptations, how many and ſtrong ſoever they may be in the way. 2. The Chriſtian's ſafety; *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Where *note*, 1. The care that Chriſt had of Peter, and in him of all believers; *I have prayed for thee*; for thee as a believing chriſtian, and for thee as a tempted chriſtian: And it is not ſaid, I will pray for thee, but I have prayed for thee. Chriſt prayed for Peter before Peter underſtood that he had need of Chriſt's prayer; Chriſt prayed for Peter, as ſoon as ever Satan deſired to ſift Peter: Our Interceſſor is full as nimble and ſpeedy in his ſuit for us, as Satan is in his accuſations againſt us; he has deſired, but I have prayed; he is a potent aſſailant, but thou haſt a powerful aſſiſtant. 2. The ſubject-matter prayed for, *That thy faith fail not*; not that thy faith be not aſſaulted, not that thy faith be not ſhaken, but, that thy faith may not fail by an abſolute and total deficiency. The third particular is the chriſtian's duty; *When thou art converted ſtrengthen thy brethren.* When *converted*; that is, when recovered from thy fall, when reſtored upon thy repentance to the divine favour. This converſion is not from a ſtate of ſin; Peter was ſo converted before; but it was from an act of ſin, into which he ſhould lapſe and relapſe: *Strengthen thy brethren*: that is, eſtabliſh others in the faith, from which thou art ſhamefully fallen thyſelf. Now the leſſons of inſtruction from the whole are theſe: 1. That temptations are like ſiftings; God ſifts, to purge away our duſt and droſs; Satan ſifts, not to get out the chaff, but to bolt out the flour; his temptations are levelled againſt our faith. 2. That Satan has a continual deſire to be ſifting and winnowing God's flour. Satan's own children are all bran, all chaff, theſe he ſifts not: God's children have flour mixed with bran, good wheat mixed with chaff; theſe he deſires to ſift, winnow, and fan: not to ſeparate the bran and droſs, but to deſtroy the flour. 3. That the interceſſion of Chriſt gives ſecurity, ſatisfaction, and encouragement to all believers, that though their faith may, by temptations, be ſhaken and aſſaulted, yet, that it ſhall never be finally vanquiſhed and overcome: *I have prayed that thy faith fail not.* 4. That lapſed chriſtians, when recovered and reſtored, ought to endeavour to reſtore and recover, to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh others: *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.*

33 And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into priſon, and to death. 34 And he ſaid, I tell thee, Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me.

St. Peter's reſolution to accompany Chriſt both to priſon and to death, was holy and good: but his too confident opinion of his own ſtrength and ability ſo to do, without a divine act and aſſiſtance, was his failing and infirmity.—Self-confidence is a ſin too incident to the holieſt and beſt of men. Little did St. Peter think what a feather he ſhould be in the wind of temptation, if once God left him to himſelf, and to Satan's aſſaults. Farther, How hard a matter it is for a chriſtian to excel in gifts, and not to be over-confident and conceited. To ſee a man eminent in gifts, and yet exemplary in humility, is a rare ſight; if we ſtand in the evil day, it is an humble fear of falling that muſt enable us to ſtand.

35 And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing? And they ſaid, Nothing. 36 Then ſaid he unto them, But now he that hath a purſe, let him take *it*, and likewiſe *his* ſcrip: and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment and buy one. 37 For I ſay unto you, that this that is written muſt yet be accompliſhed in me, And he was reckoned among the tranſgreſſors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they ſaid, Lord, behold, here *are* two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.

As if our Lord had ſaid, "Hitherto I have been with you, and you have had my ſpecial protection and careful proviſion, though you went without purſe, ſcrip, or ſword: But the time is now at hand when I muſt leave you; when your friends will be few, and your enemies many; therefore make ſuch proviſion for yourſelves, as prudence ſhall direct. Indeed, my ſufferings will be firſt: I muſt be numbered with the tranſgreſſors, and all things that are written of me muſt be accompliſhed, and will ſuddenly be fulfilled; and after me you will next come upon the ſtage, therefore prepare and provide for it." *Learn*, That Chriſt having forewarned his members, but eſpecially his miniſters, of the dangers, diſtreſſes and difficulties that they are to conflict and encounter with; it is their duty by faith and patience, with courage and chriſtian reſolution, to be well armed and prepared againſt them.

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his diſciples alſo followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he ſaid unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a ſtone's caſt, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him. 44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly: and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his diſciples, he found them ſleep-

ing for ſorrow. 46 And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.

Our bleſſed Saviour being now come to the mount of Olives, and having entered with his diſciples into the garden near it, whither he uſed to retire and pray: in this place he falls into a bitter and bloody agony, in which he prayed with wonderful fervour and importunity; his ſufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his knees, and would be found in a praying poſture. *Learn* thence, That prayer is the beſt preparative for, as well as moſt powerful ſupport under the heavieſt ſufferings that can befal us. As to this prayer of our Saviour, in his agony, many particulars are very obſervable: As, 1. The time when he prayed thus extraordinarily; it was the evening before he ſuffered, juſt before Judas, with his black guard, came to apprehend him; and when he did come, he found him in a praying poſture: our Lord teaching us by his example, that when imminent dangers are before us, eſpecially when death is apprehended by us, it is our duty to be very much in prayer to God, and very fervent in our wreſtlings with him. 2. The ſubject matter of our Lord's prayer, *That, if poſſible, the cup might paſs from him*; that is, that he might eſcape the dreadful wrath, at which he was ſo ſore amazed. But what! did Chriſt now begin to repent of his undertaking for ſinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when he came to the pinch? No, nothing like this: but as he had two natures, being God and man, ſo he had two diſtinct wills; as man, he feared and ſhunned death, as God-man he willingly ſubmitted to it. The divine nature, and the human ſpirit of Chriſt, did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing intereſts. Again, this prayer was not abſolute, but conditional: "Father, if it may be, if thou wilt, if it pleaſe thee, let the cup paſs; if not, I will drink it." The cup of ſufferings, we ſee is a very bitter and diſtaſteful cup, a cup which human nature abhors; yet doth God oft-times put this bitter cup of affliction into the hands of thoſe whom he ſincerely loves; and when he does ſo, it is their duty to drink it with ſilence and ſubmiſſion, as their Lord did before them. 3. The manner of our Lord's prayer in this agony: and here we may remark, (1.) It was a ſolitary prayer, he went by himſelf alone, out of the hearing of his diſciples. The company of our beſt and deareſt friends is not always ſeaſonable; there are times and ſeaſons when a chriſtian would not be willing, that the moſt intimate friend he has in the world ſhould be with him, to hear what paſſes in ſecret between him and his God. Again, (2.) It was an humble prayer, that appears by the poſtures in which he caſt himſelf, ſometimes kneeling, ſometimes lying proſtrate upon his face, he lies in the very duſt, and lower he could not lie, and his heart was as low as his body. (3.) It was a vehement, fervent, and importunate prayer: ſuch was the fervour of his ſpirit, that he prayed himſelf into an agony. O let us bluſh to think how unlike our praying frame of ſpirit is to Chriſt's. Lord, what coldneſs, deadneſs, formality, and lazineſs, is found in our prayers! How often do our lips move, when our hearts ſtand ſtill! *Obſerve* 4. The poſture which the diſciples were found in; when our Lord was praying in his agony, they were faſt aſleep. Good God! Could they poſſibly ſleep at ſuch a time as this! when Chriſt's ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful, could their eyes be thus heavy? *Learn* thence, That the very beſt of Chriſt's diſciples may be, and oft-times are, overtaken with great infirmities, when the moſt important duties are performing. 5. The mild, meek, and gentle rebuke which he gives his diſciples for their ſleeping; He ſaid unto them, *Why ſleep ye? Could ye not watch with me one hour?* "What, not watch when your Maſter was in ſuch danger! Could ye not watch with me, when I was going to lay down my life for you? What, not one hour, and that the parting hour too!" *Learn* hence, That the holieſt and beſt reſolved chriſtians, who have willing ſpirits for Chriſt and his ſervice, yet, in regard to the weakneſs of the fleſh, and the frailty of human nature, it is their duty to watch and pray, and thereby guard themſelves againſt temptations. *Riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.*

47 ¶ And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus, to kiſs him. 48 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs? 49 When they that were about him ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the ſword? 50 ¶ And one of them ſmote the ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his right ear. 51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52 Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief prieſts, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye ſtretched forth no hand againſt me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.

It was the lot and portion of our bleſſed Saviour here, we find, to be betrayed into the hands of his mortal enemies, by the treachery of a falſe and diſſembling friend: and in this ſad relation before us, we have obſervable, The traitor, the treaſon, the manner how, and the time when this treaſonable deſign was executed. *Obſerve*, 1. The traitor, Judas; all the evangeliſts carefully deſcribe him by his name, Judas, Judas Iſcariot, leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for Jude, the brother of James; and by his office, one of the twelve. Lord, how ought the greateſt profeſſors to look well to themſelves, and to the grounds and principles of their profeſſion! for a profeſſion begun in hypocriſy, will certainly end in apoſtacy. 2. The occaſion of this treaſon, covetouſneſs, or the inordinate love of worldly wealth; and accordingly, the devil lays a temptation before him, exactly ſuited to his temper and inclination, and it inſtantly overcame him. *Learn* hence, That perſons are never in ſuch imminent danger of falling into ſin, as when they meet with temptations exactly ſuited to their maſter luſts. O pray we, That God would keep us from temptations ſuited to our predominant luſt and corruption. 3. The treaſon of Judas; He led an armed multitude to the place where Chriſt was, gave them a ſignal to diſcover him by, and bids them *lay hands upon him, and hold him faſt*: which treaſon of Judas, was attended with theſe black and helliſh aggravations: he had been a witneſs to our Saviour's miracles, and a hearer of our Lord's doctrine: What he did was not by ſolicitation: the chief prieſts did not ſend to him, but he went to them. Lord! how dangerous is it to allow ourſelves in any ſecret ſin. None can ſay how far that one ſin in time may lead us. Should any one have told Judas, that his coveteouſneſs would at laſt make him deny his Lord, and ſell his Saviour; he would have anſwered with Hazael, *Is thy ſervant a dog, that I ſhould do this thing?* 4. The endeavour made by the diſciples for their Maſter's reſcue. *One of them* (St. Matthew ſays it was Peter) *drew a ſword, and cut off the ear of Malchus.* But why not the ear of Judas rather? Becauſe though Judas was moſt faulty, yet Malchus might be moſt forward to arreſt and carry off our Saviour. O how does a pious breaſt boil with indignation at the ſight of any open affront offered to its Saviour! Yet, though Peter's heart was ſincere, his hand was raſh; good intentions are no warrant for irregular actions: and accordingly Chriſt who accepted the affection, reproved the action. To reſiſt authority, even in Chriſt's own defence, is raſh zeal, and diſcountenanced by the goſpel. Peter did well to aſk his Maſter, *If he ſhould ſmite with the ſword?* but he ought to have ſtayed his hand till Chriſt had given him his anſwer. However, Peter's ſin occaſioned a miracle from our Saviour; Chriſt heals that ear miraculouſly, which Peter cut off unwarrantably: yet the ſight of this miracle converted none. O how inſufficient are all outward means for converſion, without the Spirit's operation!

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high prieſt's houſe. And Peter followed afar off. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and where ſat down together, Peter ſat down among them. 56 But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him and ſaid, This man was alſo with him. 57 And he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not. 59 And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth, this *fellow* alſo was with him; for he is a Galilean. 60 And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately, while he yet ſpake, the cock crew. 61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

This paragraph of the chapter gives us an account of the fall and riſing of Peter; of his ſin in denying his Maſter, and of his recovery by repentance; both muſt be conſidered diſtinctly. Firſt, touching his ſin and fall; there are four particulars *obſervable* relating thereunto; namely, the ſin itſelf, the occaſion of that ſin, the reiteration and repetition of it, and the aggravating circumſtances attending it. *Obſerve*, 1. The ſin itſelf, the denial of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord and Maſter, *I know not the man*; and this backed with an oath, he ſware that he knew him not. Lord! how may the ſlaviſh fear of ſuffering drive the holieſt and beſt of men to commit the fouleſt and worſt of ſins? 2. The occaſions leading to this ſin, and they were theſe: Firſt, His *following Chriſt afar off*: To follow Chriſt was the effect of Peter's faith, but to follow him afar off at this time, was the fruit of fear, and the effect of frailty. Wo unto us when temptation comes, if we be far from Chriſt's gracious preſence and aſſiſtance. 2. His being in bad company, amongſt Chriſt's enemies: Would we eſcape temptations to ſin, we muſt then decline ſuch company, as would allure and draw us into ſin. Peter had better have been a-cold by himſelf alone, than warming himſelf at a fire, which was encompaſſed in with the blaſphemies of the multitudes; where his conſcience, though not ſeared, was yet made hard.—Another grand occaſion of Peter's falling, was a preſumptuous confidence of his own ſtrength and ſtanding; *Though all men ſhould forſake thee, yet will not I.* O Lord! to preſume upon ourſelves, is the ready way to provoke thee to leave us to ourſelves; if ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. We ſoon fall, if we believe it impoſſible to fall. 3. The reiteration and repetition of this ſin, he denied Chriſt again and again: he denies him firſt with a lie, then with an oath, and next with a curſe. Lord! how dangerous is it not to reſiſt the firſt beginnings of ſin? If we yield to one temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more and ſtronger. Peter proceeded from a denial to a lie, from a lie to an oath, from an oath to an imprecation and curſe. It is our wiſdom vigorouſly to reſiſt ſin at the beginning; for then have we moſt power, and ſin has leaſt. 4. The heinous and aggravating circumſtances of St. Peter's ſin; and they are theſe: 1. The character of his perſon, a diſciple, an apoſtle, a chief apoſtle, a ſpecial favourite, who with James and John had the ſpecial honour to be with Chriſt at his transfiguration; yet he denies Chriſt. 2. The perſon whom he denies, *his Maſter*, his Saviour and Redeemer. He, that in great humility had waſhed Peter's feet, had ate the paſſover with Peter, had given but juſt before the holy ſacrament to Peter, yet is this kind and condeſcending Saviour denied by Peter. 3. Conſider the perſons before whom he denied Chriſt; the chief prieſt's ſervants. O how ſurpriſing, and yet very pleaſing was it to them, to ſee one diſciple betray and ſell his Maſter, and another diſown and deny him! 4. Conſider the time when he denied him: It was but a few hours after he had received the holy ſacrament from Chriſt's own hands. How unreaſonable then is their objection againſt coming to the Lord's table, That ſome who go to it, diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it: Such examples ought not to diſcourage us from coming to the ordinance, but ſhould excite and increaſe our watchfulneſs after we have been there, that our after-deportment may be ſuitable to the ſolemnity of a ſacramental table. 5. What a ſmall temptation he lay under thus ſhamefully to deny his Lord and Maſter: A damſel only at firſt ſpake to him. Had a band of armed ſoldiers appeared to him, and apprehended him; had he been bound and led away to the judgment-hall, and there threatened with the ſentence of an ignominious death, ſome excuſe might have been made better for him; but to diſown his relation to Chriſt, upon a word ſpoken by a ſorry maid that kept the door, the ſmallneſs of the temptation was an high aggravation of the crime. Ah! Peter, how little didſt thou anſwer thy name at this time! Thou art not now a rock, but a reed, a pillar blown down by a woman's breath. O frail humanity, whoſe ſtrength is weakneſs and infirmity. *Note* here, That in moſt of the ſaints falls recorded in ſcripture, the firſt enticers to ſin, or the accidental occaſions of it, were women: witneſs (beſides the firſt fall, that of Adam's, where the woman was firſt in the tranſgreſſion) the fall of Lot, Samſon, David, Solomon, and Peter; theſe are ſad inſtances of the truth of what I ſpeak. A weak creature may be a ſtrong tempter; nothing is too impotent or uſeleſs for the devil's ſervice. It was a great aggravation of Peter's ſin, that the voice of a poor maid that kept the door, ſhould be of more force to overcome him, than his faith in Jeſus to ſuſtain him: But what ſhall we ſay? ſmall things are ſufficient to caſt us down, if God doth not help us up; we ſink under any burden, if God ſuſtains us not; and yield to the leaſt temptation, if he leaves us to ourſelves; a damſel ſhall then make a diſciple ſhrink, and a door-keeper ſhall be able to drive an apoſtle before her. This is the account, in ſhort, of St. Peter's fall, conſidered in itſelf, and with the circumſtances relating to it. Now follows his recovery and riſing again by repentance; and here we have *obſervable*, The ſuddenneſs of his repentance, the means of his repentance, and the manner of his repentance. 1. The ſuddenneſs of St. Peter's repentance: As his ſin was ſo ſad, ſo was his repentance ſpeedy. Sin committed by ſurprize, and through the prevalency of a temptation that ſuddenly aſſaults us, is much ſooner repented of, than where the ſin is preſumptuous and deliberate. David's murder and adultery were deliberate acts of ſin, in which he lay almoſt twelve months, without any ſolemn repentance for them. St. Peter's denial was haſty and ſudden, under a violent pang and paſſion of fear; and he takes the warning of the cock's crowing, to go forth ſpeedily and weep for his tranſgreſſion. 2. The means of his repentance, which was twofold: The leſs principal means was *the crowing of the cock*; the more principal means were *Chriſt's looking upon Peter, and Peter's remembering the words of Chriſt*. 1. The leſs principal means of Peter's riſing and recovery by repentance, was *the crowing of the cock*: As the voice of the maid occaſioned him to ſin, ſo the voice of the cock occaſioned him to reflect. That God who always can work without means, can ever, when he pleaſes, work by weak and contemptible means, and open the mouth of a bird or a beaſt, for the converſion of a man. But why doth our Lord make uſe of the crowing of a cock, as the means of bringing Peter to repentance? There is ever ſome myſtery in Chriſt's inſtitutions and inſtruments; the cock was a preacher, to call Peter to his duty, there being ſomething of emblem between a cock and a preacher; the preacher ought to have the wings of a cock, to rouze himſelf from drouzineſs and ſecurity, and to awaken others to a ſenſe of their duty: he muſt have the watchfulneſs of the cock, to be ever ready to diſcover and forewarn danger; He muſt have the voice of the cock, to cry aloud, to tell Iſrael of their ſin, to terrify the roaring lion of hell, and make him tremble, as they ſay the natural lion does: in a word, he muſt obſerve the hours of the cock, to crow at all ſeaſons; to preach the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon. Again, 2. The more principal means of Peter's recovery, were, Chriſt's looking upon Peter, and Peter's remembering the words of Chriſt:—(1.) *Chriſt looking upon Peter.* Our Saviour looked upon Peter before either Peter looked upon our Saviour, or upon himſelf: O wonderful act of love and grace towards this fallen diſciple! Chriſt was now upon his trial for his life (a time when our thoughts would have been wholly taken up about ourſelves) but even then did Chriſt find leiſure to think upon Peter, to remember his diſconſolate diſciple, to turn himſelf about, and give him a pitiful but piercing look, even a look that melted and diſſolved him into tears. We never begin to lament our ſins till we are firſt lamented by our Saviour; *Jeſus looked upon Peter*, that was the firſt more principal means of his repentance. But (2.) The other means was, Peter's remembering the words of the Lord, *Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me.* Now this remembrance was an applicative and feeling remembrance; he remembered the prediction of Chriſt, and applied it ſenſibly to himſelf; teaching us, that the efficacy of Chriſt's word, in order to ſound repentance, depends not upon the hiſtorical remembrance of it, but upon the cloſe application of it to every man's conſcience. *Obſerve*, 3. The manner of St. Peter's repentance; it was ſecret, it was ſincere, it was laſting and abiding. (1.) It was ſecret: he went out and wept, *Vere dolet, qui ſine teſte dolet*; he ſought a place of retirement, where he might mourn in ſecret: ſolitarineſs is moſt agreeable to an afflicted ſpirit: yet muſt I add, that as Peter's ſorrow, ſo probably his ſhame might cauſe him to go forth and weep. Chriſt looked upon him, and how aſhamed muſt he be to look upon Chriſt, ſeeing he had ſo lately denied that he had ever ſeen him? (2.) St. Peter's repentance was ſincere, *He wept bitterly.* His grief was extraordinary, and his tears abundant: there is always a weeping that muſt follow ſin; ſin muſt coſt the ſoul ſorrow, either here or in hell: we muſt now either mourn a while, or lament for ever. Doubtleſs Peter's tears were joined with a hearty confeſſion of his ſin to God, and ſmart reflections upon himſelf, after this manner: “Lord! what have I done? I, a diſciple: I, an apoſtle: I, that did ſo lately acknowledge my maſter, to be Chriſt the Lord: I, that ſpoke with ſo much aſſurance, *Though all men deny thee, yet will not I*: I that promiſed to lay down my life for his ſake: yet have I denied him, yet have I, with oaths and imprecations, diſowned him, and this at the voice of a damſel, not at the ſight of a drawn ſword preſented at my breaſt. Lord, what weakneſs, what wickedneſs, what unfaithfulneſs have I been guilty of! O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep all my days for the fault of this one night." Thus may we ſuppoſe our lapſed apoſtle to have bemoaned himſelf: and happy was it for him, that he did ſo; for bleſſed are the tears of a converted revolter, and happy is the miſery of a mourning offender. 3. St. Peter's repentance was not only ſecret and ſincere, but laſting and abiding: he retained a very quick ſenſe, and lively remembrance of this ſin upon his mind all his life after. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory reports, That ever after, when Peter heard the crowing of the cock, he fell upon his knees, and wept. Others ſay, That he was wont to riſe at midnight, and ſpent the time in prayer and humiliation between cock-crowing and day-light. And the Papiſts, who delight to turn every thing into ſuperſtition, firſt began that practice of ſetting up what we call weather-cocks upon towers and ſteeples, to put people in mind of Peter's fall and repentance by that ſignal. Laſtly, St. Peter's repentance was an extraordinary zeal and forwardneſs for the ſervice of Chriſt, to the end of his days. He had a burning love towards the holy Jeſus ever after, which is now improved into a ſeraphic flame; *Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee*, ſays he himſelf, John xxi. 17. And, as an evidence of it, he fed Chriſt's ſheep; for in the Acts of the Apoſtles, we read of his extraordinary diligence to ſpread the goſpel; and his travels, in order thereunto, are computed by ſome to be nine hundred and fifty miles. To end all, Have any of us fallen with Peter, though not with a formal abjuration, yet by a practical denying of him; let us go forth and weep with him: let us be more vigilant and watchful over ourſelves for the time to come; let us expreſs more fervent love and zeal for Chriſt, more diligence in his ſervice, more concernedneſs for his honour and glory: this would be an happy improvement of this example. God grant that it may have that bleſſed effect.

63 ¶ And the men that held Jeſus, mocked him, and ſmote *him*. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they ſtruck him on the face, and aſked him, ſaying, Prophecy, who is it that ſmote thee? 65 And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him.

Obſerve here, the vile affronts, the horrid abuſes, the injuries and indignities which were put upon the holy and innocent Jeſus in the day of his ſufferings: The rude officers and ſervants ſpit in his face, blind-folded his eyes, ſmote him with their hands, and, in contempt and ſcorn, bid him propheſy who it was that ſmote him. Verily, there is no degree of contempt, no mark of ſhame, no kind of ſuffering, which we ought to decline for Chriſt's ſake, who hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting upon our account.

66 And as ſoon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came together, and led him into their council, 67 Saying, Art thou the Chriſt? tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe. 68 And if I alſo aſk *you*, ye will not anſwer me, nor let *me* go. 69 Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God. 70 Then ſaid they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, Ye ſay that I am. 71 And they ſaid, What need we any further witneſs? for we ourſelves have heard of his own mouth.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt was judged and tried before a court that had no authority to judge or try him, verſe 66, *They led him into their council.* This was their great ſanhedrim or eccleſiaſtical court, which, according to its firſt conſtitution, was to conſiſt of ſeventy grave, honourable, and learned men, who were to judge impartially for God, according to Numb. xi. 16. But this, alas! conſiſted of a malicious pack of Scribes and Phariſees, men full of malice and revenge; and over theſe Caiaphas now preſided, an head fit for ſuch a body: but though there was at our Saviour's trial a face of a court amongſt them, yet their power was much abridged by the Romans, ſo that they could not hear nor determine, neither judge nor condemn in capital matters. *Obſerve* next, The indictment of blaſphemy is brought in againſt him; *What need we any farther witneſs? we have heard his blaſphemy.* Abominable wickedneſs! It is not in the power of the greateſt and unſpotted innocency to protect from ſlander and falſe accuſations. Farther, The great meekneſs of our Saviour under all theſe ill ſuggeſtions, and falſe accuſations: As a lamb before the ſhearer, ſo is he dumb, and opened not his mouth. *Learn* thence, That to bear the revilings, contradictions, and falſe accuſations of men, with a ſilent and ſubmiſſive ſpirit, is an excellent and Chriſt-like temper: though a trial for his innocent life was now managed moſt maliciouſly and illegally againſt him, yet, *when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not.* O may the ſame meek and humble mind be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who, inſtead of reviling his accuſers, prayed for his murderers, and offered up his blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it. Lord Jeſus, help us to ſet thy inſtructive example continually before us, and to be daily correcting and reforming of our lives by that bleſſed pattern. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIII.

AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and led him unto Pilate. 2 And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæſar, ſaying, That he himſelf is Chriſt a king. 3 And Pilate aſked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? and he anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou ſayeſt *it*. 4 Then ſaid Pilate to the chief prieſts and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man. 5 And they were the more fierce, ſaying, He ſtirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he aſked whether the man were a Galilean. 7 And as ſoon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's juriſdiction, he ſent him to Herod, who himſelf

ſelf was alſo at Jeruſalem at that time. 8 ¶ And when Herod ſaw Jeſus, he was exceeding glad: for he was deſirous to ſee him of a long ſeaſon, becauſe he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him. 9 Then he queſtioned with him in many words; but he anſwered him nothing. 10 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſtood, and vehemently accuſed him. 11 And Herod, with his men of war, ſet him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and ſent him again to Pilate. 12 ¶ And the ſame day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themſelves.

In this chapter we have a relation of the blackeſt and ſaddeſt tragedy that ever was acted upon the ſtage of the world, namely, the barbarous and bloody murder of the holy and innocent Jeſus, by the Jews his own countrymen; the beſt of kings put to death by his own ſubjects. And the firſt ſtep towards it, is his arraignment before Pilate and Herod; they poſt him from one to another; Pilate ſends him to Herod, and Herod having made ſufficient ſport with him, remands him to Pilate: neither of them find any fault in him worthy of death, yet neither of them would releaſe him. Here *obſerve*, That our Saviour being before Pilate, anſwers him readily and cautiouſly: *Art thou the king of the Jews?* ſays Pilate. *Thou ſayeſt it*, ſays our Saviour. *Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?* He replied, *I am*. Hence, ſays the apoſtle, 1 Tim. vi. 13. *That Jeſus Chriſt before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion*. *Teaching* us, That though we may, and ſometimes ought to hold our peace when our reputation is concerned, yet we muſt never be ſilent, when the honour of God and his truth may be effectually promoted by a free and full confeſſion. Yet it is farther *obſervable*, That our Saviour being before Herod, would neither anſwer him to any queſtion, nor work any miracle before him. This was an inſtance and evidence of our Lord's great humility, in refuſing to work miracles before Herod, who deſired it only to gratify his curioſity. Thus do vile men abuſe the holy power of God, deſiring to ſee it exerted for admiration and paſtime; not to be convinced or converted by it, but only to pleaſe their fooliſh fancy. And as admirable was the patience as the humility of Chriſt, and his preſent ſilence, who neither at Herod's requeſt, nor at the Jews importunity and falſe accuſations, could be moved to anſwer any thing. *Obſerve* farther, That though Herod had murdered Chriſt's forerunner, John the Baptiſt, and our Saviour's own life was in danger by Herod heretofore, yet now he has him in his hands, he lets him go; only he firſt abuſes him, and mocks him, and arrays him in a gorgeous robe, like a mocking. Thus were all the marks of ſcorn imaginable put upon our dear Redeemer; yet all this jeering and ſporting ſhame did our Lord undergo, to ſhew what was due unto us for our ſins; and alſo to give us an example to bear all the ſhame and reproach imaginable for his ſake; *who, for the joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the ſhame*, Heb. xiii. 2. Laſtly, The wicked accuſation brought in againſt our bleſſed Redeemer; *We found*, ſay they, *this fellow perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæſar*. O helliſh untruth! How directly contrary to the whole courſe and tenor of Chriſt's life was this accuſation! By his doctrine he preached up ſubjection to governors and government, ſaying, *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*. And by his practice he confirmed his own doctrine, working a miracle to pay tribute to Cæſar. Satan could help them to draw up an indictment as black as hell againſt the innocent Jeſus; but all the powers of hell and darkneſs could not prove a tittle of it.

13 ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief prieſts, and the rulers, and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching thoſe things whereof ye accuſe him; 15 No, nor yet Herod: for I ſent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and releaſe *him*. 17 For of neceſſity he muſt releaſe one unto them at the feaſt. 18 And they cried out all at once, ſaying, Away with this *man*, and releaſe unto us Barabbas: 19 (Who for a certain ſedition made in the city, and for murder, was caſt into priſon.) 20 Pilate therefore, willing to releaſe Jeſus, ſpake again to them. 21 But they cried, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify him. 22 And he ſaid unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him: I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let *him* go. 23 And they were inſtant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief prieſts, prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave ſentence that it ſhould be as they required. 25 And he releaſed unto them him, that for ſedition and murder was caſt into priſon, whom they had deſired; but he delivered Jeſus to their will.

Obſerve here, 1. How unwilling, how very unwilling, Pilate was to be an inſtrument of our Saviour's death: One while he expoſtulates with the chief prieſts, ſaying, *What evil hath he done?* Nay, St. Luke here declares, that Pilate came forth three ſeveral times, profeſſing that he found no fault in him. Where *note*, How much more juſtice and equity Chriſt met with from Pilate an heathen, than from the chief prieſts and people of the Jews, profeſſing the true religion? O how deſperate is the hatred that grows upon the root of religion! *Learn* hence, That hypocrites within the church, may be guilty of ſuch tremendous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſciences of infidels and pagans without the church may boggle out, and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a pagan, abſolves Chriſt, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, that heard his doctrine, and ſaw his miracles do condemn him. 2. How Pilate at laſt ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the importunity of the Jews, and delivers the holy and innocent Jeſus, contrary to his judgment and conſcience, to the will of his murderers. It is a vain apology for ſin, when perſons pretend that they are not committed with their own conſent, but at the inſtigation and importunity of others; for ſuch is the frame and conſtitution of man's ſoul, that none can make a perſon wicked without his own conſent: it was no extenuation of Pilate's ſin, no alleviation of his puniſhment, that to pleaſe the people he delivered our Saviour, contrary to the directions of his own conſcience, to be crucified. 3. The perſon whoſe life the wicked Jews preferred before the life of the holy Jeſus, Barabbas; *We will that thou releaſe Barabbas, and deliver Jeſus.* Mark theſe hypocritical high prieſts, who pretended ſuch a zeal for God and religion; they prefer the life of a perſon guilty of the higheſt immoralities and debaucheries, even murder and ſedition, before the beſt man that ever lived in the world. But whence ſprang the malice and hatred of the high prieſts, and people of the Jews, againſt our Saviour? Why, plainly from hence, Chriſt interpreted the law of God more ſtrictly than their luſts could bear; and he lived a more holy, uſeful, and excellent life than they could endure.—Now nothing enrages the men of the world more againſt the profeſſors, but eſpecially the preachers of the goſpel, than holineſs of doctrine, and ſtrictneſs of life and converſation. Such as preach and live well, let them expect ſuch enmity and oppoſition, ſuch malice and perſecution, ſuch ſufferings and trials, as will ſhock an ordinary patience and conſtancy of mind. Our Maſter met with it, let his zealous miniſters prepare for it.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the croſs, that he might bear *it* after Jeſus.

The ſentence of death being paſſed by Pilate, who can with dry eyes behold the ſad pomp of our Saviour's execution: Forth comes the bleſſed Jeſus out of Pilate's gates, bearing that croſs which ſoon after was to bear him. With his croſs on his ſhoulder, he marches towards Golgotha; and when they ſee he can go no faſter, they compel Simon of Cyrenia, not out of compaſſion, but indignation, to bear his croſs: This Cyrenian being a Gentile who bore our Lord's croſs, ſome think thereby was ſignified, that the Gentiles ſhould have a part in Chriſt, as well as the Jews, and be ſharers with them in the benefits of the croſs.

27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming, in which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck. 30 Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

There were four ſorts of perſons which attended our Saviour at his crucifixion; the executioners who tormented him, the Jews that mocked him, the ſpectators and lookers on that marked him, and ſympathizing friends who lamented him: theſe laſt Chriſt thus beſpoke, *Weep not for me, but for yourſelves*; that is, "Weep rather upon your own account than mine: Reſerve your ſorrows for the calamities coming upon yourſelves and your children." It is very probable, that the tears and lamentations, of many of theſe mourners were but the fruits of tender nature, not the effects of faith, and flowing from a principal of grace. *Learn* thence, That melting affections and ſorrows, even from the ſenſe of Chriſt's ſufferings, are not infallible marks of grace. The hiſtory of Chriſt's ſufferings, is very tragical and pathetical, and may melt ingenuous nature, where there is no renewed principle of grace.—Theſe motions of the affections may rather be a fit mood, than the very frame and temper of the ſoul. There are times and ſeaſons when the rougheſt and moſt obdurate hearts may be penſive and tender; but that is not its temper and frame, but only a fit, a pang, a tranſient paſſion. There is no inferring, or concluding then a work of grace upon the heart, ſimply and barely from the movings or meltings of the affections. Nature will have its good moods, but grace is ſteady; *Daughters of Jeruſalem*, &c.

32 And there were alſo two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. 33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Here we ſee the infamous company, that our holy Lord ſuffered with; *two thieves*: It had been a ſufficient diſparagement to our bleſſed Saviour, to be ſorted with the beſt of men; but to be numbered with the ſcum of mankind, is ſuch an indignity, as confounds our thoughts: This was deſigned by the Jews to diſhonour and diſgrace our Saviour the more; and to perſuade the world, that he was the greateſt of offenders: But God over-ruled this, for fulfilling an ancient prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, Iſa. liii. 12. *And he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.*

34 ¶ Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and caſt lots.

Chriſt had often preached the doctrine of forgiving enemies, and praying for them; he practiſes it here himſelf in a moſt exemplary manner. Where *note*, 1. The mercy deſired and prayed for; and that is, *forgiveneſs*. 2. The perſon deſiring that mercy, Chriſt, the dying Jeſus. 3. The perſons for whom it is deſired, his bloody murderers; *Father, forgive them.* 4. The argument uſed, or motive urged to procure this mercy: *Forgive them, for they know not what they do.* *Learn* hence, 1. That ignorance is the uſual cauſe of enmity againſt Chriſt. 2. That there is forgiveneſs with God, for ſuch as oppoſe, yea, perſecute Chriſt out of ignorance. 3. That to forgive enemies, and to beg forgiveneſs for them, is an evidence of a Chriſt-like frame of ſpirit; *Father, forgive them*: Not that the goſpel requires of us an inſenſibility of wrongs and injuries; that allows us a ſenſe of offered evils, though it forbids us to revenge them; yet the more tender our reſentments are, the more excellent our forgiveneſs is: So that a forgiving ſpirit doth not exclude the ſenſe of injuries; but the ſenſe of injuries graces the forgiveneſs of them; neither doth the goſpel require us, under the notion of forgiving enemies, to deliver up our rights and properties to the luſts of every one that will invade them, but meekly to receive evil, and readily to return good.

35 And the people ſtood beholding: and the rulers alſo with them derided *him*, ſaying, He ſaved others: let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt the choſen of God. 36 And the ſoldiers alſo mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar. 37 And ſaying, If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thyſelf. 38 And a ſuperſcription alſo was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Obſerve here, 1. A mighty aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings upon the croſs; namely, The mocking deriſion which he met with in his dying moments. As he endured the pain, ſo he deſpiſed the ſhame: Cruel mockings was our Lord tried with, both from the common people and from the chief prieſts; yet the common people's reviling him, and wagging their heads at him, was not ſo much to be taken notice of, as the chief prieſts, who were men of age and gravity, and the miniſters of religion; for them barbarouſly to mock him in his miſery, and, which was worſe, atheiſtically to jeer and ſcoff at his faith and affiance in God, ſaying, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he will have him*; this was ſuch an indignity, as confounds our thoughts. But from hence we *learn*, 1. That perſecutors are generally atheiſtical ſcoffers; the chief prieſts and elders, who perſecuted Chriſt do blaſpheme God; they mock at his power, and deride his providence, which was as wicked as to deny his being. 2. We learn from this example, that ſuch as miniſter to God in holy things by way of office, if they be not the beſt, they are generally the worſt of men; no ſuch bitter enemies to the power of godlineſs, as ſuch preachers who were never experimentally acquainted with the efficacy and power of it upon their hearts and lives. *Obſerve*, 2. The inſcription wrote by Pilate over our ſuffering Saviour, *This is Jeſus the King of the Jews*. It was the cuſtom of the Romans, when they crucified a malefactor, to publiſh the cauſe of his death in captital letters placed over the head of the perſon. Now it is obſervable, How wonderfully the wiſdom of God over-ruled the heart and pen of Pilate, to draw this title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his croſs. Pilate is Chriſt's herald, and proclaims him *King of the Jews*. *Learn*, That the kingſhip and regal dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt ſufferings and reproaches. Pilate, without his knowledge, did our Saviour an eminent piece of ſervice; Verily he did that for Chriſt, which none of his diſciples durſt do; not that he did it deſignedly, and with any intent to put honour upon Chriſt, but from the ſpecial over-ruling providence of God: no thanks to Pilate for all this; becauſe the higheſt ſervices performed for Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall never be rewarded by him.

39 ¶ And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us. 40 But the other anſwering, rebuked him, ſaying, Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation? 41 And we indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiſs. 42 And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.

Here we have a further aggravation of our Lord's ſufferings on the croſs, from the company he ſuffered with, the two thieves, who reviled him with the reſt. St. Matthew and St. Mark ſay, They both reviled him; St. Luke ſays, One of them reviled; poſſibly both of them might do ſo at firſt, and one of them repent; which, if ſo, increaſes the wonder of the penitent thief's converſion. From the impenitent thief's reviling of Chriſt, when he was at the very point of death, and even in the ſuburbs of hell, we *learn*, That neither ſhame nor pain will change the mind of a reſolute ſinner: but even then, when he is in the ſuburbs of hell, will he blaſpheme. From the penitent thief's confeſſing of Chriſt, and praying to him; *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom:* We *learn*, both the efficacy and freeneſs of divine grace. 1. The efficacious power of it: O how powerful muſt that grace be, which wrought ſuch a change in an inſtant, which ſuppled that heart in a moment, which had been hardening in ſin for ſo many years! 2. The freeneſs of it; which takes hold of his heart when he was at the height of ſin, and was not only void of grace, but ſeemed paſt grace. O the powerfully efficacy, and adorable freeneſs of the heart-changing grace of God in this vile perſon! it diſpoſed him to own his ſin, to confeſs the juſtneſs of his puniſhment, to juſtify Chriſt's innocency, to reprove his fellow-companion, to pray to a crucified Chriſt, and to intercede with him, not for preſent deliverance from death, but for a place in Chriſt's kingdom. Where we *learn*, 1. That true converſion is never too late for obtaining mercy and ſalvation. 2. That true converſion, how late ſoever, will have its fruits: The forementioned fruits of faith and repentance were found with this penitent thief: yet muſt not this extraordinary caſe be drawn into example: this extraordinary and miraculous grace of God is not to be expected ordinarily: We have no warrant to expect an overpowering degree of God's grace, to turn our hearts in an inſtant at the hour of death, when we have lived in forgetfulneſs of God, and in a neglect of our ſoul's concerns, all the days of our life; for it is evident as to this caſe of the penitent thief's converſion at the laſt hour, 1. It is an example without a promiſe. 2. It is but a ſingle example. 3. It is an example recorded but by one Evangeliſt: The Spirit of God, foreſeeing what an ill uſe ſome would make of this inſtance, leaves one example upon record, that none might deſpair; and but one, that none might preſume. 4. This thief probably had never any knowledge of Chriſt before. 5. This thief improved his time at laſt, as never did any before or after; for he believed Chriſt to be the Saviour of the world, when one diſciple had betrayed, another denied him, and all had forſaken him, he owned him to be the Son of God, the Lord of life, when he was ſuffering the pains of death, and ſeemingly deſerted by his Father; he proclaims him Lord of paradiſe, and diſpoſer of the kingdom of heaven, when the Jews had condemned him, and the Gentiles crucified him as the vileſt of impoſtors; he feared God, owned the juſtice of his puniſhment, was ſolicitous, not for the preſervation of his body, but for the ſalvation of his ſoul; yea, not of his own only, but of his brother's that ſuffered with him; ſo that he glorified Chriſt more at the moment of his death, than ſome do in the whole courſe of their lives. 6. This was a miracle, with the glory whereof Chriſt would honour the ignominy of his croſs: So that we have no more ground to expect ſuch another converſion, than we have to expect a ſecond crucifixion. This converted perſon was the firſt fruits of the blood of the croſs. From whence we *learn*, That God can, and ſometimes doth, though very ſeldom, prepare men for glory, immediately before their diſſolution by death. His grace is his own, he may diſpenſe it how and when, where, and to whom he pleaſes; yet this is no more warrant to neglect the ordinary, becauſe God doth ſometimes manifeſt his grace in an extraordinary way. True, in this converſion we have a pattern of what free grace can do; where we have not a promiſe to encourage our hope, our hope is nothing but preſumption.

43 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily, I ſay unto thee, To-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

Theſe words are our Saviour's gracious anſwer to the penitent thief's humble prayer, *Lord, remember me in thy kingdom*, ſays the thief, *To-day ſhalt thou be with me in my kingdom*, ſays our Saviour: Where *note*, 1. The immortality of the ſouls of men is without all doubt; our deſires after, and hopes for immortality, do prove our ſouls immortal, and capable of that ſtate. The ſouls of men die not with their bodies, but remain in a ſtate of ſenſibility. 2. That there is a future and eternal ſtate, into which ſouls paſs at death. Death is our paſſage out of the ſwift river of time, into the boundleſs and bottomleſs ocean of eternity. 3. That the ſouls of the righteous at death are immediately received into a ſtate of happineſs and glory; *This day ſhalt thou be with me*; not after thy reſurrection, but immediately after thy diſſolution. That man's ſoul is aſleep, or worſe, that dreams of the ſoul's ſleeping till the reſurrection: For why ſhould the believer's happineſs be deferred, when they are immediately capable of enjoying it? Why ſhould their ſalvation ſlumber, when the wicked's damnation ſlumbereth not? How do ſuch delays conſiſt with Chriſt's ardent deſires, and his people's longing to be together!

44 And it was about the ſixth hour, and there was a darkneſs over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 And the ſun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the mids. 46 And when Jeſus had cried with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit: and having ſaid thus, he gave up the ghoſt. 47 Now when the centurion ſaw what was done, he glorified God, ſaying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48 And all the people that came together to that ſight, beholding the things which were done, ſmote their breaſts, and returned. 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, ſtood afar off beholding theſe things.

Obſerve, here, 1. What prodigies in nature happened and fell out at the crucifixion of our Saviour: The ſun was darkened at the ſetting of the Sun of righteouſneſs; and the vail of the temple was rent; ſignifying, that God was now about to forſake his temple; that the ceremonial law was now aboliſhing, and the partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile being now pulling down, all may have acceſs to God through the blood of a Mediator. 2. The laſt prayer of our Saviour before his death, *Father into thy hands I commend my ſpirit*: They are words full of faith and comfort, fit to be the laſt breathings of every gracious ſoul in this world. *Learn* hence, That dying believers are both warranted and encouraged by Chriſt's example, believingly to commend their precious ſouls into the hands of God, as a gracious Father. 3. What influence our Saviour's death had upon the Centurion. *He glorified God, ſaying, Verily this was a righteous man.* Here *note*, That Chriſt had a teſtimony of his innocency and righteouſneſs given unto him from all ſorts of perſons whatſoever; Pilate and Herod pronounced him innocent; Pilate's wife proclaimed him a righteous perſon; the thief on the croſs declared he had done nothing amiſs; and the centurion owned him to be a righteous man, yea, the Son of God, Mark xv. 39. Only the Phariſees and chief prieſts, which were teachers of others; not ignorance, but obſtinacy and malice, blinded and hardened them to their ruin and deſtruction; inſtead of owning and receiving him for their Saviour, they ignominiouſly put him to death as the vileſt impoſtor.

50 ¶ And behold, *there was* a man named Joſeph, a counſellor, *and he was* a good man, and a juſt: 51 (The ſame had not conſented to the counſel and deed of them) *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews (who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God.) 52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a ſepulchre that was hewn in ſtone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew on. 55 And the women alſo, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the ſepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared ſpices and ointments; and reſted the ſabbath-day according to the commandment.

The circumſtances of our Lord's funeral, and honourable interment are here recorded by our Evangeliſt; ſuch a funeral as never was ſince graves were firſt digged. Where *obſerve*, 1. Our Lord's body muſt be begged before it could be buried; the dead bodies of malefactors being in the power, and at the diſpoſal of the judge that condemns them. 2. The perſon that begged his body, and beſtowed a decent and honourable burial upon it; Joſeph of Arimathea, a worthy, though a cloſe diſciple. Grace doth not always make a public and open ſhew where it is: But as there is much ſecret treaſure in the bowels of the earth, though unſeen, ſo is there much grace in the hearts of ſome ſaints, which the world takes little notice of. 3. The mourners that followed our Saviour's hearſe to the grave; the women which came out of Galilee; a poor train of mourners: The apoſtles, who ſhould have been moſt officious to bear his holy body to the ground, were ſome time ſince all ſcattered, afraid to own their Maſter, either dying or dead. Funeral pomp had been no way ſuitable, either to the end or manner of our Lord's death, and accordingly here is nothing like it. 4. The grave or ſepulchre, in which our holy Lord lay; it was in a ſepulchre *hewn out of a rock*; that ſo his enemies might have no occaſion to ſay, That his diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret holes, and unſeen paſſages under ground; It was in a new ſepulchre, *Wherein never man was laid before*, leſt his adverſaries ſhould ſay, It was another that was riſen, who was buried there before him. And he was buried in a garden: As, by the ſin of the firſt Adam, we are driven out of the garden of pleaſure, the earthly paradiſe, ſo by the ſufferings of the ſecond Adam, who lay buried in a garden, we may hope for entrance into the heavenly paradiſe. 5. The manner of our Lord's funeral; it was haſty, open, and decent. Haſty, becauſe of the preparation for the ſabbath; open, that all perſons might be ſpectators, and none might ſay, he was buried before he was dead; decent, being wrapt up in fine linen, and perfumed with ſpices. 6. The reaſon why our Lord was thus buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other men lie by the walls; doubtleſs it was to declare the certainty of his death, to fulfil the types and prophecies which went before of him: *As Jonas being three days and three nights in the whale's belly.* He was alſo buried, to complete his humiliation: This was the loweſt ſtep to which he could deſcend in his abaſed ſtate. In a word, Chriſt deſcended into the grave, that he might conquer death in its own territories and dominion. 7. Of what uſe our Lord's burial is to his followers; it ſhews us the amazing depth of his humiliation, from what, and to what his love brought him, even from the boſom of his Father to the boſom of the grave. It may comfort us againſt the fears of death, and the terrors of the grave: The grave could not long keep Chriſt, it ſhall not always keep chriſtians: It was a loathſome priſon before, it is a perfumed bed now: He whoſe head is in heaven, need not fear to put his feet into the grave. Awake and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the duſt, for the enmity of the grave is ſlain by Chriſt.

CHAP. XXIV.

The laſt chapter of St. Luke's goſpel contains the hiſtory of our Saviour's reſurrection, and gives us an account of what he did upon earth, between the time of his glorious reſurrection and triumphant aſcenſion.

NOW upon the firſt *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the ſepulchre, bringing the ſpices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. 2 And they found the ſtone rolled away from the ſepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus. 4 And it came to paſs, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men ſtood by them in ſhining garments. 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them, Why ſeek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is riſen. Remember how he ſpake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be crucified, and the third day riſe again. 8 And they remembered his words; 9 And returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things unto the eleven, and to all the reſt. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told theſe things unto the apoſtles. 11 And their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12 Then aroſe Peter, and ran into the ſepulchre; and ſtooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themſelves, and departed, wondering in himſelf at that which was come to paſs.

The Lord of life, who was put to death upon the Friday, was buried in the evening of the ſame day; and his holy body reſted in the ſilent grave all the next day, being the Jewiſh ſabbath, and ſome part of the morning following. Thus roſe he again the third day, according to the ſcriptures, neither ſooner nor later; not ſooner, leſt the truth of his death ſhould have been queſtioned, that he did not die at all; nor later, leſt the faith of his diſciples ſhould have failed. Accordingly, when the ſabbath was paſſed, Mary Magdalene getting the other women together, ſhe and they ſet out very early in the morning, to viſit the holy ſepulchre, and about ſun-riſing they get to it, intending with their ſpices and odours farther to embalm the Lord's body. *Obſerve* here, 1. That although the hearts of theſe holy women did burn with an ardent zeal and affection to their crucified Lord; yet the commanded duties of the ſabbath are not omitted by them; they keep cloſe, and ſilently ſpend that holy day in a mixture of grief and hope: A good pattern of ſabbath ſanctification, and worthy of our imitation. 2. Theſe holy women go, but not empty-handed: She, that had beſtowed a coſtly alabaſter upon Chriſt whilſt alive, prepares no leſs precious odours for him now dead; thereby paying their laſt homage to our Saviour's corpſe. But what need of odours, to perfume a precious body which could not ſee corruption? True, his holy body did not want them, but the love and affection of his friends could not with-hold them. 3. How great a tribute of reſpect and honour is due and payable to the memory of theſe holy women, for their great magnanimity and courage: They followed Chriſt when his cowardly diſciples left him; they accompanied him to his croſs, they attended his hearſe to the grave, when his diſciples did not, durſt not appear; and how very early in the morning (they viſit his ſepulchre, fearing neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the preſence of the watchmen, though a band of rude ſoldiers. *Learn* hence, That courage and reſolution is the ſpecial gift of God: If he gives it to the feeble ſex, even to timorous and fearful women, it ſhall not be in the power of armed men to make them afraid. But to a cloſe conſideration of the ſeveral circumſtances relating to the reſurrection of our holy Lord. *Note*, 1. With what pomp and triumph our holy Lord ariſes: Two men, that is, two angels in the ſhape of men, ver. 4. *are ſent from heaven to roll away the ſtone.* But could not Chriſt have riſen then without the angels help? Yes, doubtleſs; he that raiſed himſelf could eaſily have rolled away the ſtone himſelf; but God thinks fit to ſend an officer from heaven to open the priſon door of the grave; and by ſetting our ſurety at liberty, proclaims our debt to the divine juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit that the angels, who had been witneſſes of our Saviour's paſſion, ſhould alſo be witneſſes of his reſurrection. 2. Our Lord's reſurrection declared: *He is riſen, he is not here.* Almighty God never intended that the darling of his ſoul ſhould be left in an obſcure ſepulchre. *He is not here*, ſaid the angels, where you laid him, where you left him: Death has loſt its prey, and the grave has loſt its priſoner. 3. It is not ſaid, *He is not here*, for he is raiſed; but, *He is riſen*, ver. 6. The original word imports the active power of Chriſt, or the ſelf-quickening principle by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the dead, Acts i. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion.* Hence *learn*, That it was the divine nature, or Godhead of Chriſt, which raiſed the human nature from death to life: others were raiſed from the grave by Chriſt's power, but he raiſed himſelf by his power. 4. The perſons to whom our Lord's reſurrection was firſt declared and made known: To women, to the two Marys. But why to women? and why to theſe women? To women, firſt, becauſe God ſometimes makes choice of weak means for producing great effects, knowing that the weakneſs of the inſtrument redounds to the greater honour of the agent. In the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel, God intermixes divine power with human weakneſs: Thus the conception of Chriſt was by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, but his mother a poor woman, a carpenter's ſpouſe: So the crucifixion of Chriſt was in much meanneſs and outward baſeneſs, being crucified between two thieves; but the powers of heaven and earth trembling, the rocks rending, the graves opening, ſhewed a mixture of divine power. Thus here, God ſelects women, to declare that he will honour what inſtruments he pleaſes, for the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes. But why to theſe women, the two Marys, is the firſt diſcovery made of our Lord's reſurrection? Poſſibly it was a reward for their magnanimity and maſculine courage: Theſe women cleave to Chriſt, when the apoſtles forſook him; they aſſiſted at his croſs, they attended at his funeral, they waited at his ſepulchre: Theſe women had more courage than the apoſtles, therefore God makes them apoſtles to the apoſtles. This was a tacit rebuke, a ſevere check given to the apoſtles, that they ſhould be thus outdone by women: Theſe holy women went before the apoſtles in the laſt ſervices that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the apoſtles here come after them in their rewards and comforts. 5. The quick meſſage which theſe holy women carry to the diſconſolate diſciples, of the joyful news of our Saviour's reſurrection: They returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things to the eleven, ver. 9. And the other evangeliſts ſay, That they were ſent and bidden to go to the apoſtles with the notice of the reſurrection: *Go tell the diſciples*, ſays the angel, Matt. xxviii. 7. *Go tell my brethren*, ſays Chriſt, ver. 10. A moſt endearing expreſſion! Chriſt might have ſaid, "Go tell my apoſtate apoſtles, my cowardly diſciples, that left me in my danger, and durſt not own me in the high-prieſt's hall, that durſt not come within the ſhadow of my croſs, nor within ſight of my ſepulchre:" But not one word of all this, by way of upbraiding them for their late ſhameful cowardice, but all words of divine indulgence, and of endearing kindneſs; *Go tell my brethren.* Where *mark*, That Chriſt calls them brethren after his reſurrection and exaltation, thereby ſhewing, That the change of his condition had wrought no change in his affection towards his poor diſciples; but thoſe that were his brethren before, in the time of his humiliation and abaſement, are ſo ſtill, after his exaltation and advancement; *Go tell my brethren.* One thing more muſt be noted with reference to our Lord's reſurrection, and that is, Why he did not firſt chuſe to appear to the Virgin Mary, his diſconſolate mother, whoſe ſoul was pierced with a quick and lively ſight and ſenſe of her ſon's ſufferings; but to Mary Magdalene, who had been a grievous ſinner! Doubtleſs this was for the comfort of all true penitents; and adminiſters great conſolation to them: As the angels in heaven rejoice, much more doth Chriſt, in the recovery of one repenting ſinner, than in multitudes of holy and juſt perſons (ſuch was the bleſſed Virgin) who need no repentance. For the ſame reaſon did our Saviour particularly name Peter: *Go tell my diſciples, and Peter*; he being, for his denial of Chriſt, ſwallowed up with ſorrow, and ſtanding in moſt need of conſolation; therefore ſpeak particularly to Peter: As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Be ſure that his hard heart be comforted with this joyful news, that I am riſen; and let him know, that I am friends with him, notwithſtanding his late cowardice."

13 ¶ And behold two of them went that ſame day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem *about* threeſcore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all theſe things which had happened. 15 And it came to paſs, that while they communed *together*, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden, that they ſhould not know him. 17 And he ſaid unto them, What manner of communications are theſe that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are ſad? 18 And the one of them, whoſe name was Cleophas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only a ſtranger

in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are come to paſs there in theſe days? 19 And he ſaid unto them, What things? And they ſaid unto him, Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him, 21 But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this, to ~~day is the~~ third day ſince theſe things were done. 22 Yea, and ~~certain~~ women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which were early at the ſepulchre: 23 And when they found not his body, they came, ſaying, That they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, which ſaid that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the ſepulchre, and found *it* even ſo as the women had ſaid: but him they ſaw not.

Here we have *obſervable*, 1. The journey which two of the diſciples took to Emmaus, a village not far from Jeruſalem: The occaſion of their journey is not told us, but the ſcripture acquaints us with their diſcourſe in their journey, and as they were walking by the way: It was holy and uſeful, pious and profitable diſcourſe, that they entertained one another with as they walked; they diſcourſed of Chriſt's death and reſurrection; a good pattern for our imitation, when providentially caſt into ſuch company as will bear it; *That our lips drop as the honey-comb, and our tongue be as choice ſilver.* 2. How our holy Lord preſently made one in the company; when they were diſcourſing ſeriouſly about the matters of religion, he overtook them, and joined himſelf to them: The way to have Chriſt's preſence and company with us, is to be diſcourſing of Chriſt, and the things of Chriſt. 3. Though Chriſt came to them, it was *incognita*, he was not known to them, for their eyes were holden by the power of God, their ſight was reſtrained that they could not diſcern who he was, but took him for another perſon, though his body had the ſame dimenſions that he had before. Whence we *learn*, The influence which God has upon all our powers and faculties, upon all our members and ſenſes, and how much we depend upon God for the uſe and exerciſe of our faculties and members; *Their eyes were holden that they could not know him.* 4. That the notion of the Meſſias being a temporal Saviour, was ſo deeply rooted in the minds of the diſciples, that it remained here with them, even after he was riſen from the dead.—They here own and acknowledge him, *To be a prophet, mighty in deed and in word*; but they queſtion whether he were the Meſſias, the Redeemer of Iſrael! They could not reconcile the ignominy of his death with the grandeur of his office; nor conceive how the infamy of a croſs was conſiſtent with the glory of a king: *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael.* As if they had ſaid, "We were full of hopes, that this had been the Meſſias ſo long expected by us; but, this being the third day ſince he died, we fear we ſhall find ourſelves miſtaken."

25 Then ſaid he unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! 26 Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moſes and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures, the things concerning himſelf. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they conſtrained him, ſaying, Abide with us: for it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to paſs, as he ſat at meat with them, he took bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vaniſhed out of their ſight. 32 And they ſaid one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures?

Obſerve, 1. Our Saviour reproves, and then inſtructs them: He reproves them for being ignorant of the ſenſe of ſcripture: They thought the death of the Meſſias a ſufficient ground to queſtion the truth of his office, when it was an argument to confirm and eſtabliſh it: *O fools, ought not Chriſt to ſuffer?* As if he had ſaid, "Do you not find that the perſon deſcribed by the prophets in the Old Teſtament to be the Meſſias, was to wade his glory through a ſea of blood? Why then do you think yourſelves deceived in the perſon that ſuffered three days ago, when his doth agree ſo well with the predictions of the prophets, who foretold, That the Meſſias ſhould be cut off, but not for himſelf, and be ſmitten for the iniquities of his people?" Here we may *obſerve*, The great wiſdom and grace of God, who makes ſometimes the diffidence of his people an occaſion of farther clearing up the choiceſt truths unto them: Never did theſe diſciples hear ſo excellent an expoſition of Moſes and the prophets concerning the Meſſias, as now; when their ſinful diſtruſt had ſo far prevailed over them. 2. The doctrines which Chriſt inſtructs his diſciples in, namely, In the neceſſity of his death and paſſion, and of his glory and exaltation: *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer, and to enter into his glory?* *Learn*, 1. That with reſpect to God's decree, and with relation to man's guilt, the death of Chriſt was neceſſary and indiſpenſable. 2. That his reſurrection and exaltation was as neceſſary as his paſſion. 3. That there was a meritorious connection between Chriſt's ſufferings and his glory; his exaltation was merited by his paſſion: *He was to drink of the brook in the way, and then he ſhould lift up his head.* 4. Chriſt did not only put light into theſe his apoſtles heads, but heat alſo into their hearts, which burned all the while he communed with them: *Did not our hearts burn within us, while he opened to us the ſcriptures?* Oh what an efficacious power is there in the word of Chriſt, when ſet home upon the hearts of men by the Spirit of Chriſt!

33 And they roſe up the ſame hour, and re-

turned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with him. 34 Saying, The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. 36 ¶ And as they thus ſpake, Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf. Handle me, and ſee: for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have. 40 And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them *his* hands and *his* feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he ſaid unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and of an honey-comb. 43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them. 44 And he ſaid unto them, Theſe *are* the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the pſalms concerning me.

Obſerve 1. That theſe two diſciples at Emmaus, being fully ſatisfied in the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection, by his appearing to them in breaking of bread, they aroſe preſently, and went from Emmaus to Jeruſalem: It muſt needs be late at night, being after ſupper, and ſeven miles diſtant; yet conſidering the ſorrow that the diſciples were under, theſe two leave all their private affairs, and haſten to comfort them with the glad tidings of our Lord's reſurrection. *Teaching* us, That all ſecular affairs, all private and particular buſineſs, muſt give place to the glory of God, and the comfort and ſalvation of ſouls. 2. The great endeavours which our Saviour uſed to confirm his diſciples faith in the doctrine of the reſurrection, *He comes and ſtands in the midſt of them*, and ſays, *Peace be unto you*; next, *he ſhews them his pierced hands, ſide, and feet*, with the ſcars and marks, which he yet retained, that they might ſee it was their crucified Maſter: After all this, *He eats before them a piece of a broiled fiſh, and honey-comb*; not that he needed it, his body being now become immortal, but to aſſure them that it was his own perſon, and that he had ſtill the ſame body: Yet ſo ſlack and backward were they to believe that Chriſt was riſen, that all the predictions of the ſcripture, all the aſſurances they had from our Saviour's mouth, and the ſeveral appearings of Chriſt unto them, were little enough to eſtabliſh and confirm their faith in the reſurrection of our Saviour. 3. The higheſt and fulleſt evidence which our Saviour offers to evince and prove the certainty of his reſurrection, namely, by appealing to their ſenſes; *Handle me and ſee:* Chriſt admits the teſtimony of our ſenſes, to aſſure it to be his real body. And if the church of Rome will not allow us to believe our ſenſes, we ſhall loſe the beſt external evidence we can have to prove the truth of the chriſtian religion; namely, The miracles of Chriſt: for how can I know thoſe miracles were true, but by the judgment of my ſenſes? Now as our ſenſes tell us, they were true, ſo they aſſure us, the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is falſe.

45 Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures. 46 And ſaid unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem. 48 And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.

It is one thing to open the ſcriptures themſelves, or to explain them, and another to open their underſtandings to perceive them: Chriſt did the latter. Whence *note*, That the opening of the mind and heart effectually to receive the truths of God, is the peculiar prerogative and office of Jeſus Chriſt; *Then opened he their underſtandings*; namely, by the illuminations of his holy Spirit. One of the greateſt miſeries under which lapſed nature labours, is ſpiritual blindeſs; Chriſt has the only eye-ſalve which can heal and cure it, Rev. iii. 18. And there is no worſe cloud to obſcure the light of the Spirit, than a proud conceit of our own knowledge. 2. The ſpecial charge given by our Saviour to his apoſtles, *to preach repentance and remiſſion of ſins*; to preach it in Chriſt's name, to preach it *to all nations, beginning firſt at Jeruſalem.* Where *note*, The aſtoniſhing mercy of Jeſus Chriſt; although Jeruſalem was the place where he loſt his life, the city that barbarouſly butchered, and inhumanly murdered him, yet there he will have the doctrine of repentance preached, nay, firſt preached; there the goſpel-combination muſt firſt begin, *that repentance and remiſſion of ſin be preached, beginning at Jeruſalem.* Lord, how unwilling art thou that any ſhould periſh, when thou not only prayed for thy murderers, and offered up thy blood to God in the behalf of them that ſhed it, but required thy ambaſſadors to make Jeruſalem the firſt tender of remiſſion, upon condition of repentance!

49 ¶ And behold, I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jeruſalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. 50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and bleſſed them. 51 And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worſhipped him, returned to Jeruſalem with great joy: 53 And were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God. Amen.

Our Saviour, being now about to leave his diſciples, comforts them with the promiſe of his holy Spirit, which ſhould ſupply the want of his bodily preſence; and bids them tarry at Jeruſalem till they ſhould, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, be made partakers of this invaluable bleſſing. 2. Our Lord having bleſſed his diſciples, he takes his leave of them, and goes up into heaven. As he raiſed himſelf out of his grave, ſo did he aſcend into heaven by his own power, there to appear in the preſence of God for us; and as our forerunner, to give us an aſſurance, that in due time we ſhall aſcend after him, *whither our forerunner is for us entered.* Heb. vi. 20. *Obſerve* laſtly, The act of homage and adoration which the apoſtles perform to the Lord Jeſus, how they worſhipped him, that is, as God, the eternal Son of God, being ſo declared by the reſurrection from the dead, and by his aſcenſion into heaven before their eyes, from whence he will certainly come at the end of the world, to judge both the quick and the dead. For which ſolemn hour, God almighty prepare all mankind by a renewed frame of heart, and a religious courſe of life; and then, *Come Lord Jeſus to judgment, come quickly.* Amen.

THE END OF St. LUKE's GOSPEL.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO St. JOHN.

The fourth and laſt of the Holy Goſpels *falls under conſideration; namely, That which was written by the Evangeliſt St.* John. *Concerning which we have obſervable, the* writer, *the* occaſion, *the* deſign *and* ſcope *of this ſublime book.* Obſerve, 1. *The writer of it; St.* John, *the beloved diſciple, that lay in the boſom of* Chriſt; *he that lay in* Chriſt's *boſom, reveals the ſecret of* Chriſt's *heart.* John, *ſays St.* Auſtin, *drew out of the boſom of* Chriſt *the very heart of* Chriſt, *and made it known to a loſt world.* Obſerve, 2. *The occaſion of St.* John's *writing this* goſpel: *And that was the hereſy of* Ebion *and* Cerinthus, *which denied the divinity of* JESUS CHRIST. *When* GOD *ſuffers heretics to vent their blaſphemous opinions, he takes occaſion from thence to make a clearer diſcovery of divine truth. We had perhaps wanted St.* John's *goſpel, if* Ebion *and* Cerinthus *had not broached their hereſy againſt* Chriſt's *divinity.* Obſerve, 3. *The deſign and ſcope of this* goſpel: *Which is to deſcribe the perſon of* Chriſt *in his two natures,* divine *and* human, *as the object of our faith. This he doth in a ſublime and lofty manner: Upon which account he was compared by the ancients to the eagle, that ſoars aloft, and maketh her neſt on high; and was alſo called* John *the* Divine. Obſerve, *laſtly, The difference between this and the other* goſpels. *The other Evangeliſts inſiſt chiefly upon the* humanity *of* CHRIST, *and prove him to be truly* man, *the ſon of the Virgin* Mary: *This Evangeliſt proves him to be* GOD *as well as* man; God *from eternity, and* man *in the fulneſs of time. The other three writers relate what* CHRIST did: *St.* John *reports what* CHRIST ſaid. *They recount his* miracles: *he records his* ſermons *and* prayers. *In ſhort, The profound myſteries of our holy religion are here unfolded by the beloved diſciple; and particularly the* divinity *and* incarnation *of our bleſſed* SAVIOUR.

CHAP. I.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The ſame was in the beginning with God.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon ſpoken of, Jeſus Chriſt, under the name of the Word, *In the beginning was the Word*; becauſe God ſpeaks to us by him, and makes his will known unto us by Chriſt, as we make known our minds known to one another by our words. Again; As our words are the conception and image of our minds, ſo Chriſt is the expreſs image of his Father's perſon, and was begotten of the Father, even as our words are begotten of our minds: For theſe reaſons he is ſo often ſtyled *the Word*. 2. What the Evangeliſt here aſſerts concerning the Word, Chriſt Jeſus, even three particulars; namely, his eternal exiſtence, his perſonal co-exiſtence, and his divine eſſence. 1. His eternal exiſtence: *In the beginning was the Word*; in the beginning, when all things received their being, then the Word was, and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all eternity. Not in the beginning of the goſpel-ſtate, but in the beginning of the creation, as appears from the following words, *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made:* Which plainly ſhews, that the Evangeliſt is here ſpeaking of the creation, riſe, or beginning of all things created. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt, not only antecedent to his incarnation, but even before all time, and the beginning of all things, had an actual being and exiſtence. 2. His perſonal co-exiſtence with the Father; *The Word was with God*; that is, eternally and inſeparably with him, in the ſame eſſence and nature, being in the Father, as well as with him; ſo that the Father never was without him: Prov. viii. 22. *I was by him, as one brought up with him.* I was by his ſides, ſays the Chaldee interpreter. *Learn* hence, That the Son is a perſon diſtinct from the Father, but of the ſame eſſence and nature with the Father; he is God of God, very God of very God; being of one ſubſtance with the Father, by whom all things were made: *The word was with God.* 3. His divine eſſence; *The Word was God.* Here St. John declares the divinity, as he did before the eternity, of our bleſſed Saviour. He was with God, and exiſted in him; therefore he muſt be God, and a perſon diſtinct from the Father. The Word was God, ſay the Socinians, that is, a God by office, not by nature, as being God's ambaſſador: but the word *God* is uſed eleven times in this chapter in its proper ſenſe, and it is not reaſonable to conceive that it ſhould be here uſed in an improper ſenſe, in which this word in the ſingular number is never uſed throughout the whole New Teſtament. Dr. *Whitby*. *Learn* hence, That the eternity, the perſonality, and the divinity of Chriſt, are of neceſſity to be believed, if we will worſhip him aright. Chriſt tells us, John v. 23. That *we muſt worſhip the Son even as we worſhip the Father.* Now unleſs we acknowledge the eternity and divinity of Chriſt, the ſecond perſon, as well as of God the Father, the firſt perſon, we honour neither the Father nor the Son. There is this difference between natural things and ſupernatural: Natural things are firſt underſtood, and then believed; but ſupernatural myſteries muſt be firſt believed, and then will be better underſtood. If we will firſt ſet reaſon on work, and believe no more than we can comprehend, this will hinder faith; but if, after we have aſſented to goſpel-myſteries, we ſet reaſon on work, this will help faith.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Obſerve here, The argument which St. John uſes to prove Chriſt to be God; it is taken from the work of creation. He that made all things, is truly and really God; but Chriſt made all things, and nothing was made without him; therefore is Chriſt truly and really God. Here *obſerve*, 1. An affirmation of as large and vaſt an extent as the whole world: *All things* were made by him; not this or that particular being, but *all* created beings received their exiſtence and being from Chriſt. 2. That to prevent the leaſt imagination of any things having another author than Chriſt, here is the moſt poſitive and particular negation that can be, That without him was not any thing made that was made; not without him as an inſtrument, but without him as an agent. Chriſt being a co-worker with the Father and the Spirit in the work of creation. He was the author of the creation, not an inſtrument in creating. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt, as God, being the Creator and Maker of all things himſelf, is excluded from being a creature, or any thing that was made.

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.

Here we have a farther proof of Chriſt's divinity, and an evidence that he had a being as God, before his incarnation; foraſmuch as all life is centered in him, communicated by him, and derived from him. In him was life, *formaliter et cauſaliter.* Life was formerly in Chriſt, as the ſubject of it; and alſo caſually in him as the fountain of it. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt is the author and diſpenſer of all life unto his creatures: He is original life in the order of nature, becauſe by him man was created, Gen. i. 26. He is ſpiritual life in the order of grace, John xiv. 6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* He is eternal life in the order of glory, 1 John v. 20. *This is the true God, and eternal life.* *Learn*, 2. That all creatures receiving light and life from Chriſt, not as an inſtrument, but as the fountain from whence it floweth, and in which it is preſerved, is an evident proof of his divinity, and an argument that he is truly and really God: *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

6 There was a man ſent from God whoſe name *was* John. 7 The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all *men* through him might believe. 8 He was not that light, but *was ſent* to bear witneſs of that light. 9 *That was* the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Here the Evangeliſt proceeds in declaring Chriſt to be really God, becauſe he was that original, that eſſential light, which had no beginning, ſuffers no decay, but is ſo diffuſive, as in ſome kind, and in ſome meaſure or other to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. Some of the Jews had a conceit, that John the Baptiſt was the promiſed Meſſias, as appears by Luke iii. 15. *The people were in expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt or not.* Here, therefore, to undeceive the Jews, the Evangeliſt adds, that John was not *that light*; John was a great light, a burning and ſhining light, but not ſuch a light as the Meſſias was to be. John was a light inſtrumentally, Chriſt efficiently; John was a light enlightened, Chriſt was a light enlightening; John's light was by derivation and participation, Chriſt's was eſſential and original; John's light was as the light of a candle in a private houſe, in and among Jews only, but Chriſt's light was as the light of the ſun, ſpreading over the face of the whole earth: *This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*; that is, he enlightens all mankind with the light of reaſon, and is the author of all ſpiritual illumination in them that receive it. Chriſt is called a light in regard of his office, which was to manifeſt and declare that ſalvation to his church which lay hid before in the purpoſe of God; and he is called the *True light*, not ſo much in oppoſition to all falſe lights, but as oppoſed to the types and ſhadows of the Moſaical diſpenſation. *Learn*, 1. That every man and woman that comes into the world is enlightened by Chriſt in ſome kind and meaſure or other. All are enlightened with the light of reaſon and natural conſcience; ſome with the light of grace and ſupernatural illumination. 2. That Chriſt being the eſſential, original, and eternal light, enlightening and enlivening the whole creation, is an evident and undeniable demonſtration that he is truly and really God.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him; and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

He was in the world; that is, he that was God from eternity, made himſelf viſible to the world in the fulneſs of time. The Evangeliſt repeats it again, that *the world was made by him*, to ſhew his omnipotency and divinity; and then adds, that *the world knew him not*, as an evidence of the world's blindneſs and ingratitude. *Learn* hence, That notwithſtanding the eternal Son of God appeared in the world, and the world was made and created by him, ; yet the generality of the world did not know him: that is, did not own and acknowledge him, did not receive and obey him. They neither knew him as Creator, nor accepted of him as Mediator: Yea, *he came to his own*: that is, his own kindred and country, the church and people of the Jews; but the generality of them gave him cold entertainment. It was the ſin of the Jewiſh nation, that though they were Chriſt's own peculiar people, his own by choice, his own by purchaſe, his own by covenant, by kindred, yet the generality of them did reject him, and would not own him for the true and promiſed Meſſias. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt met with manifeſt and ſhameful rejection even at the hands of thoſe that were neareſt to him by fleſh and nature, John xi. 5. *Neither did his brethren believe on him.*

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God; *even* to them that believe on his name:

That is, although multitudes rejected him, yet ſome received and owned him for the true Meſſias; and thoſe that did ſo, he advanced to the high dignity of adoption and ſonſhip, giving them power, that is, right or privilege to become the ſons of God. Here *note*, 1. The nature of juſtifying faith declared; *As many as received him.* Now this recceiving of Chriſt implies theſe three things: 1. The aſſent of the underſtanding to that divine teſtimony which the ſcripture gives of Chriſt: 2. The conſent of the will to ſubmit to this Jeſus as Lord and King: 3. The affiance and truſt of the heart in Chriſt alone for ſalvation; for faith is not a bare credence, but a divine affiance, and ſuch an affiance in Chriſt, and reliance upon him, as is the parent and principal of obedience to him. *Note*, 2. That it is the high and honourable privilege of all ſuch as receive Chriſt by faith, to become the ſons of God by adoption. This is a precious privilege, a free privilege, an honourable privilege, an abiding privilege, and calls for all poſſible returns of gratitude and thankfulneſs, of love and ſervice, of duty and obedience, of ſubmiſſion and ſelf-reſignation.

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Becauſe the bragging Jews did much boaſt of their natural birth and deſcent from Abraham, as being his blood and offſpring, therefore it is here aſſerted, That men become not the children of God by natural propagation, but by ſpiritual regeneration: *They are not born of blood.* Grace runs not in the blood; piety is not hereditary. Religious parents propagate corruption, not regeneration. Were the conveniences of grace natural, good parents would not be ſo ill ſuited with children as ſometimes they are. No perſon then whatſoever has the gracious privilege of adoption by the firſt birth. *They are not born of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man*; that is, No man by the utmoſt improvement of nature can raiſe himſelf up to this privilege of adoption, and be the author and efficient cauſe of his own regeneration. *Learn* hence, That man in all his capacities is too weak to produce the work of regeneration in himſelf. They, ſays Dr. Hammond, who, by the influence of the higheſt rational principles, live moſt exactly according to the rule of rational nature, that is, of unregenerate morality, are the perſons here deſcribed. 2. That God alone is the prime efficient cauſe of regeneration: He works upon the underſtanding by illumination, and upon the will by ſanctification: *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

14 And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

The Evangeliſt having aſſerted the divinity of Chriſt in the foregoing verſes, comes now to ſpeak of his humanity and manifeſtation in our nature. *The word was made fleſh.* Where *note*, 1. Our Saviour's incarnation for us. 2. His life and converſation here among us. *He dwelt*, or tabernacled for a ſeaſon with us. In the incarnation or aſſumption of our nature, *obſerve*, 1. The perſon aſſuming, *The Word*, that is, the ſecond perſon ſubſiſting in the glorious Godhead. 2. The nature aſſumed, fleſh; that is, the human nature, conſiſting of ſoul and body. But why is it not ſaid, *The Word was made man?* but, *The Word was made fleſh. Anſw.* To denote and ſet forth the wonderful abaſement and condeſcenſion of Chriſt, there being more of vileneſs and weakneſs, and oppoſition to Spirit in the word *fleſh*, than the word *man:* Chriſt's taking fleſh implies, That he did not only take upon him the human nature, but all the weakneſſes and infirmities of that nature alſo (ſinful infirmities and perſonal infirmities excepted) he had nothing to do with our ſinful fleſh: Though Chriſt loved ſouls with an infinite and inſuperable love, yet he would not ſin to ſave a ſoul. And he took no perſonal infirmities upon him, but ſuch as are common to the whole nature, as hunger, thirſt, wearineſs. 3. The aſſumption itſelf, *He was made fleſh*; that is, he aſſumed the human nature into an union with his Godhead, and ſo became a true and real man by that aſſumption. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt did really aſſume the true and perfect nature of man, into a perſonal union with his divine nature, and ſtill remains true God and true man, in one perſon for ever. O bleſſed union! O thrice happy conjunction! As man, Chriſt has an experimental ſenſe of our infirmities and wants; as God, he can ſupport and ſupply them all. *Note* farther, 2. As our Saviour's incarnation for us, ſo his life and converſation among us: *He dwelt*, or tabernacled amongſt us. The tabernacle was a type of Chriſt's human nature. 1. As the outſide of the tabernacle was mean, made of ordinary materials, but its inſide glorious; ſo was the Son of God. 2. God's ſpecial preſence was in the tabernacle; there he dwelt, for he had a delight therein. In like manner, dwelt all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily in Chriſt; and the glory of his divinity ſhined forth to the eye and view of his diſciples; for *they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*; that is, whilſt Chriſt appeared as a man amongſt us, he gave great and glorious teſtimonies of his being the Son of God. *Learn* hence, that in the day of our Saviour's incarnation, the divinity of his perſon did ſhine forth through the veil of his fleſh, and was ſeen by all them that had a ſpiritual eye to behold it, and a mind diſpoſed to conſider it. *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*

15 ¶ John bare witneſs of him, and cried, ſaying, This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me. 16 And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. 18 No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

Here we have John Baptiſt's firſt teſtimony concerning Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah: And it conſiſts of four parts. 1. John prefers Chriſt before himſelf, as being ſurpaſſingly above himſelf. *He that cometh after me, is preferred before me*: that is, in the dignity of his perſon, and in the eminency of his office, as being the eternal God: *Now amongſt them that were born of woman, there was not a greater than John the Baptiſt:* If Chriſt was then greater than John, it was in regard of his being God. He is therefore *preferred before him, becauſe he was before him*, as being God from all eternity. *Learn* hence, That the dignity and eternity of Chriſt's perſon as God, ſets him up above all his miniſters; yea, above all creatures, how excellent ſoever. *He that cometh after me* in time, *is preferred before me* in dignity; *for he was before me*, even from all eternity. 2. John prefers Chriſt before all believers in point of fulneſs and ſufficiency of divine grace: *Of his fulneſs do they receive.* They have their failings, Chriſt has his fulneſs: Theirs is the fulneſs of a veſſel, his is the fulneſs of a fountain; their fulneſs is derivative, his fulneſs is original, yet alſo miniſterial, on purpoſe in him to give out to us, that we may receive *grace for grace*; that is grace anſwerable for kind and quality, though not for meaſure and degree. As a child in generation receives from its parents member for member, or the paper in the printing-preſs receives letter for letter, and the wax under the ſeal receives print for print, ſo in the work of regeneration, whatever grace is in Chriſt, there is the like for kind ſtamped upon the chriſtian's ſoul. All the members of Chriſt being made plentiful partakers of his ſpiritual endowments. *Learn* hence, That all fulneſs of grace, by way of ſupply for believers, is treaſured up in Chriſt, and communicated by him, as their wants and neceſſities do require: His fulneſs is inexhauſtible, it can never be drawn low, much leſs drawn dry: *Of his fulneſs do we receive grace for grace*; that is, grace freely, grace plentifully: God grant that none of us may receive the grace of Chriſt in vain. 3. John prefers Chriſt before Moſes, whom the Jews doted ſo much upon. *The law was given by Moſes*, not as the author, but as the diſpenſer of it. Moſes was God's miniſter, by whom the law, which reveals wrath, was given to the Jews, but *grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. Grace*, in oppoſition to the condemnatory curſe and ſentence of the law; and *truth*, in oppoſition to the types, ſhadows, and ceremonies of the legal adminiſtration. *Learn* hence, That all grace for the remiſſion of ſin, and for performance of duty, is given from Chriſt the fountain of grace; *grace came by Jeſus Chriſt.* The grace of pardon and reconciliation; the grace of holineſs and ſanctification; the grace of love and adoption; even all that grace that fits us for ſervice here, and glory hereafter. Chriſt is both the diſpenſer and the author of it. *Grace came by Jeſus Chriſt.* Again, 4. John the Baptiſt here (ver. 18.) doth not only prefer Chriſt before himſelf, before Moſes, before all believers, but even before all perſons whatſoever, in point of knowing and revealing the mind of God. *No man hath ſeen God at any time*; that is, no mere man hath ever ſeen God in his eſſence, whilſt he was in this mortal ſtate. Here God's inviſibility is aſſerted; next Chriſt's intimacy with the Father is declared. *The only begotten Son, that is in the boſom of the Father.* This expreſſion implies three things, 1. Unity of natures; the boſom is the child's place, who is part of ourſelves, and of the ſame nature with ourſelves. 2. Nearneſs of affection: None lie in the boſom, but the perſon that is dear to us. A boſom friend is the deareſt of friends. 3. It implies communication of ſecrets. Chriſt's lying in his Father's boſom, intimates his being conſcious to all his Father's ſecrets, to know all his counſels, and to underſtand his whole will and pleaſure. Now, as Chriſt's lying in the Father's boſom, implies unity of nature, it teaches us to give the ſame worſhip to Chriſt, which we give to God the Father, becauſe he is of the ſame nature with the Father: As it implies dearneſs of affection betwixt the Father and the Son, it teaches us to place our chief love upon Chriſt the Son, becauſe God the Father doth ſo: He, who is the Son of God's love, ſhould be the object of our love; as God hath a boſom for Chriſt, ſo ſhould we have alſo; the nobleſt object challenges the higheſt affection. Again, as Chriſt's lying in the Father's boſom, implies the knowledge of his mind and will, it teaches us to apply ourſelves to Chriſt, to his word and Spirit for illumination. Whither ſhould we go for inſtruction, but to this great Prophet; for direction, but to this wonderful Counſellor?

We can never be made wiſe unto ſalvation, if Chriſt, the wiſdom of the Father, doth not make us ſo.

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem to aſk him, Who art thou? 20 And he confeſſed, and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. 21 And they aſked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he ſaith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he anſwered, No. 22 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an anſwer to them that ſent us: what ſayeſt thou of thyſelf? 23 He ſaid, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtraight the way of the Lord, as ſaid the prophet Eſaias. 24 And they which were ſent were of the Phariſees. 25 And they aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Why baptizeſt thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John anſwered them, ſaying, I baptize with water: but there ſtandeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe. 28 Theſe things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

In theſe verſes we have a ſecond teſtimony which John the Baptiſt gave of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, *The Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem, ſaying, Who art thou?* that is, the ſanhedrim, or great council at Jeruſalem, to whom it belonged to judge who were true prophets, ſent meſſengers to the Baptiſt to know, whether he was the Meſſias or not? John refuſes to take this honour to himſelf, but tells them plainly, he was his harbinger and forerunner, and that the Meſſias himſelf was juſt at hand. From hence *note*, How very cautious, and exceeding careful this meſſenger of Chriſt was, and all the miniſters of Chriſt ought to be, that they do not aſſume or arrogate to themſelves any part of that honour which is due to Chriſt; but ſet the crown of praiſe upon Chriſt's own head, acknowledging him to be All in All. 1 Cor. iii. 5. *Who then is Paul? and who is Apollos? but miniſters by whom ye believed. Obſerve* farther, in this teſtimony of John the Baptiſt, theſe two things: 1. A negative declaration, who he was not; *I am not*, ſays he, *the Meſſiah*, whom you look for, *nor Elias*, *nor that prophet* you expect; not Elias, that is, in your ſenſe, not Elias the Tiſhbite; not Elias for identity of perſon, but Elias for ſimilitude of gifts, office, and calling. John came, though not in the perſon, yet in the power and ſpirit of Elias. He denies farther, that he was *that prophet*; that prophet which Moſes ſpake of, Deut. xviii. 15. nor any of the old prophets riſen from the dead; nay, ſtrictly ſpeaking, he was not any prophet at all: *but more than a prophet:* The Old Teſtament prophets propheſied of Chriſt to come; but John pointed at, ſhewed, and declared a Chriſt already come; and in this ſenſe he was no mere prophet, but more than a prophet. 2. We have here the Baptiſt's poſitive affirmation, who he was; namely, Chriſt's herald in the wilderneſs, his uſher, his forerunner to prepare the people for receiving of the Meſſias, and to make them ready for the entertaining of the goſpel, by preaching the doctrine or repentance to them. From hence *learn*, That the preaching of the doctrine of repentance is indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in order to the preparing of the hearts of ſinners for the receiving of Jeſus Chriſt. Laſtly, The great and exemplary humility of the holy Baptiſt, the mean and lowly opinion he had of himſelf.— Although John was the greateſt among them that were born of a woman, and ſo much eſteemed by the Jews, and had the honour to go before Chriſt in the exerciſe of his office and miniſtry; yet he judges himſelf unworthy to carry Chriſt's ſhoes after him. *He that cometh after me, is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe. Learn* hence, That the more eminent gifts the miniſters of the goſpel have, and the more ready men are to honour and eſteem them, the more will they abaſe themſelves, if they be truly gracious, and account themſelves highly honoured in doing the meaneſt offices of love and ſervice for Jeſus Chriſt. Thus doth the holy Baptiſt here: *His ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe.*

29 ¶ The next day John ſeeth Jeſus coming unto him, and ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I ſaid, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

This is John the Baptiſt's third teſtimony concerning Chriſt, in which he points out Chriſt as the true ſacrifice for the expiation of ſin. *Behold the Lamb of God:* The Lamb of God's appointing, to be an expiatory ſacrifice; the Lamb of God's election; the Lamb of God's affection; the Lamb of God's acceptation; the Lamb of God's exaltation; who, by the ſacrifice of his death, *has taken away the ſin of the world.* The ſin, not the ſins, of the plural number, to denote original ſin. As ſome think; or as others, to ſhew, that Chriſt hath univerſally taken upon himſelf the whole burthen of our ſin and guilt. And there ſeems to be a ſecret antetheſis in the word *world.* In the Levitical ſacrifices, only the ſins of the Jews were laid upon the ſacrificed beaſt; but this Lamb takes away the ſin both of Jew and Gentile. *The Lord hath cauſed to meet on him the iniquity of us all.* And the word *taketh away*, being in the preſent tenſe, denotes a continued act, and it intimates to us thus much, *viz.* That it is the daily office of Chriſt to take away our ſin by preſenting to the Father the memorials of his death. Chriſt takes away from all believers the guilt and puniſhment of their ſins, the filth and pollution of them; the power and dominion that is in them; and as St. John called upon the Jews, to behold this Lamb of God with an eye of obſervation; ſo it is our to behold him now with an eye of admiration, with an eye of gratulation; but eſpecially with an eye of faith and dependance, improving the fruit of his death to our own conſolation and ſalvation, Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me*, &c.

31 And I knew him not: but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, ſaying,

I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. 34 And I ſaw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Obſerve here, 1. That though John the Baptiſt was a near kinſman of Chriſt, according to the fleſh, yet the providence of God ſo ordered it, that for thirty years together, they did not know one another, nor converſe with each other, nor probably ever ſaw the faces of each other; to be ſure he did not know him to be the Meſſiah. This, no doubt, was over-ruled by the wiſdom of God, to prevent all ſuſpicion, as if John and Chriſt had compacted together, to give one another credit; that the world might ſuſpect nothing of the truth of John's teſtimony concerning Chriſt, or have the leaſt jealouſy that what he ſaid of Chriſt, was from any bias of mind to his perſon; therefore he repeats it a ſecond time, ver. 31, and 33. *I knew him not.* Hence we may *learn*, That a corporal ſight of Chriſt, and an outward perſonal acquaintance with him, is not ſimply needful, and abſolutely neceſſary for enabling a miniſter to ſet him forth and repreſent him ſavingly to the world. 2. The means declared by which John came to know Chriſt to be the true Meſſiah; it was by a ſign from heaven, namely, the Holy Ghoſt deſcending like a dove upon our Saviour. *He that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending, and remaining, the ſame is he. Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt taking upon him our nature, did ſo cover his glory with the veil of our fleſh and common infirmities, that he could not be known by bodily ſight from another man. Till John had a divine revelation, and an evident ſign from heaven, that Chriſt was the Son of God, *he knew him not.* 2. That Chriſt in his ſolemn entry upon his office, as Mediator, was ſealed unto the work by the deſcending of the Holy Ghoſt upon him; he was ſealed by the Holy Ghoſt's deſcending, and the Father's teſtifying, That this was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed. Now it was, that God gave not of the Spirit to Chriſt by meaſure, for the effectual adminiſtration of his mediatorial office; now *it pleaſed the Father, that in Chriſt ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* He was filled extenſively with all kinds of grace, and filled intenſively with all degrees of grace, in the day of his inauguration, when the holy Spirit deſcended upon him.

35 ¶ Again the next day after, John ſtood, and two of his diſciples: 36 And looking upon Jeſus as he walked, he ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God.

It is evident, that John's diſciples were never very willing to acknowledge Jeſus for the Meſſias, becauſe they thought he did ſhadow and cloud their Maſter. See therefore the ſincerity of the holy Baptiſt; he takes every opportunity to draw off the eyes of his own diſciples from himſelf, and to fix them upon Chriſt; he ſaith to two of his diſciples, *Behold the Lamb of God:* As if he had ſaid, "Turn your eyes from me to Chriſt, take leſs notice of me his miniſter; but behold your and my Lord and Maſter, *Behold the Lamb of God.*" *Learn* hence, That the great deſign of Chriſt's faithful miniſters is to ſet people upon admiring Chriſt, and not magnifying themſelves. Oh! it is their great ambition and deſire, that ſuch as love and reſpect them, and honour their miniſtry, may be led by them to Chriſt; to behold and admire him, to accept of him, and to ſubmit unto him: John ſaid to his diſciples, *Behold the Lamb of God.*

37 And the two diſciples heard him ſpeak, and they followed Jeſus. 38 Then Jeſus turned, and ſaw them following, and ſaith unto them, What ſeek ye? They ſaid unto him, Rabbi, (which is to ſay, being interpreted, Maſter) where dwelleſt thou? 39 He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee. They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of two which heard John ſpeak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He firſt findeth his own brother Simon, and ſaith unto him, We have found the Meſſias; which is, being interpreted, the Chriſt. 42 And he brought him to Jeſus. And when Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art Simon, the ſon of Jona: thou ſhalt be called Cephas; which is by interpretation, a ſtone. 43 ¶ The day following Jeſus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and ſaith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethſaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

This latter part of the chapter acquaints us with the calling of five diſciples; not to the apoſtleſhip, for that was afterwards; nor yet ſimply by converſion, for ſome of them were John's diſciples already, and believed in the Meſſiah to come; but they are called to own and acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt to be the true and promiſed Meſſiah. The diſciples here called, were Andrew, Peter, and Philip, mean and obſcure perſons, poor fiſhermen, not any of the learned Rabbies and doctors among the Jews. Hereby Chriſt ſhewed at once the freeneſs of his grace, in paſſing by the knowing men of the age; the greatneſs of his power, who by ſuch weak inſtruments, could effect ſuch mighty things; and the glory of his wiſdom, in chuſing ſuch inſtruments as ſhould not carry away the glory of the work from him; but cauſe the entire honour and glory of all their great ſucceſſes to redound to Chriſt. As Chriſt can do, ſo he chuſes to do great things by weak means, knowing that the weakneſs of the inſtrument redounds to the greater honour of the agent; for theſe perſons called now to be diſciples, were afterwards ſent forth by Chriſt as his apoſtles, to convert the world to Chriſtianity. Farther, The order according to which the diſciples were called; firſt Andrew, then Peter; which may make the church of Rome aſhamed of the weakneſs of their argument for Peter's ſupremacy, that he was firſt called; whereas Andrew was before him, and Peter was brought to Jeſus by him. *Andrew findeth his own brother Simon,* and brought him to Jeſus. Such as have gotten any knowledge of Chriſt themſelves, and are let into acquaintance with him, will be very diligent to invite, and induſtrious to bring in others to him. Peter being brought to Chriſt, our Saviour names him *Cephas*, which ſignifies a *ſtone, a rock*; to intimate to him his duty to be firm and ſteady in the chriſtian profeſſion, full of courage and conſtancy. *Thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a ſtone.*

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and ſaith unto him, We have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph. 46 And Nathanael ſaid unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaith unto him, Come and ſee. 47 Jeſus ſaw Nathanael coming to him, and ſaith of him, Behold an Iſraelite indeed in whom is no guile.

The laſt perſon mentioned in this chapter, who was called to own and embrace Chriſt for a Meſſiah, is Nathanael: Who this Nathanael was, doth not certainly appear, but, it is evident, he was a ſincere, good man, though prejudiced for the preſent againſt Chriſt, becauſe of the place of his ſuppoſed birth and reſidence, Nazareth: *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* That is, Can any worthy or excellent perſon, much leſs the promiſed Meſſias, come out of ſuch an obſcure place as Nazareth is? Whereas almighty God, whenever he pleaſes, can raiſe worthy perſons out of contemptible places. *Obſerve* farther, How mercifully and meekly our Saviour paſſes over the miſtakes and failings, the prepoſſeſſions and prejudices of Nathanael, but takes notice of, and publicly proclaims his ſincerity: *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*; that is, no guile imputed, no guile concealed, no prevailing guile; it being only true of Chriſt, in a ſtrict and abſolute ſenſe, that there was no guile found in his lips; but in a qualified ſenſe, it is true of Nathanael, and every upright man; they are true Iſraelites, like their father Jacob, plain men, men of great ſincerity and uprightneſs of heart, both in the ſight of God and man. And whereas our Saviour ſpeaks of him with a ſort of admiration, *Behold an Iſraelite, in whom is no guile*; we *learn*, That a perſon of great ſincerity and uprightneſs of heart towards God and man, a true Nathanael and Iſraelite indeed, is a rare and worthy ſight; *Behold an Iſraelite indeed.* 2. That ſuch indeed as are Nathanaels, need not commend themſelves, Chriſt will be ſure to do it for them: Nathanael conceals his worth, Chriſt publiſhes and proclaims it, and calls upon others to take notice of it: *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*

48 Nathanael ſaith unto him, Whence knoweſt thou me? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee. 49 Nathanael anſwered and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael. 50 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe.

Obſerve here, How Nathanael wondereth that Chriſt ſhould know him, having (as he thought) never ſeen him. Chriſt gives him to underſtand, that by his all-ſeeing eye he had ſeen him, when he was not ſeen by him: *When thou waſt under the fig-tree I ſaw thee.* Chriſt's all-ſeeing eye is an infallible proof of his Deity and Godhead. Chriſt ſeeth us wherever we are, and whatever we do, though we ſee not him; he ſeeth the ſincerity of our hearts, and will own it, and bear witneſs to it, if we are upright in his ſight. *Obſerve* farther, How Chriſt's omnipreſence and omniſcience convinces Nathanael that he was more than man, even the Meſſias, God and man, in two diſtinct natures, and one perſon; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God.* Philip called Chriſt the Son of Joſeph; Nathanael calls him the Son of God. Such as believe Chriſt's omniſcience, will never call in queſtion his divinity. Laſtly, How Chriſt encourages the faith of this new diſciple Nathanael, by promiſing him that he ſhall enjoy farther helps and means for the confirmation of his faith than ever yet he had. All that Chriſt ſaid to him, was only this, that *he ſaw him under the fig-tree, before Philip called him.* How ready art thou, O Lord! to encourage the beginnings of faith in the hearts of thy people, and to furniſh them with farther means of knowledge, when they wiſely improve what they have received? Never wilt thou be wanting, either in means or mercy to us, if we be not wanting to thee and ourſelves.

51 And he ſaith unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of man.

The heavens were open to Chriſt, and the angels attended upon him, firſt at his baptiſm, Matth. iii. ult. then at his aſcenſion, Acts i. 9. Whether Chriſt alludes to the one or the other, or to both, I ſhall not poſitively ſay; but gather this *note*, That the miniſtry and attendance of the holy angels upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the time of his humiliation, was very remarkable: An angel foretels his conception to the Virgin, Luke i. 31. An angel publiſhes his birth to the ſhepherds, Luke ii. 14. In his temptations in the wilderneſs, the angels came and miniſtred unto him, Matt. iv. 11. In his agony in the garden, an angel is ſent to comfort him, Luke xxii. 42. At his reſurrection an angel rolls away the ſtone, and proclaims him riſen, to the women that ſought for him, Matt. xxviii. 6. At his aſcenſion, the angels attended upon him, and bare him company to heaven: And at the day of judgment, he ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. Now, thus officious are the holy angels to our bleſſed Saviour, and thus ſubſervient to him upon all occaſions. 1. In point of affection and ſingular love to Chriſt. 2. In point of duty and ſpecial obligation to Chriſt. There is no ſuch chearful and delightful ſervice, as the ſervice of love: Such is the angels ſervice to Chriſt, for the ſervices he has done them, he being an head of confirmation to them; for, that they are eſtabliſhed in that holy and glorious ſtate in which they were at firſt created, is owing to the ſpecial grace of the Redeemer: *Glorify him then, all ye angels, and praiſe him, all his hoſt.*

CHAP. II.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jeſus was there. 2 And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples, to the marriage.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with the firſt miracle which our Saviour wrought, in turning water into wine; the occaſion of it was, his being invited to a marriage-feaſt. Here *note*, 1. That whenever our Saviour was invited to a public entertainment, he never refuſed the invitation, but conſtantly went; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good, which was meat and drink unto him. 2. What honour Chriſt put upon the ordinance of marriage: He honours it with his preſence and firſt miracle. Some think it was St. John that was now the bridegroom; others, that it was ſome near relation of the Virgin mother's: But whoever it might be, doubtleſs Chriſt's deſign was rather to put honour upon the ordinance than upon the perſon. How bold is the church of Rome in ſpitting upon the face of this ordinance, by denying its lawfulneſs to the miniſters of religion? when the apoſtle, Heb. xiii. 4. affirms, that *marriage is honourable among all.* Neither the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the apoſtles of the New (St. Peter himſelf not excepted) did abhor the marriage-bed, or judge themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their Maker. 3. That it is an antient and laudable inſtitution, that the rites of marriage ſhould not want a ſolemn celebration. Feaſting with friends upon ſuch an occaſion is both lawful and commendable, provided the rules of ſobriety and charity, modeſty and decency be obſerved, and no ſinful liberty aſſumed: But it muſt be ſaid, that feaſting in general, and marriage-feaſts in particular, are ſome of thoſe lawful things which are difficultly managed without ſin. 4. That our Saviour's working a miracle when he was at the marriage-feaſt, ſhould teach us, by his example, that in our chearful and free times, when we indulge a little more than ordinary to mirth amongſt our friends, we ſhould ſtill be mindful of God's honour and glory, and lay hold upon an occaſion of doing all the good we can. Laſtly, As Chriſt was perſonally invited to, and bodily preſent at this marriage-feaſt, when here on earth; ſo he will not refuſe, now in heaven, to be ſpiritually preſent at his people's marriages: They want his preſence with them upon that great occaſion; they deſire and ſeek it; he is acquainted with it, and invited to it, whoever is neglected: And where Chriſt is made acquainted with the match, he will certainly make one at the marriage. Happy is that wedding where Chriſt and his friends (as here) are the invited, expected, and enjoyed gueſts.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother ſaith unto the ſervants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do *it.*

This want of wine was probably ſo diſpoſed by the providence of God, to give our Saviour an opportunity to manifeſt his divine power in working a miracle to ſupply it. *Obſerve* here, 1. How the Virgin inquires into the family's wants, and then makes them known to Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That it is an argument of piety, and an evidence of chriſtian love, to inquire into the wants, and to recommend the neceſſities of others to Chriſt's care and conſideration, whoſe bounty and munificence can readily and abundantly ſupply them: Thus far the Virgin's action was good; ſhe laid open the caſe to Chriſt; *They have no wine.* But Chriſt, who diſcerned the thoughts of Mary's heart, finds her guilty of preſumption: She thought, by her motherly authority, ſhe might have expected, if not commanded a miracle from him: Whereas Chriſt was ſubject to her, as man, during his private life; but now being entered upon his office as a Mediator, as God-man, he gives her to underſtand ſhe had no power over him, nor any motherly authority in the buſineſs of his public office; therefore he ſays to her, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* He that charges his angels with folly, will not be taught when and how to act, by poor crawling duſt and aſhes.—*Obſerve* therefore, 2. Chriſt calls the Virgin, *woman,* not *mother*; but this was not out of any contempt, but to prevent her being thought more than a woman, above or beyond a woman, having brought forth the Son of God: *Woman,* ſays Chriſt, not *goddeſs,* as the Papiſts would make her, and proclaim her free from ſin, even from venial ſin; but Chriſt's reproving her, ſhews that ſhe was not faultleſs. 3. Chriſt would not bear with the Virgin's commanding on earth; will he then endure her interceſſion in heaven? Muſt ſhe not meddle with matters appertaining to his office here below? and will it be endured by Chriſt, or endeavoured by her, to interpoſe in the work of mediation above? No, no; were it poſſible for her ſo far to forget herſelf in heaven, ſhe would receive the anſwer from Chriſt which ſhe had on earth; *Woman, what have I to do with thee,* or thou with me, in my mediatorial office? But inſtead of this, ſhe returns anſwer from heaven to her idolatrous petitioners here on earth, "What have I to do with you? Get you to my Son, go you to Chriſt, he that was the Mediator of redemption; he, and only he, continues the Mediator of interceſſion." O how fooliſh as well as impious is it to think, that ſhe who had not ſo much power as to direct the working of one miracle on earth, ſhould have now lodged in her hands all the power of heaven!

6 And there was ſet there ſix water-pots of ſtone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece. 7 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feaſt. And they bare *it.* 9 When the ruler of the feaſt had taſted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the ſervants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feaſt called the bridegroom, 10 And ſaith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is

worſe: *but* thou haſt kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and manifeſted forth his glory; and his diſciples believed on him.

In this miracle of our Saviour's turning water into wine, *obſerve*, 1. The reality of the miracle, and the ſincerity of Chriſt in the working of it. To evidence there was no deceit in the miracle, not wine-caſks, but water-pots are called for; wine-veſſels, in which ſome lees were remaining, might have given both a vinous colour and taſte to the water; but ſtone-pots could contribute nothing of this nature; and being open pots, there was no ſtealing wine into them without obſervation. Again, our Saviour's employing the ſervants, and not his diſciples, takes off any ſuſpicion of colluſion; and his ſending it to the ruler or governor of the feaſt, was an evidence that the miracle would bear examination. Our Saviour's miracles were real and beneficial; they were obvious to ſenſe, not lying wonders, not fictitious miracles, which the jugglers in the church of Rome cheat the people with: The greateſt miracle which they boaſt of, *tranſubſtantiation*, is ſo far from being obvious to ſenſe, that it contradicts the ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, and is the greateſt affront to human nature that ever the world was acquainted with. 2. Though Chriſt wrought a real miracle, yet he would not work more of miracle than needed; he would not create wine out of nothing, but turned water into wine. Thus he multiplied the bread, changed the water, reſtored withered limbs, raiſed dead bodies, ſtill working upon that which was, and not creating that which was not: Chriſt never wrought a miracle but when needful, and then wrought no more of miracle than he needed. 3. The liberality and bounty of Chriſt in the miracle here wrought; ſix water-pots are filled with wine; enough, ſay ſome writers, for an hundred and fifty men; had he turned but one of thoſe large veſſels into wine, it had been a ſufficient proof of his power; but to fill ſo many, was an inſtance both of his power and mercy. The Lord of the family furniſhes his houſhold not barely for neceſſity, but for delight, giving richly all things to enjoy. And as the bounty of Chriſt appeared in the quantity, ſo in the excellency of the wine; *Thou haſt kept the beſt wine till now*, ſays the governor of the feaſt. It was fit that Chriſt's miraculous wine ſhould be more perfect than the natural. But, oh, bleſſed Saviour, how delicate and delicious ſhall that wine be, which we ſhall drink, ere long, with thee in thy Father's kingdom! Let thy holy Spirit fill the veſſel of my heart with water (with godly ſorrow and contrition) and thou wilt turn it into wine. For, *bleſſed are they that mourn, they ſhall be comforted.* 4. The double effects of this miracle; Chriſt hereby *manifeſted forth his glory, and his diſciples believed on him.* 1. *He manifeſted forth his glory*; that is, the glory of his Godhead, as doing this by his own power. Here ſhined forth his omnipotence, his bounty and liberality, every thing that might beſpeak him both the great and good God. The ſecond effect of this miracle was, that the *diſciples believed on him.* The great end of miracles is the confirmation of faith; God never ſets the ſeal of his omnipotency to a lie: All the miracles then that Chriſt and his apoſtles did, were as ſo many ſeals that the doctrine of the goſpel is true. If *ye believe not me*, ſays Chriſt, *believe the works which I do, for they bear witneſs of me*, John v. 36.

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his diſciples, and they continued there not many days. 13 ¶ And the Jews paſſover was at hand; and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem, 14 And found in the temple thoſe that ſold oxen, and ſheep, and doves, and the changers of money, ſitting: 15 And when he had made a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the ſheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And ſaid unto them that ſold doves, Take theſe things hence: make not my Father's houſe an houſe of merchandiſe.

Obſerve here, 1. How obedient in all things Chriſt was to the ceremonial law. He was not naturally ſubject to the law; but, to fulfil all righteouſneſs, he kept the paſſover yearly, according to the command of God, Exod. xxiii. 17. That *all the males ſhould appear before him* in the temple at Jeruſalem. Hence it is probably concluded, that Chriſt came up to the paſſover continually during his private life; and being now come up to Jeruſalem to this firſt paſſover after his baptiſm, and ſolemn entrance on his office, his firſt walk was to the temple, and his firſt work was to purge and reform it from abuſes, not to ruin and deſtroy it, becauſe it had been abuſed. Now, the abuſe and profanation of the temple at that time was this: In the outward court of the Gentiles, there was a public mart or market, where were ſold oxen, ſheep, and doves for ſacrifice; which otherwiſe the people, with great labour and trouble muſt have brought up along with them for ſacrifice. Therefore, as a pretended eaſe to the people, the prieſts ordered theſe things to be ſold hard by the altar; the intention was commendable, but the action not juſtifiable. No pretence of good ends can juſtify that which is forbidden of God: A good end can never juſtify an irregular action. 2. Our Saviour's fervent zeal in purging and reforming his Father's houſe. The ſight of ſin in any perſons, but eſpecially in and among profeſſors, ought to kindle in our hearts (as it did here in Chriſt's breaſt) a burning zeal and indignation againſt it. Yet was not Chriſt's zeal ſo warm as to devote the temple to deſtruction, becauſe of its abuſe and profanation. Places dedicated to the worſhip and ſervice of God, if idolatrouſly abuſed, muſt not be pulled down, but purged; not ruined, but reformed. There is a ſpecial reverence due to the houſe of God, both for the owner's ſake, and the ſervice ſake. Nothing but holineſs becomes that place, where God is worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs. Chriſt by purging the court of the Gentiles from merchandiſe, not unlawful in itſelf, but neceſſary for the ſacrifices which were offered in the temple, though not neceſſary to be brought there, did plainly inſinuate, That a diſtinction is to be made betwixt places ſacred and profane; and that what may be done as well elſewhere, ought not to be done in the houſe of God, the place appointed immediately for his worſhip. 3. The greatneſs of this miracle, in the weakneſs of the means which Chriſt made uſe of to effect and work it: He drove the buyers and ſellers before him out of the temple: But how, and with what? St. Hierom, in Matt. xxi. ſays, That certain fiery rays or beams, darting from Chriſt's eyes, drove out theſe merchants from this place. I dare not avouch this, but I am ſatisfied that Chriſt drove them out, unarmed with any weapons that might carry dread and terror with them, at moſt but with a whip of ſmall cords; which probably might be ſcattered by the drovers that came thither to ſell their cattle. Behold then the weakneſs of the means on the one ſide, and conſider the greatneſs of the oppoſition on the other: Here was a confluence of people to oppoſe Chriſt, this being the moſt ſolemn mart of the paſſover, and here were merchantmen, whoſe hearts were ſet upon gain (the world's God) to oppoſe him. But neither the weakneſs of the means, nor the greatneſs of the oppoſition, did diſmay him, or cauſe our Saviour to deſiſt from the attempt of reforming what was amiſs in the houſe of God. *Learn* we hence, That it matters not how weak the means of the church reformation is, nor how ſtrong the oppoſite power is; if we engage Chriſt in the undertaking, the work ſhall certainly be accompliſhed. O, how great was the work, and how unweak and unlikely were the means here! A parcel of ſturdy fellows, whoſe hearts were ſet upon their wealth, Chriſt no ſooner ſpeaks to them, and ſhakes his whip at them, but like a company of fearful hares they run before him. Chriſt, in purging of his church, will make every thing yield and give way to his power. Let it comfort the church under all unlikelihood of reformation. Who art thou, O great mountain! before our ſpiritual Zerubabel, thou ſhalt become a plain. I ſhall cloſe my obſervations upon this miracle of Chriſt's whipping the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, which both Origen and St. Jerom do make the greateſt miracle that ever Chriſt wrought, all circumſtances conſidered; I ſhall cloſe it with this reflection, viz. Was there ſuch power and terror in Chriſt's countenance and ſpeech here in the temple, in the days of the fleſh? Oh, how terrible then will his face and his appearance be to the wicked and impenitent world at the great day! Lord, how fearful will his iron ſcourge then be! how terrifying that voice, "Depart, depart from me; depart accurſed, depart into fire; depart into everlaſting fire, into a fire prepared for the puniſhment of apoſtate ſpirits, the devil and his angels!" God grant we may wiſely conſider it, and timely flee from the wrath to come.

17 And his diſciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.

The diſciples upon this occaſion called to remembrance the words of David, Pſal. lxix. *The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up*; which was verified in Chriſt as well as in David. Where *obſerve*, 1. The grace deſcribed, *zeal*, which is the ardour of the affections, carrying forth to the utmoſt for God's glory, and his church's good. Zeal is not ſo much one affection, as the intenſe degree of all the affections. 2. The object about which our Saviour's zeal was converſant, *God's houſe*; that is, all things relating to the worſhip of God, temple, tabernacle, ark, &c. which were the pledges of God's preſence. 3. The effect of this, it *hath been eaten up*, like fire that eats up and devours that whereon it lights. What was ſaid of St. Peter, That he was a man made up all of fire; and of St. Paul, in reſpect of his ſufferings, That he was a ſpark of fire burning in the midſt of the ſea; may much more truly be ſaid of Chriſt, when he was engaged in the work of church-reformation. *Learn*, That as Chriſt was, ſo chriſtians ought to be, very zealous for the glory of God, the honour of his houſe, and the purity of his worſhip. *The zeal of thine houſe*, that is, for the honour of thine houſe, *hath eaten me up*, &c.

18 ¶ Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doſt theſe things? 19 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. 20 Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he ſpake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was riſen from the dead, his diſciples remembered that he had ſaid this unto them: and they believed the ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid.

Obſerve here, 1. How exceedingly offended the Jews were at the reformation which our Saviour had made in the houſe of God: they were awed indeed with the majeſty of this great work, and durſt not openly oppoſe, but ſecretly malign it. Thence *note*, That redreſs of abuſes in God's worſhip, eſpecially if it croſſes our eaſe, and controuls our profit (as this did) is uſually diſtaſted. 2. How theſe Jews diſcover their old inveterate diſeaſe of infidelity; they require a ſign, and call for a miracle to juſtify Chriſt's commiſſion. Why? had they not a miracle before their eyes? Was not the work of purging the temple a wonderful miracle? Yet they demanded another miracle to make this good. *Learn* thence, That obſtinate infidelity will not be ſatisfied with the moſt ſufficient means for ſatiſfaction, but ſtill object and oppoſe againſt the cleareſt, the fulleſt, the moſt convincing evidence. *What ſign ſheweſt thou us?* ſay the Jews when they had ſo many ſigns and wonders daily before their eyes, 3. The Jews demanding a ſign, our Saviour grants them one; he remits them to his death and reſurrection, to prove that he was the true Meſſiah. *Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up.* That is, "I know you will deſtroy this temple of my body, by putting me to death, But I will raiſe myſelf again from the grave the third day." Chriſt did not command them to deſtroy his body, but only foretold that they would do it. *Non eſt verbum præcepti, ſed prædictionis:* "The words are not imperative, but only predictive and permiſſive." Chriſt did not bid them deſtroy his body, but foretels what they would do. "Ye will deſtroy this temple, but after three days I will raiſe it up." Where *note*, That Chriſt aſſerts his own power in raiſing his own body from the dead. True: the Father is often ſaid to raiſe him, and it is neceſſary that it be ſo ſaid, that it might appear, that divine juſtice was fully ſatisfied for our ſins, in that he was by him delivered from that death which he underwent for us. But yet it is often aſſerted, that Chriſt raiſed himſelf, and that he was quickened by the Spirit, which was as well the Spirit of the Son, as of the Father, dwelling eſſentially in him. Now Chriſt's foretelling his paſſion and reſurrection, *learn* thence, That all our Saviour's ſufferings were foreknown unto him, and were foretold by him; he would not prevent them, but willingly permitted them, and chearfully underwent them; *Deſtroy this temple.* *Note* here, 1. The ſtate and dignity of Chriſt's holy body: It is a temple. *He ſpake of the temple of his body.* The ſaints bodies are temples by ſpecial ſanctification: Chriſt's body was a temple by ſubſtantial inhabitation. The divinity of Chriſt dwelt in his humanity perſonally and immediately. God dwells in ſaints by regal authority, he dwelt in Chriſt's humanity by perſonal reſidence. 2. The violence and indignity offered to this holy temple at our Saviour's death: It was pulled down and deſtroyed. Death diſſolved the union betwixt our Saviour's ſoul and body; but there was a cloſer union, which no violence of death could diſſolve; namely, the union of his Godhead with his manhood; this was incapable either of diſſolution or deſtruction. 3. The repairing, reſtoring, and raiſing up of this temple out of the ruins of it by our Saviour's reſurrection. *In three days I will raiſe it up.* *Obſerve*, A full proof of our Saviour's divinity. To raiſe up a dead man, exceeds the power of nature; but for a dead man to raiſe himſelf, requires the power of God. We read of dead men raiſed by others, but none but Chriſt ever raiſed himſelf. The Jews could not ſay, He raiſed others from the grave, himſelf he could not raiſe. *Inference*, 1. Was Chriſt's body a temple? ſo ſhall ours be too; temples for the Holy Ghoſt to dwell in; temples by ſpecial appropriation, temples by ſolemn conſecration, temples by actual employment. *If any man defile this temple, him will God deſtroy.* 2. Was the temple of Chriſt's body pulled down by death, and deſtroyed? ſo muſt alſo the temples of our bodies ere long. The temple of his body was pulled down for our ſin; the temples of our bodies ruined by our ſin. Sin brought mortality into our natures, and the wages of our ſin is death. 3. Was the temple of Chriſt's body repaired in the morning of the reſurrection? ſo ſhall the temples of our bodies alſo, if we be the members of Chriſt by a vital union. *Thy dead men*, oh bleſſed Redeemer! *ſhall live*; *together with thy dead body ſhall they ariſe. Awake then and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt, for thy dew is the dew of herbs*, &c. Iſa. xxvi. 19.

23 ¶ Now when he was in Jeruſalem at the paſſover, in the feaſt-*day*, many believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men.

Obſerve here, What influence the ſight of our Saviour's miracles, had upon many of the common people, *They believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did*; that is, they were convinced by the works which our Saviour wrought, that he came from God, and what he ſaid and did was really true and no impoſture. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men.* Our Saviour did not, and would not truſt them who yet believed on his name. Thence *note*, That a naked aſſent to the hiſtory of the goſpel is not ſufficient to entitle us to ſaving faith. We may aſſent to the truth of all that we find there, and yet be far from the kingdom of God. Saving faith implies more than the aſſent of the underſtanding to the truths of the goſpel. We cannot believe or diſbelieve what we pleaſe, but muſt needs aſſent to what is evident to our underſtanding; ſo that it is poſſible for a man to aſſent to the truth of chriſtianity, and yet remain in a ſtate of damnation. If he doth not embrace it as good, as well as aſſent to it as true; if our faith be not the parent and principle of obedience, if our belief doth not influence our practice, though we paſs for believers amongſt men, we are no better than unbelievers in the account of Chriſt. If we believe Jeſus to be the true Meſſias, and do not receive him in all his offices; if we commit ourſelves to his ſaving mercy, but do not ſubmit ourſelves to his ruling power; if we deſire him for our Saviour, but diſown him for our Sovereign; if we expect ſalvation by him, and do not yield ſubjection to him, we put a cheat upon ourſelves; for he only believes as he ſhould, that lives as he does believe.

25 And needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.

St. John's deſign in writing of this goſpel being to aſſert the divinity of Chriſt, he ſcatters evidences of it in almoſt every chapter. Here he declares his omniſcience, *He knew what was in man*; that is, being God bleſſed for ever, he had an exact knowledge of the hearts of men, not by any revelation of men's hearts from God, but by immediate intuition from himſelf. He knows all men, and all that is in men. See here an ample teſtimony of the divinity of Chriſt, his knowledge of the ſecrets of the hearts of all men, which is declared to be the undoubted property of God alone, 1 Kings viii. 39. *Thou only knoweſt the hearts of all the children of men.*

CHAP. III.

THERE was a man of the Phariſees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with that famous conference which our bleſſed Saviour had with Nicodemus. This man by ſect a Phariſee, which ſignifies a perſon ſeparated and ſet a part for the ſtudy of the law of God, and to teach it unto others; and by calling or profeſſion, *a ruler of the Jews*, that is, probably, one of the Jewiſh ſanhedrim, a chief perſon in their eccleſiaſtical court and council. Conſider we Nicodemus firſt as a Phariſee, which ſort of men were filled with inveterate prejudice and enmity againſt Chriſt: yet from hence we may gather, that ſuch is the efficacy of divine grace, that it ſometimes convinces and converts alſo thoſe that are the greateſt enemies to Chriſt, and fierceſt oppoſers of him. No ſuch bitter enemies to Chriſt as the Phariſees; yet behold Nicodemus, a Phariſee, coming to him, convinced and converted by him. Conſider him, ſecondly, as a ruler of the Jews, as a perſon of place and power, making a figure in the world. Though they were generally the poor which followed Chriſt, yet ſome of the great and rich men of the world, as Nicodemus, a maſter of Iſrael, and Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellor, are called to Chriſt, and received by him; leſt, if he had admitted illiterate and ſimple men only, the world might have thought that they were deceived through their ſimplicity. *Obſerve* farther, The time when Nicodemus came to Chriſt, it was by night, partly out of ſhame, leſt the world ſhould think ſuch a knowing man as he was, wanted inſtruction, and partly out of fear; he had ſomething to loſe, and therefore durſt not own Chriſt publicly. However our dear Lord upbraids him not with timorouſneſs, but graciouſly condeſcends to inſtruct him in the fundamental principle of Chriſtianity, the great doctrine of regeneration. Such is the tenderneſs of our compaſſionate Saviour, that he will not extinguiſh the leaſt ſpark of holy fire, nor quench the ſmoking flax.

3 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.

Chriſt here acquaints Nicodemus, and in him all perſons, that there muſt be a change from nature to grace, before there can be a change from grace to glory; for though he was a Jew, a doctor, and one that had good thoughts of Chriſt, looking upon him as an extraordinary perſon, one that had received power from God to work miracles; yet Chriſt aſſures him that nothing ſhort of the regenerating change would bring him to heaven. It is not enough that we be new-dreſſed, but we muſt be new-made; that is, thoroughly and univerſally changed, the underſtanding by illumination, the will by renovation, the affections by ſanctification, the life by reformation, or we can never come at heaven: We muſt be like God, or we can never live with him: If we be not like him in the temper of our minds on earth, we can never be happy in the enjoyment of him in heaven; for heaven, which is a place of the greateſt holineſs, would be a place of the greateſt uneaſineſs to an unregenerate and an unholy perſon; the contagion is univerſal, deep, and inward, therefore ſuch muſt the change be.

4 Nicodemus ſaith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Two things are *obſervable* in this queſtion of Nicodemus, *How can a man be born when he is old?* 1. His ignorance and weakneſs in propounding of ſuch a queſtion. So true is that of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* What a groſs conception had this learned man of the notion of regeneration? How ignorant is nature of the workings of grace? Men of name and note, of great parts and profound learning, are very often much at a loſs in ſpiritual matters. Yet, 2. In this queſtion of his, there is diſcovered a great deal of plainneſs and ſimplicity: He did not come, as uſually the Phariſees did, with an inſnaring queſtion in his mouth, but with a mind fairly diſpoſed for information and conviction; with a pious deſire to be inſtructed. Whatever ignorance we labour under, it is ſafeſt and beſt to diſcover it to our ſpiritual guide, that we may attain the mercy of a ſaving knowledge; but how many had rather carry their ignorance to hell with them, than diſcover it to their miniſter!

5 Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus not rightly underſtanding Chriſt's meaning in the former verſe, our Saviour is pleaſed to explain himſelf in this, and tells him, That the birth he ſpake of was not natural, but ſpiritual, wrought in the ſoul by the Spirit of God, whoſe working is like water, cleanſing and purifying the ſoul from all ſinful defilement. *Learn* hence, That the regenerating change is wrought in the ſoul by the Spirit of God, which purifies it from its natural defilement, and renews it after the divine likeneſs and image. We never underſtand divine truths aright, till Chriſt opens our underſtandings; till then, they will be denied, nay, perhaps derided, even by thoſe that are profoundly learned.

6 That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "As men generate men, and nature begets nature, ſo the holy Spirit produceth holy inclinations, qualifications, and diſpoſitions." *Learn* hence, That as original corruption is conveyed by natural generation, ſo ſaving regeneration is the effect and product of the holy Spirit's operation.

7 Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus making an exception againſt our Saviour's notion of regeneration, from the abſurdity and impoſſibility of it (as he thought) our Saviour therefore proceeds to clear the matter by a ſimilitude taken from the wind, which at once declares the author, and deſcribes the manner of ſpiritual regeneration: The author of it is the holy Spirit of God, compared to the wind, firſt, For the quality of its motion; *It blows when and where it liſteth:* Secondly, From the ſenſibleneſs of its effects; *Thou heareſt the ſound thereof:* Thirdly, From the intricacy or myſteriouſneſs of its proceedings; *Thou knoweſt not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.* As the natural wind is not under the power of man, either to ſend it out, or to reſtrain it; it bloweth where it liſteth for all us, though not where it liſteth in regard of God: In like manner, the holy Spirit is as wind in the freeneſs of its motion, and in the variableneſs of its motion alſo. *Learn* hence, That the way and work of the holy Spirit of God, in the ſoul's regeneration, is ofttimes very ſecret, and uſually exceeding various: Various as to the time; ſome are wrought upon in youth, others in old age: Various in his methods of working; ſome are wrought upon by the corroſiveneſs of the law, others by the lenitives of the goſpel: Various in the manner of his working, and in the means by which he works; upon ſome by a powerful ordinance, upon others by an awakening providence. But though there be ſuch a variety in the method of the Spirit's working, yet is the work in all ſtill the ſame: There is no variety in the work wrought. The effect produced by the holy Spirit in the work of regeneration is alike and the ſame in all, namely, likeneſs to God, a conformity in our natures to the holy nature of God, and a conformity in our lives to the will of God. Again, it is a very ſecret work, and therefore compared to the wind. We hear the wind blow, we feel it blow, we obſerve its mighty force, and admire its ſtrange effects; but we cannot deſcribe its nature, nor declare its original. Thus the holy Spirit, in a ſecret and hidden manner, quickens and influences our ſouls. The effects of its operations we ſenſibly diſcern; but how and after what manner he doth it, we know no more than how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. Therefore it is called an hidden life, Coloſ. iii. 3. It is not only totally hidden from carnal men, but in part hidden and unknown to ſpiritual men, though they themſelves are the ſubjects of it.

9 Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe things be? 10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things? 11 Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen; and ye receive not our witneſs. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?

Obſerve here, 1. How Nicodemus, conſulting only with carnal reaſon, perſiſts in his apprehenſion concerning the abſurdity and impoſſibility of our Saviour's notion of regeneration, or being born of the Spirit. Nicodemus ſaid, *How can theſe things be?* *Learn* hence, That the great cauſe of men's ignorance in matters of ſalvation, and the myſteries of religion, is conſulting their own natural reaſon, without ſubmitting their underſtandings to the authority of divine revelation. Till they can give a reaſon for every thing they believe, they cry out with Nicodemus, *How can theſe things be?* whereas, though we cannot give a reaſon for all goſpel myſteries which we believe, we can give a good reaſon why we believe them, namely, becauſe God hath revealed them. No man can be a chriſtian, who refuſes to ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of divine revelation. 2. How our Saviour reproves Nicodemus for, and upbraids him with his ignorance, ver. 10. and his infidelity, ver. 12. Firſt, his ignorance is reproved; *Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Ignorance in any as to the fundamentals of religion, is ſhameful, though but a common learner, much more in a teacher and maſter, and he a teacher and maſter in Iſrael; now thou art one of them, and yet knoweſt not theſe things." *Learn* hence, 1. That a man may be very knowing himſelf, and take upon him to teach and inſtruct others, and yet be very ignorant of the nature, and much unacquainted with the work of regeneration upon his own ſoul: A man may be very ſharp-ſighted, as the eagle, in the myſteries of art and nature, and yet blind as a mole in the things of God. 2. That ignorance in the fundamentals of religion eſpecially, is very culpable and ſhameful in any that enjoy the means of knowledge, but eſpecially in thoſe that undertake to teach and inſtruct others. *Art thou a teacher, thou a maſter in Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* Next, our Saviour upbraids him for his infidelity, ver. 12. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not.* This infidelity received its aggravation from the facility and perſpicuity of our Saviour's doctrine. I have told you earthly things; that is, I have ſet forth ſpiritual things by earthly ſimilitudes, not in a ſtyle ſuitable to the ſublimity of their own nature. Let the miniſters of Chriſt learn from their Maſter's example, in all their diſcourſes to accommodate themſelves, and deſcend as low as may be to the capacities of their people: *I have told you earthly things.* 2. That even ſpiritual things, when they are ſhadowed forth by earthly ſimilitudes, and brought down in the plaineſt manner to the capacities of their people, yet they are very ſlow to underſtand them, and very backward to believe them: *I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe them not.*

13 And no man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, which is in heaven.

Here our Saviour declares to Nicodemus, That none ever aſcended up into heaven, to fetch down from thence the knowledge of divine myſteries, and to reveal the way of life and ſalvation to mankind by a Mediator, but only Chriſt himſelf; who, though he took upon him the human nature, and was then man upon earth, yet was he at the ſame time in his divine nature actually in heaven as God. This text evidently proves two diſtinct natures in Chriſt; namely, a divine nature as he was God, and an human nature as man. In his human nature, he was then upon earth when he ſpake theſe words; in his divine nature he was at that inſtant in heaven. Here *obſerve*, That the Son of God hath taken the human nature into ſo cloſe and intimate an union with his Godhead, that what is proper to either nature is aſcribed unto the perſon of our Saviour. The ſame perſon who was on earth as the Son of man, was then in heaven as God, and yet the ſame perſon ſtill. Lord, what love haſt thou ſhewn to our human nature, that under that name thou aſcribeſt to thyſelf what is proper to thy Godhead! *The Son of man which is in heaven.* The Socinians produce this text, to prove that Chriſt, after his baptiſm, was taken up into heaven, there to be made acquainted with the will of God, to fit him for the execution of his prophetical office here on earth, and that for this reaſon he was ſaid to be *in the beginning with God*, as Moſes before him was taken up into the mount, and taught by God. But, 1. We have not the leaſt word of any ſuch thing in ſcripture, though we have a particuler account of our Saviour's birth, circumciſion, baptiſm, doctrines, miracles, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion; yea, of ſmall things compared with this; as his flight into Egypt, his ſitting on a pinnacle of the temple; yet not a word of his aſſumption into heaven. 2. There was no need of it, becauſe almighty

God could reveal himſelf to Chriſt as well as to other prophets out of heaven as well as in it: Beſides, Chriſt was fitted for his prophetic office, by the unction of the Spirit he received here on earth; and therefore this aſcent was altogether needleſs.

14 ¶ And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whomſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.

Chriſt having inſtructed Nicodemus in the doctrine of regeneration in the former verſes, here he inſtructs him in the death of the Meſſiah, and in the neceſſity of faith in his death. *The Son of man muſt be lifted up*; that is, upon the croſs, and die; *that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh*. *Obſerve* here, 1. An Old Teſtament type which our Saviour refers to, and that is, the brazen ſerpent in the wilderneſs, the hiſtory of which is recorded, Numb. xxi. 7, 8. 2. The anti-type, or the ſubſtance of what that type did ſhadow forth: The brazen ſerpent's lifting up upon the pole, pre-figuring Chriſt's exaltation or lifting up upon his croſs. *So muſt the Son of man be lifted up*. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is of the ſame uſe and office to a ſin-ſtung ſoul, which the brazen ſerpent was of old to a ſerpent-ſtung Iſraelite. Here *obſerve*, 1. Wherein the brazen ſerpent and Chriſt do agree: And 2. Wherein they differ. They agree thus: In the *occaſion* of their *inſtitution*; they were both appointed for cure and healing. Were they ſerpent-ſtung? we are ſin-ſtung, devil-bitten. Was the ſting of the fiery ſerpent inflaming? was it ſpreading? was it killing? ſo is ſin, which is the venom and poiſon of the old ſerpent. They agree in this; that they both muſt be *lifted* up, before cure could be obtained; the brazen ſerpent upon the pole, Chriſt upon the croſs. They both muſt be *looked unto*, before cure could be obtained; the looking up of the Iſraelites was as neceſſary unto healing, as the lifting up of the ſerpent. Faith is as neceſſary to ſalvation as the death of Chriſt. The one renders God reconcileable unto ſinners, the other renders him actually reconciled. Again, Did the brazen ſerpent heal *all* that *looked* upon it, and looked up unto it, though all had not eyes alike, ſome with a weak, ſome with a ſtronger eye? In like manner doth Chriſt juſtify and ſave *all*, that with a ſincere faith, though weak, do rely upon him for ſalvation; *Whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh*. Farther, The brazen ſerpent was effectual for Iſrael's cure after many ſtingings: If after they were healed they were ſtung afreſh, and did look up to it, they were healed by it. Thus the merit of Chriſt's death is not only effectual for our cure and healing at our firſt converſion, but after involuntary relapſes and backſlidings, if by faith we have recourſe to the blood of Chriſt, we ſhall find it efficacious for our farther benefit and future healing. In a word, as the brazen ſerpent had the likeneſs of a ſerpent, the form, the figure, the name, the colour of a ſerpent, but nothing of the venom and poiſon of the ſerpent in it: ſo Chriſt did take upon him our nature; but ſin, the venom and poiſon of our nature, he had nothing to do with; though Chriſt loved ſouls with an invincible and inſuperable love, yet he would not ſin to ſave a ſoul. This was the ſimilitude and reſemblance between Chriſt and the brazen ſerpent. The diſparity or diſſimilitude follows: The brazen ſerpent had no power in itſelf, or of itſelf, to heal and cure; but Chriſt has a power inherent in himſelf, for the curing and healing of all that do believe in him. Again, The brazen ſerpent cured only one particular nation and people, Jews only; Chriſt is for the healing of all nations, and his ſalvation to the end of the earth. Farther, The brazen ſerpent only cured one particular diſeaſe, namely, the ſtinging of the fiery ſerpents: Had a perſon been ſick of the plague, or leproſy, he might have died for all the brazen ſerpent; but Chriſt pardons all the iniquities, and heals all the diſeaſes of his people, Pſal. ciii. 3. Yet again, Though the brazen ſerpent healed all that looked up unto it, yet it gave an eye to none to look up unto it; whereas Chriſt doth not only heal them that look up to him, but beſtows the eye of faith upon them, to enable them to look unto him that they may be ſaved. In a word, the brazen ſerpent did not always retain its healing virtue, but in time loſt it, and was itſelf deſtroyed, 2 Kings xviii. 4. But now the healing virtue and efficacy of Chriſt's blood is eternal. All believers have and ſhall experience the healing power of our Redeemer's death to the end of the world. Laſtly, The Iſraelites that were cured by looking up to the brazen ſerpent died afterwards; ſome diſtemper or other ſoon carried them to their graves; but the ſoul of the believer that is healed by Chriſt ſhall never die more: *Whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

16 ¶ For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.

Here *obſerve*, 1. The original ſource and fountain of man's ſalvation; and that is God's free and undeſerved, his great and wonderful love. *God ſo loved the world*; he doth not ſay how much, but leaves it to our moſt ſolemn raiſed thoughts; it is rather to be conceived than declared; and admired rather than conceived. *God ſo loved the world*: Hence *note*, That the original ſpring and firſt cauſe of our ſalvation is the free favour and mere love of God. A love worthy of God from whom it proceeds, even love inexpreſſible and inconceivable. 2. The greatneſs of the gift by which God evinced and demonſtrated the greatneſs of his love to a loſt world. *He gave his only begotten Son*: that is, he delivered him out of his own boſom and everlaſting embraces. Now this will appear a ſtupendous expreſſion of God's love, if we conſider that God gave *Him*, who was not only the greateſt, but the deareſt perſon to him in the world, *his own Son*; that he gave him for ſinners; that he gave him for a world of ſinners; that he gave him up to become a man for ſinners; that he gave him up to become a miſerable man for ſinners; that he gave him up to be a ſacrifice for the ſin of ſinners. 3. The gracious end for which God gave this great gift of his love to loſt ſinners; *That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*. Where *note*, 1. The gentle and merciful condition upon which ſalvation depends; *Whoſoever believeth in Chriſt, ſhall not periſh*. 2. The infinite goodneſs of God in propoſing ſuch a vaſt reward unto us, upon our performing of this condition: *He ſhall have everlaſting life.* *Learn* hence, That faith is the way which God hath appointed, and the condition which God hath required, in order to our obtaining ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. This faith conſiſts in the aſſent of the underſtanding, that Jeſus is the Saviour of the world; in the conſent of the will, to accept of Jeſus freely and voluntarily, deliberately, adviſedly, and reſolvedly, for our Saviour; in accepting the merit of his blood, and ſubmitting to the authority of his laws; it being in vain to expect ſalvation by Chriſt, if we do not yield ſubjection to him; he that thus *believes in Chriſt*, that ſubmits himſelf to his ruling power, as well as commits himſelf to his ſaving mercy, *ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

17 For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved. 18 ¶ He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Note here, That the ſalvation of ſinners was the intentional end, and the condemnation of them only the accidental event, of Chriſt's coming into the world. The deſign of Chriſt's firſt coming into the world was to ſave it. The end of his ſecond coming, will be to judge the unbelieving part of it. Secondly, That unbelief is the formal cauſe of the ſinner's damnation; it is that ſin which doth bind all other ſins upon the ſinner, and conſigns him over to damnation; it is that ſin which doth not only procure damnation, but no damnation like it; which is intimated in the next verſe.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.

Note here, 1. The worth and dignity of a choice and invaluable privilege declared, *Light is come into the world.* A perſonal light, *Chriſt*; a doctrinal light, *the goſpel.* 2. The unworthineſs, abuſe, and great indignity, which the world, through infidelity, offers to this benefit; they reject it, and *love darkneſs rather than light.* 3. The dreadful ſentence of wrath which the rejection of this benefit, and the abuſe of Chriſt, brings upon the impenitent and unbelieving world. It terminates in their full and final condemnation: *This is the condemnation*; that is, it is a juſt and righteous condemnation, it is an inevitable and unavoidable condemnation, it is an heightened and aggravated, it is an accelerated and haſtened, and irrecoverable and eternal condemnation. *Learn* hence, That the greater and clearer the light is, under which the unregenerate and impenitent do live in this world, ſo much the heavier will their condemnation and miſery be in the world to come, if they wilfully and finally reject it.

20 For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. 21 But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.

In theſe words our Saviour acquaints us with the different nature of ſin and holineſs. It is the nature of ſin, and the property of ſinners, to hate the light, becauſe it diſcovers the evil and ſinfulneſs of their ways unto them, and condemns them for them; as the Ethiopians are ſaid to curſe the ſun for its bright and hot ſhining: Whereas holy and gracious perſons, that walk uprightly, do love the light; that is, they delight to have their thoughts, words, and actions tried by the light of the word, becauſe *they are wrought in God*: that is, performed as in the ſight of God, according to the direction of the word of God, and with a ſingle eye and ſincere aim at the glory of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That the word of God, or the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, has all the properties of a great and true light; it is of a pure and purifying nature, it is of a manifeſtative and diſcovering nature; it has a piercing power and penetrating virtue, it enters the darkeſt receſſes of the ſoul, and detects the errors of men's judgments, as well as diſcovers the enormities of their lives. 2. That nothing is ſo hateful to, and hated by a wicked man, as the diſcovering and reproving light of the word of God; for at the ſame time that it diſcovers the ſin, it condemns the ſinner. 3. That a truly gracious perſon, who acteth agreeably to the will of God, is not afraid to examine his actions, by the word of God; but deſires and delights, that what he doth, may be made manifeſt both to God and man. *He that doth truth, cometh to the light*, and rejoiceth, *that his deeds may be made manifeſt*, becauſe *they are wrought in God.*

22 ¶ After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 ¶ And John alſo was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, becauſe there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet caſt into priſon,

Our bleſſed Saviour having now finiſhed his excellent ſermon, preached to Nicodemus at Jeruſalem, he departs thence with his diſciples into the country of Judea, to make proſelytes by the ordinance of baptiſm. Where *note*, 1. Our Lord's unwearied diligence in doing his Father's work and will. He goes from place to place, from city to country, preaching with, and baptizing by, his diſciples; for *Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but his diſciples*, John iv. 2.— 2. That the enjoyment of Chriſt's bodily preſence did not take away the uſe of his own ordinances. None are above ordinances, till they come to heaven. The ordinance of baptiſm is here admininiſterd by the diſciples, even in the preſence of Chriſt himſelf. This is called the baptiſm of repentance, of which children, as well as others, were capable ſubjects, becauſe baptiſm doth not require children's repentance at preſent, but engages them to repentance for time to come: As children that were circumciſed were obliged to obſerve the whole law, but could not perform it till they came to underſtand it. 3. How John did go on with his work of baptizing, though Chriſt and his diſciples did eclipſe and obſcure him; though the people now flocked after Chriſt, *All men came unto him*, ver. 26. yet John kept to his duty. It is the duty of God's miniſters to continue in their diligence, and go on with their work, when God raiſes up others about them of greater parts and better ſucceſs. O the admirable humility of that miniſter, who can ſay with John the Baptiſt, *Let another increaſe, though I decreaſe.*

25 ¶ Then there aroſe a queſtion between *ſome* of John's diſciples and the Jews, about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bareſt witneſs, behold, the ſame baptizeth, and all men come to him.

Note here, What a ſpirit of envy there was in John's diſciples againſt Chriſt, upon account of the multitude of his followers: *He that was with thee beyond Jordan, baptizeth, and all men come to him.* Where *note*, 1. How meanly John's diſciples think and ſpeak of our Saviour, compared with John their maſter. They do not ſo much as allow him a name, or give him any title, but *he that was with thee beyond Jordan, the ſame baptizeth.* 2. How they intimate, as if Chriſt had received all his credit and reputation from their maſter John; *He to whom thou bareſt witneſs, baptizeth*; as if they had ſaid, "This man whom the people flock after, neglecting thee and thy diſciples, is much inferior to thee; for he came to thee, thou didſt not go to him; thou baptizedſt him, he did not baptize thee; thou gaveſt teſtimony to him, he did not give teſtimony to thee." Whence we *note*, What a bitter ſpirit of envy and emulation there has always been amongſt the miniſters of the goſpel, even from the very firſt plantation of the goſpel, which cauſes them to look upon the exalted parts and gifts of others, as a diminution and debaſing of their own; but why ſhould the proſpering of the work of God in one miniſter's hand, be matter of repining unto others? Shall not God honour what inſtruments he pleaſeth? And will he not reward all his faithful labourers, according to their ſincerity, not according to their ſucceſs?

27 John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him. 29 He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom? but the friend of the bridegroom, which ſtandeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly becauſe of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He muſt increaſe, but I *muſt* decreaſe. 31 He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above all.

Note here, How holily and wiſely John the Baptiſt corrects the envy and jealouſy of his own diſciples, and endeavours to root all prejudice out of their minds againſt Chriſt: In order to which, he ſhews them a fivefold difference betwixt Chriſt and himſelf. 1. He tells them Chriſt was the Maſter, John but his miniſter, and that he had told them ſo from the beginning: *Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt: but that I am ſent before him.* The faithful miniſters of Chriſt think it honour enough to be ſervants to him, and would not have their followers attribute the leaſt part of the honour and glory to them which is due to Jeſus Chriſt. 2. John acquaints his diſciples, that Chriſt was the bridegroom of his church, to whom the chriſtian church was to be ſolemnly eſpouſed and married; and that he had honour enough in being one of the Bridegroom's friends and ſervants; and accordingly, inſtead of envying, he rejoiced at the ſucceſs which the Bridegroom had, and took great pleaſure in it. *Learn* 1. That the relation betwixt Chriſt and his church is a conjugal relation, a relation of marriage; yet ſet forth under the name of bride and bridegroom, rather than under the notion of a complete marriage, becauſe it is but begun here, and to be conſummated in heaven: And alſo to ſhew, that Chriſt's and his people's affections, are as warm and freſh, as ſtrong and vehement towards each other, as the affections of eſpouſed or newly married perſons are to one another; Iſa. lxii. 5. *As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoice over thee.* 2. It is honour ſufficient to the miniſters of Chriſt, that they, as friends of the Bridegroom, are employed by him to further the marriage relation betwixt him and his ſpouſe. Their office is to woo for Chriſt, to commend his perſon, and to invite all perſons to accept of him, for their head and huſband; 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.* 3. That there is no greater joy to the miniſters of Chriſt, than to ſee themſelves honoured by him, as his inſtruments, in preparing a people for Chriſt, and happily uniting them unto him. Oh! how little do our people know, and leſs conſider, how much of the comfort of their poor miniſters lives lie at their mercy: We live as we ſee any of them ſtand faſt in the Lord; we die as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their ſins. This was the ſecond difference which John acquaints his diſciples was found betwixt Chriſt and himſelf. The third follows, ver. 30. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.* He muſt increaſe; that is, in honour and dignity, in eſteem and reputation, in diſcovery and manifeſtation: He ſhall ſhine forth as the riſing-ſun; and I muſt diſappear as the morning-ſtar: Not that John's light was diminiſhed, but by a greater light obſcured only; as all the ſtars diſappear at the appearance of the ſun. Yet obſerve what matter of joy it was to John to ſee himſelf outſhined by Chriſt: Let him increaſe, though I decreaſe. That miniſter has true light in himſelf, that can rejoice when he is outſhined by others; who is content to be abaſed and obſcured, if he may but ſee Chriſt dignified and exalted in the lives of his people, whoſoever the perſon is whom God honours as his inſtrument in that ſervice. The fourth difference wherein Chriſt excels John and all his miniſters, is in the divine original of his perſon; ver. 13. *He that cometh from above is above all*, ſays John: Now Chriſt is from above, his original is from heaven; I am from the earth (though I had my commiſſion from heaven) and accordingly my words and actions are earthly: My Maſter therefore infinitely ſurpaſſeth and excels me in the dignity of his perſon, and in the ſublimity of his knowledge. From the whole, *note*, How much it is the deſire and endeavour of every goſpel miniſter to magnify Jeſus Chriſt, to diſplay his glorious excellencies and perfections before the people, that they may reverence his perſon, revere his authority, and reſpect his laws. This was the care of the holy Baptiſt here, and it will be the endeavour of every faithful miniſter of Chriſt that ſucceeds John, to the end of the world.

32 And what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth; and no man receiveth his teſtimony. 33 He that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure *unto him.*

Obſerve, 1. Another great difference which John the Baptiſt teacheth his diſciples to put between his teſtimony and Chriſt's: To the intent that he might remove the prejudice which was upon his diſciples' minds againſt the Meſſiah, he ſhews them, that his teſtimony, (which they ſo much admired) was by revelation only; Chriſt's by immediate intuition: John teſtified only what he received; but Chriſt what he had ſeen, lying in the boſom of his Father: *What he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth. Learn* hence, That it is Chriſt's (the great prophet of his church) peculiar prerogative, to have the knowledge of divine truths immediately from the Father, by ſpecial communication; and that all others receive their knowledge from him by gracious illumination only. 2. How ſadly and ſorrowfully the holy Baptiſt reſents it, that Chriſt's teſtimony was no better received and entertained by the world: *He teſtifieth, but no man receiveth his teſtimony.* John's diſciples murmured, *That all men came unto Chriſt*, ver. 26. but John mourns that there came not more, and complains, that none, that is, very few, *received his teſtimony.* Thence *learn*, That it ought and will be matter of great regret and ſorrow to all the friends of Jeſus Chriſt, but eſpecially to his faithful miniſters and ſervants, that his doctrine is ſo ill received and entertained in the world. It greatly affects, and grievouſly afflicts them, that when they *teſtify of Chriſt, no man*, that is, comparatively, very few men, *receive their teſtimony.* 3. The eulogy and high commendation given of all true believers: *They receive Chriſt's teſtimony*, and thereby *ſet to their ſeal that God is true*; that is, have ſubſcribed to, and ratified the truth of God; that God in all his promiſes of the Meſſiah, under the Old Teſtament, is faithful and true. *Learn* hence, The great honour that God puts upon the faith of believers. As unbelief defames God, and makes him a liar, ſo faith gives teſtimony to the truth of God, and ſetteth to its ſeal that God is true: *He that receiveth his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true.* 4. The illuſtrious character which the holy Baptiſt gives of Chriſt his maſter: He is the perſon *whom God hath ſent*, and unto whom *God giveth not his Spirit by meaſure. He whom God hath ſent*; that is, immediately and extraordinarily from heaven; not as the prophets and apoſtles were ſent, but immediately from heaven; having authority for ſpeaking, not only from God, but as being God himſelf. And accordingly, it is added, that *God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*; that is, the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit were poured forth upon Chriſt in a meaſure far above and beyond all finite creatures; there being a double difference betwixt Chriſt's fulneſs of the Spirit, and all other perſons whatſoever. 1. In the meaſure of it. God did not give out the Spirit to Chriſt ſparingly, and with limitation, as he did to the former prophets and John the Baptiſt, in proportion to what their offices required, but he was anointed more plentifully and abundantly with the holy Spirit, above and beyond his fellows. 2. In the manner of its working. The holy prophets that were filled with the Spirit (according to their meaſures) yet could not do or declare all things, nor act upon all occaſions, but ſometimes the Spirit reſtrained them, and ſometimes departed from them: But Chriſt had no limits put upon the vigour of his Spirit, but his own will; therefore could work what, and when he pleaſed. *Learn* from hence, That Chriſt had an abundant fitneſs from God for the diſcharge of his office, and an abundant fulneſs for his people. God did not meaſure to him a certain quantity and proportion of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, but poured it forth upon him without meaſure.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

The Father loved the Son from eternity, as he was his Son by eternal generation; and he loved him as Mediator by ſpecial conſtitution: He loves him as the brightneſs of his own glory, and the expreſs image of his own perſon, with an eſſential, natural, and neceſſary love; he loves him as Mediator, for undertaking our cauſe, and interpoſing for our peace. *Learn* hence, That God the Father had a ſpecial love and affection to Chriſt, not only in regard of his eternal Sonſhip, but with reſpect of his office and Mediatorſhip: *The Father loveth the Son*: It follows, *He hath given all things into his hand*; that is, he hath intruſted him with all things neceſſary to our ſalvation. Lord! what a privilege is this, that our happineſs is in Chriſt's hand, not in our own, without his. O wonderful goodneſs, to put our concerns into the ſure hands of his Son, which were loſt by the weak hands of Adam!

36 He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Learn, 1. That though all power be given to Chriſt, to diſpenſe grace here, yet none more expect to enjoy it, but upon condition of their believing in him, and of obeying him, for the original word ſignifies both. No faith is acceptable to Chriſt, not available to our ſalvation, but that which is the parent and obedience. 2. That final unbelief renders a man infallibly an object of the eternal wrath of God; *He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth in him.* The unbeliever now lies under the ſentence of God's wrath, hereafter he ſhall lie under the full and final execution of it. Lord! how ſad is it to be here in a ſtate of condemnation! but how intolerable will it be in hell, to continue eternally under condemnation! To lie for ever in that myſterious fire of hell, whoſe ſtrange property is always torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume: For, after millions of years are expired, ſtill it is wrath to come; and though the unbeliever has endured never ſo much, yet ſtill *the wrath of God abideth on him*. Every word carries dread and terror with it. The *wrath*, not the anger; and the wrath of *God*, not of man, at whoſe rebuke the devils tremble. And this wrath of God not only flaſhes out like lightning, but *abides*, dwells, and ſticks faſt *upon him*; that is, on his perſon, the whole man, ſoul and body.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John, 2 (Though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but *his* diſciples) 3 He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

The former part of this chapter acquaints us with our Saviour's removal out of Judea into Galilee. The occaſion of it was this: Chriſt hearing that John was caſt into priſon, and underſtanding how the Phariſees were enraged at the increaſing number of his diſciples; to decline their fury, and prevent danger to himſelf, he leaves Judea, and departs into Galilee, for his own preſervation. Hence *learn*, That when the faithful miniſters of Chriſt do meet with eminent ſucceſs in their Maſter's ſervice, they muſt expect to meet with a mighty ſhock of malice and envy from Satan and his wicked inſtruments. Chriſt himſelf experienced it; let his miniſters expect it, and prepare for it. 2. That it is neither unlawful nor unbecoming for the miniſters of Chriſt to flee when perſecution threatens them; their Lord and Maſter having fled before them; and commanded alſo, *When they perſecute in one city, to flee into another*.

4 And he muſt needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his ſon Joſeph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jeſus therefore being wearied with *his* journey, ſat thus on the well: and it was about the ſixth hour.

Here *note*, 1. How wonderfully the wiſdom of God over-rules the malice of men for his own glory, and the good of others. The malice of the Phariſees in Judea drives Chriſt into Galilee, and in his paſſage through Samaria, the firſt-fruits of the Gentiles are called, and particularly the woman of Samaria. 2. How in every ſtep of Chriſt's way he was doing good to the ſouls of men. In his paſſage through Samaria into Galilee, a poor woman is brought to know him to be the true Meſſias. 3. Our holy Lord, in his journeying from place to place, did travel uſually on foot; and the weakneſs of his body, upon travelling, ſhews him to be truly and really man, *and in all things like unto us, ſin only excepted*. Our bleſſed Lord did not only take upon him our nature, but the infirmities of our nature alſo.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 For his diſciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat. 9 Then ſaith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, aſkeſt drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Obſerve here, 1. How all our motions and actions are under the direction and government of God, and how divine providence doth ſometimes diſpoſe of ſmall matters to become occaſions of great good. This poor woman's coming to the well to draw water, became the means of her converſion. *Obſerve*, 2. Chriſt ſpeaks to, and ſeeks after this poor woman, before ſhe takes any notice of him; God is found of thoſe that ſeek him not, and makes himſelf manifeſt to them that enquire not after him. *Jeſus ſaid unto her, Give me to drink*. 3. The great poverty of our Lord's outward condition, he wanted a draught of water for his refreſhment, and a meal's meat now at dinner-time, to refreſh his wearied nature. Oh! what contempt did Chriſt caſt upon the world when he was here in it! He would not honour it ſo far as to keep any part of it in his own hand. Yet, *obſerve*, 4. That though Chriſt had neither houſe nor land, nor money of his own, yet he lived not by begging, or upon mere alms. *The diſciples were gone into the city to buy*, not to *beg meat*: For there was a bag which required a bearer, John xii. 6. And our Saviour's friends and followers ſupplied him with money for his neceſſary occaſions: *His diſciples were gone to buy bread.* Laſtly, How bitter is the enmity which differences of religion, and diverſities of opinions, do occaſion: They do not only alienate affections, but even violate the bonds of civil ſociety and common converſation. *The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans:* would neither eat nor drink with them.

10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, if thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldeſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The Samaritan woman had refuſed Chriſt a draught of water in the former verſe, he offers her the water of life in this verſe. O! how kindly doth Chriſt deal with thoſe that dealt unkindly with him! *If thou kneweſt the gift of God*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The mercy which Chriſt had for, and was ſo deſirous to beſtow upon, this poor woman: It was the gift of God; that is, himſelf, his holy Spirit, in the ſanctifying gifts and ſaving graces of it. All which are compared to water, in regard of their effects and operations, which are to purify the unclean, and ſatisfy the thirſty. 2. The way and courſe which this woman and every loſt ſinner ought to take, in order to the obtaining this ineſtimable gift; and that is, by aſking it, *Thou wouldeſt have aſked, and he would have given thee living water. Learn* hence, That Chriſt himſelf, his holy Spirit, with all the ſanctifying graces of it, muſt be earneſtly ſought of God: And ſuch as do unfeignedly ſeek them, ſhall certainly obtain them. 3. The true cauſe and reaſon aſſigned, why ſinners aſk not for, and ſeek not after Jeſus Chriſt, and the graces of the holy Spirit; and that is, ignorance of the worth and want of them. *If thou kneweſt the gift of God thou wouldeſt have aſked. Learn* hence, That it is ignorance of the worth of Chriſt, and inſenſibleneſs of the want of him, that makes perſons ſo different in their deſires after him, and ſo remiſs in their endeavours for the obtaining of him. Oh ſinners! did you but know who and what Chriſt is, that is offered to you, did you but ſee his beauty, fulneſs, and ſuitableneſs, and were you but ſenſible of the worth and want of him, all the world could not keep you from him; you would break through all difficulties and dangers, through all ſufferings and reproaches, to come unto the enjoyment of him.

11 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattle: 13 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Whoſoever drinketh of this water ſhall thirſt again: 14 But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt; but the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

Note here, 1. How ignorant perſons are of ſpiritual things, till enlightened by the holy Spirit of God. This poor woman's queſtion, *Whence haſt thou that living water?* looks much like that of Nicodemus, John iii. 9. *How can theſe things be?* A natural perſon cannot perceive the mind of Chriſt when ſpeaking to him about ſpiritual things. Spiritual objects muſt have a ſpiritual eye to diſcern and behold them, 1 Co. ii. 14. *The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit.* 2. With what great humility and condeſcenſion our holy Lord treats this poor woman, pitying her ignorance, and pardoning her infidelity; he tells her, that the water of that well which ſhe was about to draw, could not give an abiding ſatisfaction; but the thirſt quenched for the preſent, would certainly return again: but he that ſhould drink of the water he had to give, that is, be made partaker of the graces of his Spirit, ſhall find ſuch refreſhing ſatisfaction therefrom, that all inordinate deſires after earthly things will be quenched and extinguiſhed, and will be like a well of water ſpringing up, till he come to eternal glory. *Learn* hence, 1. That as the body of man is ſubject to a natural, ſo is the ſoul of man ſubject to a ſpiritual kind of thirſt. 2. That no creature-comfort, or earthly enjoyment, can quench this thirſt which the ſoul of a man is ſubject unto. 3. That the Spirit of grace (which our Saviour here calls the *water of life*) is able fully and perfectly to quench the thirſt of the ſoul: and where it is once ſavingly received, ſhall never be totally or finally loſt. *It ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life*; that is, the graces of the Spirit ſhall be in believers as permanent habits, as fixed principles that ſhall not decay. Hence St. Peter calls it *incorruptible ſeed, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23.

15 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Go call thy huſband, and come hither. 17 The woman anſwered and ſaid, I have no huſband. Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no huſband. 18 For thou haſt had five huſbands, and he whom thou now haſt is not thy huſband: in that ſaidſt thou truly.

Theſe words ſet forth unto us, 1. What manner of perſon this woman was, whoſe converſion Chriſt ſought ſo induſtriouſly after. 2. The means he uſed in order to that end. *Note* 1. What manner of perſon this woman was; beſide that ſhe was an idolater, as being a Samaritan, ſhe was alſo an adultereſs, and lived now in the ſin of uncleanneſs, with one that was not her huſband, after ſhe had had five huſbands before. Whence we *learn*, That the ice of old age will not quench the fire of luſt, *concupiſcenta non ſeneſcit*; ſuch is the pollution of our nature, that luſt will be inſatiable, if grace doth not reſtrain it. This woman, after five marriages, yet lives in the ſin of uncleanneſs. 2. The way and manner our Lord takes, the method and means our Lord uſes in order to her converſion. 1. He deals very tenderly and gently with her; he uſes no roughneſs or tartneſs of ſpeech with her: He doth not call her whore, nor upbraid her for her impudent lewdneſs, in living with a man that was none of her huſband, but only gives her to underſtand, that he knew the ſin ſhe lived in; yet this he did likewiſe with all imaginable privacy, whilſt his diſciples were away, and no body by but they two only. Hence *learn*, 1. That private ſins are not to be reproved publicly. 2. That, in reproving ſin, all ſharpneſs and bitterneſs of expreſſion muſt be avoided; the pill of reproof muſt be wrapped up in ſugar; for if they to whom it is given taſte the bitterneſs of gall and paſſion mixed with it, they will certainly ſpit it out before, it may be upon, our faces. Our Lord's practice here inſtructs us, that ſin is to be ſo reproved, as that the credit and eſtimation of the ſinner may be preſerved as much as may be. 2. That as Chriſt dealt with this woman tenderly and gently, ſo he diſcovers her ſin to her particularly, and ſets her ſecret ſin before the face of her conſcience diſtinctly. If ever the miniſtry of the word works upon the minds of men to their converſion, it muſt be by a particular and cloſe application of the word to every man's conſcience: generals will not affect. 3. What the particular ſin is, which Chriſt charges home upon the conſcience of this woman; it is the ſin of uncleanneſs, that the man ſhe kept with, was not her huſband. *Learn* hence, That amongſt all ſins, the ſin of uncleanneſs will lie heavieſt upon the conſcience, and wound the ſoul moſt deeply, when the Spirit of God once effectually diſcovers it, and charges it home upon the conſcience. For there is no ſin ſo directly oppoſite to ſanctification and holineſs as this ſin; no ſin that quenches the holy Spirit of God like this.

19 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain; and ye ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.

In theſe verſes the Evangeliſt declares a threefold effect and fruit of the grace of converſion that appeared in this woman. 1. She neither denied, nor excuſed, nor extenuated this ſin, which Chriſt had charged her with, but tacitly owns, and implicitly confeſſes it. 2. She doth not only own and confeſs what ſhe was charged with, but ſhe doth profeſs reverence for our Saviour's perſon, and pays honour to him as an extraordinary prophet; *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.* 3. She deſired inſtruction and reſolution from him concerning the worſhip and ſervices of the true God, how ſhe might ſeek him and where ſhe might ſerve him moſt acceptably, whether at Jeruſalem or upon mount Gerizim; *Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain, but ye ſay Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.* Where *note*, How ready and forward perſons of a falſe religion are to aſcribe too much to antiquity, and to the example and cuſtom of their forefathers; whereas it is not the continuance of a thouſand or two thouſand years, that can make any thing truly ancient in religion, except it has been from the beginning: Nothing is truly ancient in matters of religion, but that which can derive its original from him, that is truly called the *Ancient of days*.

21 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem worſhip the Father. 22 Ye worſhip ye know not what: we know what we worſhip; for ſalvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.

Here we have our Saviour's anſwer to the foregoing queſtion, which conſiſts of two parts: 1. Concerning the place of worſhip: 2. Concerning the worſhip itſelf. As to the place of worſhip our Saviour tells her, That though the Jews had heretofore, by warrant of God's word, regularly worſhipped at Jeruſalem, and the Samaritan's ſuperſtitiouſly worſhipped at mount Gerizim, yet the hour was coming, namely, at his death, when all differences of places for God's worſhip ſhould be taken away, and therefore ſhe need not trouble herſelf about the place of God's worſhip, to know whether of the two places were holier, and the better to ſerve God in, for ere long the ſervice of God ſhould not be confined more to one place than another *Learn* hence, 1. That, ſince the death of Chriſt, the religious difference of places is taken away, and the worſhip of God not confined to any one particular place or nation. 2. Our bleſſed Saviour reſolves her concerning the worſhip itſelf, namely, That the ceremonial worſhip, which the Jews and Samaritans uſed, ſhould ſhortly be aboliſhed, and inſtead thereof a more ſpiritual form of worſhip ſhould be eſtabliſhed, more ſuitable to the ſpiritual nature of the great and holy God, and containing in it the truth and ſubſtance of all that which the Jewiſh ceremonies pre-figured and ſhadowed forth. *Learn* hence, That the true worſhip of God under the goſpel doth not conſiſt in the external pomp of any outward ceremonies, but is ſpiritual and ſubſtantial: No worſhip is acceptable to him, who is the Father of ſpirits, but that which is truly ſpiritual.

24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip *him* in ſpirit and in truth.

God is a Spirit; that is, he hath no body, nor bodily parts: He is not a bare ſpiritual ſubſtance, but a pure and perfect Spirit; and therefore his worſhippers *muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*; where ſpirit is oppoſed to the legal ceremonies, and truth to the Jewiſh rites, not to hypocritical ſervices; for the old patriarchs did worſhip God in *ſpirit* and in *truth*. As truth is taken for ſincerity, they ſerved him with a ſincere conſcience, and with a ſingle heart: But our Saviour's buſineſs is to ſhew, that a new worſhip, without legal rites and Jewiſh ceremonies, is proper to the times of the goſpel. In the words, *obſerve*, 1. The nature of God declared; *God is a Spirit.* 2. The duty of men inferred; therefore *they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.* From the whole, *note*, 1. That God is a pure ſpiritual being. When bodily parts, hands, and eyes, &c. are aſcribed to him, it is only in condeſcenſion to our weakneſs, and to ſignify thoſe acts in God, which ſuch members do perform in us. 2. That the worſhip due from the creature to God is ſpiritual worſhip, and ought to be ſpiritually performed; that is, we muſt worſhip him from ſpiritual principles, ſincere love, and filial reverence, for ſpiritual ends, that we may pleaſe him, and promote his glory; and after a ſpiritual manner, with the whole heart, ſoul, and mind, and with a fervency of ſpirit. We muſt have awful apprehenſions of him, ſuitable to the nature of his being; but above all, we muſt endeavour to reſemble him: Then is God worſhipped beſt by us, when we are moſt like unto him. The Jewiſh ceremonial worſhip was aboliſhed, to promote the ſpirituality of divine worſhip; yet muſt not this be underſtood as if God rejected bodily worſhip, becauſe he requires ſpiritual under the goſpel; for Jeſus Chriſt, the moſt ſpiritual worſhipper, worſhipped God with his body. Beſides, God has appointed ſome parts of worſhip, which cannot be performed without the body, as ſacraments. In a word, God has created the body as well as the ſoul, Chriſt has redeemed the body as well as the ſoul, and he will glorify the body as well as the ſoul; therefore it is our duty to worſhip and glorify God with our bodies, and with our ſpirits, which are his.

25 The woman ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh which is called Chriſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jeſus ſaith unto her, I that ſpeak unto thee, am *he*.

Note here, 1. What a general expectation there was in the minds of all perſons (at the time of our Saviour's appearing) of one whom the Jews call the Meſſiah: *I know that Meſſiah cometh.* This woman, though a Samaritan, yet knew that the Meſſiah ſhould come, and that he was now expected. 2. What the work and office of the Meſſias was apprehended and believed to be, namely, to reveal the whole mind and will of God to a loſt world; *When the Meſſiah is come, he will tell us all things.*. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed and true Meſſiah, being called and appointed by God to be the great Prophet of his church, hath fully and perfectly revealed all things needful to be known for our ſalvation, John xv. 15. *All things that I have heard of the Father I have made known unto you.* Laſtly, How freely and fully Chriſt reveals himſelf to this poor woman; he tells her plainly, that he was the Meſſias. When the Jews aſked him, John x. 24. *If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly*, Chriſt did not in plain terms tell them who he was; nay, when John Baptiſt ſent two of his diſciples to aſk him, whether he were *He that ſhould come*; he gave them no direct anſwer: Yet behold, he makes himſelf plainly known to this poor woman; he diſcerning her humility and great ſimplicity, that ſhe was willing to be inſtructed by him, and did not come to him as the Jews and Phariſees did, captiouſly, with a deſign to entangle and enſnare him. Hence *learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt delights to reveal himſelf, and make known his mind and will to ſuch as, with an humble mind, and an honeſt ſimplicity of heart, do deſire to know him, and underſtand their duty to him.

27 ¶ And upon this came his diſciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man ſaid, What ſeekeſt thou? or, Why talkeſt thou with her? 28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and ſaith to the men, 29 Come, ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Note here, 1. How the providence of God ſo ordered and diſpoſed of things, that the diſciples did not return to Chriſt, till he had finiſhed his diſcourſe with this poor woman. An humbled ſinner may meet with ſuch ſatiſfaction and ſweet refreſhment in Chriſt's company, that the preſence even of diſciples themſelves (the beſt and holieſt of ſaints) may be looked upon as injurious to it, and an interruption of it. This poor woman had ſo ſweet a time with Chriſt, that an end being put to the conference, by the coming of the diſciples, might be matter of grief and reſentment to her; yet the providence of God ſo ordered, that the diſciples did not come to break off the conference, till Chriſt had made himſelf known as the Meſſias to this poor woman. 2. The carriage and behaviour of the diſciples upon their return to Chriſt; finding him preaching a ſermon to a ſingle woman, they marvelled, but yet were ſilent. *Learn*, 1. That the humility and condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in treating poor penitent and humble ſinners, is a matter of wonder and admiration, even to diſciples themſelves. O bleſſed Saviour! there was more kindneſs and condeſcenſion, more love and compaſſion, more meekneſs and humility in thyſelf alone, than in all thy diſciples and followers put together. Yet *note*, 2. Though they marvelled, they were ſilent, *No man ſaid, Why talkeſt thou with her?* Thence *obſerve*, That ſuch reverence is due to Chriſt in all his diſpenſations and actions, that when we can ſee no reaſon for what he doth, it is not for us to enquire, much leſs for us to quarrel; but we muſt awfully admire what we cannot comprehend. 3. The behaviour of this woman after the conference was over; ſhe leaves her water-pot, and makes haſte to invite and call her neighbours to Chriſt, whoſe grace and kindneſs ſhe had experienced. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as truly know Chriſt, have taſted ſweetneſs in him, and derived comfort and ſatiſfaction from him, will be forward to invite, and induſtrious to draw others to a ſaving acquaintance with him. *Come* with me, *and ſee* a man *that told me all that ever I did. Is not this the Chriſt?* Farther, From the woman's leaving her water-pot behind her, and haſtening to the city, that when once a ſoul has taſted the ſweetneſs and excellency that is in Jeſus Chriſt, thoſe things which were highly eſteemed before, will be little regarded then. The poor woman came to draw water, and thought much, and ſpake much of the water of that well which was before her: But meeting with Jeſus Chriſt, and taſting of his grace, ſhe forgets both water and water-pot, and away ſhe goes to fetch in all her acquaintance to Chriſt.

31 ¶ In the mean-while his diſciples prayed him, ſaying, Maſter, eat. 32 But he ſaid unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33 Therefore ſaid the diſciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34 Jeſus ſaith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work.

Note here, The fit and ſeaſonable motion which our Saviour's diſciples make to him; *Maſter, eat*. *Learn* from thence, That though a perſon's chief care ſhould be for his own ſoul, and for improving all opportunities for doing good to the ſouls of others, yet the bodies of men muſt not be neglected, but ſupported by meat and drink; eſpecially theirs, whoſe health and ſtrength may be of greater uſe and ſervice to God and his church. The body is the ſervant of the ſoul, the inſtrument whereby it worketh; and, therefore, to neglect the body is to diſable and unfit the ſoul for ſervice, to hinder the functions and operations of it. The ſixth commandment, which forbids us to kill, requires us to uſe all means for the preſervation of life both in ourſelves and others. Next, Our Saviour's anſwer to the diſciple's motion; *Maſter, eat*, ſay they. *I have meat to eat that ye know not of*, ſays he; *for my meat is to do the will of him that ſent me*. Not that our Saviour did not want meat at this time, for he was both hungry and thirſty, as appears by his aſking water of the woman to drink, and by his ſending his diſciples into the city to buy meat; but our Lord was more intent upon doing his Father's work, than upon ſatisfying his own hunger. Chriſt hungered more after an opportunity of doing good to the ſouls of men, than he did after meat and drink to ſatisfy his hunger. Lord, let us, thy miniſters, learn of thee to prefer the ſpiritual welfare of our people before any temporal advantages whatſoever.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harveſt? behold, I ſay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harveſt. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that ſaying true, One ſoweth, and another reapeth. 38 I ſent you to reap that whereon ye beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Our bleſſed Saviour having in the former verſes given a moſt plain and evident demonſtration of his fervent deſire to bring ſouls home to God, doth in theſe verſes labour to ſtir up and kindle the like affections in his diſciples: And this he doth by three very effectual arguments. The firſt argument is drawn from the ripeneſs of the people, and their willingneſs to hear, and their readineſs to be reaped and gathered by the goſpel, (whereof there was a preſent inſtance in the Samaritans, who were now coming forth in multitudes to Chriſt) which opportunity therefore was to be improved; *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already for harveſt.* *Learn* hence, That as a people is ſometimes ripe for the miniſtry of the word, as corn is ripe and ready for the reaper's hand, ſo it is the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt to lay hold upon ſuch opportunities with as much deſire and delight, as the harveſt men do upon a reaping ſeaſon. The ſecond argument to ſtir up the diſciples diligence in preaching the goſpel, is drawn from the great reward they ſhould receive for this their work. *He that reapeth, receiveth wages.* The harveſt man's wages is double to what other labourers receive. The miniſters of God ſhall receive good wages at his hand, how ill ſoever they are requited and rewarded by an unkind world. And, as a farther encouragement, it follows: *He that ſoweth, and he that reapeth ſhall rejoice together*; that is, The prophets who took ſo much pains in ſowing the ſeed of the goſpel, and particularly John the Baptiſt, and you my apoſtles which ſucceed him, and reap the fruit of what they did ſow, ſhall have the ſame reward in glory, and rejoice together. *Learn* hence, That not only the ſucceſsful, but the faithful labourer in God's harveſt ſhall be rewarded: not only thoſe which ſee the fruit of their miniſtry in the converſion of ſinners, but ſuch as are faithful ſeeds-men. Though the ſeed does not come up till we are in our graves; nay, though it rots under the clods, and does not come up at all; yet ſhall the faithful ſeedſman be rewarded according to his labour, not according to his ſucceſs. The third argument, to quicken the diſciples diligence, is drawn from the eaſineſs and facility of that labour which God required of them; *Others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labours*; that is, The prophets and John the Baptiſt have prepared the ground, and ſown the ſeed, and made ready a people for the Lord, and now you enter into their labours, performing and gathering them into the goſpel-church; yet this muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively: Not as if the prophets reaped nothing, converted none; but that their fruit was ſmall in compariſon of the ſucceſs which the apoſtles found. Nor is it to be underſtood as if the apoſtles took no pains at all, but that the prophets greater pains render the apoſtles labour ſucceſsful, who took leſs pains. *Learn* hence, That the wiſdom of God ſees it fit that all his ſervants in the work of the miniſtry do not meet with the ſame difficulties, nor enjoy the ſame ſucceſs. Some are laborious ſowers, others are joyful reapers; ſome labour all their days with little viſible ſucceſs, others bring in many to Chriſt, perhaps by a ſingle ſermon; ſome labour even with wearineſs, and reap little, others enter into their labours, and reap much.

39 ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the ſaying of the woman, which teſtified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they beſought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed becauſe of his own word: 42 And ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying; for we have heard him ourſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.

Here an account is given of the converſion of more of the Samaritans, from the city of Sichar. Some believed on him, upon the full report which the woman had made, That *He had told her all that ever ſhe did*; but others were brought to believe by *his own word*. Now from the woman's being an inſtrument to bring her acquaintance to Chriſt by her own experience of what ſhe had heard from him; *learn* 1. That very weak inſtruments, when they employ themſelves for Chriſt, deſiring to extol his praiſe, and ſet forth his glory, are ſometimes richly bleſſed with great ſucceſs. *Many of the Samaritans believed for the ſaying of this poor woman.* 2. That when a perſon can ſay but little of Chriſt, yet if it be ſpoken from experience and ſenſible feeling, it will be more ſucceſsful and perſuaſive than much more that is ſpoken from notional knowledge. Such was this woman's teſtimony concerning Chriſt; *Come, ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?* She ſpoke what ſhe found, yea, what ſhe felt within herſelf, and ſpeaking her own experience, *many believed in him for her ſaying.* But farther, Theſe Samaritans believed Chriſt to be a prophet upon the teſtimony of this woman; but they believed him afterwards to be the Meſſias, or the Saviour of the world, upon the credit and authority of his own word, *ver.* 41. *And many more believed becauſe of his own word.* Thence *learn*, That although inſtruments ſpeaking may be a mean to draw perſons to give ſome aſſent to truth, yet it is Chriſt himſelf that muſt work a full perſuaſion, and his own word is the ſureſt foundation for faith to build and depend upon: *Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying, for we have heard him ourſelves.*

43 ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44 For Jeſus himſelf teſtified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having ſeen all the things that he did at Jeruſalem at the feaſt: for they alſo went unto the feaſt.

Our bleſſed Saviour having ſpent two days with the Samaritans, as an introduction to the calling of the Gentiles, he goes forward to Galilee, the place which he was pleaſed to make choice of for the exerciſe of the greateſt part of his miniſtry. Coming into Galilee, he paſſeth by the city of Nazareth, where he had had his education, knowing what little reſpect he was like to find there; a prophet ordinarily having little honour in his own country; therefore, ſhunning Nazareth, he goeth to Cana, where he had done his firſt miracle. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a real tribute of honour due unto every prophet and miniſter of God, which ought to be teſtified by reverence to their perſons, by a due eſtimation of the dignity of their calling, by obedience to their doctrine, and by an honourable maintenance. A prophet ſhould have honour; and honour includes all theſe. 2. It is very uſual and ordinary for the prophets of God to meet with leaſt reſpect where they are moſt known; their neareſt neighbours, their neareſt relations, their neareſt acquaintance, are oft-times furtheſt off from giving that honour that is due unto them. 3. That the true prophets and meſſengers of God ſhall be ſure to find ſome that will entertain their perſons, and embrace their miniſtry, though they may be diſeſteemed and rejected by others. Though our Saviour had no honour at Nazareth, yet he found entertainment amongſt the reſt of the Galileans.

46 So Jeſus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whoſe ſon was ſick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and beſought him that he would come down, and heal his ſon: for he was at the point of death. 48 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman ſaith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Go thy way; thy ſon liveth. And the man believed the word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his ſervants met him, and told *him*, ſaying, Thy ſon liveth. 52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they ſaid unto him, Yeſterday at the ſeventh hour the fever left him. 53 So the father knew that *it was* at the ſame hour in the which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy ſon liveth; and himſelf believed, and his whole houſe. 54 This *is* again the ſecond miracle *that* Jeſus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

In this laſt paragraph of the chapter, we find our bleſſed Saviour performing a ſecond miracle in Cana of Galilee, curing a nobleman's ſon that was ſick of a fever. This nobleman apprehended Chriſt to be a prophet, and believed that if he were bodily preſent with his ſon, he might poſſibly cure him: but he did not believe him to be the Meſſias, who was true God, and every where preſent: Therefore to give an infallible proof that he was ſo, he tells him that his ſon was cured by the word of his mouth, even at that diſtance. By which miracle he cured not only the child of his fever, but the father of his unbelief. From whence we *note*, 1. The perſon that here applies himſelf to Chriſt; a *nobleman*. We do not find Chriſt oft attended with nobility. *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* Yes; here is one. The ſovereign grace of God is free; and he has his numbers among all orders, ranks, and degrees of men: And though not many noble are called, yet ſome are. 2. The calamity which befel this noble perſon: *His ſon was ſick*; yea, dying. Earthly greatneſs is no defence againſt afflictions; great men are in trouble as other men: Neither the wealth and riches of this nobleman, nor his power and authority, nor his honour in his country, nor his favour with his prince, could keep off God's hand either from himſelf or from his ſon; but the father feels as much by ſympathy, as the child by ſenſe. 3. The cauſe and ſpecial occaſion which brought this nobleman unto Chriſt: It was in general, an affliction; and in particular, the ſickneſs of his child. *Learn* hence, That great is the fruit and profit of afflictions to the childen of men. Many, with this nobleman, never come to Chriſt till they be driven by the croſs; and particularly, God ſanctifies the ſickneſs and death of near and dear relations (children in ſpecial) to bring people nearer to himſelf. 4. This nobleman was neither faithleſs nor faithful: Had he been quite faithleſs, he had not taken ſuch pains to come to Chriſt: Had he been faithful he had not limited the Son of God, by ſaying, *Come down and heal my ſon ere he die: Come down*, as if Chriſt could not have cured him abſent; *ere my ſon die*, as if the ſame power required to heal him when ſick, could not raiſe him being dead: Lord, *heal my ſon*, had been a proper ſuit to him who was the great Phyſician; but, *Come down and heal him*, was to teach Chriſt how to work. He who doth whatſoever he will, muſt do it how he will, and when he will: It is for us to crave and receive, not to preſcribe and appoint. 5. The meekneſs and great condeſcending goodneſs of Jeſus Chriſt: Notwithſtanding the infirmity of this poor man, our Lord ſays, *Go thy way, thy ſon liveth*. Worthineſs in the creature, is not the motive that rules Chriſt. Should we meaſure our hopes by our worthineſs, there was no bleſſing to be hoped for; but if we meaſure them by Chriſt's bounty and compaſſion, there is no bleſſing to be deſpaired of. 6. How Chriſt not only anſwers the deſires, but exceeds the expectations of this diſtreſſed perſon: His requeſt was only, *Come and heal my ſon:* Chriſt's anſwer was, *Go thy way, thy ſon liveth*. Our heavenly Father, when he doth not give us what we aſk, gives us better than we aſked. We aſk what we think beſt, but God gives what he knows to be beſt. Chriſt here gave a greater demonſtration of his omnipotency than was craved. Laſtly, With one word doth Chriſt heal two patients; the ſon of his fever, the father of his unbelief. It was a low degree of faith that brought the father to Chriſt; it was an higher degree that ſent him back to his ſon; but higheſt of all, when finding his ſon healed, he himſelf believed, and his whole houſe. *Learn* hence, That a weak faith may be true, but a true faith is always growing and increaſing: *It is like the path of the juſt, that ſhineth more and more until perfect day.*

CHAP. V.

AFTER this there was a feaſt of the Jews, and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem. 2 Now there is at Jeruſalem by the ſheep-*market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Betheſda, having five porches. 3 In theſe lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain ſeaſon into the pool, and troubled the water: whoſoever then firſt after the troubling of the water ſtepped in, was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had.

This chapter begins with a deſcription of the famous pool of Bethſeda, whoſe waters were medicinal, to cure the firſt comer thereunto, whatſoever diſeaſe he had. Some think this was effected in a natural way, and that the intrails of the ſacrificed beaſts being waſhed in this pool, an healing virtue was communicated for curing the palſy, and ſuch cold diſeaſes; as perſons that have lame and withered hands, are at this day directed to put them into the belly of a beaſt newly opened. But others look upon the healing virtue of this pool to be ſupernatural and miraculous, becauſe it cured all diſeaſes, how great and deſperate ſoever; and this in a moment, or very quickly; and but one at a time; and that one, the firſt that ſtepped in only, after an angel had deſcended and troubled the waters: All which ſhew, that the healing virtue came not from the goodneſs of the waters, but that it was a ſupernatural work. Some think that the miracle of this pool was granted to the Jews, partly to ſtrengthen them in the true worſhip of God, and to confirm them in their religious courſe of ſacrificing, againſt the ſcoffs of the Romans, who were now their lords; ſuch a virtue being given to that water wherein their ſacrifices were wont to be waſhed. *Learn* thence, That means of God's appointment, how improbable and unlikely ſoever, *muſt* not be deſpiſed, but awfully admired, and thankfully uſed; although the way and manner of their working be not underſtood or comprehended by us.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jeſus ſaw him lye, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that caſe*, he ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man anſwered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another ſteppeth down before me. 8 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Riſe, take up thy bed and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the ſame day was the ſabbath. 10 ¶ The Jews therefore ſaid unto him that was cured, It is the ſabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11 He anſwered them, He that made me whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, take up thy bed and walk? 12 Then aſked they him, What man is that which ſaid unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? 13 And he that was healed wiſt not who it was; for Jeſus had conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in *that* place.

It was very commendable that the rich men did not engroſs this pool, and the benefit of it to themſelves, but ſuffered poor people to come to it. In this college of cripples, a poor man, who had been lame thirty-eight years, was found, who wanted ſtrength to help himſelf, wanted money to hire others, and others wanting mercy to help him; Chriſt takes pity on him, and becauſe he could not go to health, health is graciouſly brought to him, and that by the hand of the great Phyſician, Chriſt Jeſus. *Note* here, 1. That not only are men's bodies ſubject to innumerable infirmities and diſeaſes, but it pleaſes God for wiſe ends to continue ſome of his ſervants labouring under bodily weakneſs for many years together, yea, even all the days of their life. Here is a poor man for eight and thirty years together under the diſcipline of God's rod by bodily weakneſs. 2. That it is the duty of the afflicted to wait upon God in a diligent uſe of all means which God has appointed for their help and healing: As to truſt to means, is to neglect God; ſo to neglect the means is to tempt God. This poor man, no doubt, had made uſe of the means before, yet waits at the pool now. 3. Though Chriſt well knew the caſe of this afflicted perſon, and wanted no information, yet he aſks him, if he will be made whole? to make him ſenſible of his miſery, to quicken his deſires after healing, and to raiſe his expectations of help from him. Though Chriſt knows our wants, yet he takes no notice of them, till we make them known to him by prayer. 4. The time when Chriſt wrought this miracle of healing upon the impotent man, it was upon the ſabbath-day; and as an evidence of the certainty of the cure, Chriſt bids him *take up his bed, and walk*. Our Saviour's miracles were real and beneficial, they were obvious to the ſenſe, and would bear the examination of all perſons. The miracles which the church of Rome boaſt of, will not bear the examination of our ſenſes: Their great miracle, tranſubſtantiation, is ſo far from being obvious to ſenſe, that it contradicts the ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, and is the greateſt affront to human nature that ever the world was acquainted with. And our Saviour's working this and many other miracles on the ſabbath-day, was for the teſtification of the miracles to all perſons that would take notice of them. 5. How unjuſtly the Jews tax the cripple that was healed, with the breach of the ſabbath, for taking up his bed, and walking on the ſabbath-day? whereas the law only forbade carrying burthens on the ſabbath-day for profit, in way of trade: But this man's carrying his bed, was a teſtimony of God's goodneſs and mercy towards him, and of his gratitude towards God. Hypocritical and ſuperſtitious perſons often-times pretend much zeal for obſerving the letter of the law, little reſpecting the moral ſenſe and ſignification of it. Beſides, our Saviour has a mind to let the Jews know, that he was Lord of the ſabbath, and that he hath power over it, and could diſpenſe with it as he thought good. Laſtly, The great modeſty and humility of our bleſſed Saviour, how hateful all oſtentation and vain-glory was unto him; for having wrought this famous miracle before the people at a public time, the feaſt of the paſſover, to ſhun all applauſe from the multitude he conveys himſelf privately away from them: *Jeſus conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in that place.* Our Saviour's buſineſs was to do much good, and make but little noiſe; he ſought not his own glory.

14 Afterwards Jeſus findeth him in the temple, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.

Theſe words are our Saviour's ſeaſonable advice and counſel to the poor impotent cripple, whom he had miraculouſly reſtored to health and ſoundneſs. Whence *obſerve*, 1. The perſon admoniſhing, *Jeſus*; he that had been his phyſician before, is his monitor and teacher now: *Behold, thou art made whole: ſin no more.* Oh how much it is the duty, but how ſeldom the practice, of thoſe whom God makes inſtruments for recovering bodily health, to put their patients in mind of their obligations to thankfulneſs and new obedience! Thus did our Saviour here. The recovered man's phyſician gave him inſtruction: His healer became his monitor. *Sin no more.* 2. The perſon admoniſhed, the recovered cripple: *Thou art made whole.* But what was he? Not a diſciple, not a believer; *For he that was healed wiſt not who Jeſus was*, ver. 13. He knew not Chriſt, therefore believed not on him, and yet was healed by him. Thence *learn*, That there are many outward mercies and common bleſſings, which Chriſt beſtows upon thoſe that have no ſpiritual knowledge of him, or ſaving acquaintance with him. *The man that was healed, wiſt not who it was that had healed him.* 3. The place where Chriſt meets this his recovered patient; not at the tavern, but in the temple, returning thanks to God for his recovered health: When God ſends forth his word and healeth us, it is our duty to make our firſt viſit to God's houſe, and to pay our vows in the great congregation, and ſound forth the praiſes of our great and gracious deliverer. 4. The circumſtances of time when Chriſt found him in the temple, ſoon after his recovery. *Afterwards Jeſus findeth him in the temple.* We muſt not be clamorous and importunate to receive mercies, and dumb and tongue-tied in returning thanks; but make haſte, and not delay the time to pay our acknowledgments to him that healeth us. 5. The admonition itſelf; *Behold thou art made whole; ſin no more; leſt a worſe thing come upon thee*; where our Saviour admoniſhes him of the greatneſs of the mercy, *Behold thou art made whole*; and ſubjoins a cautionary direction, *Sin no more.* Where it is neceſſarily implied, that ſin is always the deſerving, and oft-times the procuring cauſe of a perſon's afflictions and calamities; and that the beſt and ſureſt way to prevent the return of judgments and calamities to a perſon, is for a perſon to return no more to ſin; *Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come upon thee*; where it is farther implied, that Almighty God has ſorer plagues and ſeverer judgments in ſtore for thoſe ſinners who go on obſtinately in a courſe of ſin and rebellion againſt God, notwithſtanding all the ſignal rebukes of his avenging anger. From the whole, *note*, That when the Lord doth graciouſly heal a perſon, or a people, it is a mercy to be much obſerved, and thankfully acknowledged.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jeſus which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day.

After the man underſtood who his healer and benefactor was, he went and told the Jewiſh magiſtrates it was Chriſt that had healed him. This he did, not with any evil deſign, no doubt, to inform againſt him, and ſtir up the Jews to perſecute him; but deſirous to publiſh what Chriſt had done, to his honour, and to direct others to make uſe of him. *Learn* thence, That it is the duty of all thoſe that have experienced the power and pity of Chriſt themſelves, to proclaim and publiſh it to others, to the intent that all that need him may experience help and healing from him. This ſeems to be the poor man's deſign: But behold the blindneſs, obſtinacy, and malice of the Jews, who perſecuted Chriſt, and ſought to kill him for doing good, and healing a cripple that had been thirty-eight years ſo: *Therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him.* Yet obſerve the cloke and pretence they have for their malicious perſecution of our Saviour; namely, the ſuppoſed violation of the Sabbath-day; *They ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day. Learn* hence, That great cruelty againſt Chriſt and his members, has always been, and ſtill is, maſked and diſguiſed with a fair pretence of zeal for God and his commands. The Phariſees mortally hated our Saviour, therefore, they cover their malice, and traduce him as a profaner of the ſabbath, and ſeek to take away his life.

17 ¶ But Jeſus anſwered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

From this verſe to the end of the chapter, we have our Saviour's apology for his working the foregoing cure on the impotent man on the ſabbath-day. And the chief argument he inſiſts upon, is drawn from his unity and equality in nature and operation with his Father: *As the Father worketh*, ſays he, *ſo I work.* Here he ſpeaks of himſelf, not as a ſervant, or inſtrument in the Father's hand, but as the fellow-worker with the Father, both in the works of creation and in the works of providence and preſervation alſo. *Learn* hence, 1. That though Almighty God has long ſince ceaſed from the work of creation, yet not from the work of preſervation. *My Father worketh hitherto*; not by creating new kinds of creatures, but by upholding and preſerving what he has already created. 2. That Chriſt the Son of God, is joined with, and undivided from the Father in working. As the Father created all things by him (not as a man, and an inſtrument in his Father's hand; for then he was not ſuch) but as his fellow-worker, being equal in nature and power with the Father; in like manner as the Father preſerveth, ſuſtaineth, governeth, and upholdeth all things, ſo doth Chriſt; the Father's actions and his being the ſame. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

18 Therefore the Jews ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he not only had broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo that God was his Father, making himſelf equal with God. 19 Then anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do: for what things ſoever he doeth, theſe alſo doeth the Son likewiſe.

Obſerve here, The Jews inſtead of being ſatisfied, were the more enraged; not only becauſe he had violated the ſabbath, (as they pretended) by healing the cripple on the ſabbath-day, but becauſe Chriſt had aſſerted, that God was his Father in a peculiar manner, and made himſelf equal with God. Our Saviour therefore goes on to aſſert his equality and conjunction with the Father in his operations and workings; which doth at once juſtify his work on the ſabbath-day, and prove himſelf to be truly and really God. Now our holy Lord, to prove himſelf equal with God the Father, produces firſt many arguments, to ver. 31. then alledges the teſtimony of many witneſſes to the end of the chapter. Our Saviour's firſt argument to prove himſelf equal with the Father in eſſence and nature, is this, that the Father and he are equal in operation, in will and conſent for working; that the Son doth all that the Father doth, and the Father doth nothing without the Son, ver. 19. *The Son can do nothing of himſelf*; that is, as man, as the Meſſias, and as Mediator, he could do nothing of himſelf. His perfect obedience to, and compliance with the will of his Father that ſent him, would not ſuffer him to do any thing without him; but as God, he could do all things of himſelf. *Learn* hence, That it is an undeniable proof, that the Father and the Son are one in nature, eſſence, and being; in that they are inſeparable and undivided in operation and working; *What things ſoever the Father doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe; and the Son doth nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do:* Therefore Father and Son being equal in operation and working, are equal in nature and being; and, conſequently, both eſſentially, truly, and really God: Therefore the Arians of old, and the Socinians at this day, are wide when they produce this text, *The Son can do nothing of himſelf*, to prove that Chriſt is not equal with God the Father. They forget or neglect to diſtinguiſh between his divine nature, which could do all things, and his mediatorial office, which could not do, but what the Father that ſent him had appointed him to do.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doeth; and he will ſhew him greater works than theſe, that ye may marvel.

The ſecond argument which our Saviour produces to prove his unity in nature, and equality in operation with the Father, is drawn from that ſpecial love which the Father beareth to the Son; which inclines him to communicate all things to him by a divine and ineffable communication. *Learn* hence, 1. That God the Father loveth Jeſus Chriſt his Son, with an eſſential, natural, and neceſſary love, as being the ſubſtantial image of himſelf, and the ſplendour and brightneſs of his glory. *The Father loveth the Son*; that is, with an eſſential, eternal, and ineffable love. 2. That the Father's love to Chriſt was communicative; the Father communicated his eſſence and nature, his wiſdom and power for operation to the Son. *The Father ſheweth the Son all things that himſelf* doth: namely, by a divine, inconceivable, and unſpeakable communication.

21 For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will.

A third argument proving Chriſt to be God, and equal with the Father, is here produced; namely, his raiſing of the dead: He is joined with the Father in that work, and equal with him: *As the Father quickeneth whom he pleaſeth, ſo doth the Son whom he will*; that is, not as the Father's inſtrument, but as a principal agent, by the ſame authority, with the like abſolute freedom of will which the Father uſes, being a ſovereign and independent being, as the Father is; *As the Father raiſeth the dead, and quickeneth them, ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will.* This is more than ever was ſaid by prophet or apoſtle, that he did ſuch works at his will. *Learn* hence, 1. That quickening or raiſing of the dead, is an act of omnipotency, and proper to God only; *The Father raiſeth the dead, and quickeneth them.* 2. That Chriſt's power to raiſe the dead as well as the Father's, is a proof of his equality with his Father, and an evidence of his being truly and really God: *the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.

A fourth inſtance of Chriſt's Godhead, and proof of his equality with the Father, is, That it is his work to judge the world; *The Father*, ſays Chriſt, *judges no man*; that is, no man without me, but all men by me, to this intent, *That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; that is honour him with the ſame faith, love, fear, worſhip, that is due and payable to God the Father. Hence *learn*, 1. That Chriſt, as God, hath the abſolute power of life and death, of abſolution and condemnation, which he executes in conjunction with his Father. 2. That having this power of judging the world with the Father, doth ſhew that the ſame glory is due to him, which is due unto the Father. *All men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* 3. That ſuch as pretend to honour Chriſt, but deny him to be God, equal with the Father, withdraw the higheſt honour from him; and ſuch as withdraw the honour from the Son, deny it to the Father, who will not be honoured but in and through honouring of the Son. This text ſpeaks dread and terror to the Socinians, who pretend to honour Chriſt, but not with the ſame honour with which they pretend to honour the Father: In God's account, they honour him not at all; *For he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.* True, they pray to Chriſt, and give him divine worſhip, though they believe him to be a creature; but what is this but idolatry, to worſhip that which by nature is not God, and to do that to a creature, which God requires to be given to himſelf, having ſaid, *My glory will I not give to another?* Iſaiah xlviii. 2. Divine honour can only be due to a divine perſon; that is, to him that is God bleſſed for evermore.

24 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live. 26 For

as the Father hath life in himſelf; ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of man.

Here we have a fifth evidence of Chriſt's Godhead, and equality with the Father; namely, that he is the author of ſpiritual and eternal life to all that believe on him. He that hath a fountain of life equal with the Father, and communicated to him from the Father, is God: but Chriſt hath this, ver. 26. *For as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo he has given to the Son to have life in himſelf.* Again, he that hath authority to execute judgments upon angels and men, is God; and Chriſt hath ſuch authority, ver. 27. *He hath given him authority to execute judgment.* Farther, he that with his voice quickeneth and maketh alive them that hear it, is God; and Chriſt doth this, ver. 25. *The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live.* The *dead*, that is, 1. The ſpiritually dead, ſuch as are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: theſe hearing the voice of Chriſt in the miniſtry of the word, ſhall live a life of grace on earth, and a life of glory in heaven. 2. Such as are corporally dead alſo; theſe are likewiſe quickened and raiſed by Chriſt as God. *Learn* hence, 1. That God the Father hath communicated to Chriſt his Son a power to quicken and enliven ſuch as are ſpiritually and corporally dead. 2. That the Father's communicating this power to the Son argues no inequality or inferiority in the Son, but he hath the ſame life infinitely, independently, and equally with the Father; *as the Father hath it, ſo hath the Son:* the Father hath it in himſelf, and ſo hath the Son alſo; therefore the Son, as well as the Father, is eſſentially and truly God. 3. Others, by the dead, underſtand thoſe whom Chriſt raiſed from the dead, when he himſelf aroſe. When many of the bodies of the ſaints aroſe with him, Matt. xxvii. it being ſaid, *The hour now is*, &c. Dr. Whitby.

28 Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice. 29 And ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

Our Saviour, finding the Jews amazed and aſtoniſhed at his declaring his ſovereign and ſupreme authority and power to quicken and raiſe whom he pleaſed from the dead, doth in theſe verſes aſſure them, that there would be a general reſurrection, and an univerſal day of judgment both of the righteous and the wicked, and a future diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments in another life, according to men's actions here in this life. *All that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth.* Here *note*, 1. The certainty and univerſality of the reſurrection of the dead declared: *The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves ſhall come forth.* 2. The powerful and efficacious means, by which this great and ſudden change ſhall be effected and accompliſhed in the morning of the reſurrection; namely, the omnipotent voice of Chriſt: *All that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth.* 3. Here are the different ends of the reſurrection declared, according to the difference of perſons which ſhall then be raiſed, good and bad: *Thoſe that have done good, to the reſurrection of life; and thoſe that have done evil, to the reſurrection of damnation.* *Learn*, 1. That there ſhall certainly be a reſurrection of the body. 2. That all in the graves ſhall be raiſed, though not all alike; the wicked ſhall be raiſed by the power of Chriſt, as their judge: The righteous ſhall be raiſed by virtue of their union with Chriſt as their head. 3. According as men live in this world, and go out of it, ſo will they be found at the reſurrection, without any change of their ſtate; there will then be only two ſorts of perſons, good and bad. All that have done good, how ſmall ſoever the degree of their goodneſs hath been, ſhall be rewarded; and all that have done evil, ſhall be everlaſtingly puniſhed: for all perſons ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable in the other world, according as they manage their deportment and behaviour in this life: *They that have done good, ſhall go*, &c.

30 I can of mine own ſelf do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is juſt; becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath ſent me.

Here Chriſt declares to the Jews, and in them all mankind, that they might aſſure themſelves his judgment would be exactly righteous, becauſe he had no private will or power of his own, contrary to, or different from his Father. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt being the ſame in eſſence and nature, in power and operation with the Father, had no private will or intereſt of his own, but acted all things as God, in co-ordination with the Father; and as man, in ſubordination to him: *I can of my own ſelf do nothing*: that is, neither as God, nor as Mediator; not as God, for God the Father and Chriſt being one, equal in power, what one perſon did, the other doth; not as Mediator, for ſo Chriſt finiſhed the work which his Father gave him to do; the will of the Father and the will of Chriſt being both one. As Chriſt was ſent by his Father's order, ſo he was altogether guided by his Father's will, wherewith his own will exactly concurred.

31 If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs is not true. 32 ¶ There is another that beareth witneſs of me, and I know that the witneſs which he witneſſeth of me, is true.

Our bleſſed Saviour having produced theſe five foregoing arguments to prove his unity in eſſence, and his equality in power with the Father, comes now to the end of the chapter, to produce ſeveral teſtimonies for the proof of it; and the firſt of them is the teſtimony of God his Father; *There is another that beareth witneſs of me, whoſe witneſs is true.* Now the Father had lately, at Chriſt's baptiſm, by a voice from heaven, declared him to be his beloved Son in whom he was well pleaſed; which illuſtrious teſtimony, given to Chriſt, they had not regarded. *Learn* hence, That as Chriſt came into the world in obedience to his Father, and bear witneſs to him; ſo did the Father honour him, and bear witneſs of him, and his teſtimony concerning his

Son is undoubtedly true, and to be depended and reſted upon; for we make the Father a liar, if we do not depend upon the record which he hath given of his Son.

33 Ye ſent unto John, and he bare witneſs unto the truth. 34 But I receive not teſtimony from man: but theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved.

The ſecond teſtimony to prove Chriſt to be the Meſſias, was that of John the Baptiſt. We read, John i. 19. how the Jews ſent to enquire of him, Whether he were the Chriſt, or not; and he denied it, and pointed at Jeſus, ſaying, *Behold the Lamb of God*; yet would not the Jews abide by this teſtimony of John concerning the Meſſias. Nevertheleſs, ſays Chriſt, *I receive not teſtimony from John*; that is, "John by his teſtimony added nothing to me; I was what I was, and *I am what I am*, before John teſtified of me, and ſince." *Learn* hence, That the divinity of Chriſt's perſon, and the verity of his doctrine, needs no man's teſtimony for the confirmation of it, being ſufficiently confirmed by Chriſt's own authority, and his Father's teſtimony: *I receive not teſtimony from man*; that is, "I need it not, I deſire it not upon my own account, but upon yours only, that upon the credit of John's teſtimony ye might believe in me, and be ſaved by me; *Theſe things I ſay that ye might be ſaved*."

35 He was a burning and a ſhining light: and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light.

Note here, John's character, and the people's carriage. 1. John's character; he was a *light*, *a burning and a ſhining light:* He had in him a light of knowledge, to enlighten, direct, and comfort others; and this his knowledge was accompanied with zeal; he was a *burning* light in his doctrine, and a *ſhining* lamp in his converſation; he had the light of knowledge in his head, the warmth of zeal in his heart, and the influence of both in his life. *Learn* hence, 1. That thoſe whom God calls to the office and work of the miniſtry, he furniſhes with abilities and endowments ſuitable to their great employments; he endows them with a light of knowledge, which is animated by the heat and warmth of zeal. 2. That miniſterial gifts and abilities are not beſtowed alike upon all, but diſpenſed variouſly.—All are lights according to their meaſure, but all are not equally burning and ſhining lights for proportion and degree. 3. That the brighteſt burning, and cleareſt ſhining lights in the church of Chriſt, have but their time in this world; they are ſubject, as well as other men, to the common condition of mortality, and the lamps of their lives burn out the faſter, by lighting others to heaven. *John was a burning and ſhining light*; but now is put out and gone. *Note* 2. As John's character, ſo the people's carriage: *Ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light.* Here is a threefold gradation; they *rejoiced*, they *rejoiced in his light*, and they *rejoiced for a ſeaſon*. 1. They *rejoiced*, The word ſignifies, they leaped for joy, and danced about him as children do about a bonfire, when he firſt began his miniſtry among them. O, how warm are the affections of a people, when a pious and zealous miniſter comes firſt among them. 2. They *rejoiced in his light*, not in his heat. Or, they rejoiced in John's light, not in Chriſt's; for when they found that John bare record to Chriſt, they ſoon grew cold in their affection towards John. 3. They *rejoiced* only *for a ſeaſon*; for an hour, as the word ſignifies. For a ſhort time John's miniſtry was acceptable. *Learn* hence, 1. That it has been an old practice among profeſſors, not to like their paſtors long, though they have been never ſuch burning and ſhining lights. John was not changed, but his hearers were changed; he did burn and ſhine in the candleſtick of the church with equal zeal and luſtre to the laſt; but they had changed their thoughts of him, and loſt their eſteem for him. 2. That as nothing in general is ſo mutable as the mind of man, ſo nothing in particular is ſo variable as the affections and opinions of people towards their miniſters. The lamp of John's miniſtry was always alike, burning and ſhining, his oil did not waſte, but his hearers' zeal waſted, and their affections cooled: Thoſe whoſe gifts are not at all abated, may yet find a great abatement in the acceptation of their gifts; therefore let no man live upon the breath of men; leaſt of all let miniſters live upon the popular air, or the ſpeech of the people. O, let us live upon the credit which we have with God, and rejoice chiefly in his eſteem. If our performances find acceptance with God, we are ſafe and happy, though they fall under contempt with men.

36 ¶ But I have greater witneſs than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.

The third teſtimony produced by Chriſt, to evidence and prove himſelf to be the promiſed Meſſias, and Saviour of the world, is that of his miracles; which, by an omnipotent power as God, he was enabled to work. Chriſt's miracles were ſpeaking teſtimonies of his unity with the Father, and of the divinity of his perſon. Not ſo the miracles of his apoſtles; for he wrought his miracles in his own name, and by his own power and authority; but the apoſtles expreſsly declared the contrary, Acts iii. 12, 16. *Why look ye ſtedfaſtly on us, as if we by our own power had made this man whole? His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong. Learn* hence, That the teſtimony of Chriſt's own works, his miracles wrought in his own name, and by his own authority and power, is a clearer confirmation of his Godhead, office, and doctrine, than the beſt of men's teſtimonies; yea, than John Baptiſt's own teſtimony, *That he ſaw the Spirit deſcending on him.*

37 And the Father himſelf which hath ſent me hath borne witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not.

Here our bleſſed Saviour produces again the teſtimony of his Father, that he was the true and promiſed Meſſias: This was given him both at his baptiſm and transfiguration; when God the Father owned God to be his Son, by an audible voice from heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* Which teſtimony the Jews now ought the more to have regarded, becauſe though their forefathers had heard the voice of God at certain times, Exod. xx. and Deut. iv. yet they in their times had never heard his voice. *Learn* hence, That the Father's immediate teſtimony of Chriſt from heaven, is greater than all the teſtimonies given to him here on earth; greater than John's, greater than his miracles. The preſence of the glorious Trinity, when that teſtimony was given, Matt. iii. ult. made that witneſs moſt awful and ſolemn.

39 ¶ Search the ſcriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which teſtify of me.

The next teſtimony which Chriſt appeals to, is the teſtimony of the ſcriptures, that is, the writings of Moſes and the prophets, which Chriſt bids the Jews diligently ſearch, and they ſhall find that they abundantly teſtified of him, and that all the prophecies and types were fulfilled in him. The word (*ſearch*) ſignifying to ſearch as men do for a golden mine in the bowels of the earth, which they muſt dig deep for, before they can come at. It intimates, 1. That there is an ineſtimable treaſure lying hid in the holy ſcriptures, which we ſhall never fathom by a ſlight, ſuperficial ſearch. 2. That this ineſtimable treaſure may be found out by the painful ſearcher; and it is the duty of all the members of the viſible church to read and ſearch the ſcriptures, which point out the way to eternal life.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Here our Saviour upbraids the Jews for their obſtinate infidelity; that notwithſtanding God the Father, by a voice from heaven, and John the Baptiſt, by his teſtimony on earth, notwithſtanding all the miracles which they had ſeen wrought by Chriſt himſelf, and notwithſtanding the ſcriptures, which they pretended ſo highly to eſteem, did prove him to be the Meſſias, and the author of eternal life, which they profeſſed to ſeek; yet ſuch was their obſtinacy, that they would not come unto him, nor believe in him: *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life* Hence *note*, 1. A choice and invaluable mercy, which Chriſt ſtands ready to beſtow upon poor ſinners, and that is life, both ſpiritual and eternal: A life of grace, in order to a life of glory. 2. The gracious condition upon which this invaluable bleſſing may be had; and that is, upon coming to Chriſt, believing on him, and receiving of him. 3. Here is the true reaſon declared why ſinners do miſs of life and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, when he has ſo dearly purchaſed it for them, and does ſo freely render it unto them, and that lies in their own wilfulneſs and obſtinacy; *Ye will not come unto me*. *Learn* hence, That the true reaſon why ſo many ſinners miſs of ſalvation and eternal life, after all that Chriſt has done and ſuffered for them, is their own obſtinacy and unwillingneſs to come to him, that they may have life. Man by nature has not only an inability, but a fixed enmity in his will againſt Jeſus Chriſt.

41 I receive not honour from men. 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

Here *note*, 1. How little our Saviour ſought the approbation and vain-glorious eſtimation of men: *I receive not honour from men.* The ſame ſhould all his diſciples and followers do; reſt ſatisfied in the ſecret teſtimony and ſilent applauſe of their own conſciences, without pumping for popular applauſe. 2. The dreadful ſin which Chriſt charged upon the Jews, as the cauſe why they rejected him; *I know that ye have not the love of God in you.* Oh! deplorable ſtate and caſe, to be void of all true love to God! love being the ſpring of all action, and the root of all true obedience; he that loves God, will not only ſweat at his work, but bleed at his work too, if his work cannot be carried on without bleeding. But where love of God is wanting, and no care to pleaſe God is found, his authority is deſpiſed, his Son rejected; as the Jews here would not come to Chriſt, that they might have light, becauſe they had not the love of God in them. 3. The high affront which the Jews offered to the Son of God, in preferring any ſeducers or impoſtors before him, who came in their own names, whilſt he was rejected, who came in the name of his Father. *Learn* hence, That though Chriſt was the great ambaſſador of his Father, not a ſervant, but a ſon, and had his miſſion, his approbation, and his teſtimony from heaven, yet ſo far did the perverſeneſs and prejudices of the Jews prevail, that he was rejected, whilſt impoſtors and deceivers, falſe Chriſts and anti-chriſts, without any evidence and authority from God, (becauſe promiſing them a temporal kingdom) were embraced and entertained; *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: but if another* (a ſeducer) *ſhould come in his own name, him ye will receive.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, You are incredulous to none but me; every deceiver, every cheat that has but wit or wickedneſs enough to tell you, "The Lord hath ſent him," is believed by you; but though I come in my Father's name, ſhewing a commiſſion ſigned and ſealed by him, and doing thoſe works that none but a God can do, yet you receive me not. O unreaſonable infidelity!

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

Here Chriſt tells the Jews, that it is impoſſible they ſhould believe aright in him, becauſe they were ſo in love with the praiſe of men, that they would own him for the Meſſias, who could promiſe them a temporal kingdom, and in the mean time reject himſelf, who came authorized with the teſtimony and approbation of God; you will receive honour one of another, but reject the honour that cometh from God only. *Learn*, That ſuch as ambitiouſly hunt after vain-glory and reſpect from men, do evidence themſelves to be regardleſs of God's approbation and acceptation.

45 Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father: there is *one* that accuſeth you, *even* Moſes, in whom ye truſt. 46 For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how ſhall ye
believe my words?

Think not that I will accuſe you; that is, that *I only* will accuſe you to *the Father: there is one that accuſeth you, even Moſes*; that is, the writings of Moſes, which you pretend to depend upon, and to truſt to; *for had you believed his writings*, that is, the prophecies and types contained in his writings, you would have been led by them to believe in me; for they all pointed at me, and received their accompliſhment in me: But if Moſes cannot be heard by you, I muſt expect no authority with you. *Learn* 1, That the whole ſcope of Moſes' ceremonial law was to point out and prefigure Jeſus Chriſt; Chriſt was the ſum of the law, as well as the ſubſtance of the goſpel; he was Abraham's promiſed Seed, Moſes' great Prophet, Jacob's Shilo, Eſay's Emanuel, David's holy One, Zachary's Branch, and Malachi's Angel. 2. That ſuch as believed the ancient prophecies before Chriſt came, did ſee their accompliſhment in him, when he was come.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER theſe things Jeſus went over the ſea of
Galilee, which is *the ſea* of Tiberias.

Note here, How buſy and induſtrious our holy Lord was about his Father's work, both on the ſea, and on the land, both by night and by day; *his meat was to do the will of him, that ſent him, and to finiſh his work:* Some have inquired into the reaſons why Chriſt travelled by ſea, as well as by land; and they ſeem to be theſe: 1. To ſhew what his intent was in walking the ſea; namely, to be ſailed upon, as the land was made to be walked upon. 2. That Chriſt might take occaſion to manifeſt his deity in working miracles upon the ſea, as well as upon the land. 3. Might it not be to comfort and encourage ſeafaring men, that dwell much upon the waters, in the midſt of their diſtreſſes, to truſt in, and pray to ſuch a Saviour, as had himſelf an experimental knowledge of the danger of the ſeas? Some have farther obſerved, That, after our Saviour's reſurrection, we never find him ſailing upon the ſeas more; for ſuch a turbulent condition, which neceſſarily attends ſea-voyages, was utterly inconſiſtent with the ſtability and perpetuity of Chriſt's ſtate, when he was riſen from the dead; the firm land better agreeing with his fixed eſtate, than the fluctuating water.

2 And a great multitude followed him, becauſe
they ſaw his miracles which he did on them that
were diſeaſed.

Note here, What an exact knowledge Chriſt had, not only of all his followers, but of the motives and principles which did induce them to follow him; it was not the excellency of his perſon, nor the heavenlineſs of his doctrine, that drew the multitude at this time after him, but the novelty of his miracles; *They ſaw the miracles which he did:* It is better to feel one miracle wrought upon the heart, in changing and renewing that, than to ſee a thouſand outward miracles wrought before our eyes.

3 And Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there
he ſat with his diſciples. 4 And the paſſover, a
feaſt of the Jews, was nigh. 5 ¶ When Jeſus then
lifted up *his* eyes, and ſaw a great company come
unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we
buy bread that theſe may eat? (6 And this he ſaid
to prove him: for he himſelf knew what he would
do.) 7 Philip anſwered him, Two hundred penny-worth
of bread is not ſufficient for them, that every
one of them may take a little. 8 One of his diſciples,
Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, ſaith unto him,
9 There is a lad here which hath five barley-loaves,
and two ſmall fiſhes: but what are they among ſo
many? 10 And Jeſus ſaid, Make the men ſit down.
Now there was much graſs in the place. So the
men ſat down, in number about five thouſand. 11
And Jeſus took the loaves, and when he had given
thanks, he diſtributed to the diſciples, and the diſciples
to them that were ſet down; and likewiſe of
the fiſhes, as much as they would. 12 When they
were filled, he ſaid unto his diſciples, Gather up the
fragments that remain, that nothing be loſt. 13
Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled
twelve baſkets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves,
which remained over and above unto them
that had eaten. 14 Then thoſe men, when they
had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is
of a truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the
world.

This miracle of our Saviour's feeding five thouſand perſons with five barley-loaves and two ſmall fiſhes, is recorded by all the four Evangeliſts; and ſeveral particulars therein are very remarkable. *Note*, 1. What a poor and ſlender proviſion the Lord of the whole earth hath for his family, for himſelf, for his diſciples, and the multitude; nothing more than five barley-loaves and two fiſhes. *Teachiug* us, That theſe bodies of ours muſt be fed, not pampered: Our belly muſt not be our maſter, much leſs our God. And as the quality of the victuals was plain, ſo was the quantity ſmall; only five loaves and two fiſhes. Well might the diſciples ſay, *What are they among ſo many?* The eye of ſenſe and reaſon ſees an utter impoſſibility of thoſe effects which faith can eaſily apprehend, and a divine power more eaſily produce. When men judge by ſenſe and reaſon, and do not look to Chriſt's power, if extremities come, they are ſoon at their wit's end, and know not what to do. *Note*, 2. How the great Maſter of this miraculous feaſt doth marſhal his gueſts; he commands them to ſit down. None of the people reply, "Sit down! but to what? Here's the mouths, but where's the meat? We may ſoon be ſet, but when ſhall we be ſerved?" Not a word like this, but they obey and expect. Lord, how eaſy is it to truſt thy providence, and rely upon thy power, when there is corn in the barn, bread in the cupboard, money in the purſe! but when our ſtores are empty, when our ſtocks run low, when we have nothing in hand, then to depend upon an inviſible bounty is a noble act of faith indeed. 3. The actions performed by our bleſſed Saviour. 1. *He bleſſed* the loaves: *Teaching* us by his example, Never to uſe or receive the good creatures of God without prayer and praiſe; not to ſit down to our food as a beaſt to his fodder. Chriſt *broke* the loaves; he could have multiplied them whole, why then doth he rather chuſe to do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us, that we may rather expect his bleſſings in the diſtribution of his bounty, than in the reſervation of it: Scattering is the way to increaſing, and liberality the way to riches. Again, 3. *He gave to his diſciples, that they might diſtribute to the multitude:* He did not do it with his own hands, but by theirs; doubtleſs it was to gain reputation to his diſciples from the people: The ſame courſe doth Chriſt take in ſpiritual diſtributions: He that could feed the ſouls of his people immediately by the hand of his Spirit, chuſes rather by the hands of his miniſters to divide the bread of life among them. 4. The reality and greatneſs of the miracle, *They did all eat, and were filled:* they did eat, not a crumb or a bit, but to ſatiety and fulneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatiſfied, and yet twelve baſkets of fragments remain: More is left than was at firſt ſet on. It is hard to ſay which was the greateſt miracle, the miraculous eating, or miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they ate, we may wonder that they left any thing; if what they left, that they ate any thing. Laſtly, Theſe *fragments*, though of barley-loaves and fiſh-bones, muſt not be loſt, but gathered up; we muſt exerciſe frugality in the enjoyment of the greateſt plenty. Lord, how tremendous will their account be, who, having large and plentiful eſtates, do conſume them upon their luſts! how will they wiſh they had been born to poverty and neceſſity, when they appear to make up their accounts before God!

15 ¶ When Jeſus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone.

Here we have *obſervable*, The wonderful effect of the foregoing miracle; the people ſeeing ſo many fed with five loaves, were ſo tranſported, that they concluded that Jeſus was certainly the promiſed Meſſias. Now the notion they had of the Meſſias was this, that he ſhould be a temporal prince, that ſhould ſubdue all nations under his feet, and particularly, free the Jews from the ſlavery of the Roman yoke, which was now upon their necks; forgetting what our Saviour had often told them, that his kingdom was not of this world, but within men: and that his buſineſs was to free men from ſoul-ſlavery, not from civil ſubjection: However, upon this miſtake, the Jews here in a furious zeal deſigned to take Chriſt by force, and make him their king; but our Saviour (who came not into the world to diſtutb the order of civil government) underſtanding their intentions, withdraws himſelf into a mountain, to avoid giving the leaſt occaſion for any ſuch jealouſy or ſuſpicion. Hence *learn*, That although Jeſus Chriſt be the great King of his church, and doth exerciſe a ſpiritual kingdom in it, yet he came not into the world to be a temporal king, nor was his kingdom of this world, or ever deſigned to be prejudicial to the thrones of princes, and civil government of men. Therefore doth Chriſt withdraw himſelf, and refuſe all this offer, as no ways agreeable to him, or conſiſtent with his deſign.

16 And when even was come, his diſciples went down unto the ſea, 17 And entered into a ſhip, and went over the ſea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jeſus was not come to them. 18 And the ſea aroſe, by reaſon of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they ſee Jeſus walking on the ſea, and drawing nigh unto the ſhip: and they were afraid. 20 But he ſaith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ſhip: and immediately the ſhip was at the land whither they went.

Note here, 1. The great danger the diſciples were in, and the difficulties they encounter with, after they had enjoyed the ſweet privileges of Chriſt's gracious preſence with them: They were toſſed upon a tempeſtuous ſea. *Learn* thence, That it is not unuſual, after ſweet refreſhments and manifeſtations from Chriſt unto his people, to meet with a ſtormy and ſharp exerciſe of faith and patience: Such was the lot of his diſciples here: a conſtant gale of ſweetneſs, and uninterrupted courſe of proſperity and happineſs, as it is not to be expected here, ſo neither can it be enjoyed here, without great peril and danger. 2. What haſte our Saviour makes towards his diſciples, when they were toſſed upon a tempeſtuous ſea; *Jeſus drew nigh unto the ſhip.* Nothing can ſeparate between, nor keep Chriſt from his children and people in a ſuffering hour. He that waded through a ſea of wrath to ſave his people, will walk upon a ſea of water to ſuccour and relieve them in an hour of tribulation. 3. The diſciples not diſcerning Chriſt, not knowing him to be their Saviour, were afraid of him. Chriſt may be coming to ſave his people, and they not able at preſent to diſcern and apprehend him; but their fears may be higheſt, when their deliverer and deliverance is neareſt. 4. How ſpeedily Chriſt relieves them of their fears by telling them who he was: *It is I; be not afraid.* It is a ſufficient report in all our afflictions to be aſſured of Chriſt's gracious preſence with us. Say but, O Saviour, *It is I*, and then let evils do their worſt; that one word, *It is I*, is ſufficient to allay all ſtorms, and to calm a thouſand tempeſts. Laſtly, With what joy and gladneſs the diſciples received and entertained Chriſt in this hour of their diſtreſs; *They willingly received him into the ſhip.* Though the company of Chriſt is always ſweet and welcome to his diſciples and friends, yet never is it ſo very agreeable and deſirable to them as in the hour of trial and temptation: Then they willingly receive him, and joyfully welcome and entertain him.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which ſtood on the other ſide of the ſea ſaw that there was none other boat there, ſave that one whereinto his diſciples were entered, and that Jeſus went not with

his diſciples into the boat, but *that* his diſciples were gone away alone; 23 Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks: 24 When the people therefore ſaw that Jeſus was not there, neither his diſciples, they alſo took ſhipping, and came to Capernaum, ſeeking for Jeſus. 25 And when they had found him on the other ſide of the ſea, they ſaid unto him, Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither? 26 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you: for him hath God the Father ſealed.

Our bleſſed Saviour having wrought the foregoing miracle, feeding five thouſand with five loaves, the people followed him in troops from place to place. Chriſt, who knew their hearts, tells them plainly, what was their end: They followed him indeed, but not for any ſpiritual excellencies they ſaw in him, or ſoul advantages they expected from him, but for bread; only to have their bellies fed with the loaves, not their ſouls ſatisfied with the bread of life. Oh! how ſeldom is Chriſt ſought for his own ſake, viz. *Jeſus quæritur propter Jeſum*, Aug. How natural is it for men to ſeek Chriſt for ſiniſter ends, and by-reſpects! But to ſeek him only for outward advantages, is the baſeſt of by-ends, and that which the ſoul of Chriſt exceedingly abhors. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth.* This prohibition muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; not as if Chriſt intended to take them off from their lawful labours, and the buſineſs of their callings: but his meaning is, Labour not in the firſt and chief place for earthly things, which are all periſhing, but for bread for your ſouls to live eternally by; even for the food of my heavenly doctrine, which will make them that feed upon it immortal: and this the Son of man ſtands ready to give unto you: *For him hath God the Father ſealed:* that is, by a ſpecial commiſſion and authority, hath impowered him to diſpenſe all ſpiritual bleſſings to them that want and crave them. *Learn* hence, 1. That all the things of this life are periſhing and fading. The beſt of outward comforts and enjoyments are meat that periſheth. 2. That it is the greateſt of follies to labour intenſely and inordinately for, and to ſet ourſelves with all our might and ſtrength to purſue and follow after periſhing things. 3. That Jeſus Chriſt's holy doctrine, his heavenly grace, is food that never periſheth nor diminiſheth, how many ſoever partake of it; but makes all that partake thereof, to be partakers of eternal life therewith. 4. That Jeſus Chriſt is authorized, ſealed, and commiſſioned by his Father to give eternal life to ſuch as induſtriouſly labour after him, and will not be ſatisfied without him. *Him hath God the Father ſealed:* that is, Jeſus Chriſt was ſealed to the office of Mediator, by God the Father: Chriſt was ſealed at his baptiſm; ſealed by his doctrine; ſealed by his miracles; ſealed by his reſurrection; ſealed by his unction or ſuper-eminent and unparalleled ſanctification. Lord! where will the rejecters of Chriſt then appear at the great day, who have deſpiſed the authority of him whom the Father hath commiſſioned to give eternal life to whomſoever he pleaſeth?

28 Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall we do that we might work the works of God? 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.

Here the Jews, who were ſtrict obſervers of the ceremonial law of Moſes, and reſted thereupon for ſalvation, inquire of our Saviour what they ſhould do that they might pleaſe God? Chriſt directs them to the great duty of believing on himſelf, to own and acknowledge him to be the true Meſſiah, and, as ſuch, to rely upon him alone for ſalvation: *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him*, &c. *Learn* hence, That, for a penitent humbled ſinner to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is a work highly pleaſing and acceptable unto God. Chriſt calls faith *the work of God*, upon a threefold account: it is the work of his efficiency and operation: it is the work of his commanding; and it is the work of his approbation and acceptation; a work that God is highly pleaſed with, and greatly delighted in: *This is the work of God.*

30 They ſaid therefore unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that we may ſee, and believe thee? What doſt thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the deſart; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Here the Jews tell our Saviour, that, before they will believe in him, they muſt ſee ſome ſign from him, to confirm his doctrine, and prove him to be the Meſſias: they acknowledge Chriſt had wrought a great miracle, in feeding five thouſand perſons with five barley-loaves; but Moſes fed their fathers in the wilderneſs, who were no leſs than ſix hundred thouſand perſons, with excellent manna from heaven, and this for forty years together; from whence they would ſeem to conclude, that they had more reaſon to believe Moſes than Chriſt; not conſidering that Moſes was but an inſtrument to obtain, by prayer, the manna at the hands of God; but Chriſt was an agent, and that, by a creating power inherent in himſelf, he multiplied the five loaves to the feeding of five thouſand. *Note* here, From the Jews requiring a ſign before they would believe, that he who publiſhes a new doctrine to the world, ought to confirm his miſſion by ſome miraculous operation. 2. That God honoured Moſes, his meſſenger, very much, and Chriſt, his miniſter, much more, in that both of them wrought great and ſpecial miracles for the confirmation of their miſſion. 3. That the Jews not believing Chriſt to be the true Meſſias, upon ſo many atteſtations, and after his divine miſſion was confirmed by ſuch miraculous operations, rendered their infidelity inexcuſable, and their obſtinacy invincible.

32 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I

ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Upon the Jews mentioning manna to our bleſſed Saviour, he takes occaſion to make a compariſon betwixt himſelf, the bread of life, and manna, the bread of Moſes, and that in three particulars: 1. It was not Moſes that gave that manna, it was God at the prayer of Moſes: but it was God that now offered them the bread of life, were they willing to accept it. 2. The manna was not given from heaven, that is, from the celeſtial heaven, but only from the air and clouds, which frequently in ſcripture is called *heaven*; but Chriſt, the bread of life, was given and ſent by the Father from the higheſt heaven, even the heaven of glory. 3. Manna was not true ſpiritual food effectively and of itſelf, but bodily food only; but Chriſt is real and ſpiritual bread, which gives life to loſt and dead men, which manna did not, could not do: and whereas manna was peculiar to Iſrael alone, Chriſt gives life to all ſorts of perſons, Gentiles as well as Jews, *The bread of God giveth life unto the world.* *Learn* hence, That, as Chriſt is the truth and ſubſtance of all types in the Old Teſtament, ſo, particularly, the manna was an illuſtrious type of Chriſt. In many things they agree, and in ſome they differ. They agree in their original; manna came down from above, ſo did Chriſt; manna was freely given, ſo is Jeſus Chriſt the free gift of God; manna was not fit to be eaten as it lay in the field, but muſt be ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and baked in an oven, before it was fit for food: Chriſt was ground by his ſufferings, bruiſed on the croſs, ſcorched in the fiery oven of his Father's wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour for us. Again, as the manna was gathered by the Iſraelites daily and equally, it was rained down about their tents, and every man had his omer: thus is Chriſt in the miniſtry of the word daily offered to a loſt world, and all that believe in him ſhall ſhare alike in the benefit of the juſtification, ſanctification, and glorification from him: but now the manna and Chriſt differ in this; and the truth excels the type thus: there is a quickening, enlivening virtue, a life-giving and a life-upholding power, in Chriſt the bread of life, which was never found in manna, the bread of Iſrael: and whereas manna only fed the body of an Iſraelite, and this only for a little time in the wilderneſs; Chriſt nouriſheth the ſoul, the ſouls of all believers, be they Jew or Gentile, bond or free, and this not for a time, but for eternity; *The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

34 Then ſaid they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt. 36 But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not.

Obſerve here, 1. How the carnal Jews hearing of the bread which Chriſt had commended ſo highly, and conceiving of it carnally, deſire they may partake of it conſtantly; *Lord, evermore give us this bread.* The commendation of ſpiritual things may move the affections, and quicken the deſires of natural perſons; but if their deſires be not ſpiritual and ſerious, diligent and laborious, conſtant and abiding, they are no evidence of the truth of grace. 2. Chriſt diſcovers another excellent effect of this bread of life, which he had been recommending; that ſuch as feed of it *ſhall never hunger more*; that is, inordinately, after the periſhing ſatisfactions of this world; but ſhall find an all-ſufficient fulneſs in him, and complete refreſhment from him, for the preſerving and perpetuating of their ſpiritual life; *He that cometh unto me ſhall never hunger*, &c. 3. How juſtly Chriſt upbraids the Jews for their obſtinate infidelity; *Ye have ſeen me*, ſays our Saviour, *yet ye believe not.* Ye have ſeen me in the fleſh, you have heard my doctrine, you have ſeen my miracles; I have done amongſt you thoſe works which never any man did, to convince you that I am the Meſſiah, yet you will not own me to be ſuch, nor believe on me. O the ſtrength of infidelity and unbelief! The devil has a great advantage upon men, by making them ſtrong in unbelief, as God hath making his people ſtrong in faith.

37 All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.

Our bleſſed Saviour having lamented the obſtinate infidelity of the Jews in the foregoing verſe, who, though they had ſeen him, would not believe on him, he doth in this verſe comfort himſelfwith the aſſured expectation, that there would be a number, which ſhould certainly and infallibly come unto him; *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come unto me*, &c. Here *obſerve*, 1. An account of the perſons that ſhall come to Chriſt: *All that the Father hath given him.* There is a double gift of us to Chriſt. 1. In God's eternal purpoſe and counſel. 2. In our effectual vocation and calling, when our hearts are, by the holy Spirit of God, perſuaded and enabled to accept of Chriſt, as he is freely tendered us in the goſpel. *Obſerve*, 2. The gracious entertainment which Chriſt gives to thoſe that come unto him; *He will in no wiſe caſt them out*; where the poſitive is included in the negative; *I will not caſt them out*; that is, I will kindly receive, and graciouſly entertain them. *Learn* hence, 1. That both God the Father, and Chriſt his Son, are unfeignedly willing, and cordially deſirous of the ſalvation of loſt ſinners. That federal tranſaction which was betwixt the Father and the Son, from everlaſting, about the ſalvation of loſt ſinners, evidently declares this. 2. That the compaſſionate and merciful Jeſus will in no wiſe caſt out or reject, but kindly entertain and receive every penitent ſinner that doth believingly apply unto him for pardon of ſin and eternal life; *I will in no wiſe caſt out*; that is, I will not caſt them out of my pity and compaſſion; out of my care and protection: I will not caſt them out of my covenant; I will never caſt them out of my kingdom; for my nature inclines me, my promiſe binds me, and my office, as Mediator, engages me to the contrary.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine

own will, but the will of him that ſent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. 40 And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

In theſe words our Saviour gives us the confirmation of the foregoing promiſe, that he will in no wiſe caſt out thoſe that come unto him, by aſſuring us, that it was the great end for which he came into the world. His Father ſent him to do his will, and not his own; that is not to do his own will without his Father's, but to do his own will and his Father's. For Chriſt, as God, with a co-ordinate will with his Father's, and as man, a will ſubordinate to the will of his Father. Now it is the will of both Father and Son, that ſuch as believe in him ſhould be preſerved from periſhing, and be raiſed up by Chriſt at the laſt day. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſtands not only inclined by his own mercy and goodneſs to ſave repenting and believing ſinners, but doth alſo ſtand obliged thereunto, by virtue of a truſt committed to him from the Father. Therefore Chriſt mentions the will of him that ſent him, as a reaſon of his fidelity in this matter. 2. That the Father's will and good pleaſure is the original ſource, the fountain and firſt ſpring from whence the ſalvation of believers do proceed and flow. *It is the Father's will that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life.* 3. That ſuch as are given to Chriſt by the Father, and put as his truſt into his keeping, he looks upon them as his charge, and ſtands engaged for the preſervation of them. *This is my Father's will, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing.* Yet hath the Father ſo committed the care of believers to his Son, as that he keeps them ſtill in his own hand.—John x. 28, 29. *My Father which gave them to me, is greater than all*, &c. 4. From thoſe words, *I will raiſe him up at the laſt day*, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is truly, eſſentially and really God. That perſon, who can, by his own almighty power, raiſe the dead, muſt certainly be God: and this power Chriſt had. He raiſed others from the dead, and his own dead body from the grave alſo, by his own power; and therefore Chriſt ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.* Doubtleſs, he that ſpake theſe words, and made theſe promiſes, knew his own power to perform them; and that power muſt be omnipotent, and that act of omnipotence doth prove him to be God. It is true, the diſciples raiſed the dead, who yet were no God, but, with this difference, they raiſed the dead by Chriſt's power; but Chriſt raiſed others and himſelf alſo, by his own power.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he ſaid, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they ſaid, Is not this Jeſus the Son of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? how is it then that he ſaith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jeſus therefore anſwered and ſaid unto them, Murmur not among yourſelves.

Although Chriſt had in the foregoing verſes plainly aſſerted himſelf to be the true bread that came down from heaven, for the benefit of the world, yet the Jews underſtanding his words carnally, are offended with him, and murmur at him, for pretending to come down from heaven, when they knew him to be the ſon of Joſeph and Mary. They underſtood nothing of his divine nature, nor of his miraculous conception by the over-ſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore were highly offended at him. Thence *learn*, That ignorance of Chriſt's divine nature was the ground and occaſion of that contempt which was caſt upon his perſon. *Note* farther, The proof which Chriſt gave of his divine nature, in his knowing the hearts and thoughts of theſe murmuring Jews, *Jeſus ſaid, Murmur not among yourſelves.* Chriſt knows and obſerves the moſt ſecret murmurings and repinings that are found in the breaſts of the children of men; and this his knowledge is an evidence and proof of his divinity, that he is truly and really God.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

In which words we have ſomething neceſſarily implied, and ſomething poſitively expreſſed. The miſery of man in his natural and unſanctified ſtate is here implied; he is far diſtant from Chriſt, and unable of himſelf to come unto him. By nature we are ſtrangers, yea, enemies unto God; enemies to the holineſs of his nature, and to the righteouſneſs of his laws: And as the ſtate of unregeneracy is a ſtate of enmity, ſo conſequently muſt it be a ſtate of impotency; *Without me* (therefore ſays Chriſt) *ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. that is, without intereſt in me, and influences of grace derived from me. Again, the truths we have expreſſed are theſe: 1. That all thoſe who come unto Chriſt are drawn unto him. 2. That the drawing of ſinful ſouls unto Jeſus Chriſt is the ſpecial and peculiar work of God. This drawing is a powerful act, but not a compulſory act; God doth not draw any againſt their wills to Chriſt, but he inclines the will of ſinners to come unto him. He draws by effectual perſuaſion, and not by violent compulſion. 3. That all thoſe who are drawn to Chriſt here, ſhall be raiſed up glorioully by him hereafter: *I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.* Such as are brought to Chriſt by the Father, Chriſt ſhall never abandon them, till he has raiſed them up at the laſt day, and preſented them blameleſs and complete before his Father; where they ſhall ever be with the Lord.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath ſeen the Father, ſave he which is of God, he hath ſeen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlaſting life.

In theſe words our bleſſed Saviour confirms his former aſſertion, concerning the Father's drawing, from the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, which ſpeaking of the days of the Meſſias, foretold, that perſons ſhould be taught of God to embrace the Meſſias; whence Chriſt inferreth, that every one who is thus taught, ſhall come unto him, and believe in him. *Learn* hence, 1. That the teachings of God are abſolutely neceſſary to every man that cometh unto Chriſt in the way of faith. 2. That ſuch ſhall not miſcarry in the way of faith, who are under the ſpecial teachings and inſtructions of God: *They ſhall be taught of God*, and he teacheth to profit, and that not only authoritatively, but efficaciouſly and effectually. Thoſe whom God undertakes to teach, receive from him both an ear to hear, and an heart to underſtand. *They ſhall be all taught of God*: and they that are taught, have heard and learned of the Father.

48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderneſs, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.

In theſe verſes, our bleſſed Saviour reſumes his former doctrine, namely, that he is the object of ſaving faith, and the bread of life, which he compares with the manna, the bread of Iſrael. *Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderneſs*, which manna was an illuſtrious type of Chriſt. Thus both came down from heaven; both were freely given of God, without any merit or deſert of man; both in a miraculous manner: both at firſt unknown what they were, and whence they came; but equally belonging to all, both ſufficient for all, both poor and rich. The manna, white in colour, ſo clear is our Lord's innocence; pleaſant like honey, ſo ſweet are his benefits; beaten and broken before eaten, Chriſt on his croſs bleeding and dying; given only in the wilderneſs, and ceaſing as ſoon as they came into the land of promiſe; as ſacraments ſhall vaniſh, when we enjoy the ſubſtance in heaven. But though manna was thus excellent, yet the eaters of it were dead; but ſuch as feed upon Chriſt, the bread of life, ſhall live eternally in bliſs and glory. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man*, &c. Here we *learn*, 1. What a miſerable creature man naturally is, in a pining and ſtarved condition, under the want of ſoul-food. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is the food for ſouls, which quickens them that are dead, and is unto the needy ſoul all that it can need; ſuch ſpiritual food as will prove a remedy and preſervative againſt death, both ſpiritual and eternal. *I am the living bread.*

52 The Jews therefore ſtrove amongſt themſelves, ſaying, How can this man give us *his* fleſh to eat? 53 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 55 For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo, he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread, ſhall live for ever. 59 Theſe things ſaid he in the ſynagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Note here, How the Jews, underſtanding Chriſt after a carnal manner, were offended at what he had ſaid; for they thought it was inhuman to eat men's fleſh, and could not underſtand how the body of Chriſt could, in ſuch a ſenſe, be food to all the world. Hence *obſerve*, That carnal perſons put a carnal ſenſe upon Chriſt's ſpiritual words, and ſo occaſion their own ſtumbling. But yet notwithſtanding the Jews ſtumbling at our Saviour's expreſſion, he doth not alter his words, but preſſeth more and more the neceſſity of feeding upon him by faith, in order to eternal life; *Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* *Learn* from thence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the true ſpiritual food of all believers. 2. That thoſe, and only thoſe, who do by faith feed upon him, ſhall obtain a life of grace and glory from him; if we do not by faith feed upon him, we can have no evidence for a life of grace, nor title to a life of glory. This place ſome Papiſts produce to countenance the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and a bodily eating and drinking of Chriſt's fleſh and blood in the ſacrament. But it is evident, that Chriſt treats not of the ſacrament in this chapter, for the ſacrament was not now inſtituted; therefore it is not a ſacramental, but a ſpiritual feeding upon Chriſt by faith that is here meant. For this eating gives life to the eater; all that eat are ſaved, and all that do not eat are damned: but this is not true of a ſacramental eating; beſides, this eating which Chriſt ſpeaks of, he makes abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; but ſome are ſaved that never fed upon Chriſt in the ſacrament, as John the Baptiſt, and the thief on the croſs. Laſtly, If it be underſtood of a ſacramental eating and drinking, wo be to the church of Rome, for denying the cup to the laity; becauſe drinking of Chriſt's blood is here made as neceſſary as eating of his fleſh, in order to eternal life. *Except ye eat the fleſh*, &c. Farther, the cloſe and intimate union which is betwixt Chriſt himſelf, and thoſe that feed upon him: *He that eateth me, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* As meat is turned into the eater's ſubſtance, ſo believer's and Chriſt become one; and by feeding on him, that is, by believing on him, there followed a mutual inhabitation; Chriſt dwelleth in them, and they in him; this is true of a ſpiritual feeding upon Chriſt, but not of a ſacramental eating. Nay Chriſt carries it higher ſtill, and tells us, that there is a real union between the Father and him, and as the Father lives who ſent him, having an eternal fountain of life in himſelf; and the Son lives by the Father, having the ſame life communicated to him with his eſſence from the Father: In like manner (ſays Chriſt) he that eateth me, the ſame ſhall live by me. All which is certainly true of our ſpiritual feeding upon Chriſt by faith; but cannot be applied to a corporal feeding on him in the ſacrament, as the Papiſts would have it.

60 Many therefore of his diſciples, when they had heard *this*, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can bear it? 61 When Jeſus knew in himſelf, that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 *What* and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?

The foregoing doctrine of our Saviour, concerning eating his fleſh and drinking his blood, ſounded ſo very harſhly, that not only the common multitude, but ſome of them that had been his diſciples, that is, who had given up their names to follow him, could not tell how to bear it. Our Saviour reproves their unjuſt ſtumbling at what he had ſaid, that he was the bread which came down from heaven, and tells them, that his aſcenſion into heaven ſhould prove the truth of his deſcent from heaven. Hence we *learn*, That Chriſt's ariſing from the grave, and aſcending into heaven by his own power, is an evident proof of his Godhead, and that he really came down from heaven, in reſpect of his divine nature, which condeſcended to be clothed with our fleſh. *What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?*

63 It is the ſpirit that quickeneth; the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, *they* are ſpirit, and *they* are life.

To convince the Jews that our Saviour did not mean a carnal and fleſhly eating of his body he tells them, That ſuch an eating would profit nothing; but it is a ſpiritual eating of him by faith, that bringeth that quickening life of which he had ſpoken. *It is the Spirit*, or divine nature, *that quickeneth: the fleſh*, or human nature alone, ſeparated from his Godhead, *profiteth nothing*, and can give no life. *Learn* hence, That it is the Godhead of Chriſt united to the human nature, which adds all virtue, efficacy, and merit, to the obedience and ſufferings of the human nature. It is *the Spirit*, or divine nature of Chriſt, *that quickeneth*; the *fleſh*, or human nature alone, *profiteth nothing*; and therefore the carnal eating of his fleſh would do no good.

64 But there are ſome of you that believe not. For Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him. 65 And he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 ¶ From that *time* many of his diſciples went back and walked no more with him.

Our bleſſed Saviour having thus cleared his doctrine, that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven, and that he is not to be carnally, but ſpiritually fed upon; he plainly tells the Jews, That the true cauſe of their ſtumbling at this doctrine, was their ignorance and unbelief: *There are ſome of you that believe not.* Upon which plain dealing of our bleſſed Saviour's, many unſound profeſſors did wholly forſake him, and accompanied no longer with him. *Learn* hence, That multitudes, who have long profeſſed Chriſt and his holy religion, may draw back, and fall from their profeſſion, and finally revolt from him. 2. That it is an evil heart of unbelief, which cauſes men to depart from Chriſt, and to make ſhipwreck of their profeſſion.

67 Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye alſo go away? 68 Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God. 70 Jeſus anſwered them, Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon: for he it was that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

Our Saviour finding many of his nominal diſciples forſaking him, and departing from him, aſks his apoſtles (the twelve) Whether they would alſo go away? intimating, that their departure would go nearer to him than the departure of all the reſt. The nearer they are from whom we receive unkindneſſes, the nearer do thoſe unkindneſſes go to our hearts, *Will you, the twelve, alſo go away?* Peter, as the mouth, and in the name of the reſt, anſwers, That they knew none beſides to whom they could go, and expect that happineſs which they did from him. They that go from Chriſt, can never hope to mend themſelves, let them go whither they will; therefore, it is as irrational, as it is ſinful to depart from Chriſt, *who hath the word*, that is, the promiſe of *eternal life*. Laſtly, St. Peter having made this profeſſion for himſelf and the reſt of the twelve, that they would not depart from Jeſus, whom they believed to be the true Meſſias, the Son of God; Chriſt intimates to Peter, that his charity was ſomething too large in promiſing ſo much for them all; for there was one traitor among them, whoſe heart was as open to Chriſt, as his face was to them; he meant it of Judas Iſcariot, of whoſe perfidiouſneſs he gave them warning at this time. *Learn* hence, That the better any man is in himſelf, the more charitable is the opinion which he has of others. Charity inclines to believe others good, till they diſcover themſelves to be bad. 2. That Chriſt doth approve of our charitable judgment of others ſincerity, according to what we hope and believe, though we happen to be miſtaken, and our judgment is not according to truth; Chriſt knew Judas to be an hypocrite at this time, but doth not reprove Peter for having a better opinion of him than he deſerved. It is far better to err on the charitable, than on the cenſorious hand; it is leſs offenſive to Chriſt, and leſs injurious to ourſelves.

CHAP. VII.

AFTER theſe things, Jeſus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.

Our bleſſed Saviour knowing that the rage of the chief prieſts and Phariſees in Judea and at Jeruſalem, was grown to that height, that they were reſolved to kill him; to avoid their fury, he reſolves to continue in Galilee, and would not come into Judea at preſent, nor go up to Jeruſalem into the mouth of his enemies; his hour being not yet come. *Learn* hence, That ſo long as it was neceſſary for Chriſt to ſave and preſerve himſelf from danger, he was pleaſed to make uſe of the ordinary means for his own preſervation; namely, retirement and withdrawing himſelf: Chriſt as God could have rid himſelf out of the hands of his enemies by a miraculous perſervation; but he uſes the ordinary means when they would ſerve the turn. And as he would not decline danger when his hour was come, ſo would he not run into it before it was come, but uſed all prudential means and methods for his own ſafety and preſervation. *He would not come into Judea, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.*

2 Now the Jews feaſt of tabernacles was at hand.

There were three great feaſts which the Jews celebrated every year; namely, the feaſt of the Paſſover, the feaſt of Pentecoſt, and the feaſt of Tabernacles: This laſt was obſerved in the month of September, after they had gathered in the fruits of the earth; whence it was alſo called the feaſt of In-gathering: At this feaſt they went out of their houſes, and dwelt in booths ſeven days, in remembrance of their living in tents or booths in the wilderneſs for forty years together, before they came to Canaan: Now, the inſtitution of this feaſt, being to call the Iſraelites to remembrance of their former condition in the wilderneſs, teaches us how prone and ready we are to forget our troubles, and the mercies wherewith our troubles have been ſweetened, when once they are paſt and over. The Jews, when ſettled in Canaan, going out of their houſes yearly, and dwelling in booths, did thereby teſtify that preſent mercies had not made them forget their former trials and troubles.

3 His brethren therefore ſaid unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doeſt. 4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly. If thou do theſe things, ſhew thyſelf to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Note here, 1. The advice which Chriſt's brethren, that is, his kindred, gave him to render himſelf more famous and publicly known to the world; they adviſe him not to ſtay any longer in Galilee, an obſcure place, but to go into the more noble and populous country of Judea, and work miracles there. But what high preſumption was this in creatures to preſcribe to Chriſt, and direct him whither to go, and what to do? 2. The reaſon they offer for their advice; for no man that ſeeketh to be known openly, will do any thing in ſecret; that is, "If thou wilt be thought to be the Meſſias by thy working miracles, do them not in a corner; but go up to Jeruſalem with us at this next feaſt, that the great men may take notice of them." Such as hunt after reputation themſelves, and are ambitious of vain-glory and commendation from men, meaſure others, even the moſt holy and religious, by their own inclinations and diſpoſitions; and wonder that others do not follow their meaſures for gaining of reputation and reſpect. Thus did our Lord's brethren here: but the wonder ceaſes, if we conſider the following words; *Neither did his brethren believe on him.* It is no new thing for the holieſt ſervants of God to meet with great trials from their graceleſs friends. Chriſt met with this before us; his kindred according to the fleſh, not believing in him, were a ſore trial and temptation to him. Some martyrs have confeſſed, that the hardeſt works they have met withal, have been to withſtand the temptations, the tears and intreaties of their deareſt and neareſt relations.

6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feaſt: I go not up yet unto this feaſt, for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had ſaid theſe words unto them, he abode *ſtill* in Galilee.

Here we have Chriſt's anſwer and refuſal returned to his brethren's deſire: He tells them, That they might go up to the feaſt of Jeruſalem, when they pleaſed, and as publicly; but it was not for him to appear ſo publicly, becauſe the doctrine which he taught was odious to the Phariſees, and the prevailing power at Jeruſalem; he therefore reſolves to go up privately, that he might not ſtir up the jealouſy of the ſanhedrim: But for them, they were out of danger of the world's hatred; for being the children of it, the world would love its own; but him it hated, becauſe he reproved its ſins. Where we may *remark*, That though our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was moſt freely willing, and ready to lay down his life for ſinners, when the time was come that God the Father called for it; yet he would not expoſe his life to hazard and danger unſeaſonably. Teaching us by his example, as not to decline ſufferings when God calls us to them, ſo not to tempt God by running into them, when we may inoffenſively avoid them. *Your time is always ready, mine is not yet come.*

10 ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret. 11 Then the Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he? 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him. For ſome ſaid, he is a good man: others ſaid, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13 Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

Note here, 1. How our bleſſed Saviour, who came to fulfil the

the law, goes to Jeruſalem at the Jewiſh feaſt, according to the command of God, Exod. xxiii. *Three times a year ſhall all thy males appear before me.* Chriſt being made under the law, ſheweth a punctual obedience to the law, and fulfilled it in his own perſon. 2. The different opinions which the Jews at Jeruſalem do expreſs concerning our Saviour: ſome allowing him the charitable character of being a good man; others traducing him as a deceiver of the people. Our dear Lord, we ſee, when here on earth, paſſed through evil report and good report. Is it any wonder to find the friends of Chriſt branded with infamy and reproach, when Chriſt himſelf paſſes under the infamous character of a deceiver of the people? Some allowed him to be a *good man*; but *others ſaid, Nay, but he deceiveth the people.*

14 ¶ Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple, and taught. 15 And the Jews marvelled, ſaying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I ſpeak of myſelf. 18 He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own glory: but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him.

Obſerve here, 1. Though Chriſt went up to Jeruſalem privately, leſt he ſhould ſtir up the jealouſy of the Phariſees againſt himſelf unſeaſonably; yet he went into the temple and taught publicly. His example teaches us this much, "That although the ſervants of Chriſt may for a time, and in ſome caſes withdraw themſelves from apprehended danger: yet when God calls them to appear openly, they muſt do it courageouſly, without ſhrinking, though the danger be ſtill impending." Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem, entered the temple and taught. 2. So admirable was our holy Lord's doctrine, that the Jews marvelled how he ſhould come to the knowledge of ſuch divine myſteries, conſidering the meanneſs of his education. They were ſtruck with admiration, but they wanted faith; whereas the leaſt degree of ſaving faith is beyond all admiration without it. 3. Our Lord vindicates his doctrine, telling them the doctrine he delivered was not his own; that is, of his own inventing and deviſing; but received immediately from the Father, whoſe ambaſſador and great prophet he was. Again, when Chriſt ſays, *My doctrine is not mine*, that is, not only mine, but my Father's and mine. For as he was God equal with the Father, ſo he naturally knew all his counſels; and as man, had knowledge thereof by communication from his Godhead. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of the goſpel is a doctrine wholly from God; he contrived it, and ſent his own Son into the world to publiſh and reveal it, Chriſt was ſent, and his doctrine was not his own, but his that ſent him. 4. A double rule given by our Saviour, whereby the Jews might know, whether the doctrine he preached were the doctrine of God. Firſt, if a man walk uprightly, and doth the will of God in the beſt manner according to his knowledge; *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of my doctrine whether it be of God.* There is no ſuch way to find out truth, as by doing the will of God. The ſecond rule, by which they might know that his doctrine was from God, was this, becauſe he ſought his Father's glory, and not his own, in the delivery of it. *He that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true.* Hence *learn*, That the nature and ſcope of that doctrine which Chriſt delivered, eminently tending not to promote his own private glory, but the glory of his Father, is an undoubted proof and evidence, that his doctrine was of God.

19 Did not Moſes give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people anſwered and ſaid, Thou haſt a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion, (not becauſe it is of Moſes, but of the fathers,) and ye on the ſabbath-day circumciſe a man. 23 If a man on the ſabbath-day receive circumciſion, that the law of Moſes ſhould not be broken; are ye angry at me, becauſe I have made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day.

Here *note*, 1. That our Lord, having vindicated his doctrine in the former verſes, comes now to vindicate his practice in healing the impotent man on the Sabbath-day, for which the Jews ſought his life, as a violation of the fourth commandment given by Moſes. Our Saviour tells them, that, notwithſtanding their pretended zeal for the law of Moſes, they more notoriouſly broke the ſixth commandment, by going about to kill him, an innocent perſon, than he had broken the fourth commandment, by making a man whole on the Sabbath-day. Hence *learn*, That it is damnable hypocriſy, when men pretend great zeal againſt the ſins of others, and do allow and tolerate worſe in themſelves. This is for their practice to give their profeſſion the lie; the Jews condemn our Saviour for a ſuppoſed breach of the fourth commandment, whilſt they are guilty of a real breach of the ſixth commandment. 2. The ignominy and reproach which the Jews fix upon our bleſſed Saviour, in the height of their rage and fury againſt him; *Thou haſt a devil.* The King of ſaints in heaven, as well as the whole hoſt of ſaints on earth, has been frequently ſmitten and deeply wounded with reproach. Chriſt was reproached for our ſake, and when we are reproached for his ſake, he takes our reproach as his own. Moſes' reproach was the reproach of Chriſt, Heb. xi. 26. And he eſteemed it a treaſure, which did more enrich him with its worth than oppreſs him with its weight; *eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt.* 3. The wonderful meekneſs of Chriſt, in paſſing over this reproach and calumny, without one word of reply. Guilt is commonly clamorous and impatient, but innocence is ſilent, and regardleſs of miſreports. Our Saviour is not at the pains of a word to vindicate himſelf from their impotent cenſure, but goes on with his diſcourſe, and juſtifies his own action, in healing a man on the Sabbath-day, from the Jews own practice in circumciſing their children on that day, if it happen to be the eighth day: And the argument runs thus, "If circumciſion may be adminiſtered to a child on the Sabbath-day, which is a ſervile kind of a work, and bodily exerciſe, without blame or cenſure, why muſt I fall under cenſure, for healing a man on the Sabbath-day, thoroughly and perfectly, only by a word ſpeaking?" Hence *learn*, that the law of doing good, and relieving the miſerable at all times, is a more ancient and excellent law, than either that of the Sabbath reſt, or of circumciſion upon the eight day. A ritual law muſt and ought to give place to the law of nature which is written in every man's heart. As if our Lord had ſaid, "If you may wound a man by circumciſion on the Sabbath-day, may not I heal one? If you may heal on that day one member of the circumciſed, may not I make a man whole every whit? If you be at pains to cure ſuch a one with your hand, may not I without pains cure a man with the word of my mouth?"

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

From the foregoing argument, Chriſt draws an inference or concluſion, That there is no making a judgment according to the firſt appearance of things; and that ſuddenneſs or raſhneſs, prejudice or partiality in judging, overthrows righteous judgment. This is the general application of what Chriſt had ſaid before; and the particular application of it, as to himſelf, comes to this, *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*: As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Lay aſide your prejudices againſt my perſon, and compare theſe caſes attentively and impartially with one another; and then ſee whether you can juſtly condemn me as a Sabbath-breaker, and acquit yourſelves." Such was the perfect innocency of our Saviour's actions, that he could and did ſubmit them to the reaſon and judgment of his very enemies.

25 Then ſaid ſome of them of Jeruſalem, Is not this he whom they ſeek to kill? 26 But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed, that this is the very Chriſt? 27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is: 28 Then cried Jeſus in the temple, as he taught, ſaying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myſelf, but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath ſent me. 30 Then they ſought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, When Chriſt cometh, will he do more miracles than theſe which this *man* hath done?

Our bleſſed Saviour having vindicated both his doctrine and practice, and appeared publicly in the temple, and ſpeaking boldly there, the people of Jeruſalem, knowing the hatred and enmity of the chief prieſts and rulers againſt him, do wonder that they did not apprehend him. *Learn*, Almighty God doth and can preſerve his own, in the faithful diſcharge of their duty in ſuch an admirable manner, that even their enemies themſelves may wonder at it, and be aſtoniſhed at it. 2. The argument which the Jews urged againſt our Saviour's being Chriſt, and the promiſed Meſſias, namely, that they *knew whence he was*, whereas *when the Meſſiah cometh, no man ſhall know whence he is*; now herein they aſſert a manifeſt untruth; for though Chriſt, in reſpect of his Godhead, was prefigured by Melchiſedec, who was without father or mother, without deſcent; (that is, without any that the ſcripture mentions,) yet in reſpect of his human nature, the Jews might know whence he was; for the ſcripture plainly pointed out the tribe, the family, the lineage, and the place of his birth. 3. That Chriſt, being grieved at this impudent cavil, doth reply unto it with much boldneſs and zeal; he *cried, ſaying, Ye know me, and whence I am; but the Father that ſent me ye know not:* That is, "You know me as a man, where I was born, and of what family I am, but you know not my divine nature, nor the Father from whom I am by eternal generation, and who hath ſent me into the world." 4. What cauſeleſs rage appeared in theſe men againſt Chriſt, for declaring the truth unto them: they would have taken him by violence, had not the power and providence of God reſtrained them for the preſent, becauſe his time to ſuffer was not yet come. Hence *learn*, That violence and perſecution againſt the faithful diſpenſers of the truths of God, have been the lot and portion of ſuch in all ages and generations; Chriſt experienced it; let his miniſters expect it. 5. That although the rulers at Jeruſalem were angry and enraged, yet the meaner and inferior ſort of people believed on him, being convinced by the wonderful miracles which he had wrought amongſt them, that he was the true and promiſed Meſſias. For, ſay they, whenever the Meſſias comes, *he cannot do greater and more evident miracles than this man hath done*. *Learn* hence, That although the grace of God be not inſured to, or entailed upon any ſort of people: yet ordinarily it is the meaner ſort of people with whom it prevails moſt. Many of the common people at Jeruſalem were believing, when the rulers there were perſecuting: Men that live in pleaſure and at eaſe, ſee no need of dependence upon God; have little inclination or deſire to further the goſpel, and to encourage either the diſpenſers or profeſſors of it; nay, it is well if they do not turn perſecutors.

32 ¶ The Phariſees heard that the people murmured ſuch things concerning him; and the Phariſees and the chief prieſts ſent officers to take him. 33 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that ſent me. 34 Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me:* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. 35 Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he go, that we ſhall not find him? will he go unto the diſperſed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36 What *manner of* ſaying is this that he ſaid, Ye ſhall

ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me:* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

Obſerve here, How enraged the Phariſees were, when they heard that ſo many of the common people were brought to believe in Chriſt, and cleave unto Chriſt, inſomuch that they ſent public officers, armed with authority to apprehend our bleſſed Saviour; *The Phariſees and chief prieſts ſent officers to take him.* *Learn* thence, That nothing more enrages the enemies of religion, and draws trouble on the preachers and profeſſors of it, than the ſucceſs which the goſpel at any time meets with. *Obſerve,* 2. Our Saviour tells them, that as they deſired to be rid of him, ſo ere long they ſhould have their deſire; he would leave them, and go to his Father, and, in his abſence, they would wiſh for his bodily preſence again, but ſhould not have it. *Learn,* The deſpiſers of Chriſt have little cauſe to be weary of him, and to ſeek to put him away by violence and perſecution; for their obſtinate contempt of him will cauſe him to depart from them, and finally to forſake them. *Obſerve,* 3. How the Jews, not underſtanding our Saviour's words aright, reaſoned among themſelves, whether, by leaving of them, he meant to go into ſome pagan country, and teach the Gentiles the myſteries of the Jewiſh religion; which above all things they could not endure to hear. *Learn* hence, That it is the ordinary ſin of a people privileged with the means of grace, not to be ſenſible of the hazard or danger of Chriſt's leaving and forſaking them, till at laſt he leaves them finally, and caſts them off, to their inevitable and unutterable condemnation. Thus did our Lord with the Jews here: *I go my way, and whither I go, ye cannot come.*

37 In the laſt day, that great *day* of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.

The feaſt of tabernacles (which is the feaſt here meant) laſted eight days; the firſt and laſt of which were to be kept holy with religious aſſemblies and ſacrifices; and it was a cuſtom among the Jews, upon that ſolemn day, to offer up a pot of water unto God, which they drew out of the fountain of Siloam; with reference to this cuſtom, Chriſt here cries with a loud voice, inviting the people to fetch and draw from him, as from a living fountain, all the ſanctifying gifts and ſaving graces of the holy Spirit. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt is the original and fountain of all ſaving grace, whom if we thirſt after, repair to, and by faith depend upon as Mediator, we ſhall certainly receive what influences of grace ſoever we want and ſtand in need of.

38 He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.

Here again Chriſt alludes to a Jewiſh cuſtom; the Jews were wont at fountains to build great veſſels of ſtone, and in the midſt or belly of them to have pipes, through which the water paſſes, "Now, ſays Chriſt, Thus ſhall it be with every one that believeth on me; he ſhall be abundantly filled with the Spirit of God, in all the ſanctifying and ſaving graces of it." Chriſt and his holy Spirit are a living fountain, whoſe waters never fail; they are not a water-brook, but a ſpring of water; we ſhall never miſs of the waters of life, if we ſeek unto and wait upon Chriſt for them. *For, if we believe on him, out of our belly ſhall flow rivers of living waters,* ſufficient for ourſelves, and wherewith to refreſh others.

39 (But this he ſpake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the Holy Ghoſt was not yet *given,* becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.)

Theſe words are the Evangeliſt St. John's commentary upon the foregoing promiſe: he tells us, that Chriſt ſpoke this of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which did accompany the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt. *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given,* that is, not ſo plentifully given, *becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified.* *Learn* hence, That although the Spirit was in ſome meaſure given by God from the beginning to good men, yet the more plentiful effuſion of it was deferred, till the aſcenſion and glorification of Jeſus Chriſt.

40 ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this ſaying, ſaid, Of a truth this is the prophet. 41 Others ſaid, This is the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh out of the ſeed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a diviſion among the people becauſe of him. 44 And ſome of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In theſe verſes an account is given of the various effects which our Lord's foregoing ſermon had upon his hearers hearts: ſome were ſo affected with it, that they believed him to be the great prophet promiſed to Iſrael, Deut. xviii. 18. Others apprehended him to be the Chriſt; others contradict both, ſuppoſing him to be born not at Bethlehem, but in Galilee. And upon this diverſity of opinions, there aroſe a diviſion amongſt them; and ſome had a mind to have apprehended him, but, by an over-ruling power, they were reſtrained from doing of it at preſent. *Learn* hence, that diverſity of opinions in matters of religion, even concerning Chriſt himſelf, have been even from the beginning. Some accounted him a prophet, others the Meſſiah; ſome thought him neither, but a grand impoſtor and deceiver. Our dear Lord, when here on earth, paſſed through evil report and good report; let his followers expect and prepare for the ſame: for innocence itſelf cannot protect from ſlander and falſe accuſation.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief prieſts and Phariſees; and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers anſwered, Never man ſpake like this man. 47 Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on him? 49 But this people, who knoweth not the law, are curſed.

Note here, 1. How God reſtrained the rage and malice of Chriſt's enemies, till his hour was come; the officers of the chief prieſts, who were ſent forth with a commiſſion to apprehend him, returned without him; but with this honourable mention of him in their mouths, *Never man ſpake like this man.* Such is the power of Chriſt's doctrine that even thoſe that come unto it with prejudice, and with a perſecuting purpoſe, may be ſurpriſed by it, and, though not converted, yet bridled and reſtrained: the preaching of the goſpel doth ſometimes reſtrain the violence of the hand, when it works no change in or upon the heart. Thus it was with theſe poor officers. 2. That the Phariſees being more enraged at the reaſon which the officers gave for neglecting their office, than for the neglect itſelf, upbraid them, that they ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be ſo deceived, whereas none of the grandees, or learned Rabbies, had owned him; only an accurſed crew of ignorant people followed him, and doted on him. Here *note*, That when Chriſt came into the world, the great ones of the world not only refuſed to believe on him, but boaſted of their unbelief, as an argument of their wiſdom. *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* Oh no, they were too wiſe to believe! Faith is left to fools, and accounted folly by thoſe wiſe men. Nay, farther, they count the common people curſed, who did believe on Chriſt. Oh prodigious ſtupidity! to account them accurſed, who receive Jeſus Chriſt, the chiefeſt bleſſing: great men have not always the wiſdom of a man, but more ſeldom have they the wiſdom of a real chriſtian. Great in honour, and wiſe in underſtanding, are a ſweet couple, but ſeldom ſeen together.

50 Nicodemus ſaith unto them, (he that came to Jeſus by night, being one of them) 51 Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou alſo of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own houſe.

Here *note*, 1. How God ſtirs up Nicodemus, though he durſt not openly own Chriſt, yet to plead for him, that he might not be condemned before heard; this was a common rule of juſtice, and nothing but what might have been ſaid on behalf of the greateſt malefactor; he could not well have ſaid leſs; but God ſo ordered it, that it is enough to divert the ſtorm from falling upon Chriſt at this time.—One word ſhall be ſufficient to blow over a perſecution, when God will have it ſo. 2. They anſwer Nicodemus with a taunt, a mock, and a ſcorn, that no prophet ever did riſe out of Galilee, nor ever ſhould. Therefore Chriſt ariſing out of Galilee, as they thought, could be no prophet. Laſtly, That though they were more enraged, yet they diſperſe without concluding any thing againſt Chriſt: for that time every one went to his own home. There is no wiſdom nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he ſat down and taught them.

The foregoing chapter gave us an account of a moſt excellent ſermon which our Saviour preached in the temple, at the feaſt of tabernacles. Now the feaſt being ended, Jeſus did not tarry in the city all night; but went out of it two miles, as he frequently uſed, to the mount of Olives. And although it was ſo dangerous for him to be ſeen any more in Jeruſalem, yet early the next morning he returns again to the city, enters the temple, and falls upon his work of preaching without fear and with indefatigable diligence. O what a buſy uſeful life was this of our Saviour's! He ſpent the day in preaching in the temple, the night in privacy and prayer on the mount of Olives; and the next morning he returns to his work of preaching again. Thus was he always holily and painfully employed. To glorify his Father, and to be uſeful and beneficial to mankind, was his food by day, and his reſt by night. Lord, how little do we reſemble thee, if, when thy life was all pain and labour, ours be all paſtime, pleaſure, and recreation.

3 And the ſcribes and Phariſees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had ſet her in the midſt, 4 They ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moſes in the law commanded us, that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned: but what ſayeſt thou? 6 This they ſaid, tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued aſking him, he lifted up himſelf, and ſaid unto them, He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her. 8 And again he ſtooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, *even* unto the laſt: and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt. 10 When Jeſus had lift up himſelf, and ſaw none but the woman, he ſaid unto her, Woman, where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She ſaid, No man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and ſin no more.

Our Saviour early in the morning entering upon the work of preaching: *Note*, 1. What a mixed auditory he had, of ſcribes and Phariſees, and common people. All ſorts of perſons came to hear him, but not all with the ſame intentions: The common people came to learn, but the ſcribes and Phariſees came to cavil and carp; the latter came to tempt and enſnare him, the former to be taught and inſtructed by him. It is not our bare attendance upon ordinances, but the purity of our aim, and the ſincerity of our intentions in waiting upon God in them, that is an evidence of our ſincerity. 2. How the hypocriſy of theſe Phariſees was gilded over with an appearance of ſanctity, as if they were great lovers of chaſtity, and haters of uncleanneſs; they bring to Chriſt a woman taken in adultery, to be cenſured by him. One that had not known theſe Phariſees, would have concluded them very holy and honeſt, very conſcionable and conſcientious perſons: but Chriſt, who ſaw into their boſoms, ſoon found that all this was done only to tempt him. Thus a ſmooth tongue and a falſe heart often accompany one another: when we ſee a glittering appearance we have reaſon to ſuſpect the inſide. 3. The puniſhment which the Phariſees ſought to have inflicted on this adultereſs; it is death; let her be ſtoned: Sometimes the puniſhment of adultery was burning, ſometimes ſtoning, always death: Lord! how ought chriſtians to bluſh, who have ſlight thoughts of the ſin of adultery, which both Jews and Pagans held deadly? 4. Their enſnaring queſtion, *Moſes commanded ſuch ſhould be ſtoned; but what ſayeſt thou?* The Phariſees deſire no better advantage againſt Chriſt, than a contradiction to Moſes their law-giver: It has been an old ſtratagem to ſet Moſes and Chriſt at variance, but they are faſt friends; they are ſubordinate one to another, not oppoſed one againſt another. Moſes brings us to Chriſt, and Chriſt to glory; fain would theſe colloguing adverſaries draw Chriſt to contradict Moſes, that they might take advantage of the contradiction, to condemn Chriſt. 5. The wiſdom and caution of our Lord's anſwer; he doth not excuſe her crime, but bids her accuſers look at home, and examine their own conſciences, whether they were not guilty of the like, or as great a ſin: He doth not ſay, "Let her be ſtoned;" this had been againſt the courſe of his mercy: he doth not ſay, "Let her not be ſtoned;" this had been againſt the law of Moſes: but he ſo anſwers, that both his juſtice and his mercy are entire; ſhe diſmiſſed, they aſhamed. It is a falſe zeal that is eagle-eyed abroad, and blind at home: Such as are moſt wicked themſelves, are oft-times moſt ready and ſkilful to ſpy out the faults and failings of others: We ſtand too near ourſelves to diſcern our own miſcarriages. The eye that ſees every thing, ſees not itſelf. *Note*, Though Chriſt abhorred the ſin, yet he does not condemn the ſinner. *Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee*, ſays Chriſt. This Chriſt ſaid, not to excuſe the woman, or to connive at her offence, but to ſhew that he declined the office of a civil judge, which was to paſs ſentence on criminals. He therefore doth not ſay, No man ought to condemn thee, but *Hath no man condemned thee?* Chriſt doth not execute the office of a magiſtrate in judging her death; but of a miniſter, in calling her to repentance and reformation: How ought every one of us to keep within the bounds of our calling, when our Saviour himſelf will not intrench upon the office and function of others? Laſtly, Our Saviour's cautionary direction to this adultereſs: *Go, and ſin no more.* Where *note*, Chriſt doth not ſay, Go, and commit adultery no more: but, *Go, and ſin no more.* It is not a partial repentance, or a turning away from this or that particular ſin, which will denominate us true penitents, or intitle us to the pardoning mercy of God, but a leaving off all ſin, of what kind ſoever: therefore, ſays Chriſt, *Go, and ſin no more.*

12 ¶ Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life. 13 The Phariſees therefore ſaid unto him, Thou beareſt record of thyſelf; thy record is not true. 14 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of myſelf, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, or whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the fleſh, I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me. 17 It is alſo written in your law, that the teſtimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf, and the Father that ſent me, beareth witneſs of me. 19 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jeſus anſwered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo. 20 Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Our bleſſed Saviour having baffled the deſign which the Phariſees had upon him, and ſhewed a ſpirit of divine wiſdom, in delivering himſelf from that ſnare which they had laid for him, he returns to inſtruct the people in the treaſury. And here *note*, 1. He inſtructs them in the nature of his office, which was to enlighten all men with the knowledge of divine truth; ſo that they ſhould not walk in darkneſs, either of ſin or error, but be led to eternal life. *Learn* hence, That the great end and errand of Chriſt's coming into the world, was to give light unto poor ſouls that ſat in darkneſs. 2. The exception which the Phariſees make againſt our Saviour's teſtimony of himſelf; *Thou beareſt record of thyſelf; thy record is not true.* Indeed, ſuch is the corrupt nature of man, which is prone to ſeek itſelf, and hunt after vain-glory, that it may render a perſon's teſtimony of himſelf ſuſpected; but Chriſt being true God, that cannot lie, and coming out of the boſom of his Father, as his ambaſſador, his teſtimony of himſelf is above all exception, and ought to be credited without farther proof. 3. How Chriſt challenges his enemies, the Phariſees, for judging carnally of him, and according to the meanneſs of his outward appearance, whereas he judged no man: that is, Firſt, No man, as they judged, according to outward ſhew: or, Secondly, *I judge no man*; that is, at preſent. My proper work is not to condemn any, but teach all; and my preſent office is that of a prophet, not of a judge. My coming now is to inſtruct and ſave the world; my next coming will be to judge and condemn it. 4. Chriſt declares that he is not alone in the teſtimony given of himſelf, but that the Father did alſo teſtify and bear witneſs of him, and that according to their own law, the teſtimony of two was always accounted and eſteemed valid. "Now, ſays Chriſt, if ſo much weight be to be laid upon the teſtimony of two men, how much more forcible ſhould the teſtimony of the Father, and of him that he hath ſent, be, to ſatisfy you, that what I ſay of myſelf is true? *Learn* hence, 1. That the Father and the Son, though one in eſſence and operation, yet are diſtinct perſons. 2. That theſe diſtinct perſons did bear joint witneſs concerning Chriſt. God the Father teſtified of him by a voice from heaven; and Chriſt as God, bare witneſs of himſelf as man, and as Mediator. Surely out of the mouth of two ſuch witneſſes, the truth of Chriſt's divine miſſion is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them, I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 22 Then ſaid the Jews, Will he kill himſelf? becauſe he ſaith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.. 23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 25 I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye ſhall die in your ſins.

Obſerve here, A dreadful threatening denounced by Chriſt againſt the obſtinate and unbelieving Jews, *Ye ſhall die in your ſins*; that is, in the guilt of your ſins: Lord! what a ſad word is this, *Ye ſhall die in your ſins:* O better is it a thouſand times to die in a ditch! for they that die in their ſins, ſhall riſe in their ſins, and ſtand before Chriſt in their ſins: ſuch as lie down in ſin in the grave, ſhall have ſin lie down with them in hell to all eternity. The ſins of believers go to the grave before them; ſin dieth while they live; but the ſins of unbelievers go to the grave with them. While they live they are dead in ſin: and by ſin they fall into death: from which there is no recovery unto life. 2. The grand ſin for which this great puniſhment is threatened, and that is the ſin of unbelief; *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* Plainly intimating, that, of all ſin, infidelity and unbelief is the grand damning ſin under the goſpel. The devil hath a great advantage upon men, by making them ſtrong in unbelief, as God hath by making his people ſtrong in faith. Unbelief renders a ſinner's caſe deſperate and incurable; it doth not only procure damnation, but no damnation like it.

25 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even *the ſame* that I ſaid unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to ſay and to judge of you: but he that ſent me, is true; and I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him. 27 They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father. 28 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then ſhall ye know, that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myſelf; but as my Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things.

The Jews hearing our Saviour denouncing ſuch a terrible threatening againſt them, becauſe they believed not on him in the foregoing verſes; here they perverſely aſk him, Who he was? our Saviour replies, That he was the ſame that he was from the beginning, even the very Chriſt, and that they were the very ſame that were alſo the mortal enemies and oppoſers of the truth. But that the time was haſtening, when they ſhould be fully convinced who he was; namely, when they had lifted him up upon his croſs, when he was riſen again, and aſcended into heaven, and brought that deſtruction upon them, which he had ſo often threatened. *Learn* hence, That the ſufferings of Chriſt were clear and convincing demonſtrations, both who he was, and what he was. The darkening of the ſun, the quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, were ſuch convincing proofs of his deity, that they could not but ſay, *Verily, this was the Son of God.*

29 And he that ſent me, is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.

That is, he that ſent and commiſſioned me for the great work of redemption, he is continually with me, both to aſſiſt and to accept me; I doing every thing that is agreeable to his holy will and pleaſure. Hence *learn*, 1. That the work of redemption, in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, was a work well-pleaſing to God the Father; the work itſelf was highly pleaſing to him; and Chriſt's way of managing it was well-pleaſing alſo. 2. That the reaſon why it was thus well-pleaſing to God, was, becauſe he acted in a conſtant conformity to his Father's will, kept to his Father's commiſſion, and executed his Father's commands, *doing always thoſe things that pleaſed him.* 3. That as the Father and Chriſt were inſeparable in reſpect of the unity of the divine eſſence; ſo the Father was always with Chriſt as Mediator, both to ſupport and to uphold him, to accept and to reward him. The Father hath not left me alone, either in the doing of his will, or in the ſuffering of his pleaſure. 4. That thoſe who deſire the gracious and ſpecial preſence of God with them in all conditions, particularly in times of ſufferings and trouble, they muſt make it their care and ſtudy to pleaſe God, and to obſerve his will in all things; then God will be with them in his guiding preſence, in his ſtrengthening preſence, in his comforting, in his quickening, in his ſanctifying, ſympathizing, and accepting preſence.

30 As he ſpake theſe words, many believed on him. 31 Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my diſciples indeed; 32 And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.

Note here, 1. The bleſſed fruit and ſucceſs of our Saviour's foregoing diſcourſe concerning his perſon and office. *As he ſpake theſe words many believed on him*: Not by their own natural power and ability, but by Chriſt's omnipotent and efficacious grace; he that ſpake to the ear, cauſed his word to reach the heart; Chriſt himſelf, that planted and watered, gave alſo the increaſe. 2. The love and care of Chriſt mentioned to theſe new converts; he watereth immediately theſe plants with wholeſome advice and counſel. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed*: Where *note*, It muſt be Chriſt's word, the true doctrine of the goſpel, and this abided and continued in, which will evidence our diſcipleſhip. 3. A ſpecial privilege which ſhall follow upon abiding in the doctrine of Chriſt; they ſhall increaſe in the knowledge of it, and be made free by it: *Ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* Where *note*, 1. That man is naturally in bondage and captivity, by blindneſs of mind, by hardneſs of heart, by rebellion of will. 2. That the means appointed by God for ſetting at liberty from this captivity and bondage, is the word of Chriſt, and the doctrine of the goſpel: *The truth ſhall make you free.*

33 ¶ They anſwered him, We be Abraham's
ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how
ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free? 34 Jeſus anſwered
them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Who-
ſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin. 35
And the ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever:
but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore
ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

Note here, How theſe carnal Jews underſtand all that our Saviour ſaid, to be ſpoken in and after a carnal manner: When he ſpoke to them before, *of eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood*, they underſtood it groſly of his natural body; when he ſpeaks to them here of a ſpiritual freedom from ſin, they underſtand it of a civil freedom from ſervile bondage and ſubjection; alledging, *They were Abraham's ſeed, and never in bondage to any man.* Which was a manifeſt untruth, having been in bondage, in their anceſtors, to the Egyptians and Babylonians; and in their own perſons to the Romans. But this was not the bondage that Chriſt meant; but a ſpiritual ſlavery and thraldom, under the dominion of ſin, and power of Satan: *For he that committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin:* That is, whoſoever doth habitually, wilfully, deliberately, and conſtantly allow and tolerate himſelf in a ſinful courſe, he is under the ſervitude and thraldom of ſin. Every ſinner is a bond-ſlave; and to live in ſin is to live in ſlavery. And this every man doth till the Son makes him free; then, and not till then, *is he freed indeed. Learn* hence, That intereſt in Chriſt, and continuance in his doctrine, ſets the ſoul at liberty from all that bondage whereunto it was ſubject in its natural and ſinful ſtate. O happy exchange, from being the devil's ſlaves, to become Chriſt's free men: and alſo freed from the rigorous exactions and terrible maledictions of the law.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's ſeed: but ye
ſeek to kill me, becauſe my word hath no place in
you. 38 I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my
Father: and ye do that which ye have ſeen with
your father. 39 They anſwered and ſaid unto him,
Abraham is our father. Jeſus ſaith unto them, If
ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works
of Abraham. 40 But now ye ſeek to kill me, a
man that hath told you the truth, which I have
heard of God: this did not Abraham.

The Jews boaſting again, that they were Abraham's ſeed, and bearing themſelves much upon it; our Saviour tells them, He knew they were ſo, his natural children according to the fleſh; but not his genuine children according to the Spirit: This he proves, becauſe they did not tread in Abraham's ſteps, and do his works: for if either the temper of their minds, or the action of their lives were agreeable to Abraham, they would not ſeek, as they did, to deſtroy and kill him, only for bringing the doctrine of ſalvation to them, which he had heard and learned of their Father. Thence *learn*, 1. How prone we are to glory in our outward privileges, and to rely upon them. Whereas theſe are arguments of God's goodneſs towards us, but no evidence of our goodneſs towards him. 2. That it is very dangerous and unſafe to pride ourſelves in, and depend upon any external privileges and prerogatives whatſoever; as, our being born within the pale of the viſible church, our deſcending from pious parents, and holy progenitors: for unleſs we be followers of their faith, admirers of their piety, and imitate their example, we are none of their children; but belong to another father, as our Saviour tells the Jews in the other verſes.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then ſaid they
to him, We be not born of fornication: we have one
Father, *even* God. 42 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If
God were your Father, ye would love me: for I
proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I
of myſelf, but he ſent me. 43 Why do ye not under-
ſtand my ſpeech? *even* becauſe ye cannot hear my
word. 44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the
luſts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer
from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, be-
cauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh
a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and
the father of it.

In the former verſes the Jews make their boaſt, that they were the children of Abraham; in theſe, that they are the children of God. *We have one Father, even God.* This our Saviour diſproves, telling them, that if God were their Father, they would love him, as proceeding from him by eternal generation; and in his office employed by him as Mediator. Alſo, if God were their Father, they would underſtand him ſpeaking from God; whereas now they were ſo tranſported with malice, that they could not endure his doctrine with patience, though it came from God: All which were undeniable proofs, that they were not the children of God. Hence *learn*, That none can juſtly pretend any intereſt in God as his children, but they that love Chriſt, as being the expreſs image of his Father's perſon, and do hear and receive his doctrine as coming from God: This the Jews did not do; therefore, ſays Chriſt, they are not the children of God. Farther, Having told them whoſe chileren they are not, our Saviour tells them plainly whoſe children they were. *Ye are of your father the devil.* This appears by their being actuated by him, by their reſembling and imitating of him; their inclinations, diſpoſitions, and actions, being all to fulfil the luſts of the devil. Now, as his ſervants we are, when we obey; ſo his children we are, whom we reſemble. *Learn* hence, That men's ſinful practiſes will prove them to be Satan's children, let their profeſſion be what it will; if in the temper of their minds, and in the actions of their lives, there be a conformity to Satan's diſpoſition, and a ready compliance with his temptations, they are certainly his children, what pretenſions ſoever they make of being the children of God. None could pretend higher to the relation of God's children, than theſe Jews did; yet, ſays Chriſt, *Ye are the children of the devil, for his works ye do. Note* hence, That the devil hath the relation of a father to all wicked men: And this fatherhood doth not proceed from the act of the father, but of the children; for the devil doth not make wicked men his children by begetting them; but they make the devil their father by imitating of him.

45 And becauſe I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, becauſe ye are not of God. 48 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil? 49 Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me. 50 And I ſeek not mine own glory: there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.

Here *note*, 1. The free reproof which Chriſt gave the Jews for their obſtinate unbelief: *Becauſe I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.* 2. The challenge which he gives the worſt of his adverſaries: *Which of you convinceth me of ſin?* So perfectly pure, innocent, and ſpotleſs was the doctrine and life of Chriſt, that although his enemies loaded him with ſlander and falſe accuſation, yet none of them could juſtly convict of, much leſs condemn him for the leaſt known ſin. 3. The Jews, being enraged at this reproof, fell a railing at his perſon, charging him with being a Samaritan, poſſeſſed of an evil ſpirit. Our Saviour meekly replies, That he did not deal with the devil, but was honouring his Father in what he did and ſaid; and therefore his Father would take care of his honour, and judge between him and them. Here *note*, that though Chriſt uſed ſome ſharpneſs in reproving the Jews and repreſenting them to themſelves; yet he anſwers with wonderful mildneſs and meekneſs, when he diſcovers his reſentments of his own reproaches: How cool was Chriſt in his own cauſe, but warm enough in God's!

51 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death. 52 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou thyſelf? 54 Jeſus anſwered, If I honour myſelf, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye ſay, that he is your God. 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him; and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying.

Note here, 1. The bleſſed fruit and effect of obſerving our Saviour's doctrine; *He that keeps my ſaying, ſhall never ſee death*; that is, ſhall be ſecured from eternal miſery, and enjoy eternal life. 2. How the Jews miſunderſtood our Saviour's words: *He that keeps my ſaying ſhall never ſee death:* as if he meant a freedom from temporal death, and hereupon they looked upon him as beſide himſelf, to promiſe a privilege which neither Abraham, nor the prophets did ever enjoy: Whereas it was not exemption from temporal death, but freedom from eternal deſtruction, which our Saviour promiſed to them that keep his ſaying. Hence *learn*, That the miſunderſtanding of Chriſt's doctrine, and taking it in a carnal ſenſe, has given occaſion for the many cavils and occaſions made againſt it. 3. How Chriſt clears himſelf of all ambition in this matter, and ſhews that he did not make this promiſe of delivering his followers from death vain-gloriouſly, but that God, whom they called their Father, had honoured him with power, to make good whatever he had promiſed to them that keep his ſaying. *Learn* hence, That as Chriſt entirely ſought his glory, ſo the Father conferred all honour and glory upon Chriſt as Mediator; thereby teſtifying how infinitely pleaſed he was with the redemption of mankind performed by him. *If I honour myſelf, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me.*

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw *it*, and was glad.

That is "Abraham having received a promiſe, that the Meſſias ſhould come of his ſeed, he exceedingly rejoiced to ſee the day of my coming in the fleſh, though afar off, with the eye of his faith, and in a figure, in his ſacrificed ſon Iſaac; and this ſight of his faith was ſo tranſporting, that he leaped for joy." *Learn* hence, That a ſtrong faith gives ſuch a clear ſight of Chriſt (though at a diſtance) as produceth an holy delight and rejoicing in him.

57 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? 58 Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up ſtones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid himſelf, and went out of the temple, going through the midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by.

Note here, 1. What a falſe and ridiculous conſtruction the Jews make of our Saviour's words, as if he had affirmed that he had ſeen Abraham, and Abraham him, with bodily eyes; whereas Chriſt only aſſerted, that Abraham had ſeen his day; that is, he foreſaw by faith the day of his incarnation, and coming in the fleſh. 2. Our Saviour's poſitive aſſerting of his divinity, or that he had had a being as God from all eternity; for, ſays he, *Before Abraham was, I am.* Where *note*, That Chriſt does not ſay, Before

Abraham was, I was; but, *Before Abraham was, I am*; which is the proper name of God, thereby is ſignified the eternal duration and permanency of his being. The adverſaries of Chriſt's divinity ſay, that, before Abraham was, Chriſt was; that is, in God's foreknowledge or degree; but this may be ſaid of any other perſon as well as Chriſt, that he was in the foreknowledge of God before Abraham was born: Whereas undoubtedly it was Chriſt's deſign in theſe words to give himſelf ſome preference and advantage above Abraham, which this interpretation doth not in the leaſt do. Laſtly, How the Jews looking upon Chriſt as a blaſphemer, for making himſelf with God, and for aſſerting his eternal exiſtence, they make a furious attempt upon his life, by taking up ſtones to caſt at him, as the Jews uſed to deal with blaſphemers; but our Saviour delivers himſelf miraculouſly from their fury, and eſcapes untouched.—Hence *learn*, That when arguments fail, the enemies of truth betake themſelves to force and violence: *They took up ſtones to caſt at him*. 2. That as Chriſt diſappointed his own perſecutors, ſo he can and will deliver his people in their greateſt extremity from their perſecutors rage and fury. 2 Pet. ii. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly*, &c.

CHAP. IX.

AND as *Jeſus* paſſed by, he ſaw a man which was blind from his birth.

The foregoing chapter acquaints us with a famous encounter which the Phariſees had with our bleſſed Saviour in the temple at Jeruſalem: This being ended, as he paſſed from the temple, he ſaw a man lying, poſſibly by the highway, who was born blind; him Chriſt pitches upon as an object fit to exerciſe his divine power, in the cure and healing of. They that are blind by caſualty, may perhaps be relieved by art and induſtry; but to cure one that is born blind, nothing leſs is required than an almighty power.—*Learn* hence, That diſeaſes and diſtempers, which are incurable by the ordinary courſe of nature, are not inſuperable to Chriſt's power, nor impoſſible for him to help, but a proper object for him to magnify his power upon. Therefore it is here recorded, that this poor man was blind from his birth: Such blindneſs being counted incurable by natural means.

2 And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Here *note*, Something implied or ſuppoſed; namely, 1. That all bodily afflictions and calamities do come upon us for ſin. Whereas afflictions, although they always fall upon a ſinner, yet they are not always ſent to puniſh ſin, but by way of purgation and prevention of ſin. 2. It is here ſuppoſed, that ſome afflictions come upon men for perſonal ſins, ſo others come upon them for parental ſins; and that children may, and oft-times do, very juſtly ſuffer for their parents ſins. 3. It is here ſuppoſed, that there is no other reaſon of a perſon's ſufferings, but only ſin; whereas though ſin be much and often the cauſe of ſuffering, yet we may wrong God and man, yea, and ſin too, to conclude it is always the cauſe of ſuffering. 4. It is implied here, that there is a tranſmigration of ſouls from one body to another: the diſciples ſuppoſed, that this ſoul, when it was in another body, ſinned, and was now puniſhed by being put into a blind body. This Pythagorean error was crept in among the Phariſees, and the diſciples here ſeemed to be tainted and infected with it. This may teach us, how far the holieſt and wiſeſt of men are from an infallible ſpirit, and that the beſt of men may be miſled by a common error.

3 Jeſus anſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him.

Chriſt's anſwer muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, as if he denied this man and his parents to be guilty of ſin; for both he and they had ſin enough, not only to deſerve temporal blindneſs, but eternal darkneſs. The meaning is, that in afflicting this man, the Lord did not ſo much reſpect his, or his parents' ſin, as the manifeſtation of his own glory, in this miraculous cure. Chriſt doth not deny but that neither the one nor the other was the cauſe in that man's caſe; but that the power and mercy of God might be ſeen in reſtoring this man to his ſight, therefore was he born blind. Whence *note*, 1. That though ſin be always the deſerving, yet it is not always the procuring cauſe of affliction. 2. That we ſeldom think of, or hit upon any other cauſe of affliction, but only ſin; though the deſign of God looks beyond the ſin of man in afflictions, yet man ſeldom looks beyond that, or thinks of any other deſign of God in afflicting, but only puniſhing for ſin.

4 I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Here our Saviour tells his diſciples, That he was ſent by God into the world, and had a great work aſſigned him by God, during his abode in it; namely, to inſtruct, reform, and ſave mankind: And what our Saviour ſays of himſelf, is applicable to every one of us in a lower ſenſe; we are ſent into the world to work out our own ſalvation in the firſt place, and then to promote the ſalvation of others as much as in us lies. *Note*, 1. That every one has a work to do in the world, a great work aſſigned him by God that ſent him into it. 2. That the time allotted for the finiſhing and diſpatching of this great work, is a limited time, it is a ſhort time; our working ſeaſon is a ſhort ſeaſon: *While it is day*. 3. That, after the working ſeaſon is paſt and expired, there will ſucceed a night of darkneſs, in which there muſt be a ceſſation from work. *The night cometh*.

6 When he had thus ſpoken, he ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and waſhed, and came ſeeing.

Two things concurred towards the cure of this blind man, namely, an act of divine power on Chriſt's part, and an act of divine power on Chriſt's part; he tempers the clay and ſpittle together, and anoints the man's eyes therewith, and behold he ſees. What an improbable remedy and means was this to human reaſon! much fitter to put out a ſeeing man's eyes than to cure a blind man's. Had Chriſt pulled out his box, and applied ſome medicinal ointment to his eyes, then the praiſe had been aſcribed to his ſkill, not to his power; but now it plainly appeared, that all the virtue was in Chriſt, not in the means. Lord! what great things canſt thou do by weak and unlikely means, yea, by oppoſite and contrary means: but it is the praiſe of Omnipotency to work by improbabilities. From the contemptibleneſs of the means or inſtrument, always redounds the greater honour to the agent. 2. An act of faith and obedience on the man's part: *He went away and waſhed his eyes in the pool of* Siloam, *and returned ſeeing*. Where *note*, 1. How Chriſt delights to exerciſe and try the faith of his people, by their ſubjection and obedience to difficult commands. 2. That true faith, joined with ſincere obedience, never faileth the expectation of them that exerciſe it, eſpecially in obeying the moſt hard and difficult commands. Therefore the Evangeliſt added, that the blind man after waſhing *returned ſeeing*.

8 ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had ſeen him, that he was blind, ſaid, Is not this he that ſat and begged? 9 Some ſaid, This is he; others *ſaid*, He is like him: *but* he ſaid, I am *he*. 10 Therefore ſaid they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11 He anſwered and ſaid, A man that is called Jeſus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and ſaid unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and waſh: and I went and waſhed, and I received ſight. 12 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is he? He ſaid, I know not.

The blind man, thus miraculouſly cured, returns with much joy to his neighbours and acquaintance, who confer with him about this matter; they inquire, Whether he was the perſon cured or not? who was the perſon that cured him, and where he was? He aſſures them, he was the very perſon that was blind, but now cured; and he that cured him was Jeſus; that the means uſed was clay and ſpittle; but where the perſon was, or what was become of him, he knew not. *Learn* thence, 1. That the miraculous cures of God work a ſenſible alteration in men, not only in their own apprenſion, but in the judgments of others. This miracle ſhined forth among the neighbours, who, having ſeen and obſerved the blind man, admire his healing. 2. How frankly the blind man acknowledges, and how freely he confeſſes, that he was the perſon whom Jeſus had healed, *I am he*. It is an unthankful ſilence to ſmother the works of God in an affected ſecreſy; to make God a loſer by his bounty towards us, is a ſhameful injuſtice. O God! we are not worthy of thy common favours, much leſs of ſpiritual bleſſings, if we do not publiſh thy mercies on the houſetop, and praiſe thee for them in the great congregation!

13 ¶ They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the ſabbath-day when Jeſus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Phariſees alſo aſked him how he had received his ſight. He ſaid unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I waſhed, and do ſee. 16 Therefore ſaid ſome of the Phariſees, This man is not of God, becauſe he keepeth not the ſabbath-day. Others ſaid, How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles? And there was a diviſion among them.

Note here, 1. How the Jews, who ſhould have been full of ſilent wonder, and inclined to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, ſo omnipotent an agent, are prejudiced againſt him, and bring the late blind man before the Phariſees, our Saviour's profeſſed enemies. 2. The time which our Saviour choſe for working this cure, it was on the ſabbath; many, if not moſt of Chriſt's famous miracles, were wrought upon the ſabbath-day. Upon that day he cured the withered hand, Matt. xii. Upon that day he cured the impotent man at the pool of Betheſda, John v. Upon that day he cured the blind man here. This Chriſt did, probably, for two reaſons: 1. To confirm his doctrine which he preached on that day, by miracles; therefore his preaching and working miracles went together: 2. To inſtruct the Jews (had they been willing to receive inſtruction) in the true doctrine, and proper duties of their ſabbath; and to let them know, that works of neceſſity and mercy are very conſiſtent with the due ſanctification of the ſabbath. It is hard to find out any time wherein charity is unſeaſonable; for as it is the beſt of graces, ſo the works of it are the fitteſt for the beſt of days.

17 They ſay unto the blind man again, What ſayeſt thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He ſaid, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his ſight, until they called the parents of him that had received his ſight. 19 And they aſked them, ſaying, Is this your ſon who ye ſay was born blind? how then doth he now ſee? 20 His parents anſwered them, and ſaid, We know that this is our ſon, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now ſeeth, we know not? or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, aſk him, he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf. 22 Theſe words ſpake his parents, becauſe they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs that he was Chriſt, that they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 23 Therefore ſaid his parents, He is of age, aſk him.

Obſerve here, 1. How deſirous the Phariſees were to obſcure the glory of this famous miracle which Chriſt had wrought: In order to which, 1. They re-examine the man, to know what his thoughts were of the perſon who had done this for him. They judged him to be an impoſtor and a great ſinner; the man declares freely, That he believed him to be a great prophet. Hence we *learn*, That there may be, and ſometimes is, more true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt in one poor man, than in a general council of learned Rabbies. This blind man ſaw Chriſt to be a prophet, when the Jewiſh ſanhedrim ſaw nothing in him but impoſture. *This man is not of God*, ſays the council: *Verily he is a prophet*, ſays the blind man. 2. They next examine his parents (being unwilling to believe the man himſelf,) Whether he was their ſon, or not? If ſo, whether he were born blind? And if born blind, by what means he now ſees? Lord! what obſtinate and wilful blindneſs was found in theſe Phariſees? How do they cloſe their eyes and ſay, We will not ſee? What endeavours are here uſed to ſmother a miracle, which undeniably proved Chriſt to be the expected Meſſias? They examine firſt the man, then his parents, then the man again; hoping, that being over-awed with fear, they would either deny, or at leaſt conceal the truth; but the more they ſtrove to darken and obſcure the truth, the more conſpicuous and evident they made it. *Great is truth, and will prevail*, how many ſoever oppoſe it, and ſet themſelves againſt it. *Obſerve* next, The wiſdom and cautiouſneſs of his parents anſwer: they expreſly own, that the blind man was their ſon; that he was born blind; but for the way of his cure they wave that, poſſibly becauſe they did not ſee this cure wrought; and fearing the ſentence of excommunication, a decree being paſſed among the rulers, That *whoſo confeſſeth Chriſt, ſhall be put out of the ſynagogue*. Hence *learn*, 1. That excommunication, or ſeparation from the ſociety of the people of God, is an ancient and honourable ordinance in the church of God, and, as ſuch, to be revered and eſteemed. 2. That this ordinance of God has been, and may be abuſed by wicked men, and the edge of it turned againſt Chriſt himſelf, and his ſincereſt members. 3. That the fear of unjuſt excommunication muſt not diſcourage perſons from confeſſing the truth, when called to it. The parents of the blind man durſt not confeſs Chriſt, *for fear that they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue*.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and ſaid unto him, Give God the praiſe: we know that this man is a ſinner. 25 He anſwered and ſaid, Whether he be a ſinner, *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I ſee. 26 Then ſaid they to him again, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? 27 He anſwered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye alſo be his diſciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and ſaid, Thou art his diſciple; but we are Moſes' diſciples. 29 We know that God ſpake unto Moſes: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

Here we have an account of the Phariſees farther practiſing upon this blind man, to rob Chriſt of the glory of this miracle; firſt they inſinuate with him, and then they frown upon him. Firſt, they inſinuate with him, ſaying, *Give God the praiſe:* As if they had ſaid, "Aſcribe the cure to God, not to this man," whom they conclude to be a ſinner, becauſe he broke (as they thought) the ſabbath. It is no new thing to ſee men pretend to aim at the glory of God, when at the ſame time they are maliciouſly oppoſing Chriſt, and perſecuting his members. Next, they attempted to frown this poor man into a denial of this miracle wrought upon him, or to perſuade the people that it was a cheat; but it is wonderful to obſerve how the boldneſs and confidence of this poor man increaſed, God giving him that wiſdom and courage which all his adverſaries were not able to reſiſt or gainſay. Therefore the Phariſees being angry at this boldneſs of the man, they revile him for being ſo ſilly, as to become a diſciple to Chriſt, whoſe office and authority they knew not; whereas they were the diſciples of Moſes, whom they knew God ſpake unto. *Learn*, That ſuch as are led by malice, and prepoſſeſſed with prejudice againſt Chriſt, will not only think baſely of his perſon, but refuſe to ſee the cleareſt evidences of the authority and commiſſion. *As for this fellow*, ſay the malicious Phariſees, *we know not whence he is*, or who geve him this commiſſion.

30 The man anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

In theſe verſes the blind man proceeds to vindicate our bleſſed Saviour, who had cured him of his blindneſs, from the exceptions of the Phariſees, and endeavours, by ſolid arguments, to convince them, that his cure (being born blind) was truly miraculous; and conſequently proved Chriſt to be of God. 1. The man admires that Chriſt having wrought ſuch a miracle upon him, they ſhould be ignorant of his authority; *This is marvellous, that ye know not from whence he his, and yet he hath opened mine eyes*. He lays down a general propoſition, that no deceiver or falſe teacher is heard of God, or enabled by him to work ſuch miracles as theſe, but only ſuch faithful ſervants as do his will, are thus extraordinarily aſſiſted by him. *We know that God heareth not ſinners*; that is, ſuch as love and delight in ſin, ſuch as are in a ſtate of ſin, and go on in a courſe of ſin, God will not hear ſuch, or anſwer the prayers of ſuch. Indeed God ſometimes hears a ſinner's prayer in wrath, and refuſes to hear a ſaint's prayer in mercy; but he never denies a ſaint's prayer in wrath, or hears a ſinner's prayer in mercy. The propoſition laid down is an eternal truth; *God heareth not ſinners*; that is, ſo long as they purpoſe to continue ſinners, and go on in a courſe of ſin, and remain bold and preſumptuous ſinners. *Learn* thence, That none that live in a courſe of ſin, can reaſonably expect that God ſhould hear them, and give in an anſwer of prayer to them. *God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*; that is, if a man feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, him the Lord accepteth, heareth, and anſwereth. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as would be heard of God, and accepted with him, muſt be devout worſhippers of him. 2. That it is not enough to prove men religious and acceptable with God, that they are devout worſhippers of him, unleſs they walk in obedience to him, and do his will: *If any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Note*, 3. How the blind man goes on to prove, that Chriſt had a ſpecial authority from God, and an extraordinary preſence of God with him in what he did, becauſe he had done ſuch a work as was never done by Moſes, or by any of the prophets, or by any perſon whatſoever, ſince the creation of the world. From whence he wiſely and well infers, that Chriſt was a perſon authoriſed by and ſent of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt having done that which was never done before, (namely, to give ſight to one that was born blind) was an evidence of his omnipotency. 2. That this act of omnipotency proved him to be God. Whatever miracles the prophets wrought, they wrought them by Chriſt's power, but Chriſt wrought this and all other miracles by his own power. Laſtly, How this blind man, though unlearned, judges more rightly of divine things, than the whole learned council of the ſanhedrim. Whence we *learn*, That we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or biſhops; and that it is not abſurd for laymen ſometimes to vary from their opinions; theſe overſeers being ſometimes guilty of great overſight. Dr. *Whitby*.

34 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? And they caſt him out. 35 Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out; and when he had found him, he ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He anſwered and ſaid, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſpecial inſtance of Phariſaical pride: they account this poor man a vile perſon, whom heaven had marked by his native blindneſs for ſome extraordinary wickedneſs. How prone are we to judge them the greateſt ſinners, whom we obſerve to be the greateſt ſufferers? 2. From reviling they proceed to excommunicating; *They caſt him out*; that is, out of the communion of the Jewiſh church. O happy man, who having loſt a ſynagogue, has found a heaven! Behold this blind man, and admire him for a reſolute confeſſor, ſtoutly defending the gracious author of his cure, againſt the cavils of the Phariſees, and maintaining the innocence and honour of ſo bleſſed a benefactor. 3. Our Saviour's regard to this blind man, whom the Phariſees had ſet at naught and excommunicated; *He finds him out*, reveals himſelf more fully to him, and directs him to believe in him. Where *note*, That the miracle which Chriſt had wrought upon the blind man, did not convert him, and work faith in him, till Chriſt revealed himſelf unto him, and enabled him to diſcern the truth of what he revealed. *Learn* hence, That miracles confirm faith, but miracles alone cannot work faith. The blind man had experienced a miracle wrought upon him, yet remains an unbeliever, till Chriſt ſaid, *I am he*. *Obſerve*, 4. How readily the man receives the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith, upon the forementioned revelation of himſelf unto him: He inſtantly ſaid, *Lord, I believe*; and, in teſtimony thereof, *worſhips him*; that is, as God incarnate, as God manifeſted in the fleſh. Thence *learn*, That true knowledge of the Son of God will beget faith in him; and true faith in him will be productive of homage and adoration, of obedience and ſubjection to him. He that knows Chriſt aright, will believe, and he that believes, will worſhip and obey: *He ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.*

39 ¶ And Jeſus ſaid, For judgment I am come into this world: that they which ſee not, might ſee; and that they which ſee might be blind.

In theſe words our Saviour declares not the intentional deſign, but the accidental event of his coming into the world: namely, 1. That thoſe who were blind might receive ſight. 2. That thoſe who preſume they ſee, and know more than others, for deſpiſing the goſpel, and ſhutting their eyes againſt the light of it, ſhould be left in darkneſs, and by the juſt judgment of God be more and more blinded. Thoſe who ſhut their eyes wilfully againſt the cleareſt light, and ſay they will not ſee, it is juſt with God to cloſe their eyes judicially, and ſay they ſhall not ſee.

40 And *ſome* of the Phariſees which were with him heard theſe words, And ſaid unto him, Are we blind alſo? 41 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth.

Note here, 1. How the Phariſees, who watched all opportunities to enſnare our Saviour, look upon theſe laſt words as reflecting upon them; as if Chriſt did inſinuate that they were blind: *Are we blind alſo?* They that ſhut their eyes, and will not ſee the light which Chriſt offers to them, are the worſt of blind ones. 2. Our Saviour's reply to the Phariſees queſtion: *If ye were blind*, that is, ſimply ignorant of your duty, and without the means of knowledge and inſtruction, *you ſhould have no ſin*; that is, comparatively to what you have; you ſhould not have had ſo much ſin and guilt upon you as you now have, by ſhutting your eyes againſt the light. *But now you ſay, We ſee:* that is, being puffed up with the knowledge which you have, as if ye were the only men that ſaw: this proud conceit or yours renders your condition incurable, and *your ſin remaineth* unpardonable. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is a far greater ſin to contemn the known laws of God, than to be ignorant of them; pride is a greater hindrance of knowledge than ignorance, becauſe the proud man thinks he wants no knowledge. 2. That the moſt exalted knowledge is inſufficient to ſalvation, without a ſuitable and correſpondent practice. The Phariſees had the key of knowledge at their girdle, yet our Saviour tells them of double damnation. Lord, how ſad is it to know Chriſt in this world, as that he will be aſhamed to know us in another world!

CHAP. X.

VERILY, verily, I ſay unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the ſheep-fold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber.

a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door, is the ſhepherd of the ſheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the ſheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own ſheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a ſtranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of ſtrangers. 6 This parable ſpake Jeſus unto them: but they underſtood not what things they were which he ſpake unto them.

Our bleſſed Saviour having, in the end of the foregoing chapter upbraided the Phariſees for their blindneſs and ignorance in the myſteries of religion, notwithſtanding the high conceit which they had of their own knowledge; he proceeds in this chapter farther to convince them, that they were blind leaders of the blind, though they thought and looked upon themſelves as the only guides and teachers of the people. And in order thereunto, he propounds a parable of the true and falſe ſhepherd, which repreſents a good and bad paſtor and teacher, and gives us a fourfold mark and character of a good ſhepherd. *Obſerve*, 1. The *good ſhepherd enters in by the door:* that is, he has his vocation and miſſion from Chriſt: he comes into the church regularly, in a right and approved way and manner; not by any clandeſtine methods, or indirect means. *To him the porter openeth:* that is, the holy Spirit, who openeth the hearts of men to receive Jeſus Chriſt and the doctrine of the goſpel, which the faithful ſhepherds deliver in his name, and by authority received from him. *Learn* hence, That all faithful paſtors have a lawful call to the work of the miniſtry: They enter by the right door, and execute their truſt in a right manner, but ſuch as, without a call from God, unwarrantably thruſt themſelves into the miniſtry, are no better, nor no other, *than thieves and robbers* in God's account. 2. Another property of a good ſhepherd is this, *That he calleth his ſheep by their names.* This importeth three things: (1.) A ſpecial love that he bears to them. (2.) A ſpecial care he has over them. (3.) A particular acquaintance with them, that he may know how to apply himſelf ſuitably to them; which, though it be eminently verified in Chriſt, yet it is the duty of every faithful paſtor and under-ſhepherd, in his meaſure, to labour after. 3. *The good ſhepherd leadeth out his ſheep into good paſtures;* that is, he feedeth them with ſound doctrine; nouriſhes them with the word of life. Whereas the hireling or falſe ſhepherd, whatever he may do for his own ſake, he has no regard to Jeſus Chriſt, to the honour of his perſon, to the edification of his church, or the ſalvation of ſouls; but his deſign is to raiſe and enrich himſelf; and ſo he may compaſs that, he cares not how many ſouls periſh through his neglect. 4. The laſt property of the good ſhepherd here mentioned, is this, *That he goeth before his ſheep*, as the ſhepherd doth before his flock; namely by a holy life, and unblameable converſation: He treads out thoſe ſteps before the people, which they take in their way towards heaven. *And the ſheep follow him*, and are guided by him. *He leadeth out his ſheep, and goeth before them*, &c.

7 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, I am the door of the ſheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the ſheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture. 10 The thief cometh not but for to ſteal, and to kill and to deſtroy: I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Obſerve here, 1. The character which Chriſt gives of himſelf, *I am the door of the ſheep*; that is, the only way and means by which ſinners have acceſs to God, and can obtain ſalvation; the only door by which ſinners are entered into the kingdom of grace, and admitted into the kingdom of glory. *Learn* hence, That there is no poſſible way of acceſs to God for fallen man, but by Jeſus Chriſt. As there is no way of entering the houſe but by the door, and thoſe that ſo enter are ſafe; in like manner, ſuch as come unto God through Jeſus Chriſt, in the way of faith and holy obedience, ſhall be put into a ſecure condition, and at laſt obtain eternal ſalvation. 2. The end and deſign of Chriſt in coming into the world aſſerted and declared by himſelf; *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* But had not this people ſpiritual life before he came into the world? Yes, he gave life to his people before his coming, in a meaſure ſufficient to ſupply their neceſſity; but ſince his coming, he gives it in ſuch a ſuperabounding meaſure, as may teſtify his divine bounty; they ſhall not barely live, but live *abundantly*; that is, their ſpiritual life ſhall abound through the upholding, ſtrengthening, quickening, and comforting preſence of his holy Spirit; for having conveyed ſpiritual life into his people in their regeneration and converſion, he will cauſe it to increaſe more and more in their ſanctification, until it arrive to a complete perfection in their glorification. Laſtly, The character which our Saviour gives of the ſcribes and Phariſees in general, and of thoſe falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets which went before him in particular; he ſtyles them *thieves and robbers*; *All that ever came before me, were thieves and robbers.* He doth not ſay, All that were ſent before me, but *all that came before me* were thieves and robbers. So that Chriſt doth not ſpeak this of the true prophets, who were ſent by God before him, but of the falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets, that came of themſelves, without any commiſſion from God. The meaning is, all perſons that came before me, pretending to be what I am, the true Meſſias, as did Theudas and Judas of Galilee, &c. they were thieves and robbers; that is, they only ſought their own advantage, while they deceived and ruined you. *Learn* hence, That whoever took upon them the office and perſon of the Meſſias before Chriſt, or whoſoever have ſince uſurped a lawful calling in his church, without his commiſſion, they are in Chriſt's account no better than murderers, thieves, and robbers, and they ought to be ſo in the people's eſteem. *The ſheep did not hear them.*

11 I am the good ſhepherd. The good ſhepherd giveth his life for the ſheep. 12 But he that is an

hireling, and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep. 14 I am the good ſhepherd, and know my *ſheep*, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep.

In theſe verſes our Saviour evidently proves himſelf to be the true ſhepherd of his church, by the marks and ſigns, by the properties and characters of a good ſhepherd; which were eminently found with him; namely, to know all his flock, to take care of them, and to lay down his life for them. 1. Jeſus Chriſt, the great ſhepherd of his church, hath an exact and diſtinct knowledge of his flock; *I know my ſheep*, with a threefold knowledge, and with a knowledge of intelligence and obſervation; he knows them ſo as to obſerve and take notice of them, with a knowledge of approbation and acceptation; knows them ſo as to approve and own them, with a knowledge of care and protection; he knows them ſo as to defend and keep them. Thus Chriſt knows his ſheep, *and is alſo known of them*; that is, he is believed on, beloved, and obeyed by them. 2. *He lays down his life for his flock.* And for this doth he eminently deſerve the title of the good ſhepherd. (As for his power, he is ſtyled the great ſhepherd.) A good ſhepherd indeed, who not only gives life for his ſheep, but gives his own life by way of ranſom for his ſheep! This example of Chriſt, the great and good ſhepherd, in laying down his life for his ſheep, teacheth all ſubordinate and inferior ſhepherds, to prefer the good of their flock, even before their own lives.

16 And other ſheep I have which are not of this fold: them alſo muſt I bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, *and* one ſhepherd.

Here Chriſt proves himſelf to be the true ſhepherd of his church from another property of a good ſhepherd, which is to take care for increaſing and enlarging of his fold, by bringing in the Gentiles to it; and by breaking down the partition wall, to make one church of both Jews and Gentiles. Chriſt calls the Gentiles his *other ſheep*, by way of anticipation, becauſe ſhortly they were to be ſo, and united together with the believing Jews, into one ſheepfold; and whereas he ſays, he *muſt* bring theſe ſheep in, we are to underſtand it not of a neceſſity of co-action, but of a neceſſity of compact; it being a federal agreement betwixt the Father and himſelf, that both Jew and Gentile ſhould be one flock, incloſed in one fold, and preſented to his Father as a glorious church. Hence *learn*, How endearing our obligations are to the deareſt Jeſus, that he ſhould account us Gentiles, who were afar off, his *ſheep*, (we being ſo in reſpect of his eternal purpoſe) and make it his care, and eſteem it his charge, to call us home, and bring us into his fold the church, that we might be ſaved amongſt the remnants of the true Iſraelites. *Other ſheep I have*, &c.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myſelf. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Hence *note*, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt certainly foreknew his own death and reſurrection. 2. That Chriſt was a volunteer in dying, *He laid down his life*, none could have taken it from him. It is true, his death was a violent death, but a voluntary ſacrifice; he died violently, but yet voluntarily: The hand of his enemies could never hurt him without his own conſent. 3. That as Chriſt died voluntarily with reſpect to himſelf, ſo in a way of ſubjection to his Father's command. *This commandment have I received from my Father.* 4. That this voluntary ſubmiſſion of Chriſt to die for us, was the ground of his Father's love to him. *Therefore doth my Father love me: becauſe I lay down my life.* Although the Father hath many reaſons to love the Son, yet none was ſtronger than this obedience of his to death, even the curſed death of the croſs, for the redemption and ſalvation of loſt ſinners; therefore did the Father love him with a more exceeding love, becauſe he laid down his life for his ſheep.

19 ¶ There was a diviſion therefore again among the Jews for theſe ſayings, 20 And many of them ſaid, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others ſaid, Theſe are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Here the Evangeliſt ſhews what different effects this ſermon of our Saviour had upon the Jews; many of them calumniate and ſlander him, as one poſſeſſed and mad, and therefore not to be heard and minded; others of calmer thoughts ſaid, That the doctrine he taught, and the late miracle which he had wrought in curing the blind man, were abundantly ſufficient to confute ſuch a groundleſs ſlander. *Learn*, That the doctrine of Chriſt meeting with diverſity of diſpoſitions, it is no wonder that it occaſions different effects, to the ſoftening of ſome, and hardening of others; even as the ſame ſun that melteth the wax, hardeneth the clay: yet is not this to be imputed to the doctrine of our Saviour, but to men's corruptions which oppoſe the truth, and the maintainers of it.

22 ¶ And it was at Jeruſalem the feaſt of the dedication, and it was winter.

This feaſt was not of divine, but human inſtitution; it was appointed by Judas Maccabeus, and continued eight days, as an anniverſary commemoration for the repairing of the temple. Now our Saviour was ſo far from reproving the Jews for obſerving this feaſt, which was of human inſtitution, that he graced the ſolemnity with his own preſence. Hence *note*, That our Saviour held communion with the Jewiſh church, and did, without ſcruple, conform himſelf to the obſervation of their rites and cuſtoms, although they were not originally of divine inſtitution. 2. That ſuch a chriſtian as does peaceably comply with the practice of the church in whoſe communion he lives, in the obſervation of thoſe different rites and cuſtoms which are uſed by her, acts moſt agreeably to our Saviour's practice and example. Who can with any ſhew of reaſon cenſure chriſtians for obſerving the feaſt of the nativity, who ſee Chriſt himſelf obſerving the feaſt of dedication? Certainly no perſon of ſober principles ever queſtioned, but that eccleſiaſtical rulers and civil magiſtrates have a power to appoint public days of thankſgiving yearly, for the commemoration of mercies, which ought never to be forgotten. From our Saviour's preſence at this feaſt, Grotius well notes, That feſtival days, in memorial of public bleſſings, may piouſly be inſtituted by perſons in authority, without a divine command.

23 And Jeſus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly. 25 Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me. 26 But ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you.

In theſe verſes we have recorded a new and freſh debate betwixt our Saviour and the Jews; and therein we have obſervable, 1. The time of this debate, ver. 22. It was *at the feaſt of dedication, in the winter*, our Saviour taking that opportunity to publiſh his doctrine, when a concourſe of people were gathered together at that ſolemnity. 2. The place of this debate, *in Solomon's porch*. Although the temple and porch built by Solomon were deſtroyed by the Babylonians; yet when the temple was re-built, there was a porch like it, which retained the antient name. 3. The debate itſelf: *If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly*. Not that they affected the knowledge of the truth, but only deſigned to enſnare him; for if he had affirmed himſelf to be the Meſſias, he had brought himſelf in danger of the Roman governor; becauſe the Jews expected the Meſſias to be a temporal prince, that ſhould deliver them from the Roman power. Now if Chriſt had declared himſelf ſuch a Meſſias as the Jews expected, it might have coſt him his life. Therefore his hour being not yet come, he anſwers with his uſual prudence and warineſs to their enſnaring queſtion. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's enemies are full of ſubtle policies, and can turn themſelves into all ſhapes, that, if poſſible, they may entrap and enſnare him; and accordingly, they pretend here great earneſtneſs of deſire to be ſatisfied, whether indeed he was the true and promiſed Meſſias; when in truth they had another deſign. 4. The wiſdom and caution of our Saviour's anſwer; he refers them to his miracles, *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me*. Our Saviour's miraculous works were ſufficient for the Jews to have grounded and bottomed their faith upon, and to have confirmed them in the belief that he was the promiſed and expected Meſſias, had not prejudice, obſtinacy, and malice blinded their eyes, that they could neither ſee nor conſider. Laſtly, How Chriſt points out to theſe Jews the true cauſe of their infidelity; which was not the obſcurity of his doctrine, but their not being his ſheep; that is, not as yet converted, they not having the properties of his ſheep, which he ſets down in the following verſes. *Learn* hence, That men's final unbelief under the means of faith, is a clear evidence of their being in a loſt and periſhing condition. Infidelity is the ſin that doth conſign a man over to damnation; and to ſuch as ſit under the goſpel, doth not only procure damnation, but no damnation like it.

27 My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Here *obſerve*, 1. That all ſincere and faithful chriſtians are Chriſt's ſheep, and he is their great and good ſhepherd. This relation implies tender affection, powerful protection, and plentiful proviſion. The tenderneſs of Chriſt's affection towards his ſheep, appears by pitying their infirmities, by having a fellow-feeling with them in their ſufferings, by ſuiting their temptations to the degrees of their graces. His care in providing for them appears, in affording to them the holy ſcriptures, the miniſtry of the word, the adminiſtration of the ſacraments, and the operation of his holy Spirit to make all efficacious and effectual to them. His protection of them diſcovers itſelf, by preparing them for trials, by ſupporting them under them, and by delivering them out of them, and by ſanctifying all to them, cauſing them to work together in ſubſerviency to his own glory, and his people's good. 2. That Chriſt's ſheep hear his voice, and anſwer the call of their great ſhepherd. They hear the voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to them in the ſcriptures, in the miniſtry of the word, in their own conſciences, in providences; and they hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to them, in and by his holy Spirit; and as they hear Chriſt's voice, ſo do they anſwer his call: Now the right anſwer to the call of Chriſt in the goſpel, is a preſent anſwer, a willing anſwer, and an abiding anſwer. 3. That all Chriſt's ſheep do follow him their ſhepherd. They follow him, (1.) In his doctrine: And, (2.) In his example, in his contempt of the world, in his freedom in reproving ſin, in the holineſs and heavenly-mindedneſs of his converſation, in his meekneſs and patience, in charity and univerſal goodneſs, and as he was a mighty pattern of prayer. 4. That Chriſt the great and good ſhepherd knows all his ſheep; *My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them.* He knows them ſo as to diſtinguiſh them, ſo as to obſerve and take notice of them, ſo as to own and approve them, ſo as to take care of them, and provide for them. And as the Lord knoweth who are his, ſo he knoweth who are not his too; as he knows his ſheep, ſo he knows the goats alſo, and their place will be at his left hand. *My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them.*

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The promiſe made by Chriſt unto his ſheep, namely, the promiſe of eternal life, and perſeverance in grace, till they come to the full fruition of it in glory; *I give unto them eternal life, and none ſhall pluck them out of* *my Father's hand.* 2. The confirmation he gives of this from his own and his Father's power, which is employed, engaged, and concerned for them, and for their perſeverance and preſervation, notwithſtanding all oppoſition to the contrary; *My Father which gave them me is greater than all*; *and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Learn* 1. That eternal life is the portion of Chriſt's ſheep. 2. That eternal life is the gift of Chriſt. 3. That eternal life is now given to Chriſt's ſheep: They have it now in the purchaſe, in the promiſe, and in the firſt fruits. 4. That all Chriſt's ſheep are put by God the Father into Chriſt's hand for ſecurity: *My Father hath given them me.* 5. The Father doth ſo intruſt Chriſt with his ſheep, as yet to take care of them himſelf; they are in the Father's hand, as well as in the Son's, and their being in the hands of both, doth aſſure them of the certainty of their perſeverance. *None ſhall pluck them out of my hand*; none ſhall be *able to pluck them out of my Father's hand:* implying, that there are many that would pluck them out of their hands, ſin, Satan, the world, &c. but they ſhall be kept by the almighty power of God, *through faith unto ſalvation:* for who can be too ſtrong for omnipotent power?

30 I and *my* Father are one.

That is, one in eſſence and nature, one in authority and power, and not barely one in will and affection, one in concord or conſent. That this is the genuine ſignification of the word, appears by a threefold argument. 1. From the original words; it is not ſaid, I and my Father are (εις) one perſon in the maſculine gender, but in the neuter (εν) I and my Father are one thing. Now, if that thing be not the divine Being, they cannot be one; for ſince the Father is confeſſed to be God, the Son cannot be one thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2. It appears from the context, our Saviour, in the preceding verſes, aſcribed the preſervation of his ſheep to the power of his Father: *None can pluck them out of my Father's hand:* and he aſcribes it alſo to his own power: *None ſhall pluck them out of my hand:* plainly intimating, that his ſheep were equally ſafe in his own hand, as well as in his Father's; for ſays he, *I and my Father are one*; that is, one in power; and, if they be one in power, they muſt be one in nature; unleſs we make an almighty creature, which is a contradiction. 3. It appears evidently by what follows in the next verſe, that the Jews underſtood our Saviour in this ſenſe; why elſe did they take up ſtones to ſtone him? *We ſtone thee*, ſay they, *for blaſphemy*, *becauſe thou*, *being a man*, *makeſt thyſelf God.* The Jews took our Saviour's meaning aright, and were ſatisfied, that when he ſaid *I and my Father are one*, he aſſerted himſelf to be God, and deſerved to die; and well he had deſerved it, if he had not been God. The adverſaries of our Saviour's divinity, to elude the force of theſe words, which make ſo much againſt them, interpret the words thus, *I and my Father are one*; that is, ſay they, we are, (μιαι βȣλησις) one in will and affection, one in concord and conſent: This is a truth, but not the great truth contained in theſe words; for the believers are one with God, and one with one another; namely, by a harmony of wills and deſires, ſo far as they are regenerated, God's will and theirs are uniſons, they will and deſire the ſame thing, and are of one heart and one mind. But God and Chriſt are one, in a much higher ſenſe than Chriſt and believers are one; namely, one in eſſence and nature, one in authority and power, Chriſt being conſubſtantial with God. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is for nature coeſſential, for dignity coequal, and for duration coeternal with the Father. 2. That although Chriſt be one in eſſence with the Father, yet are they diſtinct perſons one from another; *I and my Father, we are one.* 3. That the Son being one in eſſence, one in power, one in conſent and will with the Father, they are both equally concerned for the perſeverance of the ſaints, for preſerving them in grace, and for bringing them to glory. *None ſhall pluck them out of mine or my Father's hand*; *for I and my Father are one.* If the power be the ſame, the eſſence muſt be the ſame.

31 Then the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him. 32 Jeſus anſwered them, Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of thoſe works do ye ſtone me? 33 The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God.

Note here, 1. How the Jews underſtood our Saviour affirming, that he and the Father are one; that is, one in eſſence and nature, and himſelf a perſon equal with God. This they looked upon as blaſphemy in him, to arrogate to himſelf what is proper to God only. 2. That the Jews looked upon it has a piece of juſtice in them to ſtone Chriſt for this apprehended blaſphemy: *Then the Jews took up ſtones to ſtone him.* According to the law of God, the blaſphemer was ſtoned to death, but then he was firſt to be judicially tried and judged: But ſuch was the furious zeal of theſe Jews, that in a tumultuous manner they attempt to ſtone him to death. Lord, how doth the fury of men, in oppoſing truth, outſtrip the true zeal of thy faithful ſervants in defending truth! 3. With what meekneſs our Lord receives this horrid indignity of ſtoning (for it is probable that ſome ſtones were caſt at him, he ſaying, *For which of theſe works do ye ſtone me?*) he clears his own innocence, and expoſtulates with them for rewarding him evil for good: *Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father*; that is, by my Father's authority and commiſſion; I have been ſight to the blind, feet to the lame, a tongue to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf; Do any of theſe works deſerve ſuch uſage as ſtoning at your hands? *Learn* hence, That ſuch was the perfect and ſpotleſs innocence of Chriſt in all his actions, that he durſt, and did appeal to the conſciences of his moſt inveterate adverſaries: *For which of theſe works do ye ſtone me?*

34 Jeſus anſwered them, Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the ſcripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him whom the Father hath ſanctified and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?

Here our Saviour by a two-fold argument vindicates himſelf from the imputation of blaſphemy, in aſſerting himſelf to be God. 1. Becauſe the Old Teſtament gave to magiſtrates and judges the title of gods, as Pſal. lxxxii. 6. *I have ſaid, Ye are gods.* Now Chriſt argues ſtrongly from the leſs to the greater, thus: "If judges and magiſtrates may be called Gods, becauſe they are commiſſioned by him, and derive their authority from him, how much more is that title due to me, who was ſanctified, ſeparated, and ordained for a Mediator, and appointed to the work of redemption, before I came into the world, and conſequently was God from all eternity?" This place the Socinians (thoſe profeſſed adverſaries of our Saviour's Godhead) produce to prove, that Chriſt was not God by nature, but only in reſpect of his ſanctification and miſſion. It is a certain truth, that he that was ſanctified and ſent, was the Son of God; but he was not therefore the Son of God becauſe ſanctified and ſent. His ſanctification was not the ground of his Sonſhip; but his Sonſhip was the cauſe of his ſanctification. Chriſt was not therefore God's Son, becauſe he was ſanctified and ſent; but he was therefore ſanctified and ſent, becauſe he was his Son. He was a Son before he was ſent, even from eternity, otherwiſe, it muſt have been ſaid, that God ſent him to be his Son, and not that God ſent his Son. This ſuppoſes him, before he was ſent, to have been actually his Son, as certainly he was before, from before the foundations of the world. Prov. viii. 23. *I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

Here we have a ſecond argument, by which our Saviour proves, that it was no blaſphemy to call himſelf God; but that he was God in very deed; namely, an argument taken from his works: *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*: And the argument runs thus: If (ſays Chriſt) I do thoſe miraculous works, which no power leſs than a divine power can effect, then you ought by theſe works to be led to believe and acknowledge, that I am truly and really God; but the works which I do, are the effect and product of an omnipotent power, therefore you ought to believe, that I am one in eſſence with the Father, there being a mutual in-exiſtence of one perſon in the other, ſo that the Father is in me, and I in him: And thus *I and the Father are one.* *Learn* hence, That Chriſt never required of his diſciples and followers an implicit faith, or a blind obedience; but as he ſubmitted his doctrine to the trial of reaſon, ſo he ſubmitted his miracles to the examination and judgment of ſenſe: Therefore he ſays, *If I do not the works of my Father*, that is, divine works, *believe me not* to be a divine perſon.

39 Therefore they ſought again to take him: but he eſcaped out of their hand, 40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized; and there he abode. 41 And many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, John did no miracle: but all things that John ſpake of this man were true. 42 And many believed on him there.

Note here, 1. The violence and fury of theſe unbelieving Jews, againſt the holy and innocent Jeſus! *They ſought again to take him.* 2. The prudential care of Chriſt for his own preſervation; his time being not yet come, he withdraws from Jeruſalem, the neſt of his enemies, and goes beyond Jordan: when Chriſt was perſecuted in one city, he fled to another; he has ſanctified a ſtate of perſecution to his miniſters and members, and by his own being in it. It is no diſgrace for any of them to fly, when their Captain did it, and bids them do it, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one city, flee unto another.* 3. The ſucceſs of Chriſt's miniſtry beyond Jordan: *Many reſorted to him, and believed on him.* This place about Jordan was the place where John had exerciſed a great part of his miniſtry; and now, many years after John's death, the fruit of his miniſtry appears; for *many believed on him there*; that is, about Jordan, where John had preached and baptized. *Learn* hence, That the labours of faithful miniſters may ſeem to be loſt, and lie long like ſeed under the ground, and yet at laſt, by ſome new watering, may ſpring up, and the fruit appear in abundance. Here John's miniſtry about Jordan hath freſh fruit upon Chriſt's coming, long after John was dead. 4. The dignity of Chriſt above John, *John did no miracle*; but Chriſt did all. The wiſdom of God ſo ordered it, that though the Old Teſtament prophets, Elijah and Eliſha, wrought many miracles for the confirmation of their divine miſſion, yet John the Baptiſt coming immediately before Chriſt, as his meſſenger and forerunner, wrought none, for theſe three reaſons probably, 1. That ſo the glory of Chriſt in working miracles when he came upon the ſtage of his miniſtry, might be the more clear and evident. 2. That the evidence of Chriſt being the Meſſias might be the more clear by the miracles which he wrought. 3. That the minds of the people might not be divided and diſtracted between John and Chriſt, and that there might be no pretence or competition between them: *Therefore John did no miracles; but all things*, &c.

CHAP. XI.

NOW a certain *man* was ſick *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her ſiſter Martha. 2 It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whoſe brother Lazarus was ſick. 3 Therefore his ſiſters ſent unto him, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick. 4 When Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid, This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

This chapter relates unto us the miraculous power of Chriſt, in raiſing of dead Lazarus, which, as it was one of his laſt, ſo was it one of the greateſt miracles which he wrought; and yet we find none of the Evangeliſts make mention of it, but only St. John: The reaſon is ſuppoſed to be this, becauſe when the other Evangeliſts wrote their hiſtory, Lazarus was then alive; (for Epiphanius ſays, he lived thirty years after he was raiſed by Chriſt) and probably, the mention of this relation might have brought Lazarus into danger and trouble; but Sir John wrote his goſpel after Lazarus's death. This miracle was a ſufficient demonſtration of Chriſt's Godhead: None but an Almighty power could recal a man four days dead, from a ſettled corruption to a ſtate of life. None but he that created Lazarus, could thus make him anew. Here *note*, 1. The tender ſympathy of theſe two endeared ſiſters with their afflicted brother; they feel his ſorrows and acquaint their Saviour with his ſufferings: *Lord! behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick.* They do not ſay, Our brother that loves thee is ſick; *he whom thou loveſt is ſick:* Thereby pleading not the merit of Lazarus, but the merit of Chriſt. For how can the love of Chriſt, which is infinite and eternal, have any cauſe but itſelf? *Note*, The perſon whom Chriſt loved is ſick, and dies. *Learn* thence, That ſtrength of grace, and dearneſs of reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail either againſt death or againſt diſeaſes. Lazarus, whom Chriſt loved, is ſick. *Note* 2. The gracious anſwer which Chriſt ſent to the ſiſters' meſſage; *this ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God*: that is, this ſickneſs ſhall not bring upon him ſuch a death as he ſhall remain under the power of, to the general reſurrection; but is only deſigned to give me an opportunity of glorifying God, by exerting my miraculous power in reſtoring him to life. *Learn* hence, 1. That as God's own glory is his ſupreme aim and end in all his actions, ſo in particular it is deſigned by him in ſending afflictions upon his people, to glorify his power and wiſdom, mercy and love, in and upon them. The ſaints ſickneſſes are all for the glory of God. 2. That God is glorified when his Son is glorified: as none do honour the Father, who do not honour the Son; ſo the Father accounts himſelf glorified, when the glory of the Son is advanced. *This ſickneſs is for*, &c.

5 Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was. 7 Then after that ſaith he to *his* diſciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8 *His* diſciples ſay unto him, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee; and goeſt thou thither again? 9 Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him.

Note 1. What an *happy*, becauſe an *holy* and *religious* family was here, and much honoured by Chriſt; *Jeſus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus*; wherever true piety dwells, it draws the eye and heart of Chriſt towards it. Chriſt had frequently and familiarly lodged under their roof, and he rewarded them for their entertainment with his love.—*Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter:* Where remark, That Martha is here named firſt, though elſewhere Mary had the precedency, to ſhew, no doubt, that they were both equally dear to Chriſt. 2. That although Chriſt loved Lazarus, yet he ſeems to neglect him, he delays going to him for ſome days: But could Chriſt abſent himſelf from one ſo long, whom he loved ſo well? We find he did. Let us take heed then that we do not miſinterpret Chriſt's delays. He ſeldom comes at our time, but never ſtays beyond his own; our Saviour had a double end in ſtaying thus long; namely, for greatening of the miracle, and confirming their faith. Had Chriſt gone before Lazarus was dead, they might have attributed his recovery rather to the ſtrength of nature, than to Chriſt's miraculous power; or had Chriſt raiſed Lazarus as ſoon as he was dead, they might peradventure have thought it rather ſome trance or ecſtacy, than a death and diſſolution; therefore Chriſt ſtays ſo many days, that God might be the more glorified, and his own omnipotent power the more magnified. We *learn* then, That when Chriſt delays to help them whom he dearly loves, it is always for wiſe ends and holy purpoſes. 3. How the diſciples, though they were dearly affected to Lazarus, (for they had learned to love where their Maſter loved,) yet they diſcourage Chriſt from going to him into Judea, for fear of violence offered to him, *Maſter, the Jews of late, ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither again?* Here the diſciples pleaded for their Maſter's ſafety, at the ſame time aiming at their own; they were to go with him into Judea, and they well knew that their danger was inwrapped in his, therefore they ſeek to divert him from his intention. O how has the fear of ſuffering made many of the friends of Chriſt decline an opportunity of glorifying God, and doing good to others! But cannot God give ſafety in the midſt of danger, if he pleaſeth? Let us then not chuſe our way, according to our own apprehenſion, either of danger or ſafety; but as we ſee God going before us, if our call be clear, let us go on with courage, whatever difficulties lie in our way. 4. How our Saviour corrects theſe fears of his diſciples, by acquainting them with his call from God, to undertake this journey into Judea. *Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk therein, he ſtumbleth not: but in the night he ſtumbleth.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "As he that walks in the day is in no danger of ſtumbling, but in the night he is in danger; ſo long as I have a call from God, and my working time laſts, there is a divine providence that will watch over me, and ſecure me from all danger; now my day is not fully ſpent, and therefore it is not in the power of mine enemies to precipitate my paſſion, or to bring the night of ſufferings upon me before the appointed time; but ere long the night will come on, the working time will be over, and then ſhall both I and you ſtumble upon death; but while the day laſteth we are ſafe." *Learn* hence, 1. Every man has his twelve hours, that is, his working time aſſigned him by God in this world. 2. Whilſt theſe hours are not ſpent, and whilſt his working time is unexpired, he ſhall not ſtumble, he ſhall not die, he ſhall not be diſabled from working, while God has any work for him to do; neither the malice of men, nor the rage of devils ſhall take him off till his work be finiſhed. 3. Every man has his night as well as his day, in which he muſt expect and prepare to ſtumble; that is, to fall by death; for, when God has done his work by us and with us, he will withdraw his protection from us, but not his care over us. We ſtumble upon death, and fall into the grave; but God receives us to himſelf, and at the end of our working ſeaſon rewards us for our work.

11 Theſe things ſaid he: and after that he ſaith unto them, Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of ſleep.

Note here, 1. Our Saviour, coming near to Bethany, tells his diſciples that Lazarus ſleepeth; that is, plainly, he was dead. This ſhewed his omniſciency, and that he was truly God: for he had received no advice of his death from any perſon, but as God knew that he was deceaſed. 2. The ſweet title given both to death and Lazarus; death is called a *ſleep*, Lazarus is ſtiled a *friend*: yet Chriſt ſays, not my friend, but our friend Lazarus ſleepeth; intimating that gracious familiarity and mutual friendſhip which was betwixt himſelf and all his members. *Learn* hence, 1. That all true believers are Chriſt's friends. 2. That the friends of Chriſt muſt die as well others. 3. That their death is but a ſleep, *Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth*. It followeth, *but I go, that I may awake him out of ſleep. Note*, Chriſt ſays not, We will go and awake him, but I will go, and I will awake him. The diſciples, who were companions in the way, muſt not be partakers in the work; witneſſes they may be, actors they cannot be; none can awaken Lazarus, but the Maker of Lazarus. Who can command the ſoul to come down and meet the body; and who can command the body to riſe up and meet the ſoul, but that God that created both ſoul and body? Lord! it is our comfort againſt the dread and terror of death, that our reſurrection depends upon thy almighty power; *I will go, that I may awake him out of ſleep.*

12 Then ſaid his diſciples, Lord, if he ſleep, he ſhall do well. 13 Howbeit Jeſus ſpake of his death: but they thought that he had ſpoken of taking of reſt in ſleep. 14 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe: nevertheleſs, let us go unto him. 16 Then ſaid Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow diſciples, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him.

Note here, 1. How deſirous the diſciples were that Chriſt ſhould not go to Bethany where Lazarus was, Bethany being within two miles of Jeruſalem, where the ſeat of our Saviour's enemies was. But our Lord, knowing his call to be clear, reſolves to go: *Nevertheleſs*, ſays Chriſt, *let us go unto him*. O love, ſtronger than death! the grave cannot ſeparate betwixt Chriſt and his friends: Other friends accompany us to the brink of the grave, and there they leave us to worms and duſts; for death hath both horror and noiſomneſs to attend it: But for thee, O Saviour, the grave-ſtone, the earth, the coffin, are no bounders of thy dear reſpects. Bleſſed be God, that neither life nor death can ſeparate from the love of Chriſt; but even after death and burial he is graciouſly affected to thoſe he loves. Chriſt has a gracious regard to the duſt of his ſaints: Though his holy ones ſee corruption, they ſhall not always lie under the power of corruption; their dead bodies are a part of the undoubted members of Chriſt's myſtical body. Bleſſed be God, the time is coming, when Chriſt ſhall knock at the door of his children's graves, and call them up out of their bed of duſt, *and they ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live*. 2. The wiſe and only deſign of Chriſt in delaying to go to Bethany till Lazarus was dead; namely, that he might at once raiſe Lazarus's dead body, and his diſciples faith, confirming them in the belief that he was the Son of God, and the true Meſſias. But could the faith of the apoſtles want confirmation, who had ſeen ſo many miracles wrought by our Saviour, and had lived under his miniſtry all the time of it? Yes; the faith of the moſt eminent ſaints, even of the apoſtles themſelves, wants confirmation in this ſtate of weakneſs and imperfection, and is capable of growth. *I am glad for your ſakes, that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.* 3. The great paſſion which Thomas expreſſes upon the notice given by Chriſt of Lazarus's death: Plainly, *Lazarus is dead*, ſays Chriſt; *Let us go and die with him*, ſays Thomas. Oh what paſſionate and impatient expreſſions do ſometimes drop from our mouths, on occaſion of the death of our dear relations! we are ready to be ſo affected with the death of our friends, as to wiſh ourſelves out of the world, that we might be with them. But we muſt remember, that it is God that appoints us our ſeveral poſts, and particular ſtations, which we muſt keep, till the wiſdom of God ſees fit to remove us.

17 Then when Jeſus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already. 18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jeruſalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) 19 And many ſo the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as ſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him: but Mary ſat *ſtill* in the houſe. 21 Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know that even now, whatſoever thou wilt aſk of God, God will give *it* thee.

Obſerve here, 1. The length of time which Chriſt deſignedly delayed before he would come to Lazarus's grave; he was not above ſix miles off from Bethany, being within two miles of Jeruſalem, and Jeruſalem within four miles of Bethabara, where Chriſt now was, and yet our Saviour came not of four days; doubtleſs that the miracle of Lazarus's reſurrection might be more conſpicuous and remarkable. Chriſt could as eaſy have cured Lazarus being ſick, as have raiſed him being dead, and as eaſily have raiſed him the firſt day, as the fourth day; but that had not carried along with it ſuch a full conviction of Chriſt's almighty power. Therefore, that he might draw the eyes of their faith more ſtedfaſtly to behold and admire his almighty power, our Saviour defers his coming till Lazarus had been dead four days. 2. The civil uſage of mourning with thoſe that mourned for the dead: Anciently they mourned thirty days, and ſometimes forty, for a dear relation, Numb. xx. 29. During which time, neighbours and friends came to viſit and relieve them in their ſadneſs, with ſuch conſolatory arguments as they had. Chriſtian religion doth not condemn natural affection: Human paſſions are not ſinful, if not exceſſive; to be above the ſtroke of paſſions is a condition equal to angels; to be in a ſtate of ſorrow without the ſenſe of ſorrow, is a diſpoſition beneath the beaſts; but duly to regulate our ſorrows, and ſet boundaries to our grief, is the wiſdom, the duty, the intereſt, and the excellency of a chriſtian. As to be above all paſſions will be our happineſs in heaven, ſo to regulate and rectify our paſſions is a great part of our holineſs on earth. *Note*, 3. Although Martha was a true mourner for the death of her brother, yet ſhe doth not ſo far indulge to grief, but, upon the firſt notice of Chriſt's approach, ſhe ariſes to go forth to meet him, with a mournful moan in her mouth; *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.* Where *note*, How faith and infirmity were mixed together; faith appeared in that firm perſuaſion which ſhe had of Chriſt's power, as if death durſt not ſhew his face in Chriſt's preſence. *Hadſt thou been here, my brother had not died.* But then her infirmity appeared in limiting Chriſt both to time and place; to place, *If thou hadſt been here:* As if Chriſt could not (if he pleaſed) ſave his life, abſent as well as preſent. Then to time, *Now he ſtinketh*; as if ſhe had ſaid, "You are come, but, alas! too late; you have ſtayed too long, he is paſt recovery, the grave hath ſwallowed him up." As if death would not deliver up his priſoner at the command of Chriſt: Oh! the imperfect compoſition of the beſt of ſaints! what a mixture of faith and infirmity is found in the holieſt and beſt of chriſtians! This farther alſo appears in her next words, ver. 22. *I know that whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of God, he will give it thee:* She ſeems not to be believe that Chriſt was able to raiſe him by his own immediate power, but muſt obtain power of God to do it, as the prophets were wont to do that raiſed the dead. She thought Chriſt a perſon highly in God's favour, but ſcarce believed him able to raiſe Lazarus by his own power; had her faith extended to a belief that Chriſt was equal with the Father, and that the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him, ſhe would not have queſtioned his power to raiſe him from the grave; for though Chriſt as Mediator did apply himſelf by prayer to God at the raiſing of dead Lazarus, ver. 41, 42. yet as God, he had a power of himſelf to raiſe Lazarus, an almighty power communicated with his eſſence from the Father, by an eternal and ineffable generation.

23 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy brother ſhall riſe again. 24 Martha ſaith unto him, I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day. 25 Jeſus ſaith unto her, I am the reſurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; 26 And whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me, ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this?

Here *note*, 1. Chriſt's meek anſwer to Martha's paſſionate diſcourſe. He takes no notice of the forementioned failings, but comforts her with a promiſe of her brother's reſurrection: *Thy brother ſhall riſe again.* Thence *learn*, That the knowledge and belief of the general reſurrection, is, and ought to be a ſufficient ſupport under the loſs of our endeared friends, who die in the Lord. 2. That the doctrine of the general reſurrection was no new doctrine; Job believed it, chap. xix. Daniel publiſhed it, chap. xii. 1. the Phariſees had a notion of it; but Martha here makes it an article of faith, *I know he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day.* 3. How Chriſt particularly inſtructs Martha in the cauſe of her reſurrection, acquainting her, that he himſelf is the author and efficient cauſe of it; *I am the reſurrection and the life*: That is, I am the author, and principal efficient cauſe of the reſurrection; and this with reſpect to both natures: 1. His divine nature is the efficient cauſe of the reſurrection: He ſhall raiſe our bodies out of the duſt, by the power of the Godhead. 2. His human nature is the exemplary cauſe or pattern of the reſurrection; for which reaſon Chriſt is called the *firſt-born from the dead.* For though ſome were raiſed before him, yet was his reſurrection the cauſe of their's. Hence St. Paul argues, from Chriſt's reſurrection, the certainty of his members' reſurrection; Chriſt and believers are one myſtical body, therefore is not Chriſt perfectly riſen till all his members are riſen with him. Indeed Chriſt's perſonal reſurrection was perfect when he aroſe, and all believers aroſe repreſentatively in him, yet till all believers ariſe perſonally, the reſurrection of Chriſt has not received its utmoſt perfection, but there is ſomewhat behind of the reſurrection of Chriſt. Moſt fitly then might our Saviour aſſert, *I am the reſurrection and the life.* 4. That Chriſt not only aſſerts himſelf to be the reſurrection, but alſo the life: *I am the reſurrection and the life*; that is, I am the cauſe of life natural, ſpiritual, and eternal: *And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die*; that is, eternally: though his body ſhall die becauſe of ſin, yet his ſpirit ſhall live becauſe of righteouſneſs.

27 She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world. 28 And when ſhe had ſo ſaid, ſhe went her way, and called Mary, her ſiſter, ſecretly, ſaying, The maſter is come, and calleth for thee. 29 As ſoon as ſhe heard *that*, ſhe aroſe quickly, and came unto him. 30 Now Jeſus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the houſe, and comforted her, when they ſaw Mary that ſhe roſe up haſtily, and went out, followed her, ſaying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. 32 Then when Mary was come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his feet, ſaying unto him, Lord, If thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.

Note here, 1. The full confeſſion which Martha makes of her faith in Chriſt: *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world.* A confeſſion which comes neareſt to that of St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 16.) of any that we meet with in ſcripture: Nay, it ſeems more full than we meet with in ſcripture: Nay, it ſeems more full than Peter's confeſſion; for thoſe additional words, *which ſhould come into the world*, are not in his confeſſion; the ſum is, ſhe believed Chriſt to be the very Meſſias, who was typified and prefigured, propheſied of, and promiſed to the Old Teſtament ſaints, as the perſon that, in the fulneſs of time, ſhould come into the world for the redemption and ſalvation of it. *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world.* Hence *learn*, That Chriſt is never rightly believed in, nor regularly depended upon, for ſalvation, except he be owned and acknowledged to be the eternal Son of God. Martha was now fully perſuaded of Chriſt's divine nature, of which the beſt of the diſciples, till after our Saviour's reſurrection, had but a faint and uncertain perſuaſion. 2. How earneſt and intent our Saviour was to diſpatch the errand he came upon; namely, to raiſe Lazarus from the grave, and to comfort the two mournful ſiſters: He would not ſo much as enter the houſe, till he had effected his work; and therefore he goes ſtrait to the grave, which probably was the place where Mary met him: Lord! it was thy meat and drink to do the will of thy Father; it was thy meat and drink by day, thy reſt and repoſe by night. How unlike are we to thyſelf, if we ſuffer either our pleaſures or our profits to divert us from our duty? 3. What haſte and ſpeed Mary makes to attend upon our Saviour? ſhe aroſe quickly, and came unto him. Mary's love added wings to her motion.—The Jews, obſerving her haſty motion, having a loving ſuſpicion that ſhe is gone to the grave to weep there; but their thoughts were too low; for whilſt they ſuppoſed that ſhe went to a dead brother, ſhe was waiting for a living Saviour. And ſhe that uſed to ſit at Jeſus's feet, now falls at his feet, with an awful veneration; the very geſture was ſupplicatory. And her humble proſtration was ſeconded with a doleful lamentation, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.* Where *note*, A mixture of faith with human infirmity. Here was ſtrength of faith in aſcribing ſo much power to Chriſt, that his preſence could preſerve from death; but here was infirmity in ſuppoſing the neceſſity of Chriſt's preſence for this purpoſe. Certainly he that did raiſe him from death, being preſent, could have preſerved him from dying, being abſent, had he pleaſed. This was Mary's moan, *Lord, hadſt thou been here, my brother had not died*; full of affection, but not free from frailty and infirmity: However, Chriſt takes no notice of her errors and infirmity; but all the reply we hear of, is a compaſſionate groan, which the following verſes acquaint us with.

33 When Jeſus therefore ſaw her weeping, and the Jews alſo weeping which came with her, he groaned in the ſpirit, and was troubled, 34 And ſaid, Where have ye laid him? They ſay unto him, Lord, come and ſee. 35 Jeſus wept. 36 Then ſaid the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37 And ſome of them ſaid, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died?

Note here, 1. The condolency and tender ſympathy expreſſed by our Saviour upon this occaſion: *He groaned in his ſpirit, and was troubled*: Or as the original has it, he troubled himſelf, intimating, that our Saviour's paſſions were pure and holy, not like ours, muddy and mixed with ſinful imperfection. The commotions of his affections were like the ſhaking of pure water in a chryſtal glaſs, which ſtill remains clear; and they aroſe and were calmed at his pleaſure; he was not overpowered by them, but had them at his command. *Learn* hence, That as Chriſt took upon him the human nature, ſo he did aſſume alſo human affections, thereby evincing himſelf to be our brother and near kinſman, according to the fleſh. (2.) That the paſſions and affections, which our Saviour had and expreſſed, were always holy and innocent; he was not without them, but he was above them; they did never violently and immoderately trouble him, but when he pleaſed he troubled himſelf. *Jeſus groaned in ſpirit*, and troubled himſelf. *Note*, 2. How our Saviour manifeſts his condolency and tender ſympathy with Martha and Mary, by his weeping, *Jeſus wept*; partly from compaſſion, and partly for example; in compaſſion, firſt to humanity, to ſee how miſerably ſin had debaſed the human nature, and rendered man like unto the brute beaſts that periſh. Secondly, in compaſſion to Lazarus, whom he was now about to bring back into a ſinful and troubleſome world. Thus St. Jerom, *Non flevit Chriſtus lachrymus noſtras*, &c. "Chriſt, ſays he, did not weep our tears; he mourned over Lazarus, not becauſe dead, but becauſe now to be brought again to life."—Again, Chriſt wept for our example, to fetch ſighs and tears from us, at the ſight of others miſeries, and eſpecially at the funerals of our godly friends. *Learn* hence, That mourning and ſorrow, and this expreſſed by tears and weeping, is an affection proper for thoſe that go to funerals, provided it be decently kept within due bounds, and is not exceſſive: for immoderate ſorrow is hurtful to the living, and diſhonourable to the dead; neither is it an argument of more love, but an evidence of leſs grace. *Note*, 3. How the Jews obſerving Chriſt's ſorrow for, admire his love to, dead Lazarus: *Behold, how he loved him!* Chriſt's love to his people is admirable and ſoul-amazing; ſuch as ſee it may admire it, but can never fully comprehend it. 4. How ſome of the malicious Jews attempt to leſſen the reputation of our Saviour, not willing to own him to be God, becauſe he did not keep Lazarus from dying; as if Chriſt could not be the Son, becauſe he did not at all times, and in all caſes, exert and put forth his divine power. Whereas Chriſt acted freely, and not neceſſarily, governing his actions by his own wiſdom, as he ſaw moſt conducing to the ends and purpoſes of his own glory.

38 Jeſus therefore again groaning in himſelf, cometh to the grave. (It was a cave, and a ſtone lay upon it.) 39 Jeſus ſaid, Take ye away the ſtone. Martha, the ſiſter of him that was dead, ſaith unto him, Lord, by this time he ſtinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the ſtone *from the place* where the dead was

laid. And Jeſus lifted up *his* eyes, and ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me. 42 And I knew that thou heareſt me always: but becauſe of the people which ſtand by I ſaid *it*, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me. 43 And when he had thus ſpoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin: Jeſus ſaith unto them, Looſe him, and let him go.

In theſe verſes we find our Lord addreſſing himſelf to the miracle of raiſing Lazarus from the grave. Firſt, he commands them to take away the ſtone. But could not that voice which raiſed the dead remove the ſtone? Yes, no doubt; but it is always the will of Chriſt, that we put forth our utmoſt endeavours, and do what we can in order to our own deliverance. To remove the ſtone, and untie the napkin, was in their power; this therefore they muſt do; but to raiſe the dead was out of their power, this therefore will Chriſt do alone. Our hands muſt do their utmoſt, before Chriſt will put forth his help. The ſtone being thus removed, his eyes begin; they are lifted up to heaven, his Father's throne, from whence he expects to derive his power: His tongue ſeconds his eyes, and he prays unto his Father: Chriſt, as God, wrought this miracle by his own power. Conſider him as Mediator, and ſo he looks up to his Father by prayer; yet we hear of no prayer, but a thankſgiving only: Chriſt's will was his prayer; whatever Chriſt willed, God granted; Chriſt and his Father having one eſſence, one nature, and one will. Neither was it fit for Chriſt to pray vocally and audibly, leſt the unbelieving Jews ſhould ſay, he did it by intreaty, nothing by power. Farther, That as Chriſt, when he ſpake to his Father, lifted up his eyes; ſo, when he ſpake to dead Lazarus, he lifted up his voice, and cried aloud. This Chriſt did, that the ſtrength of the voice might anſwer the ſtrength of the affection, ſince we vehemently utter what we earneſtly deſire; alſo, that the greatneſs of the voice might anſwer to the greatneſs of the work; but eſpecially, that the hearers might be witneſſes, that this mighty work was performed, not by any magical enchantments, which are commonly mumbled forth with a low voice, but by an authoritative and divine command. In a word, might not Chriſt utter a loud voice at the raiſing of Lazarus, that it might be a repreſentation of that ſhrill and loud voice of the laſt trumpet at the general reſurrection, which ſhall ſound into all graves, and raiſe all fleſh from their bed of duſt? Next, As the manner of our Lord's ſpeaking with a loud voice, ſo the words ſpoken by him; *Lazarus, come forth.* Chriſt doth not ſay, Lazarus, revive; but, as if he ſuppoſed him already alive, he ſays, *Lazarus, come forth*; to let us know, that they are alive to him, who are dead to us. What a commanding word this was, *Come forth.* Not that it was in the power of theſe loud commanding words to raiſe Lazarus, but in the quickening power of Chriſt which attended theſe words. O bleſſed Saviour! it is thy voice which we ſhall ere long hear ſounding into the bottom of the grave, and raiſing us from our bed of duſt: It is thy voice that ſhall pierce the rocks, divide the mountains, and echo forth throughout the univerſe, ſaying, *Ariſe, ye dead, and come to judgment.* Laſtly, How readily obedient Lazarus was to the call and command of Chriſt; *He that was dead came forth*: And if Lazarus did thus inſtantly ſtart up at the voice of Chriſt in the day of his humiliation, how ſhall the dead be rouzed up out of their graves by that voice which will ſhake the powers of heaven and move the foundations of the earth, in the day of his glorification! *Queſt.* But where was Lazarus's ſoul all that while that he was dead? If in heaven, was it not a wrong to him to come from thence? if not, doth it not prove that the ſoul ſleeps as well as the body? *Anſ.* Souls go not to heaven by neceſſitation, as the fire naturally and neceſſarily aſcends upwards, but are diſpoſed of by God, as the ſupreme Governor; thoſe that have ſerved him go to heaven, and thoſe that have ſerved the devil go to hell; and thoſe that are not yet adjudged to either place, but are to live preſently again upon earth, as Lazarus was, are reſerved by God accordingly; whether ſhut up in the body as in a ſwoon, or whether kept in the cuſtody and hands of an angel not far from the body, waiting his pleaſure, either to reſtore it to the body, or to return it to its proper place of bliſs or miſery, the ſcripture has not told us whether; and it would be too great curioſity to enquire, and greater preſumption to determine.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him. 46 But ſome of them went their ways to the Phariſees, and told them what things Jeſus had done. 47 ¶ Then gathered the chief prieſts and the Phariſees a council, and ſaid, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans ſhall come, and take away both our place and nation.

Note here, 1. The different effects which this miracle had upon thoſe Jews who were preſent at the raiſing of Lazarus: Some of them believed on Chriſt; but others, perſiſting in their unbelief, went to the Phariſees and informed againſt them. Notwithſtanding all the evidence which our Saviour gave of his being the Meſſias, by the miracles which he wrought, yet many rejected him, and refuſed to believe in him, to their unutterable and inevitable condemnation. 2. How greatly diſturbed the Phariſees were upon the account of our Saviour's miracles: Knowing how proper an argument they were to convince men, they concluded, that if Chriſt were ſuffered to go on and work miracles, he would draw all men after him. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus proved himſelf to be the true Meſſias by the miracles which he wrought, his enemies themſelves being judges: For we find here, the worſt of our Saviour's enemies were afraid of his miracles, that by them he would draw all men after him: *If we let him alone, all men will believe on him. Note*, 3. What was the ground of the Phariſees fear, if they let Chriſt go on to work his miracles, that he would have ſo many followers as would alarm the Romans and awaken their jealouſy, and cauſe them to come upon them with an army, to deprive them of the little liberty they indulged them, and take away their place and nation: *Their place*; that is, their place of worſhip, the temple: *And their nation*; that is, bring the whole body of the Jewiſh nation to utter deſtruction. *Learn* hence, How all the enemies and oppoſers of Chriſt and his kingdom do endeavour to colour their quarrel with ſome ſpecious pretences, that they may hide the odiouſneſs of their practices from the eye of the world, and may not be openly ſeen to fight againſt God. Thus the Phariſees here perſecute our Saviour, not as the Meſſias (though the miracles he wrought were a ſufficient evidence that he was ſuch) but as one who would bring ruin upon their nation: *If we let him alone, the Romans will come, and take away both our place and nation.*

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor conſider that it is expedient for us, that one man ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation periſh not. 51 And this ſpake he not of himſelf: but being high-prieſt that year, he propheſied that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation: 52 And not for that nation only, but that alſo he ſhould gather together in one the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.

The foregoing verſes acquainted us with the apprehenſion which the chief prieſts had of the neceſſity of taking away the life of our bleſſed Saviour: *Leſt the Romans ſhould take away both their place and nation:* Now here in theſe verſes Caiaphas the high-prieſt delivers his opinion, for the preventing of this danger: He tells the reſt, that they ought not to bogle at the matter, but come to a poſitive and peremptory reſolution to provide for the public ſafety, right or wrong; and that it is a great folly to prefer one man's life, though never ſo innocent, before a nation's welfare: a moſt wicked and deviliſh ſpeech: as a judge he regarded not what was lawful, but as a wicked politician he conſulted what was expedient; he declares, that one man though never ſo good and holy, though never ſo juſt and innocent, had better die, than a whole nation ſuffer; as where it is in any caſe unlawful to do evil that good may come. *Learn* hence, That although it be the duty of all perſons to pray for, and endeavour after the public welfare of a church and nation, whereof they are members; yet it is altogether unlawful to promote the greateſt national good, by wicked and unlawful means. Farther, How God overruled the tongue of Caiaphas beyond his own intention, prophetically to foretel that great good, which by our Saviour's death ſhould come to the world, and that the fruit and benefit of his death ſhould not only extend to the Jews, but to the Gentiles alſo; and that he ſhould gather in one body, or church, all that truly believe in him, though far and wide diſperſed upon the face of the earth. *Learn* 1. That the ſpirit of prophecy did fall ſometimes upon very bad men, and God has been pleaſed to reveal ſome part of his mind to the worſt of men. Thus Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar had in their dreams a revelation from God, what things he intended to do. 2. That it is conſiſtent with the holineſs of God, ſometimes to make uſe of the tongues of the worſt of men, to publiſh and declare his will. Caiaphas here, though a vile and wicked man, was influenced by God to propheſy and ſpeak as an oracle. Almighty God may, when he pleaſes, employ wicked men this way, without any prejudice to his holineſs: *This Caiaphas ſpoke not of himſelf, but, being high prieſt that year,* &c.

53 Then from that day forth they took counſel together for to put him to death. 54 Jeſus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderneſs, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his diſciples. 55 ¶ And the Jews paſſover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jeruſalem before the paſſover to purify themſelves. 56 Then ſought they for Jeſus, and ſpake among themſelves as they ſtood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feaſt? 57 Now both the chief prieſts and the Phariſees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he ſhould ſhew *it*, that they might take him.

Note here, 1. How baneful and deſtructive evil counſel is, eſpecially out of the mouths of leading men, and how ſoon embraced and followed. Caiaphas no ſooner propounds the putting of Chriſt to death, but from that day forward they lie in wait to take him. The high prieſts had ſatisfied their conſciences, and now they make all poſſible ſpeed to put their malicious deſigns and purpoſes in execution. 2. The prudential care and means which our Lord uſed for his own preſervation; to avoid their fury, he withdraws himſelf privately into a place called Ephraim, and there continued with his diſciples. *Learn*, As Chriſt himſelf fled, ſo is it lawful for his ſervants to flee, when their life is conſpired againſt by their bloody enemies, and the perſecution is perſonal. 3. When the time was come that he was to expoſe himſelf, when the time of the paſſover drew near, in which he, being the true paſchal Lamb, was to be ſlain, to put an end to that type, he withdraws no more, but ſurrenders himſelf to the rage and fury of his enemies, and dies a ſhameful death for ſhameleſs ſinners, as the next chapter more at large informs us.

CHAP. XII.

THEN Jeſus, ſix days before the paſſover, came to Bethany, were Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raiſed from the dead.

The latter end of the foregoing chapter acquainted us with the prudential care of Chriſt, in withdrawing from the fury of his enemies in and about Jeruſalem, who were conſulting his deſtruction: His time not being fully come, he gets out of the way of his perſecutors; but now the paſſover being at hand, which was the time this Lamb of God was to die as a ſacrifice for the ſin of the world, our

Lord comes forth, firſt to Bethany, and then to Jeruſalem, not fearing the teeth of his enemies, but with a fixed reſolution to encounter death and danger for the ſalvation of his people. His example *teacheth* us, That although we are bound by all lawful means and prudential methods to preſerve ourſelves from the unjuſt violence of our perſecutors, yet when God's time for our ſufferings is come, and we evidently ſee that it is his will that we ſuffer for his ſake, we ought to ſet our faces very chearfully towards it, and reſign up ourſelves to the wiſdom and will of God.—Thus did Chriſt here, chap. xi. 54. we find he withdrew from ſuffering, his hour not being then come: But now when the paſſover was nigh at hand, which was the time when he was to ſuffer, he ſet his face towards Jeruſalem, and withdraws no more.

2 There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of ſpikenard, very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, which ſhould betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he ſaid, not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always

In theſe verſes, an account is given of our Saviour's entertainment at Bethany after he had raiſed Lazarus. A ſupper is made for him, at which Martha ſerved, and Lazarus ſat with him, but Mary anoints Chriſt's feet with precious ointment. Where *note*, 1. The action which this holy woman performed, ſhe pours a box of precious ointment upon our Saviour's head, as he ſat at meat, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſtern countries at their feaſts. I do not find that any of the apoſtles were at thus much charge and coſt to put honour upon our Saviour as this poor woman was. Hence *learn*, That where ſtrong love prevails in the heart, nothing is adjudged too dear for Chriſt, neither will it ſuffer itſelf to be out-ſhined by any examples.—The weakeſt woman that ſtrongly loves her Saviour will vie with the greateſt apoſtle, and piouſly ſtrive to expreſs the fervour of her affection towards him. *Note*, 2. How this action was reſented and reflected upon by murmuring Judas, who valued this ointment at three hundred pence, and grudged the beſtowing it upon Chriſt. He accuſed this holy woman of needleſs prodigality. Lord! how doth a covetous heart think every thing too good for thee? He that ſees a pious action performed, and ſeeks to leſſon and undervalue it, ſhews himſelf poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of envy. Judas's invidious ſpirit makes him cenſure an action, which Chriſt highly approved. Hence *learn*, That men who know not our hearts, may, through ignorance or prejudice, cenſure and condemn thoſe actions which God doth commend, and will graciouſly reward. Happy was it for this poor woman, that ſhe had a more righteous Judge to paſs ſentence upon her action than wicked Judas. 3. How readily our holy Lord vindicates this poor woman; ſhe ſays nothing for herſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſuch an advocate, who gives the reaſon for her action; *She did it for my burial.* As kings and great perſons were wont in thoſe Eaſtern countries, at their funerals, to be embalmed with odours and ſweet perfumes, So, ſaith our Saviour, this woman, to declare her faith in me, as her King, and Lord, doth with this box of ointment, as it were, before hand, embalm my body for its burial. True faith will put honour upon a crucified, as well as a glorified Saviour. This holy woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all honour in his death, believing it would be a ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice unto God, and ſavour of life unto his people.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jeſus' ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, whom he had raiſed from the dead:

Note here, It was not zeal, but curioſity, which brought theſe perſons at this time to Chriſt; they had an itching deſire to ſee Lazarus, to inquire after the truth of his death, and poſſibly after the ſtate of the dead, and the condition that ſeparated ſouls are in after death. Thus the miracles of Chriſt drew many followers after his perſon, who were never converted by his doctrine. It was the ſin of many, when Chriſt was here upon earth, that they flocked after him, rather out of curioſity than out of conſcience, and choſe rather to gaze upon his works, than to fall in love with the worker. The multitude here came to Bethany, not *for Jeſus' ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo.*

10 ¶ But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might put Lazarus alſo to death; 11 Becauſe that by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The unreaſonableneſs of that rage and madneſs, which was found in the chief prieſts againſt Lazarus. *They conſulted together how they might put Lazarus to death.* But ſuppoſing that Chriſt had ſpoken blaſphemy, in making himſelf equal with God, or ſuppoſing that he had broken the ſabbath, by curing the man that was born blind, on that day; yet what had Lazarus done that he muſt be put to death? But from hence we *learn*, That ſuch as have received ſpecial mercy and favour from Chriſt, or are made the inſtruments of his glory, muſt expect to be made the mark and the butt of malicious enemies. Chriſt had highly honoured Lazarus, by raiſing him from the grave; and here there is a reſolution againſt his life, whom Chriſt had thus highly honoured; *The chief prieſts conſulted that they might put Lazarus to death alſo.* 2. The cauſe why the chief prieſts conſulted that they might put Lazarus to death; namely, *Becauſe that by reaſon of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.* That is, many of the Jews, ſeeing the miracle of Chriſt's raiſing Lazarus from the grave, were drawn thereby to believe in Jeſus Chriſt: and this ſo enraged the chief prieſts againſt

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The latter end of the foregoing chapter acquainted us with the prudential care of Chriſt, in withdrawing from the fury of his enemies in and about Jeruſalem, who were conſulting his deſtruction: His time not being fully come, he gets out of the way of his perſecutors; but now the paſſover being at hand, which was the time this Lamb of God was to die as a ſacrifice for the ſin of the world, our

Lord comes forth, firſt to Bethany, and then to Jeruſalem, not fearing the teeth of his enemies, but with a fixed reſolution to encounter death and danger for the ſalvation of his people. His example *teacheth* us, That although we are bound by all lawful means and prudential methods to preſerve ourſelves from the unjuſt violence of our perſecutors, yet when God's time for our ſufferings is come, and we evidently ſee that it is his will that we ſuffer for his ſake, we ought to ſet our faces very chearfully towards it, and reſign up ourſelves to the wiſdom and will of God.— Thus did Chriſt here, chap. xi. 54. we find he withdrew from ſuffering, his hour not being then come: But now when the paſſover was nigh at hand, which was the time when he was to ſuffer, he ſet his face towards Jeruſalem, and withdraws no more.

2 There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of ſpikenard, very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, which ſhould betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he ſaid, not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always

In theſe verſes, an account is given of our Saviour's entertainment at Bethany after he had raiſed Lazarus. A ſupper is made for him, at which Martha ſerved, and Lazarus ſat with him, but Mary anoints Chriſt's feet with precious ointment. Where *note*, 1. The action which this holy woman performed, ſhe pours a box of precious ointment upon our Saviour's head, as he ſat at meat, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſtern countries at their feaſts. I do not find that any of the apoſtles were at thus much charge and coſt to put honour upon our Saviour as this poor woman was. Hence *learn*, That where ſtrong love prevails in the heart, nothing is adjudged too dear for Chriſt, neither will it ſuffer itſelf to be out-ſhined by any examples.— The weakeſt woman that ſtrongly loves her Saviour will vie with the greateſt apoſtle, and piouſly ſtrive to expreſs the fervour of her affection towards him. *Note*, 2. How this action was reſented and reflected upon by murmuring Judas, who valued this ointment at three hundred pence, and grudged the beſtowing it upon Chriſt. He accuſed this holy woman of needleſs prodigality. Lord! how doth a covetous heart think every thing too good for thee? He that ſees a pious action performed, and ſeeks to leſſon and undervalue it, ſhews himſelf poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of envy. Judas's invidious ſpirit makes him cenſure an action, which Chriſt highly approved. Hence *learn*, That men who know not our hearts, may, through ignorance or prejudice, cenſure and condemn thoſe actions which God doth commend, and will graciouſly reward. Happy was it for this poor woman, that ſhe had a more righteous Judge to paſs ſentence upon her action than wicked Judas. 3. How readily our holy Lord vindicates this poor woman; ſhe ſays nothing for herſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſuch an advocate, who gives the reaſon for her action; *She did it for my burial.* As kings and great perſons were wont in thoſe Eaſtern countries, at their funerals, to be embalmed with odours and ſweet perfumes, So, ſaith our Saviour, this woman, to declare her faith in me, as her King, and Lord, doth with this box of ointment, as it were, before hand, embalm my body for its burial. True faith will put honour upon a crucified, as well as a glorified Saviour. This holy woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all honour in his death, believing it would be a ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice unto God, and ſavour of life unto his people.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jeſus' ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, whom he had raiſed from the dead:

Note here, It was not zeal, but curioſity, which brought theſe perſons at this time to Chriſt; they had an itching deſire to ſee Lazarus, to inquire after the truth of his death, and poſſibly after the ſtate of the dead, and the condition that ſeparated ſouls are in after death. Thus the miracles of Chriſt drew many followers after his perſon, who were never converted by his doctrine. It was the ſin of many, when Chriſt was here upon earth, that they flocked after him, rather out of curioſity than out of conſcience, and choſe rather to gaze upon his works, than to fall in love with the worker. The multitude here came to Bethany, not *for Jeſus' ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo.*

10 ¶ But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might put Lazarus alſo to death; 11 Becauſe that by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The unreaſonableneſs of that rage and madneſs, which was found in the chief prieſts againſt Lazarus. *They conſulted together how they might put Lazarus to death.* But ſuppoſing that Chriſt had ſpoken blaſphemy, in making himſelf equal with God, or ſuppoſing that he had broken the ſabbath, by curing the man that was born blind, on that day; yet what had Lazarus done that he muſt be put to death? But from hence we *learn*, That ſuch as have received ſpecial mercy and favour from Chriſt, or are made the inſtruments of his glory, muſt expect to be made the mark and the butt of malicious enemies. Chriſt had highly honoured Lazarus, by raiſing him from the grave; and here there is a reſolution againſt his life, whom Chriſt had thus highly honoured; *The chief prieſts conſulted that they might put Lazarus to death alſo.* 2. The cauſe why the chief prieſts conſulted that they might put Lazarus to death; namely, *Becauſe that by reaſon of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.* That is, many of the Jews, ſeeing the miracle of Chriſt's raiſing Lazarus from the grave, were drawn thereby to believe in Jeſus Chriſt: and this ſo enraged the chief prieſts againſt

Lazarus, that they ſought to put him to death. *Learn* hence, That nothing ſo enrages the enemies of Chriſt, as the enlargement of his kingdom, and the ſight of the number of believers daily increaſing. This provokes the devil's wrath and his ſervants rage.

12 ¶ On the next day much people that were come to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming to Jeruſalem, 13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hoſanna: Bleſſed *is* the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14 And Jeſus, when he had found a young aſs, ſat thereon; as it is written, 15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, ſitting on an aſs's colt. 16 Theſe things underſtood not his diſciples at the firſt: but when Jeſus was glorified, then remembered they that theſe things were written of him, and *that* they had done theſe things unto him.

Here we have recorded the carriage of the multitude towards our Saviour, when he came near the city of Jeruſalem: They take palms in their hands, and go forth to meet him, and caſt their garments on the ground before him to ride upon: yea, they do not only diſrobe their backs, but expend their breath in joyful acclamations, and loud *hoſannahs*, wiſhing all manner of proſperity to their meek, but mighty King. In this prince-like, yet poor and deſpicable pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous city of Jeruſalem. Lord! how far was thou from affecting wordly greatneſs and grandeur? Thou deſpiſeſt that glory which our hearts fondly admire: Yet becauſe Chriſt was a King, he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his kingdom confeſſed, and applauded, and bleſſed; yet, that it might appear that his kingdom was not of this world, he abandons all wordly magnificence.

17 The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raiſed him from the dead, bare record. 18 For this cauſe the people alſo met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19 The Phariſees therefore ſaid among themſelves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him. 20 ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worſhip at the feaſt: 21 The ſame came therefore to Philip, which *was* of Bethſaida of Galilee, and deſired him, ſaying, Sir, we would ſee Jeſus. 22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. How the multitude at Jeruſalem came forth to meet Chriſt, when he was making his public entry into the city, hearing the fame of his miracles; *For this cauſe the people alſo met him, for that they had heard that he had done this miracle.* 2. How amongſt others who came forth to meet our Saviour, certain Greeks, or Gentile proſelytes, who came up to worſhip at the outward court of the temple, apply themſelves to Philip, that he would help them to a ſight of Jeſus; *Sir, we would ſee Jeſus.* It is probable that this deſire to ſee Chriſt, in theſe perſons, proceeded from curioſity only: but if it did produce true faith in them, we may hence infer, that a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt, by the diſcerning eye of a believer's faith, is the moſt glorious, and conſequently, the moſt deſirable ſight in the world; and ſo muſt needs be, for it is a ſoul-raviſhing, a ſoul-ſatisfying, a ſoul-transforming, and a ſoul-ſaving ſight. This ſight of Chriſt by faith will conſtrain a ſoul highly to admire, and greatly to commend him. It will incline a ſoul to chuſe him, and cleave unto him, and will ſet a ſoul a longing for the full fruition, and final enjoyment of him, Luke ii. 29. *Mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvaton: Now let thy ſervant depart.* How the envious Phariſees were galled and cut to the heart, to ſee ſuch a multitude both of Jews and Greeks, crouding out of the city, to meet Jeſus in his triumphant entrance into the city: *The Phariſees ſaid, Behold the world is gone after him.* *Learn* hence, That in the day of Chriſt's greateſt ſolemnity and triumph, there will not be wanting ſome perſons of ſuch a cankered diſpoſition, that they will neither rejoice themſelves, nor can they endure that others ſhould. This was the caſe of the wicked Phariſees here.

23 ¶ And Jeſus anſwered them, ſaying, The hour is come, that the Son of man ſhould be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it; and he that hateth his life in this world, ſhall keep it unto life eternal.

Obſerve here, 1. How our bleſſed Saviour entertains his followers with a diſcourſe concerning his approaching death and ſufferings: *The hour is coming, that the Son of man ſhall be glorified.* 2. How he arms his diſciples againſt the ſcandal of the croſs, by ſhewing them the great benefit that would redound by his death unto all mankind; and this by a ſimilitude taken from grain; *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone*: That is, as corn unſown, lodged in the barn, or laid up in the chamber, never multiplies or increaſes; but ſow it in the field, and bury it in the earth, and it multiplies and increaſes, and brings forth a plentiful crop: So, if Chriſt had not died, he had remained what he was, the eternal Son of God, but he had had no church in the world; whereas his death and ſufferings made him fructify: That brought a plentiful increaſe of exaltation to himſelf, and ſalvation to his people. 3. How plainly our Saviour dealt with his followers; he did not deceive them with a vain hope and expectation of temporal happineſs, but tells them plainly, that all that will be his diſciples, muſt prepare for ſufferings, and not think their temporal life too dear to lay down for him when he call them to it, this being the ſureſt way to ſecure to themſelves life everlaſting. *He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it, but he that hateth his life in this world, ſhall keep it unto life eternal.* *Learn* hence, That the ſureſt way to attain eternal life, is chearfully to lay down our temporal life, when the glory of Chriſt, and the honour of religion, requires it at our hand.

26 If any man ſerve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: if any man ſerve me, him will *my* Father honour.

That is, "If any man aſſumes the title, and enters into the ſacred engagement of being Chriſt's ſervant, let his converſation correſpond with his profeſſion, and let him be willing to follow me in the thorny path of affliction and and ſufferings, from this aſſurance, That all his grievous ſufferings ſhall end in eternal joys; *Where I am, there ſhall my ſervant be, and him will my Father honour.*" *Learn* hence, 1. That all that will be Chriſt's ſervants, muſt be his followers; they muſt obey his doctrine, and imitate his example. 2. That Chriſt's ſervants muſt not expect better uſage at the hands of an unkind world, than he their Maſter met with before them. 3. That ſuch as ſerve Chriſt by following of him, ſhall at death ſee him as he is, and be with him where he is; *Where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be.* 4. That God will crown the fidelity and conſtancy of Chriſt's ſervants with the higheſt dignity and honour: *If any man ſerve me, him will my Father honour.*

27 Now is my ſoul troubled: and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this hour: but for this cauſe came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

Whilſt our Saviour was thus preaching of his own death and ſufferings, a natural horror of his approaching paſſion (though ſuch as was without ſin) ſeizes upon him; his Father giving him a taſte of that wrath which he was to undergo upon the croſs for our ſins. Hereupon he betakes himſelf to prayer, *Father, ſave me from this hour:* this was the harmleſs inclination of his ſinleſs nature, which abhorred lying under wrath, and therefore prays againſt it; yet (as it were) recalling himſelf, he ſubmits to what his office, as our ſurety, required of him, and prays again to his Father to diſpoſe of him as may moſt and beſt conduce to the purpoſes of his glory; *Father, glorify thy name.* *Learn* hence, 1. That mere trouble is no ſin; Chriſt's ſoul was troubled; Chriſtianity doth not make men ſenſeleſs; grace introduceth no ſtoical ſtupidity. 2. That fear of death, eſpecially when accompanied with apprehenſions of the wrath of God, is moſt perplexing and ſoul-amazing: *My ſoul is troubled, and what ſhall I ſay?* 3. No extremity of ſufferings ought to diſcourage us from laying claim to that relation, which God ſtands in to us as a Father. Our Saviour, in the midſt of his diſtreſs, calls God Father: *Father, ſave me from this hour.* 4. In the extremity of our ſufferings, we may be importunate, but muſt not be peremptory in our prayers; as Chriſt in his agony prayed more earneſtly, ſo may we in ours, but always ſubmiſſively; *Father ſave me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I unto this hour.* 5. That our exemption from ſuffering may ſometimes be inconſiſtent with the glory of God. *Father, ſave me from this hour; Father, glorify thy name.* *Note*, laſtly, The Father's anſwer to the Son's prayer: *There came a voice from heaven, ſaying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.* That is, as God the Father had been glorified in his Son's life, doctrine, and miracles; ſo he would farther glorify himſelf in his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion; as alſo by the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and the preaching of the goſpel for the converſion of the Gentiles to the ends of the earth. *Learn* hence, That the whole work of Chriſt, from the loweſt degree of his humiliation, to the higheſt degree of his exaltation, was a glorifying of his Father: he glorified his Father by the doctrine which he taught, he glorified his Father by the miracles which he wrought, by the unſpotted innocency of his life, and by his unparalled ſufferings at his death, by his victorious reſurrection from the grave, and by his triumphant aſcenſion into heaven.

29 The people therefore that ſtood by, and heard *it*, ſaid that thundered: others ſaid, An angel ſpake to him. 30 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, This voice came not of me, but for your ſakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 (This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.)

Note here, 1. The way of God in ſpeaking to his people by a voice in thunder for the greater declaration of his glory and majeſty. Thunderings and lightnings uſually attended the voice of God, even in conſolations, and when he ſpake comfortably to his own ſervants. Oh! how dreadful and terrible then muſt the voice of God be to his enemies, when he ſhall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance to them! If there was ſuch dread and terror, ſuch thunderings and lightnings at the giving of the law; Lord, what will there be another day, when thou comeſt to puniſh the violation of that law! 2. The end why God the Father now ſpake with an audible voice to Chriſt his Son; it was for his conſolation, and the people's confirmation. His ſoul being troubled, he ſtood in need, as Mediator, of comfort from his Father; and the people had here a farther and fuller confirmation of his being the promiſed and true Meſſias that ſo they might believe in him: *This voice came not becauſe of me*; that is, not only or chiefly becauſe of me, but to confirm your faith in the belief of this great truth, that I am the Son of God, by whom the Father hath glorified, and will farther glorify, his name. 3. Our Saviour declares a double effect and fruit of his death: 1. The judgment of this world: *Now is the judgment*; *now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out:* That is, my death will be the devil's overthrow; will bring down ſin, and deliver the world from the tyranny and dominion of ſin and Satan. Thence *learn*, 1. That Satan is the Prince and ruler of all thoſe who live in ſin; not a prince by legal right, but by tyrannical uſurpation. 2. That this uſurper Satan will not quit his poſſeſſion, unleſs he be caſt out. 3. That Chriſt by his death has caſt out Satan, dethroned him, and deprived him of his tyrannical uſurpation. *Now is the prince of this world caſt out*; that is, I will ſhortly by my death deliver the world from the ſlavery of ſin, and dominion of

Satan, and particularly from that idolatry, which the greateſt part of the world were then in ſlavery under. The ſecond effect and fruit of Chriſt's death, which is here declared, is his drawing all men unto him: *When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.* There is a twofold lifting up of Chriſt; the firſt ignominious, when he was hung upon the croſs; the ſecond glorious, in the preaching of the goſpel; by this he draws all men unto him; that is, by the preaching of the goſpel, he calls and invites all perſons to himſelf; he offers the benefits of his death to all, and gathereth a church to himſelf out of the Gentile as well as the Jewiſh world. *Learn*, 1. That all perſons are naturally unwilling to come to Chriſt, they muſt be drawn. 2. That Chriſt meritoriouſly by his death, and inſtrumentally by the preaching of the goſpel, draws ſinners unto himſelf. 3. That it is not a few, or ſmall number, but a very great number, conſiſting both of Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, perſons of all nations, ſexes, and conditions, whom Chriſt draweth: Not that all are effectually drawn to Chriſt, ſo as ſavingly to believe in him; but, by the preaching of the goſpel, they are called and invited to him, and the benefit of his death are offered to them. Thus Chriſt being lifted up upon his croſs, and on the pole of his goſpel, draws all men unto him; that is, doth what is ſufficient to prevail with all men to believe on him, and to render thoſe that do not ſo, everlaſtingly inexcuſable.

34 The people anſwered him, we have heard out of the law, that Chriſt abideth for ever: and how ſayeſt thou, The Son of man muſt be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Yet a little while is the light is with you: walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for he that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. Theſe things ſpake Jeſus, and departed, and did hide himſelf from them.

Obſerve here, 1. The objection which the Jews make againſt our Saviour's being the true Meſſias. Their argument is thus: "It was foretold under the law, that Chriſt, or the Meſſias abideth for ever; but thou ſayeſt, that the Son of man muſt be lifted up and die. How then canſt thou be the promiſed Meſſias?" The anſwer is, "In his ſtate of humiliation unto death, he was lifted up; but, in his ſtate of exaltation, he abideth for ever." *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's lifting up by death, and his abiding for ever, do very well conſiſt together; for both are true of him, the one in his ſtate of humiliation, the other in his ſtate of exaltation. 2. Our Saviour returns no anſwer to their cavilling objection, nor doth he undertake to demonſtrate how his ſufferings and his abiding for ever are conſiſtent; but gives them intimations that he was the light of the world, and adviſes them, whilſt they had the light with them, to prize it highly, and improve it faithfully: *Yet a little while is the light with you, walk whilſt ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you.* *Note* here, 1. A choice and ſingular privilege enjoyed; *the light is with you*, a perſonal light, Chriſt; a doctrinal light, the goſpel: Both theſe brought with them a light of knowledge, anſwering our darkneſs of ignorance; a light of grace and holineſs, anſwering our darkneſs of ſin, which we had brought upon ourſelves; and a light of joy and comfort, anſwering the darkneſs of miſery and horror, which we lay under by reaſon of our guilt. 2. The time of enjoying this privilege limited; *yet a little while is the light with you.* The the time of a people's enjoying the light and liberty of the goſpel, it is a limited time, it is a ſhort time. 3. A duty enjoined by Chriſt, anſwerable to the privilege enjoined by us; *Walk whilſt ye have light.* An uniform and conſtant courſe of holy walking, according to the rule of the goſpel, is the indiſpenſible duty and obligation of all thoſe that enjoy the light and liberty of the goſpel; namely, to walk according to the precepts and commands of the goſpel, anſwerable to the privileges and prerogatives of the goſpel, anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of grace which the goſpel affords, and anſwerable to the glorious hope and expectation which the goſpel raiſes us unto. 4. A danger threatened to the neglecters of this duty; *leſt darkneſs come upon you:* Namely, a darkneſs of ignorance and judicial blindneſs, a darkneſs of error and ſeduction, a darkneſs of horror and deſpair, and the fatal and final darkneſs of death and hell; for all contemners of goſpel-light, there is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. Where ſin and torment run parallel, there torment makes them ſin, and their ſin feeds their torment.

37 ¶ But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with *their* eyes, nor underſtand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 41 Theſe things ſaid Eſaias when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.

The place which our Evangeliſts alludes to, is, Iſa. vi. ver. 3. *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* From whence a clear argument for Chriſt's divinity may be thus drawn. He whom Iſaiah ſaw environed with ſeraphims, and praiſed as moſt holy by them, was the true and eternal God; for ſuch acclamations belong to none but the great Jehovah, God bleſſed for evermore. But, ſays St. John, it was the glory of Chriſt that Iſaiah ſaw in his viſion, it was Chriſt whom he called, *Holy, holy*, &c. therefore Chriſt is undoubtedly God bleſſed for evermore. For the Evangeliſt was not ſpeaking of the Father, but the Son, and cites theſe words out of Iſaiah; ſo that it was the glory of the ſecond perſon that Iſaiah ſaw and ſpake of, if the words of the Evangeliſt be of any credit. Beſides, the angels are too holy to give acclamations belonging to God, to any but him that is God. *Note* here, 1. The aſtoniſhing infidelity and unbelief of the Jews, who heard our Saviour's doctrine, and were eye-witneſſes of his miracles; *though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* Let not the faithful miniſters of Chriſt be diſcouraged, and overmuch dejected, at their want of ſucceſs in diſpenſing of the goſpel, when they obſerve and conſider the ſmall ſucceſs of our Saviour's own miniſtry in the hearts and lives of his hearers; yea, though his miniſtry was accompanied with miracles, and though his miracles were many in number, mighty in nature, clear and obvious to ſenſe, being wrought before their eyes, yet his miniſtry ſucceeded not, and his miracles prevailed not: Lord, what little ſucceſs has the offer of Chriſt in the goſpel met with, from the firſt original tender to this day? Obſtinate infidelity, and curſed hypocriſy, draw more ſouls to hell than all the devils in hell. 2. How the preſent infidelity of theſe unbelieving Jews was long before foretold, and propheſied of, by the prophet Eſaias, chap. liii. 1. *Lord, who hath believed our report?* That is, our preaching. Where *note*, That Iſaiah's complaint of the ſmall ſucceſs of his preaching, was a prophecy and prediction of the like ſucceſs that Chriſt and his miniſters ſhould have under the goſpel. *Learn* hence, That the goſpel in all ages has met with more that have rejected it by unbelief, than have ſavingly entertained it by faith. Iſaiah complained before Chriſt, and his apoſtles and miniſters in every age ſince, that few have believed their reports. 3. That though the preſent unbelief of the obſtinate Jews was long foretold by the prophets of God, yet the prophets prediction was no cauſe of their unbelief, or that which laid them under an impoſſibility of believing; but the fault lay in their own obſtinate will, with reſpect to which, by the juſt judgment of God, they were blinded and hardened, for their contempt of Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſias. When men cloſe their eyes wilfully, and ſay they will not ſee, it is juſt with God to cloſe their eyes judicially, and ſay, They ſhall not ſee. *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts,* &c. *Learn* hence, That the infidelity of the people is to be reſolved into the perverſeneſs of their own wills, and the evil diſpoſitions of their own hearts, not to any judicial blindneſs or objuration wrought by God upon them, antecedent to their own ſin: God's act of hardening was conſequential upon their ſinning.

42 ¶ Nevertheleſs, among the chief rulers alſo many believed on him; but becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs *him*, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 43 For they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.

Note here, 1. That though the generality of the Jews were thus hardened under Chriſt's miniſtry and miracles, yet there were ſome, and thoſe of the chief rank, even rulers, that did believe on him; that is, they were under ſtrong and powerful convictions, that he was the true and expected Meſſias. Even in times and places where obſtinacy and infidelity moſt prevails, the miniſtry of the word ſhall not be altogether without its fruit; Chriſt here had ſome, and thoſe of the rulers too, who believed on him, when others under the ſame word were hardened: *Nevertheleſs among the chief rulers alſo, many believed on him.* 2. That though many of the chief rulers had a ſecret belief, or an inward perſuaſion, that Chriſt was the promiſed and expected Meſſias, yet it was not ſufficient to make them openly own, confeſs, and avow him to be ſuch, for fear of excommunication from the Phariſees: *They did not confeſs him, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue.* Slaviſh fear of men, and ſuffering by them, has hindered many from believing on Chriſt, and kept more from an open owning and confeſſing of him: *Becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs him.* 3. As the fear of ſuffering on one the hand, ſo the love of reputation on the other, kept them from owning and confeſſing Jeſus to be the Chriſt: *They loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God*; that is, they valued honour and applauſe from men, more than God's honouring and approving them. There is no greater ſnare to draw perſons from their duty, than inordinate love and affection to their own credit and reputation. Oh! how often is the applauſe and commendation of men preferred before the teſtimony and approbation of God! Here was their ſnare: *They loved the praiſe of men*, &c.

44 ¶ Jeſus cried and ſaid, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me. 45 And he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whoſoever believeth on me, ſhould not abide in darkneſs. 47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day. 49 For I have not ſpoken of myſelf: but the Father which ſent me, he gave me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. 50 And I know that his commandment is life everlaſting: whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.

In theſe verſes we have our bleſſed Saviour's farewel ſermon to the Jews, concerning his perſon, office and doctrine: As touching his perſon, he acquaints them with his divine nature, his oneneſs and equality with the Father; and accordingly challenges not only the aſſent, but alſo the obedience and adoration of their faith. *Jeſus cried, ſaying, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me:* That is, that believeth on me, doth not believe on a mere man, but on him that is truly and really God, as well as man: And therefore he being true God, one in eſſence, and equal in power and glory with the Father, their believing in him was believing in God the Father that ſent him. 2. The argument which our Saviour uſes to prove that believers in Chriſt do believe in the Father: *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me:* That is, "He that ſeeth me ſpiritually, and by faith, ſeeth my Father to be one with me in eſſence, though not in perſon; and he that ſeeth me in my miraculous works which I do, ſeeth him alſo that ſent me, by whom I do theſe mighty works." *Learn* hence, That we do not ſee Chriſt aright with the eye of our faith, unleſs we ſee him, and believe him to be truly and really God; one with, and equal to the Father: *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth in me him that ſent me.* 2. That the Father is not to be ſeen but in the Son; nor can believers know what the Father is, but by ſeeing what the Son is; and what they ſee the Son to be; that the Father is in him. 3. The dreadful judgment which Chriſt denounces againſt all unbelievers, and ſuch as reject him, by rejecting of his goſpel; for though, at Chriſt's firſt coming, his errand was not to judge the world, but to ſave the world, that is, to offer the tenders of ſalvation to loſt ſinners; yet at his ſecond coming he would judge them at the laſt day; when the word preached to them, and rejected by them, will give a judicial teſtimony againſt them. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt and his doctrine are inſeparable: to receive his doctrine, is to receive him; and to reject his doctrine, is to reject him. 2. That ſuch rejecters of Chriſt and the doctrine of the goſpel, ſhall not eſcape the judgment of Chriſt at the great day. 3. That at the great day, were there no other witneſs againſt the rejecters of Chriſt and his goſpel, but the word preached, yet that alone will be ſufficient both for conviction and condemnation: *The word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day.* The word is now the rule of living, and it ſhall be hereafter the rule of judging: Now it is the rule by which we muſt live to Chriſt, then it ſhall be the rule by which we ſhall be judged of Chriſt. 4. The argument and reaſon which our Saviour produces, to prove that the word of God and the doctrine of the goſpel ſlighted and rejected, ſhould condemn ſinners at the great day, namely, from the divine authority of his doctrine; for albeit his doctrine was his own, as he was true God; yet as man, and as Mediator, it was not his own, but the Father's which ſent him; ſo that his word and doctrine being divine, and the Father's as well as his, (for he did not ſpeak of himſelf; that is, of himſelf and alone without the Father) it is ſufficient to judge and condemn all the rejecters and deſpiſers of it.—*Learn* thence, 1. That though the doctrine of the goſpel be Chriſt's own, as he is truly and really God, yet it was not his own as mere man, excluſive of the Father, who is one God with him, and who gave him a commiſſion and inſtruction, as Mediator, to preach and publiſh the glad tidings of the goſpel: *For*, ſays he, *I have not ſpoken of myſelf, but the Father which ſent me gave me a commandment.* 2. That the doctrine which Chriſt delivered by command from the Father, doth point out the way to eternal life, and will bring loſt ſinners thereunto, if they ſincerely believe it, and obey it: *I know that his commandment is life everlaſting.* 3. That therefore ſinners who rejected the doctrine of Chriſt contained in the goſpel, do highly diſhonour, offend, and affront both the Father and Son, and bring upon themſelves a righteous judgment, and expoſe themſelves to unutterable and inevitable condemnation.

CHAP. XIII.

NOW before the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And ſupper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, to betray him,) 3 Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God,

In this chapter is recorded the hiſtory of our Saviour's waſhing his diſciples feet; an action full of humility and condeſcenſion, and propounded to his followers imitation. The circumſtance of the time is here noted, when this act was done; namely, at the paſſover, when the time of our Saviour's departure was at hand; and having conſtantly and immutably loved his own, he expreſſes the permanency of his love towards them to the end, by this action of his, in waſhing their feet. Here *note*, How Chriſt choſe the time of the Jewiſh paſſover to ſuffer in, that he might prove himſelf to be the ſubſtance of that type; that he was the true paſchal lamb, who by the ſacrifice of his death did atone divine diſpleaſure, and taketh away the ſins of the world. 2. The means which the wiſdom of God permitted to bring the Lord of life to his ignominious death; and that was the treaſon and perfidiouſneſs of one of his own diſciples, Judas Iſcariot. Where *obſerve*, 1. The perſon betraying, Judas; Judas a profeſſor and a preacher; Judas an apoſtle; being one of the twelve, whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the world to be his deareſt friends. Can we wonder to find friends unfriendly, or unfaithful towards us, when our Saviour had a traitor in his own houſe? 2. The heinouſneſs of Judas's ſin in betraying Chriſt; he betrayed Chriſt Jeſus a man, Chriſt Jeſus his Maſter, Chriſt Jeſus his Maker: The firſt was murder, the ſecond treaſon. Lord! it is no ſtrange and uncommon thing, for the vileſt ſins, and moſt horrid impieties, to be acted by perſons making the moſt eminent profeſſion of thy holy religion. 3. What hand the devil had in the ſufferings of our Saviour: He put it into Judas' heart to betray Chriſt, that is, he did ſuggeſt and inject ſuch thoughts into his mind, which Judas inſtantly cloſed with. The devil, being a ſpirit, has a quick acceſs to our ſpirits, and can inſtil his ſuggeſtions into them. As Chriſt did breathe upon his diſciples, and they received the Holy Ghoſt, and were filled with the Spirit; ſo Satan breathes filthy ſuggeſtions into the ſpirits of men, and fills them with all manner of wickedneſs, even with the ſpirit of hell itſelf.

4 He riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel, and girded himſelf: 5 After that he poured water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Note here, The admirable humility and great ſelf-denial of our Lord and Maſter: He ariſes from ſupper, whilſt his diſciples ſat ſtill, and he that came in the form of a ſervant, performs all the offices of the meaneſt ſervant to his diſciples: He lays aſide his upper garments, he girds himſelf with a towel, pours water into a baſon, and begins to waſh and wipe their feet, which lay out behind them, as they leaned at the table: All which was a moſt ſervile employment. *Learn* hence, That the wonderful humility of Jeſus Chriſt inclined him to do the meaneſt offices of ſervice unto his people, even to become a ſervant to them in the day of his humiliation; and though now glorified in heaven, he retains the ſame compaſſionate heart towards them, as when here on earth: Hereby inſtructing us, that it is our duty, in whatever ſtation providence ſhall place us in the world, to ſtoop to the loweſt offices of love and ſervice to our fellow brethren. Lord! thou haſt left the the moſt amazing inſtance of ſelf-denial for our encouragement and example. *Queſt.* But how far doth this example bind us? *Anſw.* It does not oblige to the individual act, but to follow the reaſon of the example; that is, after Chriſt's example, we ought to be ready to perform the loweſt and meaneſt offices of love and ſervice to one another.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? 7 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. 8 Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. 9 Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo *my* hands and *my* head. 10 Jeſus ſaith to him, He that his waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who ſhould betray him; therefore, ſaid he, Ye are not all clean.

Note here, 1. How Simon Peter refuſes to admit of ſuch a condeſcending act from Chriſt his Lord and Maſter, as the waſhing of his feet: *Lord! Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet.* It is a ſinful humility to refuſe the offered favours of Chriſt, becauſe we are unworthy to receive them. Though we are not worthy of Chriſt, and of his love, yet Chriſt is worthy of us, and of our faith. 2. Our Saviour's reply to Peter's refuſal: 1. He tells him, That there was more in it, than the bare act of waſhing did at firſt ſight import, and that he ſhould know hereafter what he did not underſtand now. *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the ſervants of God themſelves are often much to ſeek, and cannot apprehend and underſtand at preſent the actings and dealings of God with them; they underſtand not either the intent or the event of God's diſpenſations. 2. That although God's dealings with his children and people are for a while in the dark, and are not preſently made known, yet there will come a time for the clearing and evidencing of them, when they ſhall underſtand that all his diſpenſations were in mercy to them. The ſecond part of our Saviour's reply to St Peter follows, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Peter, this external act of mine in waſhing thy feet, doth ſignify ſomething farther, and imports my waſhing of thy ſoul from the guilt and defilement of ſin, without which thou canſt neither have intereſt in me, nor communion with me." *Learn* hence, 1. That ſo univerſal is the pollution of ſin, that every ſoul ſtands in need of waſhing. 2. That Chriſt waſheth all that have a part and intereſt in him, both from the guilt and pollution of all their ſin. 3. That St. Peter now underſtanding better what was meant by this outward waſhing, namely, that it did ſignify and repreſent the cleanſing of the ſoul from the defilement of ſin, he is ſo far from refuſing that Chriſt ſhould waſh his feet, that he offers his hands and head, and all, to be waſhed by him; *Lord, not my feet only*, &c. *Learn* hence, That ſo thoroughly ſenſible are the ſaints of the filthineſs and pollution of ſin, that they deſire nothing more than an inward, thorough, and prevailing purification of their whole man, by the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jeſus. 4. Our Saviour's reply to St. Peter's laſt requeſt, *He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet*; plainly alluding to the cuſtom of thoſe countries, where going abroad barefoot, or with thin ſandals, covering only a ſmall part of their feet, they had frequent occaſion to waſh their feet, but need not to waſh their whole bodies: in like manner, the ſaints and ſervants of God, who are already waſhed and cleaned by the blood of Chriſt from the guilt of their ſins, and have a real work of renovation and ſanctification begun in them by the Spirit of Chriſt, they ought to be daily purging and purifying their affections and actions, and labouring daily after farther meaſures and degrees of ſanctification. *Learn* hence, 1. That the holieſt, the wiſeſt, and the beſt of ſaints, whilſt here in a world of ſin and temptation, do ſtand in need of a daily waſhing by repentance, and according to their repeated acts of ſin. 2. That all juſtified perſons are in God's account clean perſons: *Ye are clean, but not all*; that is, you are juſtified and pardoned, ſanctified and cleanſed, all of you, excepting Judas, whoſe heart was known to Chriſt, though his hypocriſy was hid from the diſciples.

12 So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Maſter, and Lord: and ye ſay well; for *ſo* I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.

In theſe words our Saviour declares to his diſciples his intention and deſign in waſhing of their feet; namely, to teach them by his example the duty of humility; that as he had performed that act of abaſement towards them, ſo ſhould they be ready to perform all offices of love and condeſcenſion one towards another: *Behold, I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done unto you.* *Learn* thence, That humility and mutual condeſcenſion amongſt the members and miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, is a moſt neceſſary grace and duty, which the Son of God not only taught by his doctrine, but recommended and inforced by his example. Farther, The argument which Chriſt makes uſe of to preſs the imitation of his example upon them; and that is drawn from the titles given to him by his diſciples: *Ye call me Maſter, and Lord, and ſo I am.* Now ſervants to imitate their maſters, and ſubjects to obey their lord and king. Chriſt is a Maſter to teach and direct; a Lord to govern and protect. As he is a Maſter, we are to learn in his ſchool; as he is a Lord, we are to ſerve in his houſe: He muſt be ſubmitted to as a Prince, as well as a Saviour. It is in vain to expect ſalvation from him, if we do not yield ſubjection to him. Another argument which our Lord makes uſe of to preſs his diſciples to imitate his example, is drawn from his dignity and ſuperiority over them; *The ſervant is not greater than his maſter.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Though you my diſciples are to have a very high and honourable ſtation in the goſpel-church, yet let not this ſwell you with pride, but be you mutually condeſcending to each other, remembering you are but ſervants to myſelf, and ought to be ſo to one another; *And the ſervant is not greater than his Lord.* *Learn* hence, 1. That whatever dignity Chriſt confers upon his ſervants and officers, yet he is over them all, ſuperior to them, and above them. 2. That the conſideration of Chriſt's dignity, and his miniſters meanneſs, ought to keep their minds humble and lowly, and far from affecting ſuperiority over their brethren: *The ſervant is not greater than his lord, nor he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.*

17 If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Our Lord here intimates to us theſe two things: 1. The neceſſity of knowledge, in order unto practice. 2. The neceſſity of practice, in order unto happineſs. A man may know the will of God indeed, and not do it; but he can never do the will of God (acceptably) and not know it. The knowledge of God's will and our duty is neceſſary to the practice of it. The knowledge of our duty and the practice of it, may be, and too often are ſeparated; but the practice of religion, and doing what we know to be our duty, is the only way to true happineſs. *Learn* thence, 1. That Chriſt doth not approve of a blind obedience in his people, but requires that their practice and obedience be founded upon underſtanding and knowledge. 2. That the firſt care of thoſe that will be Chriſt's diſciples and followers, muſt be this, with all ſeriouſneſs to apply themſelves to the knowledge of their maſter's will. 3. The next to the knowledge of our duty, our firſt and chief care muſt be to practice of every thing that we underſtand and know to be our duty. 4. That a right knowledge and practice of our duty will certainly make us happy; *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

18 ¶ I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen; but that the ſcripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel againſt me.

If the chuſing ſpoken of here be underſtood of eternal election, a chuſing to everlaſting life, then it affords a ſtrong argument to prove Chriſt to be God: Thus: he that is the author of eternal election, is God; but Chriſt is ſuch. *I know whom I have choſen.* Conſider Chriſt as God, ſo we are choſen by him: Conſider him as Mediator, and ſo we are choſen in him. If the chuſing here be meant of chuſing to the work of the apoſtleſhip, then our Saviour tells his diſciples, that it need not ſeem ſtrange to them, that he choſe one to be an apoſtle, whom he knew would prove a traitor; for hereby that ſcripture prophecy, Pſal. xli. 9. would be fulfilled; *He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel againſt me*; which though it was literally ſpoken of Achitophel's treachery againſt David, yet was it prohetically ſpoken of Judas's treaſon againſt Chriſt; and the expreſſion of *lifting up the heel* is metaphorial, taken from a fed beaſt, that kicks againſt his maſter. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt did, as his followers do daily, ſuffer not only from open enemies, but from boſom and familiar friends. Lord, how many are there in the world, who by profeſſion lift up their hand unto thee, who yet by treaſon and rebellion lift up their heel againſt thee.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am *he*.

Here another argument occurs, to prove the divinity of our bleſſed Saviour, from his foreknowledge of Judas's treaſon: the perſon who, the time when, and the place where, were all known to Chriſt: *I tell you before it come to paſs.* The argument lies thus: "He that foreſaw the future actions of men, and infallibly foreknew the future events and iſſues of things, is certainly God; but Chriſt did this, therefore he is really God." And he tells us here, That for this very reaſon he foretold now the treaſon of Judas; *Now I tell you before, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am he.* What *he* doth he mean? What *he* could foretel ſo many things to come, which did not depend upon neceſſary, but contingent cauſes only? This *he* was not a mere man ſurely, for he knows not what ſhall be on the morrow; but muſt be real God, becauſe he knew all things, not by revelation, as the prophets knew things to come, but by immediate inſpection, and ſimple inſtitution, ſo that we may ſay with Peter, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things:* And becauſe thou *knoweſt all things* thou art God.

20 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.

Leſt his apoſtles ſhould think, that for the treachery of one of them they ſhould all become odious and abominable to the whole world, our Saviour encourages and gives them an aſſurance, That there ſhould be thoſe that would receive them, and that he would take it as kindly as if they received himſelf; *He that receiveth you receiveth me.* *Learn* hence, That it is a ſweet encouragement to the miniſters of Chriſt unto the faithful diſcharge of their duty, that Chriſt and the Father account that reſpect paid to the miniſters of the goſpel is paid to themſelves; and, on the contrary, that all the contempt caſt upon them, reflects upon themſelves: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.*

21 When Jeſus had thus ſaid, he was troubled

in ſpirit, and teſtified, and ſaid, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me. 22 Then the diſciples looked one to another, doubting of whom he ſpake.

Oh, what an aſtoniſhing word was this! *One ſhall betray me!* one of *my diſciples* ſhall betray me! yea, *one of you* my diſciples and apoſtles ſhall do it! Well might they look one upon another with ſorrow and amazement, to hear that their Maſter ſhould die; that he ſhould die by treaſon, and that the traitor ſhould be one of themſelves; yet do they not cenſure one another, but inſpect themſelves, ſaying, *Maſter, is it I?* not, *Maſter, is it Judas?* *Learn* hence, 1. That it is poſſible for ſecret wickedneſs to lurk, yea, for the greateſt villainy to lodge in the hearts of profeſſors, in whoſe converſation appeareth nothing that may give a juſt ſuſpicion to others. 2. That it is both the duty and property of the diſciples of Chriſt, to have ſo much candour and brotherly love, as not to raſhly cenſure and judge one another but to hope the beſt of others, and to fear the worſt of themſelves.

23 Now there was leaning on Jeſus' boſom, one of his diſciples whom Jeſus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he ſhould aſk who it ſhould be of whom he ſpake. 25 He then lying on Jeſus' breaſt, ſaith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jeſus anſwered, He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon. 27 And after the ſop, Satan entered into him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, That thou doeſt, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he ſpake this unto him. 29 For ſome *of them* thought, becauſe Judas had the bag, that Jeſus had ſaid unto him, Buy *thoſe things* that we have need of againſt the feaſt: or, that he ſhould give ſomething to the poor. 30 He then having received the ſop, went immediately out: and it was night.

Note here, 1. The character given of St. John the beloved diſciple: he leaned on Chriſt's boſom; that is, he had moſt intimate converſe with Chriſt, one whom Chriſt treated with greater freedom and familiarity than the reſt, and one that knew more of his heart than moſt of his diſciples. We commonly call a very near friend, *a boſom friend*. *Learn*, That although Chriſt had an endeared love for all his diſciples and followers, yet there were degrees in Chriſt's own love, and he had a familiarity with ſome diſciples beyond others, whilſt he was here upon earth, even as now in heaven; though his heart be towards all his children here on earth, yet he is pleaſed to let out more kind manifeſtations of himſelf, and more ſenſible evidences of his love towards ſome than towards others. John was the diſciple that lay in Jeſus's boſom. 2. The way which our Saviour took to diſcover Judas to the reſt of his diſciples, not by naming him, but by giving him a ſop; partly becauſe he would not give Judas any provocation by mentioning his name, and partly becauſe this ſign of eating the ſop was moſt agreeable to the prophetical prediction, Pſal. xli. 9. *Mine own familiar friend, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel againſt me.* 3. The time when Judas received the ſop, and the conſequent that followed upon receiving it; it was at that time when he had with an unbelieving heart, and an unthankful ſpirit, been eating the paſſover which was a type of Chriſt. Now *Satan enters into him*; that is, takes fuller poſſeſſion of him, and he gives himſelf up more freely and fully to the devil's conduct and ſuggeſtion. Satan gets poſſeſſion of wicked men gradually and by degrees; not all at once: the only way to be ſafe, is to reſiſt at the beginnings of ſin, for when Satan once gets footing, it is hard to prevent a more full poſſeſſion. 4. The place where Judas now was, namely, at Bethany, ſome miles from Jeruſalem, and it was now night; yet ſo intent he was upon the devil's work, that away he trudges to Jeruſalem, and at that time of night repairs to the high prieſts, and ſells his Saviour into their hands. Oh, what a warmth and zeal was here in the devil's cauſe! Men given over by God, and poſſeſſed by Satan, are ſo reſtleſs and unwearied in ſin, that neither by day nor by night can they ceaſe from the contrivance and execution of it.

31 ¶ Therefore when he was gone out, Jeſus ſaid, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo glorify him in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraightway glorify him.

Note here, 1. Our bleſſed Lord calls his death his glory: *Now is the Son of man glorified:* that is, now is the time at hand when I am to die, and ſhall by my death finiſh the work of man's redemption, and thereby eminently glorify God. God the Father was eminently glorified in the obedience and ſufferings of his dear and only Son. It is true, that the ſufferings of Chriſt were ignominious in themſelves, yet were they the way to his own glory, and his Father's alſo; for by them he redeemed a loſt world, trampled upon Satan, triumphed over ſin; and the Father was exceedingly glorified by the Son's giving obedience to his will, and ſo chearfully ſuffering: *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me: and, as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; ſo now I ſay unto you.

Note here, An endearing compellation, a ſweet title given by Chriſt to his diſciples; *Little children*; intimating that tender affection which he bears unto them, though now upon the point of departing from them. *Learn* thence, That whatever Chriſt's dealings are, or may be with his people, in reſpect of his removing and withdrawing from them, yet he ſtill retains the relation of a father to them, and will, in his abſence from them, exerciſe ſuch a care over them, as parents have of their young and tender children; ſo much doth the title of children imply and import. *Obſerve* farther, The plain intimation which our Saviour gives to his diſciples of his death being very nigh, (for it was the very next day) he tells them he was going to heaven; *and whither he went, they could not come*; that is, not preſently; they ſhould follow him their forerunner, afterwards; but at preſent he had a great deal of work for them to do, though his own work was done; and till they had finiſhed their work, *whither he went, they could not come*. *Learn* hence, That though it be reſt which the ſaints may lawfully deſire, an everlaſting reſt with Chriſt in glory, yet muſt they not refuſe to labour, whilſt their Lord will have it ſo: Till their work be done, whither Chriſt is gone they cannot come: *Ye ſhall ſeek me; but whither I go*, at preſent, *ye cannot come*.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.

Our Saviour having mentioned his departure from his diſciples in the former verſe; *I go away, and whither I go, ye cannot come*; in this and the following verſes, he gives them a ſtrict charge, that in his abſence they ſhould love one another. This he calls a *new commandment*: not that it was new in regard of inſtitution, but of reſtitution; not new in regard to the ſubſtance of it, for it was a branch of the law of nature, and a known precept of the Jewiſh religion; but he calls it a new commandment, 1. Becauſe purged from the old corrupt gloſſes of the Phariſees, who had limited this duty of love, and confined it to their own countrymen; whereas Chriſt enlarges the object, and obliges his diſciples to love all mankind even their very enemies. 2. Becauſe this duty of love was ſo greatly advanced and heightened by our Saviour, as to the meaſures and degrees of it, even to the laying down of our lives one for another. 3. It is called a new commandment, becauſe urged from a new motive, and enforced by a new example; *As I have loved you*, that ye alſo love one another. Never was this duty ſo effectually taught, ſo mightily encouraged, ſo much urged and inſiſted upon, by any teacher, as our Saviour; and never was there ſuch an example given of it as his own. 4. It is a new commandment, becauſe with the reſt it was never to wax old; but to be always freſh in the memory and practice of Chriſt's diſciples to the end of the world.

35 By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.

To recommend the foregoing duty of loving one another, with the greater advantage our Saviour tells us here, that it will be the beſt evidence of our relation to him as ſincere diſciples; *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples*. The diſciples of John were known by the auſterity of their lives; the diſciples of the Phariſees by their habit and ſeparation from other men; Chriſt will have his diſciples known by their profound affection to each other, which [illegible] the primitive times was ſo conſpicuous, that the very heathens did cry out and ſay, See how the chriſtians love one another! Here *obſerve*, 1. Our Saviour doth not ſay, By this men ſhall conjecture and gueſs you belong to me, as being my diſciples, but they ſhall certainly know it. 2. He doth not ſay, By this ſhall you know yourſelves to be my diſciples, and one another to be ſo; but by this ſhall all others know it as well as yourſelves. 3. He doth not ſay, By this ſhall all men know that you look like my diſciples; but that you are indeed what you pretend to be, namely, by your loving one another. 4. Chriſt doth not ſay, By this ſhall the world know that ye are my diſciples, namely, by your frequent faſtings, by your reading the ſcriptures daily, by your hearing ſermons weekly, by your receiving ſacraments monthly; all theſe, put together, will be no ſufficient evidence of your diſcipleſhip, if you keep a ſecret grudge in your hearts one againſt another: But, *by this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one another*. *Learn* hence, That one of the beſt proofs and evidences we can have of our relation to Chriſt, as his ſincere diſciples, is an hearty love and good-will one towards another.

36 Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, whither goeſt thou? Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go thou canſt not follow me now; but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter ſaid unto him, Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy ſake? 38 Jeſus anſwered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake? Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, The cock ſhall not crow till thou haſt denied me thrice.

Here we find Peter reflecting upon what our Saviour had ſaid juſt before, ver. 33. *Whither*, &c. he is inquiſitive to know of Chriſt whither he went. Our Lord tells him, that for the preſent he could not follow him, but ſhould hereafter; he was not yet ſtrong enough to ſuffer for him, as he ſhould and did afterwards. St. Peter, grieved at this, raſhly reſolves to follow him, though he ſhould die for his ſake. Chriſt adviſes him not to be over-confident of his own ſtrength and ſtanding, for he ſhould deny him thrice, within the time of cock-crowing. *Note* here, 1. How that fond conceit which our Lord's diſciples had of his temporal kingdom here in this world, did abide and continue with them to the very laſt; for when Chriſt ſpake of leaving them, by aſcending into heaven, Peter underſtands him of a removal that was earthly, from one place to another; whereas Chriſt intended it of a removal from earth to heaven. The opinion that the Meſſiah was to be a temporal prince, and that his kingdom ſhould be of this world; was ſo deeply rooted in the minds of the Jews, that they ſtumbled at it fatally; and Chriſt's own diſciples had ſo drank in the notion, that they wonder to hear Chriſt ſay, that he is going from them, and that whither he goes they cannot come.— 2. That Chriſt's diſciples ſhall certainly follow their Maſter afterwards, and be for ever with the Lord; but they muſt wait their Lord's time, and finiſh their Lord's work; they muſt patiently wait for their change, and not peeviſhly wiſh for it: for, though they do not follow Chriſt preſently to heaven, they ſhall follow him afterwards. 3. The greatneſs of St. Peter's confidence; *I will lay down my life for thy ſake*. Good man! he reſolved honeſtly, but too, too much in his own ſtrength. Little, O little did he think what a feather he ſhould be in the wind of temptation, if once God left him to the power and prevalency of his own fears! The holieſt of men knows not his own ſtrength, till temptation brings him to the trial. Laſtly, How deteſtable St. Peter's preſumption and ſelf-confidence was to Chriſt, and how fatal and pernicious to himſelf; *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake?* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Peter, thou ſayeſt more than thou canſt do; thine own ſtrength will fail thee, and thy ſelf-confidence deceive thee: I know thy heart better than thou doſt thyſelf, and I foreſee, that *before the cock crows thou ſhalt deny me thrice.*" Thence *learn*, That none are ſo near falling, as thoſe that are moſt confident of their own ſtanding.

CHAP. XIV.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. 2 In my Father's houſe are many manſions: If it *were* not *ſo*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf; that where I am, *there* ye may be alſo. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Our bleſſed Saviour, in the foregoing chapter, having acquainted his diſciples with his approaching death, by the treachery of Judas, their hearts were thereupon overwhelmed with grief and trouble: Accordingly in this chapter, by ſundry arguments, he comforts his diſciples againſt the perplexity of their fears and ſorrows. *Obſerve*, 1. How Chriſt addreſſes himſelf to his diſciples in a very endearing and affectionate manner: *Let not your heart be troubled.* Whence *learn*, (1.) That the beſt and holieſt of God's children and ſervants, whilſt here in an imperfect ſtate, are ſubject to deſponding, and diſquieting and diſtruſtful fears. (2.) That no work is more delightful to our Saviour, than to comfort the troubled and perplexed ſpirits of his ſervants. *Obſerve*, 2. The remedy which Chriſt preſcribes for the calming of their preſent fears, and for arming them againſt future troubles, and that is faith in the Father and in himſelf; *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Hence *learn*, 1. That God is the ſupreme object of faith; his unchangeable love and faithfulneſs, with his infinite power in the accompliſhment of his promiſe, is the ſecurity of believers. 2. That Chriſt, as Mediator between God and guilty creatures, is the immediate object of our faith. 3. That Chriſt's being the true and proper object of our faith, is a proof of his being truly and really God. Chriſt doth here aſſert his own Deity in the ſubſtance of the command, in making himſelf an object of faith in conjunction with God the Father; *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* *Obſerve* next, The arguments of conſolation which Chriſt propounds for the ſupport of his diſciples, under the ſorrow which they had conceived for his approaching departure: 1. He tells them, That heaven, whither he was now going, was his Father's houſe, a place of happineſs not deſigned for himſelf alone, but for many more to enjoy a perpetual reſt and abode in, as in everlaſting manſions; *In my Father's houſe are many manſions.* Heaven is God's houſe, in which he will freely converſe with his domeſtics, his children and ſervants, and they ſhall enjoy full glory there, as in a quiet and capacious habitation. A ſecond ground of comfort is, That he aſſures them, he will come again and receive them to himſelf, that they may live together in the heavenly manſions. This promiſe Chriſt makes good to his ſaints, partly at the day of their death, and perfectly at the day of judgment, when he ſhall make one errand for all, and take up all his children to himſelf, and make them completely happy, both in ſoul and body with himſelf. *Learn* hence, That though Chriſt has removed his bodily preſence from his friends on earth, yet his love to them is not ceaſed, nor will he reſt ſatisfied till he and they meet again, eternally to ſolace themſelves in each other's company; *I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* A third argument for conſolation is, that notwithſtanding Chriſt was to leave them, yet they knew whither he went, namely, to heaven, and which was the way thither; *Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* It contributes much to the comfort of believers, as to know God and heaven, ſo to know the way that leads thither, that ſo they may be armed againſt all the difficulties of that way.

5 Thomas ſaith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt; and how can we know the way? 6 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

Note here, 1. How Thomas, and probably divers others of the apoſtles, notwithſtanding all that Chriſt had ſaid to the contrary, did ſtill dream of a temporal kingdom, and ſuppoſed him to ſpeak of ſome earthly palace which he was going to; and therefore he tells our Saviour, he knew not whither he was going: But Chriſt meaning not a temporal, but heavenly kingdom, tells them, that if they intended to follow him, and be with him in heaven, he himſelf was the only way thither: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life*; that is, I am the true and living way to the Father: And *no man cometh to the Father but by me*; that is, no man can have any acceſs to God by prayer, or any other act of religious worſhip here on earth, or any acceſs to God in heaven, but by me, as Mediator. As if Chriſt had ſaid, "I am the author of the way that leadeth unto life, the teacher of the truth which directs to it, and the giver of that life which is to be obtained by walking in it: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*

7 If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo: and from henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him. 8 Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us. 9 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? he that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou *then*, Shew us the Father? 10 Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father,

and the Father in me: or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.

Note here, 1. What a groſs conception the apoſtles had, and St. Philip in particular, of the divine nature and being, as if God the Father could be ſeen with mortal eyes: *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.* It is not eaſy to determine what degrees of ignorance may conſiſt with ſaving grace; doubtleſs as the degrees of revelation and means of knowledge are more or leſs, ſo a perſon's ignorance is more or leſs excuſable before God. 2. How meekly our bleſſed Saviour reproves their ignorance; *Have I been ſo long with you, and haſt thou not known me, Philip?* and then proceeds to inſtruct them in, and farther acquaint them with, the oneneſs of himſelf with the Father, and the perſonal union of the divine and human nature in himſelf. *Learn* hence, That the Father being inviſible in his eſſence, to know or ſee him with mortal or bodily eyes is impoſſible; but he was ſeen in his own Son, who is the expreſs image of the Father, being one in eſſence with him, and one in operation alſo: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

12 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do ſhall he do alſo, and greater *works* than theſe ſhall he do; becauſe I go unto my Father.

Here Chriſt gives his diſciples a promiſe of enduing them with power, after his departure, to work miracles, in ſome reſpects greater than what he wrought himſelf: Not greater in regard of the manner, for he wrought by his own power, and they wrought all in his name; but greater in regard of the matter of them; particularly, their ſpeaking with ſtrange tongues, their giving the Holy Ghoſt by laying on of hands, their healing of diſeaſes by the very ſhadow of their bodies, but eſpecially by their wonderful converſion of the Gentiles from idolatry to ſerve the living God. When St. Peter converted three thouſand at one ſermon, then Chriſt made good this promiſe; the diſciple at that time appeared to be above his Maſter; Chriſt all his time was angling for a few fiſhes, and catched but an hundred and twenty, Acts i. 15. whilſt Peter comes with his dragnet, and catches three thouſand at one caſt; the reaſon might be, becauſe Chriſt was not properly to be the builder, but the foundation itſelf. He ſubjoins the reaſon of all this; *Becauſe I go unto my Father*; that is, to ſend down, and pour forth upon you my apoſtles, the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt; which was the great cauſe of the apoſtles miraculous operations. Hence *learn*, That it pleaſed the wiſdom of Chriſt to do greater things by the hand of his weak ſervants here in the world, than he was pleaſed to do himſelf, who was God over all, bleſſed for evermore.

13 And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

In theſe words our Saviour produces another argument to quiet his diſciples hearts under their perplexity and trouble for the loſs of his bodily preſence; he aſſures them, that whatever comforts they enjoyed by his preſence, they ſhall obtain by their prayers. *Note* here, 1. The qualification requiſite in prayer; we muſt pray *in Chriſt's name*; that is, for the ſake of his merits and mediation, in obedience to God's command, and with an eye to his glory, and for things agreeable to his will, and for things which his wiſdom ſees good for us. To pray in Chriſt's name, is more than to name Chriſt in prayer. It implies three things: 1. To look up unto Chriſt, as having purchaſed for us this privilege, that we may pray; for it is by the blood of Chriſt that we draw near to God, and that a throne of grace is open to us. 2. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and by the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit of Chriſt. 3. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray in the virtue of the preſent mediation of Chriſt; believing, that what we aſk on earth, Chriſt obtains in heaven. To pray thus, is no eaſy matter; yet unleſs we do pray thus, we do not pray at all. *Note*, 2. The promiſe made to ſuch prayers; *Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do:* He ſaith not, that will my Father do; but that will I do, to teſtify his divine power and oneneſs with the Father. This evidently proves him to be God. 3. The repetition of the promiſe for the further confirmation of it: *If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it.* The promiſe is doubled for the confirmation of it, that ſo we might be free from all fears and doubts of being heard, when we put up our prayers to God, in the name and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, for things agreeable to his will. *Learn* hence, That although the children of God have ſometimes many jealouſies and fears ariſing in their mind concerning the anſwer of their prayers, yet they are altogether groundleſs; for it is moſt certain their deſires ſhall be granted them, ſo far as the wiſdom of God ſees fit and convenient for them; and for that reaſon our Saviour redoubles the promiſe; *If ye will aſk any thing in my name, I will do it.*

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

In theſe words our Saviour implicitly reproves his diſciples for their fond way of expreſſing their love to him, by doting upon his bodily preſence, and ſorrowing immoderately for his abſence, and he expreſly warns them to evidence their love to him by their obedience to his commands; *If ye love me, keep my commandmeuts.* Where *note*, Chriſt requires an obedient love, and loving obedience. Love without obedience is but diſſimulation; obedience without love is but drudgery and ſlavery. Such a love as produces obedience, muſt be a dutiful love; a love of reverence and honour to him as a commander, and an operative and working love, a labour of love, as the apoſtle calls it: Not waiters, but workers, are the beſt ſervants in Chriſt's eſteem. And ſuch an obedience as is the product of love, will be a willing, eaſy, and chearful obedience, a pleaſing and an acceptable obedience, a conſtant and abiding obedience; all other motives without love are ſervile and baſe, and beget in us the drudgery of a ſlave, but not the duty of a ſon: He that fears God only, is afraid of ſmarting; but he that loves God, is afraid of offending. *Learn* hence, That the beſt and ſureſt evidence we can have of our love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is an humble, chearful, univerſal, and perſevering obedience to his commands: *Keep* *my commandments*; that is, endeavour it without reſerve; for though we cannot keep the commandments to a juſt ſatisfaction, yet we may perform them to a gracious acceptation. And the word *my*, my commandments, is a ſweetning and alleviating word. Moſes's law, an unſupportable load, but Chriſt's law an eaſy burden. The law from Sinai, dreadful; the law from Sion, gracious; it pardons weakneſs, and accepts ſincerity.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, 17 *Even* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.

Chriſt comforts his diſciples here, with a promiſe of the miſſion of the holy Spirit, to ſupply the want of his bodily preſence. Where *note*, 1. The procurer of this bleſſing, and that is Chriſt, by his prevailing prayer and powerful interceſſion: *I will pray:* It runs in the future tenſe, and ſo is a promiſe of Chriſt's continual interceſſion. As long as Chriſt is in heaven, a chriſtian ſhall not want a ſupply of comfort and conſolation here on earth. 2. The author and donor of the bleſſing, and that is, God himſelf; *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give. The Father*, that is, my Father, your Father, and he that is the Father of comfort and conſolation; *I will pray, and he will give.* It is an expreſſion of great aſſurance. 3. The bleſſing itſelf, the Holy Ghoſt, called here *Another Comforter.* Where *obſerve*, 1. The divinity of the Holy Ghoſt: he that will ſupply the comforts of Chriſt's preſence, muſt be, as Chriſt is the God of all comfort. 2. The perſon of the Holy Ghoſt: He is a divine perſon, not a quality or operation; then we might call him a comfort, but not a comforter. 3. The office and employment of the Holy Ghoſt: *He is a Comforter:* that is, an advocate, an interceſſor to ſue for us; an encourager, and one that adminiſters conſolation to us; and as he is an holy Spirit, ſo are his comforts, holy comforts. *Note* 4. The ſtability of this bleſſing; *that he may abide with you for ever.* The beſt of our outward comforts are ſudden flames, not laſting flames; but the conſolations of the holy Spirit are ſtrong conſolations, they are abounding conſolations, and everlaſting conſolations; eſpecially the holy Spirit will be the comforter of good men in the day of affliction, in the day of temptation, at the hour of death, when all other comforts flag and fail. Laſtly, The additional title given to the Holy Ghoſt, he is called *the Spirit of truth:* partly in oppoſition to Satan, who is called a lying ſpirit; partly becauſe he teacheth and revealeth the truth, leading his people into all truth, and ſealeth and confirmeth truth to the ſoul of believers: he is the ſpirit of truth, both in his eſſence and in his operations. *Learn* hence, That as the holy Spirit is true in his eſſence and nature, ſo is he true in his office as a comforter to good men; all his conſolations being real and ſolid, and free from impoſture and deluſion.

18 I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.

Here *note*, 1. The condition which the diſciples were in upon the account of Chriſt's removal from them, and that was ſad and comfortleſs; fatherleſs or orphans, as the word ſignifies. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's departure, or the loſs of his gracious preſence, is very ſad and comfortleſs to a pious ſoul; well might the diſciples here lament and mourn, upon the occaſion of Chriſt's leaving of them, ſeeing thereby they ſhould be deprived of his doctrine and inſtructions, of his advice and counſel, and of the benefit of his holy and inſtructive example. 2. The care of Chriſt for his diſciples, in reference to this their ſad and diſconſolate condition: *He would not leave them comfortleſs.* Where remark, He doth not ſay, I will not ſuffer you to be comfortleſs, but I will not leave you ſo; that is, he will not deſert or diſown them in their comfortleſs condition: he will not leave them, either in point of affection, or in point of activity; he will not ceaſe to love them, nor ceaſe to beſtir himſelf for them. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt will not leave his friends in a ſad and comfortleſs ſtate and condition, though for a time they may be brought into it: *I will not leave you comfortleſs, I will come unto you.* Chriſt's coming here unto them, is to be underſtood of his coming to them by his holy Spirit; in the gifts of it, in the graces of it, and in the comforts of it: thus he did not long leave them comfortleſs, but at the feaſt of Pentecoſt came to them again.

19 Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more: but ye ſee me: becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo. 20 At that day ye ſhall know that I *am* in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Here our Saviour foretells his approaching death, that within a little time the men of the world ſhould ſee him no more; for though he roſe again, the world ſaw him no more after his death; for we read of no appearance of him after his reſurrection to any, but to his diſciples only. Indeed the hour is coming when the world ſhall ſee him again; namely, at the day of judgment, when every eye ſhall behold him with terror and amazement. *Note* farther, The conſolation given to his diſciples, *Ye ſhall ſee me; and becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Becauſe I am raiſed from the grave, I will quicken your dead bodies in the grave, and ye ſhall live alſo; and as I live by my aſcenſion into heaven, ſo ſhall you, my diſciples, live a life of grace here, and a life of glory with myſelf hereafter. *Learn* hence, That a believer's ſpiritual life is derived from Chriſt, who by his Spirit communicates a quickning virtue to all his membere; *Becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.* See how Chriſt binds up their life together with his own! As if he had ſaid, "Whilſt there is vital ſap in the root, you that are branches in me ſhall not wither and die." Laſtly, A farther privilege inſured to believers after Chriſt's aſcenſion, and the Spirit's miſſion; they ſhould more perfectly underſtand the eſſential union betwixt Chriſt and the Father, and the myſtical union betwixt Chriſt and his members: *At that day ye ſhall know that I am in my Father*, &c. The knowledge which the ſaints now have of the myſterious and myſtical union is but dark and imperfect; but in heaven they ſhall underſtand theſe things clearly: Then and there the eſſential union of Chriſt and his Father, and the myſtical union between Chriſt and believers, will be more clearly underſtood, than we are capable to underſtand them in this our imperfect ſtate.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him.

Our bleſſed Saviour in theſe words, repeats what he had before enjoined at ver. 15. namely, to evidence the ſincerity of our love to him, by the univerſality of our obedience to his commands: *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* Where *note*, 1. The neceſſity of knowledge in order unto practice. 2. The neceſſity of practice in order unto happineſs. We muſt firſt have Chriſt's commandments, before we can keep them; we muſt have them in our underſtandings and judgments, in our wills and affections; not have them only in our eyes to read, in our ears to hear, or in our mouths to talk of them, but to hide them in our hearts, that we may not ſin againſt Chriſt, in the wilful violation of them. Farther, We muſt *keep*, as well as *have*, theſe commandments. This denotes an univerſal, diligent, and perſevering obedience to them. Hence *learn*, That although many looſe profeſſors pretend to love Chriſt, becauſe they hear, read, know, and can talk of his commandments; yet in Chriſt's account none do truly love him, but thoſe who make conſcience of their obedience to him: *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. Note*, next, The gracious promiſe of Chriſt to ſuch as thus expreſs their love unto him: 1. *He ſhall be loved of my Father, and of myſelf.* And ſhall he not be loved of the Holy Ghoſt too? Yes, no doubt. But why is he not named then? Becauſe the Son dwelleth in us by the Spirit, and ſheds his love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt. 2. *I will manifeſt myſelf unto him*; that is, ſuch obedient chriſtians ſhall not only enjoy the fruit and benefit of my love, but they ſhall enjoy the ſenſe of my love, and experience the ſenſible manifeſtations and inward diffuſions of my love in their own ſouls. *Learn* hence, That the only way to have Chriſt love us, and to let out his love upon us, and to know that he loves us, is to look diligently to our obediential walking with him and before him. We may as rationally think to nouriſh our bodies with poiſon, as to enjoy the manifeſtations of Chriſt's love in a way of ſin.

22 Judas ſaith unto him (not Iſcariot) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world?

Some underſtand theſe words of a temporal manifeſtation, and think that Judas the brother of James, who ſpake them, ſtill expected that Chriſt ſhould be a temporal prince, and have ſuch a kingdom as ſhould be conſpicuous to all the world, and therefore puts the queſtion, How he could poſſibly ſhew himſelf to his diſciples, and the world not ſee him? Others underſtand it of a ſpiritual manifeſtation; as if he had ſaid, "Lord, who or what are thy diſciples, that we ſhould enjoy more ſpecial manifeſtations of thy love to us, than to the reſt of the world? Why ſhould we be dignified by ſuch diſtinguiſhing favours above others? *Learn*, 1. That there is a real difference put by Chriſt betwixt his own children and the world, in the matter of ſpecial manifeſtations. 2. That there being no cauſe from the creature why Chriſt ſhould make this difference, his diſcriminating grace is matter of great and juſt admiration. Well might the apoſtle out of a deep admiration ſay, *Lord, how is it that that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world.*

23 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which ſent me.

Obſerve here, How our Saviour ſtill goes on to direct and encourage his diſciples to evidence the ſincerity of their love to his perſon, by the univerſality of their obedience to his commands; and tells them how great their advantage would be by ſo doing. For, firſt, *The Father would love them*; that is, manifeſt his favour to them in farther diſpenſations of grace and comfort. *Learn* thence, That all the manifeſtations of divine love to the ſouls of believers, depend upon their cloſe walking with God, in the paths of holineſs and ſtrict obedience. Secondly, *We will make our abode with him.* He ſhall have Father and Son's company. An alluſion to a parent that has many children; he will be ſure to live with them that are moſt dutiful to him, and moſt obſervient of him. The expreſſion of *making their abode* with us, denotes that ſweet and intimate fellowſhip which ſhall be betwixt God and us, and the perpetuity and conſtancy of it at all times; till we are taken up by him into heaven, he will make his abode with us, by the indwelling preſence of his holy Spirit, the graces and comforts whereof ſhall abide with us for ever.

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being *yet* preſent with you. 26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.

Here we have a repeated promiſe of the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, called *The Comforter*, and his ſpecial office declared; namely, to teach, and to bring to remembrance what Chriſt had taught: *He ſhall teach you all things*, As the Spirit of God is the great Comforter, ſo he is the ſpecial Teacher of his children; he teacheth condeſcendingly, ſtooping to the meaneſt capacities; he teacheth efficaciouſly, inclining the heart to receive inſtruction, as well as opening the ear to hear it; he teacheth plainly and clearly, unerringly and infallibly; he is truth itſelf, therefore his teachings are moſt true. And as the holy Spirit is the ſaints teacher, ſo is he alſo their remembrancer: *He ſhall bring all things to your remembrance*; that is, all truths needful to be known, and neceſſary to ſalvation. Here *note*, That the holy Spirit teaches nothing but what Chriſt himſelf taught; the Spirit teaches in the word, and by the word, but never teaches any thing contrary to the word: *He ſhall teach*, &c.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

As if our Lord had ſaid, "Whatever outward trouble the world gives you, be not afraid of it before it comes, nor troubled at it when it is come, for I will give you inward peace in the midſt of all your outward troubles: *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*" Where *note*, That Chriſt's peace is vaſtly different from that peace which is given or enjoyed by the world; the world may wiſh peace, yet never intend it; or they may wiſh it, yet not be able to give it; but Chriſt's peace is real and effectual, ſolid and ſubſtantial; the world's peace is only a freedom from outward trouble, but Chriſt's peace is a deliverance from inward guilt; and though it doth not give us an exemption from outward troubles, yet it gives us a ſanctified uſe and improvement of them, and aſſures us of a joyful iſſue and deliverance out of them.

28 Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

That the diſciples of Chriſt might neither be overſet with fears, nor overwhelmed with grief, he tells them that they ought to entertain the news of his departure rather with joy, and exultation, than with ſorrow and dejection; *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice becauſe I go to the Father.* True love to Chriſt will make us rejoice in his advancement and exaltatation, although it be our own diſadvantage. Theſe words, *My Father is greater than I*, muſt be underſtood with reference to his human nature as Mediator; for ſo was he the Father's ſervant, and the Father, as God, was greater than he as man. Again, the Father may be ſaid to be greater than Chriſt, in regard of his paternity, as being the fountain of the Deity; the Father is of himſelf, but the Son is begotten of the Father; but, being of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father, he is conſequently God, as the Father is God; for the inequality ariſes not from the eſſence, but from the order and manner of ſubſiſtance. Thus *the Father was greater than he:* Greater than he as to his original, the Son being begotten by him; and greater is he that gives, than he that receives, but, as to his eſſence, they are both one God, and ſo equal. Three ways the Father was greater than Chriſt; 1. With reſpect to his human nature. Who can doubt but a dependant creature is inferior to that almighty Being that made him? 2. With reſpect to the eternal generation of his divine perſon; as he was begotten of the Father, who is therefore called the Fountain of the Deity. 3. With reſpect to his office as Mediator, for thus he was the Father's ſervant. O wonderful condeſcenſion! that the eternal Word, who, as ſuch, was equal with the Father, ſhould, in compaſſion to us, accept a ſtation, and ſuſtain a character, in which the Father was greater than he! Now, though under each of theſe conſiderations, God the Father is greater than the Son, yet none of them are inconſiſtent with the Son's being God by nature.

29 And now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even ſo I do. Ariſe, and let us go hence.

The time of our Saviour's death now nearer and nearer approaching, he prepares the expectation of his diſciples for it, becauſe evils that ſurpriſe us ſuddenly, do ſink our ſpirits ſadly; whereas what we fear, for that we prepare. Accordingly our Lord arms his diſciples againſt all diſquietude, and overwhelming ſorrow for his departure from them: *I have told you before, that when it comes to paſs, ye might believe*: that is, be aſſured that I am not mere man, but truly and really God, and depend upon me for life and ſalvation. 2. How our Saviour points out the cauſe of his ſuffering; namely, Satan and his inſtruments: *The prince of this world cometh*; that is, by Judas, the ſoldiers, and the high prieſts: *But he has nothing in me*; that is, "He will find no ſin or corruption in me to ſide with his temptation, or no guilt upon me to give him any advantage againſt me, for I ſhall die as a perfectly innocent perſon." Chriſt, in ſuffering for our ſins, did not only conflict with the wrath of God, but with the rage of men and devils; yet all the power and policy, all the malice and cruelty of Satan, cannot prevail againſt Chriſt, any farther than he voluntarily yields and ſubmits himſelf unto it: *The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me.* 3. That it was Chriſt's love and obedience to his Father, that carried him forth ſo chearfully to the work of ſufferings, ſupported him under it, and carried him through it: *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the*, &c. True love to God will draw all men to obedience in the hardeſt ſervice and ſufferings; the grand motive of Chriſt's ſufferings was love to his Father, obedience to his commands, and a regard to his glory. Lord, let thy love and obedience to thy Father, in all thy ſufferings, be the ſubject of our admiration, and the matter of our imitation alſo. As the Father gives us commandment, ſo let us always do.

CHAP. XV.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the huſbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Obſerve here, How our bleſſed Saviour, under the metaphor of a vine, elegantly ſets forth himſelf in his relation to his viſible church, ſhewing under that ſimilitude, what his Father meant to do with Judas, and all unfruitful branches like unto him, even take them away, cut them off, and throw them into the fire: but ſuch as are fruitful, he purges by his word and Spirit, by ordinances and providences, by mercies and actions, that they may be more aboundingly and abidingly fruitful. *Learn* hence, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt in his office for, and relation to, his people, doth moſt fitly reſemble a vine. As the vine is weak, mean, and ſmall in outward appearance, not like the cedar for height, or like the oak for ſtrength; ſo was Chriſt in his ſtate of humiliation; there was no beauty in him, Iſa. liii. As the vine is a fruitful plant, though it has little pomp, yet it has much plenty, and is only uſed for fruit bearing, and brings forth plenty and variety of ſweet fruit to make glad the heart of man: Thus the fruits of Chriſt's death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion, are many and great, and delightful and ſweet. In a word, as the fruit of the vine is preſſed, that it may be drink unto men, ſo Chriſt ſubmitted to be trod in the wine-preſs of God's wrath, that thereby the ſweeteſt fruit and benefit might redound to his people. Finally, as the vine is the root from which all the branches derive their nouriſhment and fruitfulneſs; in like manner is Chriſt the ſtock into which all his members are ingrafted, the root in which they all ſubſiſt, and the fountain from whence their ſpiritual life and faithfulneſs doth proceed and flow. 2. That as Chriſt is the *vine*, ſo his Father is the *huſbandman*; he ingrafts and implants all the branches into this vine; the plants of righteouſneſs are of his own planting, he takes notice what ſtore of fruit every branch doth bring forth, and it is his daily care to dreſs and dung, to purge and prune, to ſupport and ſhelter his vineyard, that it may bring forth fruit abundantly. 3. That there are two ſorts of branches in this vine, ſome fruitful, others unfruitful, ſome have the viſibility, but not the reality of branches, ſome are branches only by external profeſſion, others are ſo by real implantation. 4. That the true touchſtone whereby to diſcern one ſort of branches from another, is not by the fair leaves of profeſſion, but by the ſubſtantial proofs of an holy and righteous converſation. 5. That in the moſt fruitful branches, in the beſt and holieſt of chriſtians, there remains much corruption to be purged out, in order to future and farther fruitfulneſs. 6. That the huſbandman's hand, (God the Father's) manages the pruning knife of affliction, in order to his people's improvement in grace and holineſs; he had rather ſee his vine bleed, than ſee it barren. Laſtly, That ſuch branches as, after all the huſbandman's care and coſt, remaineth unfruitful, ſhall be finally cut off and caſt away, as was Judas here; who, in this diſcourſe of our Saviour, ſeems particularly and eſpecially to be aimed at: He was a branch in him that bare no fruit, who was ſhortly after taken away, and went to his own place.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Our Saviour having in the former verſes diſtinguiſhed his diſciples into two ſorts, ſome that were members of his body the church, and branches of him the true vine, by outward ſhew and viſible profeſſion only, others that are ſpiritually ingrafted into him, and bring forth much fruit;
now in this third verſe Chriſt tells his diſciples, w
number they were of: Now (ſaith he) ye are clean thr
the word which I have ſpoken unto you; that is, now
Judas the traitor, that dead, rotten, fruitleſs branch, i
off and caſt out, ye are all clean through the cleanſing p
and virtue of my word and doctrine. *Learn* henc
That ſuch as are juſtified by the blood, and ſanctifi
the Spirit of Chriſt, are in Chriſt's account clean, not
ſtanding their many ſpots and manifold imperfecti
Now are ye clean. 2. That as the blood of Chriſt
meritorious, and the Spirit of Chriſt the efficacious,
word of Chriſt is the inſtrumental cauſe of a believer'
rification and cleanſing: *Now you are clean throug*
word which I have ſpoken unto you. Abide in me, and
abide in you: That is, abide in me not only by an out
and viſible profeſſion, but by a real and fiducial adhe
and I will abide in you by the influences and operati
my holy Spirit. The union and conjunction bet
Chriſt and his members is mutual; they abide in hi
faith and dependance, and he abideth in them by th
dwelling preſence of his grace and ſpirit: *Abide in m*
I will abide in you. Farther, The reaſon which
gives, why they ſhould thus abide in him; becauſe
out union with him, without intereſt in him, withou
fluences of grace derived from him, they could bring
no fruit for him, nor do any thing that is truly accep
and well-pleaſing to him: *As the branch cannot bear*
of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye,
ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing: Th
"As branches ſevered from the vine cannot live and
fruit, ſo neither can chriſtians ſeparated from Chriſt,
without deriving virtue from him, do any thing ſp
ally good and well-pleaſing in the ſight of God."
hence, That not only unregenerate men do labour
an impotency to that which is ſpiritually good, but
diſciples themſelves, without daily dependance upon
and without conſtant communications of grace from
can do nothing in a lively and acceptable way and m
unto him: *Without me ye can do nothing*; you th
branches of me the true vine. As chriſtians, withou
that is, without my ſpirit abiding in you, and unitin
to me your head, you can do nothing acceptable to
worthy of my goſpel. Again: As apoſtles, it may d
that, without the gifts and powerful aſſiſtance of the
Spirit, they could do nothing to convert the world to
tianity; in both reſpects might Chriſt truſy ſay, *W*
me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth
branch, and is withered; and men gather them
caſt *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

Here our holy Lord diſcovers the ſad and depl
condition of ſuch profeſſors, who, pretending relati
Chriſt, do yet bring forth no fruit unto him; he calls
withered branches, fit only for the fire. *Learn*
That ſuch as have had a long ſtanding in God's vin
and contented themſelves with a withered profeſſion,
great danger of having God's blaſting added to thei
renneſs. All their parts and gifts, and common
will wither, and their fair bloſſoms of profeſſion wi

off, and at the great day the angels will gather theſe fruitleſs branches together, and caſt them into hell fire.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall aſk what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.

Note here, 1. A glorious privilege declared; *Aſk what ye will, it ſhall be done unto you.* Not that we are hereby warranted to aſk what we pleaſe at God's hand, but our will muſt be limited by the word and will of God; we muſt pray in faith, and in the name and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, with a ſingle eye at the glory of God. 2. The condition upon which this privilege is attainable: *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you*; that is, practically and experimentally. If my doctrine and command abide in your hearts, and diſpoſe you to an holy fruitfulneſs in your lives, then ſhall all your juſt requeſts be granted. *Learn*, That ſuch as by faith embrace the promiſes, and by obedience live up to the precepts of the goſpel may in prayer humbly aſk of God what they will, with a due ſubmiſſion to the wiſdom and will of God.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.

Our Lord here exhorts his followers to an holy fruitfulneſs in good works by a double argument. One drawn from the glory of God: *Herein is my Father glorified.* The other from their own advantage: *So ſhall ye be my diſciples:* That is, hereby ye ſhall evidence and prove yourſelves to be my diſciples. *Learn* hence, That a chriſtian's abounding fruitfulneſs in good works will abundantly conduce to the honor and glory of God, and alſo to his own peace and comfort, by being the beſt evidence of his diſcipleſhip.

9 As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

Lord, what a compariſon is here! As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: He doth not ſay, As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved him; but ſo have I loved you; but, *As the Father!* It is *verbum dilectionis*, a word importing dearneſs of affection: Nor doth he ſay, The Father hath loved me, and I love you; but, *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you*: Nor doth he ſay, As the Father hath loved me, ſo *will* I love you; but So *have* I loved you. This ſhews the priority of Chriſt's love, that he loved us firſt, and alſo denotes the invincible conſtancy of his love, and the indubitable certainty thereof: *I have loved you:* Follow me from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven again, and you will find, that every ſtep I have taken hath been in love. *Learn*, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given full and ample demonſtration of his great and wonderful love unto his church and people. 2. That it is the duty, and ought to be the ſingular care, of every chriſtian, to preſerve the ſweet ſenſe and inward diffuſions of Chriſt's love in their own ſouls.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Chriſt had told his diſciples in the foregoing verſe, that he had *loved them, even as the Father had loved him:* That is, with an eternal love, with a real and operative love, with an immutable and conſtant love. In this verſe he directs them how they may continue in the ſenſe of his love; namely, by their conſtant obedience to his commands, as his obedience to his Father's commands had ſecured him a continuance in his Father's: *If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love:* That is, in the ſenſe of my love, and under the ſweet apprehenſions of it. *Learn* hence, That as our obedience to Chriſt is the beſt evidence of our love to him, ſo is it the beſt mean to preſerve and keep us in the ſenſe and aſſurance of his love to us.

11 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

In theſe words our Saviour declares the ground and reaſon why he did ſo earneſtly preſs and urge the duty of being univerſally fruitful upon his diſciples, and that was twofold: 1. *That his joy might remain in them*; that is, that the joy which he had in their holineſs and obedience might remain with him; nothing is more deſired by Chriſt, than that he may have cauſe continually to rejoice in the faith, and fruitfulneſs of his people. 2. *That their joy in him might be full.* This latter ariſes from the former; our joy in Chriſt reſults from Chriſt's joy in us; his delight in us, cauſes us abundantly to delight in him. *Learn* hence, that nothing is more deſired by Chriſt, than that the joy of his people ſhould be a full, ſolid, conſtant, and uninterrupted joy. 3. That the only way and mean, in order thereunto, is by an holy fruitfulneſs in good works: *All theſe things have I ſpoken*, &c. The obſervation of God's commandments does give a chriſtian here the fulleſt and moſt perfect joy.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Our Lord had often, in this farewel ſermon of his to his dear diſciples, preſſed upon them the duty of loving one another, chap. xiii. and xiv. And yet here he enforces it again from his own example: *As* I have loved you, *ſo* love you one another; that is, as truly and as ſincerely for the manner, though not in the ſame proportion and degree. *Learn* hence, That for the diſciples of Chriſt to love one another upon ſuch grounds, and in ſuch a way as he loved them, is that which his heart deſires, and is very much ſet upon. 2. That Chriſt's love unto unbelievers is both an obligation unto mutual love, and alſo a pattern and example for it. *This is my commandment, that*, &c.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Here our Saviour gives his diſciples an evidence of the greatneſs of his love unto them; namely, in his readineſs to lay down his life for them, which is the higheſt expreſſion of love to our deareſt friends, becauſe life is the greateſt earthly bleſſing. *Learn* hence, that Chriſt's love in laying down his life for his people, was a matchleſs love; for whilſt they were enemies to him, he had a friendly reſpect for them; and never ceaſed till he had brought them into a covenant of friendſhip with himſelf.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.

Here Chriſt invites his people to obedience, by the honourable title of friends: *Ye are my friends.* 1. Actively, you will declare and manifeſt yourſelves to be my friends. 2. Paſſively, I will declare myſelf to be your friend. *Learn* hence, 1. How condeſcending is the love of Chriſt, in calling his ſervants by the name of friends. 2. How glorious is the believer's relation to Chriſt, in being one of his friends. 3. How grateful is obedience to Chriſt, ſeeing it dignifies the practiſers of it with the title of his friends. 4. Our conformity to Chriſt conſiſts not ſo much in imitation of what he did, as in obedience to what he preſcribed. Some actions of Chriſt are inimitable, but all his commands are obeyable. 5. That nothing ſhort of an humble, uniform, chearful, and conſtant obedience to the commands of Chriſt, will evidence the truth of our relation to him, and the ſincerity of our friendſhip with him: Then only are ye my friends, *when ye do whatever I command you.*

15 Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

By theſe words Chriſt declares the reaſon why he was pleaſed to change his ſtile, and call his diſciples friends inſtead of ſervants; namely, becauſe of his communication of ſecrets to them, which ſervants are not admitted to the knowledge of: *Henceforth I call you not ſervants:* that is, not mere ſervants; not that they were to be exempted from obedience, (for that is called for in the foregoing verſe) but Chriſt treated them now with the kindneſs and familiarity of friends; being about to leave them, he unboſoms himſelf unto them, ſaying, *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Not as if Chriſt had communicated the infinite treaſures of knowledge to them, which the Father had imparted to him; but he ſpeaks here as the prophet of his church, that as ſuch he had revealed all things needful for them to know in order to ſalvation, all things belonging to their caſe and ſtate; as a counſellor doth not impart all his knowledge to his clients; but all that is neceſſary for his client to underſtand and know, that he makes known unto him relating to his own caſe. *Learn* hence, 1. That all Chriſt's diſciples are his ſervants, and all his ſervants are his friends, in regard of intimate communion and tender uſage: *Henceforth I call you not ſervants, but friends.* And after his reſurrection, he called them brethren, John xx. 17. The dignity of believers is a growing dignity, the longer they follow Chriſt, the higher privileges are indulged to them. 2. That all the Father's counſel concerning our ſalvation, and ſo far as it is needful and neceſſary for us to know, is faithfully revealed by Chriſt to his church, he being conſtituted by God the Father to be the great prophet and inſtructor of it: *All things,* &c. that is, all things fit for them at preſent to know; namely, concerning his paſſion, reſurrection, aſcenſion, miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, a future judgment, and the promiſe of eternal life.

16 Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that ye ſhould go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit ſhould remain: that whatſoever ye ſhall aſk of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Here our Saviour gives another inſtance and evidence of his love to his diſciples; he tells them, that his mercy and free goodneſs had prevented them in their election to eternal ſalvation, and in their vocation unto the office of apoſtleſhip: *Ye have not choſen me* to be your Maſter and Lord, *but I have choſen you* to be my diſciples, friends, and ſervants. 2. He acquaints them with the end, deſign, and intention of his chuſing of them; namely, that they ſhould bring forth fruit, and perſevere therein, even in all the fruits of holineſs and obedience, which are to the praiſe and glory of God by Jeſus Chriſt; *I have ordained you, that you ſhould bring forth fruit, and that your fruit ſhould remain.* 3. He directs them, that in order to their being fruitful, they ſhould have acceſs to the Father through him, for whatever they wanted and ſtood in need of: *Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk,* &c. *Learn* hence, That all thoſe whom God hath choſen, and called to the knowledge and ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, ought to make it their care and endeavour to bring forth fruit, and to perſevere therein to their lives end: *I have choſen you, that you ſhould,* &c.

17 Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another. 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than the Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: If they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. 21 But all theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me.

Note here, 1. With what frequency and importunity our Lord inculcates and preſſes the duty of mutual love upon his diſciples: *I command you to love one another.* It denotes the great importance of the duty, and the great averſeneſs and backwardneſs of our hearts to the performance of it. And if we conſider the diſciples as apoſtles and miniſters of the goſpel, it intimates to us the neceſſity of mutual love amongſt the diſpenſers of the goſpel, as conducing exceedingly to the welfare and benefit of the church of God, over which he hath ſet them. 2. The argument which our Saviour makes uſe of, to preſs his diſciples in general, and his miniſters and ambaſſadors in particular, to love each other; and that is, becauſe the world would certainly hate them. *Learn* hence, That the world's hatred of the members and miniſters of Chriſt, is, and ought to be, eſteemed by them a ſtrong argument to excite and perſuade them to love one another; for this is ſubjoined as an argument to preſs mutual love, that we are ſure to meet with the world's hatred. 3. The ſeveral arguments by way of encouragement which Chriſt propounds to comfort his members and miniſters againſt the world's hatred: The firſt argument is taken from his own lot and uſage; when here in the world he met with the very ſame before them: *The world hated me before it hated you.* *Learn* hence, That hatred and perſecution from the world need not ſeem hard to the ſaints, if they conſider what a ſtock Chriſt had before them upon him; he is the prime object of the world's hatred, and they who hate him much, do hate his members more, becauſe of their likeneſs to him, and reſemblance of him. A ſecond argument of comfort under the world's hatred is this, that it will evidence they are not of the world, but choſen out of the world, ver. 19. *Becauſe ye,* &c. Hence *learn,* 1. That the children of God, though in the world, yet they are not of the world, they have not the ſpirit of the world in them, nor is the converſation of the world led by them. 2. That the difference betwixt them that are of the world, and thoſe that are choſen out of the world, is of God's making: *I have choſen you out of the world.* 3. That ſuch chriſtians as are ſeparated from the world in judgment, affection, and practiſe, muſt for that reaſon expect to be hated and perſecuted by the world: *Becauſe ye,* &c. The third argument for conſolation and ſupport under the world's hatred, is taken from our relation to Chriſt, as ſervants to a maſter, ver. 20. *Remember that the ſervant is not greater than the Lord;* as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Is it equal, that you ſhould expect better treatment than myſelf, either as to your perſon or miniſtry, or that you ſhould expect that the world ſhould better receive your doctrine than it did mine before you?" *Learn* hence, That neither the members nor miniſters of Chriſt can, nor ought to expect better entertainment in and from the world, than their Maſter found before them: *The ſervant is not above his maſter, nor greater than his lord.* A fourth argument to ſupport them under the burden of the world's hatred, is taken from the goodneſs of the cauſe for which they were to ſuffer; namely, for Chriſt's name's ſake, ver. 27. *All theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake.* Hence *learn,* 1. That it is the duty of all, but eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, to own the name of Chriſt, to ſtand up in defence of his name and truth, his glory and honour, what oppoſition ſoever they meet with for the ſame. 2. That the great quarrel of the world againſt the diſciples of Chriſt, is for the name of Chriſt; whatever may be pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel.

22 If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloke for their ſin.

Theſe words are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Had not I come amongſt them in my incarnation, and preached perſonally to them the doctrine of ſalvation, and confirmed that doctrine by miraculous operations, they might have pleaded ignorance in ſome meaſure, and *they had not had ſin;* that is, they had not had the ſin of unbelief and goſpel-contempt to anſwer for, or had not had ſo great a meaſure of any kind of ſin to anſwer for, as now they have; but would have had more to ſay in excuſe, or for a cover for their ſin, than now they can: *But now they have no cloke for their ſin:* that is, they are totally inexcuſable, and have not the leaſt colour or pretence for their obſtinate unbelief." *Learn* hence, 1. That ſins of ignorance are, as it were, no ſins, compared with ſins committed againſt light and knowledge. 2. That ſins committed againſt goſpel light are of an heinous nature and aggravated guilt, as being committed againſt the very remedy. 3. That the goſpel, where it is plainly preached, doth take away all pretence, and excuſe from ſinners: *Now they have no cloke for their ſin.*

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin: but now have they both ſeen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But *this cometh to paſs,* that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cauſe.

Theſe words declare the heinous nature of the Phariſees ſin, in hating and perſecuting Chriſt, who had done before their eyes ſuch works as no man beſide him, or before him, ever did; he acting by his own power. Peter healed the lame man, Acts iii. but it was in the name of Jeſus of Nazareth; but Chriſt healed the ſick, and raiſed the dead in his own name, and by a ſpecial word of command; *I ſay unto thee, Ariſe:* Yet did the Phariſees hate him and his Father, according to the prediction, Pſal. xxxv. 19. *They hated me without a cauſe.* Which being ſpoken of David in type, received a more eminent accompliſhment in Chriſt, the Son of David. *Learn* thence, 1. That let men pretend to never ſo much holineſs or reſpect to God, yet if they hate Chriſt, and deſpiſe his goſpel, they are haters of God, who is one in eſſence and nature with his Son: *He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo.* 2. That no miracles wrought by mortal men were ever comparable with the miracles wrought by Chriſt the Son of God; his did ſurpaſs them all in number, kind, and manner of doing them; by his own authority, in his own name, and not as others, who obtained their power by prayer from God: *I have done amongſt them the works which none other man did.* 3. That Chriſt having confirmed his doctrine by ſuch unparalleled miracles as the world was never before acquainted with, doth aggravate the ſin of thoſe that are haters of his perſon, deſpiſers of his doctrine, and reproachers of his miracles: It being juſt with God, when men obſtinately will ſhut their eyes and will not ſee, judicially to cloſe their eyes, and ſay, They ſhall not ſee.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me. 27 And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.

Here our holy Lord confirms himſelf, that though he had laid them under many aſperſions and ſcandals from the world, yet all theſe ſhould be done away by the coming of the Holy Spirit, who ſhould teſtify of him, and make his perſon and doctrine to be acknowledged in the world; and that they themſelves ſhould bear witneſs of him, who had been with him from the beginning; that is, ſince he firſt began to exerciſe his prophetic office. *Note* here, 1. That Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three diſtinct perſons in the Godhead. 2. That the Holy Ghoſt proceedeth from the Father and the Son: Here the Son is ſaid to ſend him; and, as to the Father, he is ſaid to proceed from him. If the Holy Ghoſt doth not proceed from the Son, why is he called *The Spirit of the Son?* Gal. iv. 6. Why is he ſaid here to be ſent by the Son? *The Comforter whom I will ſend unto you from the Father.* And if the Spirit doth not proceed from the Son, what perſonal relation can we conceive betwixt the Son and the Spirit? 3. That it is the higheſt dignity and honour of the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt, that the Spirit beareth no teſtimony unto Chriſt, but with and according to the teſtimony given by them; for here is conjoined, *He ſhall teſtify of me; and ye ſhall alſo bear witneſs, who have been with me from the beginning.*

CHAP. XVI.

THESE things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended. 2 They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God ſervice. 3 And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you.

In the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, our bleſſed Saviour had acquainted his diſciples with the hatred and hard uſage which they were like to meet with in the world, and here he intimates to them the reaſon why he did ſo much inſiſt upon that ſubject; namely, not to ſadden their hearts, and grieve their ſpirits, before their ſufferings came, but that they might not *be offended*, diſcouraged, or ſcandalized, at them, when they came, but prepared for them, and armed againſt them. Hence *learn*, 1. That all afflictions, but eſpecially perſecutions, are ſo ſearching and trying, that the beſt of chriſtians have need to be guarded againſt them, that they may not be offended at them. 2. That it was the great deſign of Chriſt to arm his diſciples againſt the ſcandal of the croſs, leſt, ſtumbling at what they expected not, they ſhould fall from the profeſſion of chriſtianity. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that you ſhould not be offended.* 2. How our Saviour inſtances in two particular ſorts and kinds of ſufferings, which his diſciples were to expect in the world, and from the world; namely, excommunication and martyrdom, ver. 2. *They ſhall put you out of their ſynagogues*; that is, exclude them from all their aſſemblies, both civil and religious, and ſhall not only think it lawful, but a very acceptable ſervice to God, to put them to death; *Whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God ſervice.* 3. How Chriſt diſcovers to his dear diſciples the cauſe and ground of the world's hatred againſt them, and enmity towards them; namely, their ignorance of the Father and of himſelf, ver. 3. *Theſe things will they do, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.* From whence we may *learn*, That all the perſecutions of the ſaints do ſpeak in perſecutors an ignorance both of God the Father, and of Jeſus Chriſt his Son. All perſecution ſprings from ignorance as well as from malice. And men, who continue ignorant of God and Chriſt, are in danger of turning perſecutors, if they have a temptation to it. 4. How our Lord again forewarns his diſciples of their approaching ſufferings, to the intent that they might remember that he had foretold them of them, and would not fail to ſupport them under them. He had often told them in general of perſecutions and troubles which they muſt expect to meet with, but did not till now intimate the kinds and degrees of thoſe ſufferings, with reſpect to their weakneſs; and becauſe, whilſt he was with them, he himſelf bore the brunt of all, the world's rage falling upon him, letting them alone; but after his aſcenſion, when the malice of Satan and wicked men could not reach him, then did the ſtorm fall upon them. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt is ſo tender of his diſciples weakneſs, that he will not put them upon the hardſhip of ſufferings, till they be trained up and prepared for them. 2. That it may encourage the ſaints in and under their ſufferings, that Chriſt himſelf is the great object of the perſecutors' malice, and they only for his ſake; for, could they reach him, they would not concern themſelves with them. 3. That the ſaints of God, after long exemption and freedom from ſufferings, muſt expect that ſtorms will ariſe, clouds gather thick, and trials come on apace; and their being under one trial will not hide or ſhelter them from another.

5 But now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you aſketh me, Whither goeſt thou? 6 But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, ſorrow hath filled your heart.

Note here, How our Saviour again intimates to his diſciples his ſpeedy departure from them, and reproves them for being ſo ſaddened at it, and concerned for it, without conſidering the end and deſign of it, and the benefit and advantage they were to receive by it. Here we ſee how the diſciples thoughts were wholly taken up about themſelves, what they ſhould do for want of Chriſt's bodily preſence, without being inſtant with him, to know whither he was going, and what benefit he ſhould reap, and they might expect from his departure. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's diſciples ought not ſo much to have lamented the loſs of his bodily preſence, as to have rejoiced in his glorious exaltation, and in their own advantages by his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion? *None of you aſketh me, Whither goeſt thou? But ſorrow has filled your heart.*

7 Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.

In theſe words our Saviour urges his diſciples to ſubmit to his departure, as that which would make way for his ſending the Comforter to them; which, he aſſures them, would be of more advantage to them than his own ſtay and continuance amongſt them. Thence *learn*, That the preſence of the holy Spirit with us is a greater comfort and advantage to us than the preſence of Chriſt in the fleſh amongſt us. Chriſt's bodily preſence was comfortable, but the ſpirit is more intimately a Comforter than Chriſt in his fleſhly preſence; becauſe the Spirit can comfort all believers at once, in all places; but Chriſt's bodily preſence can comfort but few, and that in one place only at once. Chriſt did converſe with his diſciples outwardly, but the Spirit poſſeſſed himſelf of their hearts inwardly. Now for the Spirit to dwell in us is more advantageous than to have Chriſt dwell in the fleſh amongſt us. The benefit of Chriſt's converſation was great; but the advantage of the Spirit's renovation and holy inſpiration is much greater: The one encourages and incites us to be holy, but the other quickens and enables us to be holy. Therefore well might Chriſt ſay, *It is expedient*, or highly neceſſary and advantageous *for you, that I go away*. He ſubjoins a reaſon; *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come*; *but if I depart, I will ſend him to you.* Whence we *learn*, That Chriſt's aſcenſion was indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to the Spirit's miſſion; the Spirit could not have deſcended, if Chriſt had not firſt aſcended; the Spirit could not come, but by the gifts and miſſion of the Mediator. Now the ſending of the Spirit being a part of Chriſt's royalty, as Mediator, it was not convenient that the Spirit ſhould be ſent, till Chriſt was crowned, and ſat down on his throne in his kingdom; then the Spirit was to make application to us of the redemption purchaſed for us.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment: 9 Of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me; 10 Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more; 11 Of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged.

In theſe and the following verſes, our Saviour acquaints his diſciples with the advantages that will redound by the coming of the Comforter. Firſt, The advantage to the world. Secondly, To the Apoſtles. And, thirdly, To himſelf. To the world, 1. *He ſhall convince them of ſin, righteouſneſs and judgment. Of ſin*; that is of their ſinful ſtate and nature, of the large extent of ſin, and particularly of the ſin of unbelief. *Learn* 1. That the Spirit of God is the author of conviction of ſin, and that all convictions of ſin do either mediately or immediately flow from him. 2. That unbelief is a ſin of the greateſt malignity againſt Chriſt, and of the greateſt danger to a chriſtian's ſoul: *He ſhall convince the world of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me.* Secondly, *Of righteouſneſs*; that is, of the inſufficiency of all human righteouſneſs, and of the neceſſity of the righteouſneſs of a Mediator; by which alone we are to expect acceptance with God; or of a complete and perfect righteouſneſs in me, imputable to ſinners for their perfect juſtification; and that it is ſo, appears, *Becauſe I go to the Father, and ye ſee me no more.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Hereby you may be ſatisfied, that by my active and paſſive obedience I have fully ſatisfied my Father's juſtice for you, and you ſhall never be charged or condemned; becauſe, when I go to heaven, I ſhall abide there in glory with my Father, and never be ſent back again; ye ſhall ſee me no more, as I muſt have been, if any thing had been omitted by me." Farther, That none are convinced of righteouſneſs who are not firſt covinced of ſin. None will come to Chriſt by faith, till convictions of ſin have awakened and diſtreſſed them. Thirdly, *Of judgment*; that is, the Spirit ſhall convince the world, that Jeſus is both Lord and Chriſt, that he had power to judge Satan the prince of the world, and that he did by his death put down the kingdom of darkneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That Satan is a prince, who by unjuſt uſurpation, and ſinners voluntary conſent, has exerciſed a tyrannical power over the world. 2. That Chriſt by his death did judge, condemn, and overcome this mighty prince, and hath made his conqueſt evident to the conſciences of men, by the convictions of his holy Spirit: *The Spirit ſhall convince of judgment*; that is, *that Satan the prince of this world is judged.*

12 I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth:—

The ſecond benefit, which our Saviour declares was to be expected by the coming of the holy Spirit, relates to the apoſtles themſelves: *He ſhall guide you into all truth*; that is, into all truth neceſſary for you to know in order to ſalvation. This is a principal text which the Papiſts bring for their doctrine of infallibility, but groundleſly: For this promiſe was made to all the apoſtles, as well as Peter; nay, not only to the apoſtles, but to all their ſucceſſors; yea, not to the apoſtles only and their ſucceſſors, but to all believers alſo; for they are led by the Spirit of God, and that into all truth too; not abſolutely, but into all neceſſary truth; and ſo far as a private chriſtian follows the conduct and guidance of the divine Spirit, he is more infallible than either pope or council, who follow the dictates and directions of their own ſpirits only.

—For he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf; but whatſoever he ſhall hear, *that* ſhall he ſpeak: and he will ſhew you things to come.

That is, he ſhall not teach you a private doctrine, or that which is contrary to what ye have learned of me, but whatſoever he ſhall hear of me, and receive from me, that ſhall he ſpeak; *and he will ſhew you things to come.* This affords an argument, to prove the holy Spirit to be God: He that can ſhew us things to come, he that clearly foreſeeth and infallibly foretelleth what ſhall be, before it is, is certainly God. But this the holy Spirit doth; *He will ſhew you things to come.* Men and devils may gueſs at things to come, but none can ſhew things to come, but he that is truly and really God; therefore the Spirit is ſo.

14 He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. 15 All things

that the Father hath, are mine: therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.

Here Chriſt ſhews the advantage which would redound to himſelf by the coming of the Comforter; he declares that the Spirit ſhould glorify him by his teſtimony, gifts, and miracles, and ſhall in all things accord with him, and thereby evidence that he hath his miſſion from him; *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* And *all things that the Father hath are mine.* Hence *learn*, That although the union in eſſence amongſt the perſons in the Trinity is the ſame, yet the order of their ſubſiſtance and operation is diſtinct; the Son being from the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt from the Father and the Son: *For all things that the Father hath are mine: And the Spirit ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* *Note* farther, That theſe words afford a ſtrong argument to prove the divinity of Chriſt; *All things which my Father hath are mine:* Where Chriſt challenges to himſelf the incommunicable attributes of God, and conſequently that eſſence which is inſeparable from them. Doth the Father know the ſecrets of all hearts? So doth Chriſt, Rev. ii. 23. *All the churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the reins and hearts.* Is the Father eternal? So is Chriſt, Prov. viii. 23. *I was ſet up from everlaſting*, &c.

16 A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father. 17 Then ſaid *ſome* of his diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me: and, Becauſe I go to the Father? 18 They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little while? we cannot tell what he ſaith. 19 Now Jeſus knew that they were deſirous to aſk him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye inquire among yourſelves of that I ſaid, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me? 20 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoice: and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when ſhe is in travail, hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come: but as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the child, ſhe remembereth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have ſorrow: but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

In theſe words our holy Lord proceeds to comfort his diſciples with a promiſe, that, however he was now to be removed from them, yet they ſhould ſhortly ſee him again; namely, after his reſurrection; it being impoſſible that he ſhould be held by death, but muſt ariſe and go to his Father. His diſciples not underſtanding what he meant, but labouring under the prejudices of their national errors, concerning the temporal kingdom of their Meſſias, knew not what to make of thoſe words, *A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me.* Our Saviour therefore explains himſelf to his diſciples, telling them, that they ſhould have a time of ſad ſorrow and grief of heart, during the time of his ſufferings and abſence from them, but their ſadneſs ſhall ſoon be turned into joy, when they ſhall ſee him alive again after his reſurrection. This he illuſtrates by the ſimilitude of a travailing woman, who ſoon forgets her ſorrow after ſhe hath brought forth a child. Thus will their hearts revive upon the ſight of him riſen from the grave; and no man ſhall be able to take their joy away from them, becauſe he ſhall die no more, but go to heaven, and there live for ever, to make interceſſion for them. *Learn* hence, 1. From the apoſtles not underſtanding Chriſt's words concerning his departure, though ſo often inculcated upon them, *A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father:* Hence *note*, How unreaſonable it is to arrogate to man's underſtanding a power to comprehend ſpiritual myſteries, yea, to underſtand the plaineſt truths, till Chriſt enlightens the underſtanding; let the doctrine be delivered never ſo plainly, and repeated never ſo frequently, yet will men continue ignorant, without divine illumination. How often had this plain doctrine of Chriſt's departure to the Father been preached to the diſciples by Chriſt's own mouth! Yet ſtill they ſay, *What is this that he ſaith? we cannot tell what he ſaith.* 2. The different effects which Chriſt's abſence ſhould have upon the world, and upon his diſciples: *The world will rejoice, but ye ſhall weep and lament.* *Note*, 1. That it is the wretched diſpoſition of the world to rejoice in the abſence and want of Chriſt out of the world. When I am gone, *the world will rejoice.* 2. That nothing is the cauſe of ſo much ſorrow and ſadneſs to ſincere diſciples, as Chriſt's abſence and removal from them: Such is their eſtimation of the worth of him, ſo great is their apprehenſion of the want of him, that there is no loſs comparable to his abſence and removal from them; ye ſhall weep and lament at my departure, though the world will rejoice. *Learn* 3. That the believer's ſorrow for Chriſt's abſence, though it be very great, yet it ſhall not be perpetual; *Ye have now ſorrow; but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy ſhall no man take from you.* The joy of the ſaints may be interrupted, it ſhall never be totally extinguiſhed; it is a permanent joy, of which they ſhall never be totally deprived, till they enter into the ocean of eternal joy; *Your joy no man taketh from you.*

23 And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing: Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. 24 Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my name: aſk and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.

At the firſt reading of the twenty-third verſe there ſeems to be a contradiction in the words. Chriſt tells them in the former part of the verſe, that they ſhall aſk him nothing in that day; and yet promiſes, that whatever they aſk ſhall be given them, in the latter part of the verſe. To reſolve this, know, that there is a two-fold aſking, one by way of queſtion, the other by way of petition. The former is aſking that we may know, or be informed in what we doubt; the latter is aſking what we may receive, and be ſupplied with what we want. Now when Chriſt ſaith, *In that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing*, it is as much as if he had ſaid, "At preſent you underſtand but little of the myſteries of religion, and therefore ye put queſtions about many things; but in that day, when the Comforter comes, ye ſhall be ſo clearly enlightened by him, that ye ſhall not need to aſk me any more queſtions." But when Chriſt ſaith, *Whatever ye will aſk of the Father in my name, he will give it*, the meaning is, "In that day, when I have left the world, and aſcended to my Father, you ſhall not need to addreſs your prayers to me, but to my Father in my name." But what is it to pray in the name of Chriſt? *Anſ.* It is more than to name Chriſt in prayer; it is eaſy to name Chriſt in prayer, but no eaſy thing to pray in the name of Chriſt. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is, 1. To look up to Chriſt, as having purchaſed for us this privilege, that we may pray; for it is by the blood of Chriſt that we draw near to God, and that a throne of grace is open to us. 2. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray in the ſtrength of Chriſt, by the aſſiſtance of his grace, and the help of his holy Spirit. 3. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray by faith in the virtue of Chriſt's mediation and interceſſion, believing, that what we aſk on earth, he intercedes for, and obtains in heaven. To pray thus is no eaſy matter; and, unleſs we do pray thus, we do not pray at all. Ver. 24. *Hitherto ye have aſked nothing in my name:* That is, explicitly and expreſsly in my name, or by me as Mediator betwixt God and man, and with reſpect to my merits. Do this after my death, reſurrection, and interceſſion at the right hand of God, and you ſhall receive ſuch anſwers as will fill you with joy; for the ſaints of God under the Old Teſtament, and the apoſtles themſelves under the New, had hitherto put up all their petitions in the name of the Meſſiah, though not in the name of Jeſus. But now he exhorts them to eye his mediatory office in all their addreſſes to God, and promiſes them, whatſoever he had purchaſed of the Father by his ſufferings and ſatisfaction, they ſhould obtain it for the ſake of his prevailing interceſſion. *Learn* hence, That it is a mighty encouragement to prayer, that now, under the goſpel, the perſon of the Mediator is exhibited in our fleſh, has ſatisfied Divine Juſtice in our nature, and in that nature intercedes as Mediator, for whatever he purchaſed as our Surety. Hence is the encouragement, *Whatſoever ye aſk the Father in my name, he will give to you.*

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of the Father.

Here our Saviour tells his diſciples, that although he had ſpoken many things to them in dark parables and figurative expreſſions, yet now the time was approaching, namely, the Comforter's coming, when he would by the Holy Ghoſt clearly enlighten their underſtandings in the knowledge of divine myſteries, and the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and particularly in the knowledge of God as his Father, and their Father in him. Hence *learn*, 1. That the cleareſt truths will be but parables, proverbs, and dark myſteries, even to diſciples themſelves, till the holy Spirit enlightens their underſtandings. 2. That the clear and full manifeſtation of divine truth was reſerved till the coming of the Comforter, who did communicate it to the apoſtles, and by them to the church, or body of chriſtians: *I*, by him, *will ſhew, you plainly of the Father.*

26 At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name: and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name; that is, after I am aſcended into heaven, and have ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon you, you ſhall put up all your prayers and requeſts to God in my name; *And I ſay not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelf loveth you*; that is, I need not tell you (though I ſhall certainly do it) that I will intercede with the Father for you, for he of himſelf is kindly diſpoſed and affected towards you, for he of himſelf is kindly diſpoſed and affected towards you, for my ſake. When Chriſt ſays, *I do not ſay that I will pray the Father for you*, the meaning is not, that he will lay aſide his office as Interceſſor for believers, but that they had not only his interceſſion, but the Father's love, upon which to ground their hope of audience. *Learn* hence, 1. That the chriſtians' prayers, put up in Chriſt's name, cannot fail of audience and acceptance for the ſake of the Mediator's interceſſion and the Father's love. 2. That in our prayers we ought ſo to eye and look up to Chriſt's interceſſion, as not to overlook or forget the Father's love, but ground our hopes of audience upon both; *I ſay not that I will pray the Father for you*, though I ſhall aſſuredly do it, *for the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me.*

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29 His diſciples ſaid unto him, Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb. 30 Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee: by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.

Here *obſerve*, 1. A proof of our Saviour's Godhead: *He came forth from the Father into the world:* He came out from the Father in his incarnation, and came into the world to accompliſh the work of our redemption. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt is true God, equal with the Father, for he was not only ſent by him, but came forth from him; *I came forth from the Father.* 2. That it pleaſed Chriſt, out of love to his people, to leave the Father, and come into the world; not by being ſeparated from the Deity, but by obſcuring the Deity with the vail of our fleſh, in order to the finiſhing the great and glorious work of redemption for us; *I came out from the Father, and am come into the world.* 3. That Chriſt having finiſhed his ſuffering work here on earth, aſcended into heaven, and ſent down the holy Spirit to apply unto his church the redemption purchaſed by his blood: Again, *I leave the world, and go to the Father*. Laſtly, How the apoſtles argue from the knowledge of Chriſt's omniſciency to the certainty of his divinity: *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things; by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.* The knowledge and experience of Chriſt's omniſciency, may and ought fully to confirm us in the belief of his Deity; for that attribute of the Deity cannot be communicated to any perſon without the communication of the divine nature.

31 Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe?
32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come,
that ye ſhall be ſcattered, every man to his own, and
ſhall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.

In the foregoing verſe, the apoſtles made a full profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt's divinity, and in Chriſt's omniſciency: *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and that thou cameſt forth from God.* In this verſe Chriſt intimates to them, that their faith ſhould be put upon a great trial very ſhortly, namely, when his ſufferings came on; and that then they ſhould all forſake him, and take care of themſelves: *Ye ſhall be ſcattered, and leave me alone. Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt was forſaken and left alone by his own diſciples, in the day of his greateſt diſtreſs and danger. *Learn*, 2. That when the diſciples left Chriſt, they were ſcattered every one to his own. *Learn* 3. That when all forſook Chriſt, and left him alone, he was far from being ſimply alone, becauſe God was with him: *Ye ſhall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.* God was with Chriſt, and will be with chriſtians in a ſuffering hour, in his eſſential preſence, in his gracious and ſupporting preſence: *He that ſent me*, ſays Chriſt, *is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe my Father.*

33 Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Theſe words are the concluſion of our Saviour's farewel ſermon to his diſciples, in which he declares to them, 1. The inevitable neceſſity of the world's trouble: *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation*; that is, while ye have to do with the men of the world; while ye have any thing to do with the things of the world; nay, while ye have a being in the world, you muſt look for trouble, both from within and from without, from friends and foes, in body, ſoul, name, eſtate; heart-breaking troubles, ſoul-rending troubles, ſuch troubles as will make the heart to break, and the back to bend; and you, my diſciples, muſt expect it as well as others: *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation.* Hence *learn*, That the diſciples of Chriſt in this world may, yea, muſt expect and look for trouble. 2. The remedy provided by Chriſt againſt this malady: *In me ye ſhall have peace*, when in the world ye have tribulation. *Ye ſhall have peace*; that is, ſerenity of mind, a quiet and calm temper of ſpirit within, when the world, like a tempeſtuous air, is full of ſtorms without. *Learn* thence, That though in the world Chriſt's own diſciples muſt look for and expect troubles, yet he has taken effectual care, that, amidſt all their troubles, in him they may have peace; Chriſt's blood has purchaſed peace for them, his word has promiſed it to them, and his Spirit ſeals it up to their ſouls. 3. The cordial provided by Chriſt for the ſupport of his diſciples ſpirits, under the ſinking trouble of the world's tribulations and troubles; *But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* I have taken away the ſting out of every croſs, and the venom out of every arrow. *Learn* hence, That it is a great comfort to a chriſtian, under all the troubles of this world, to conſider, that Chriſt has overcome the world, that is all things in the world, which may hinder his people's comfort and conſolation here, and their eternal happineſs and ſalvation hereafter; namely, the prince of the world, the rulers of the world, the wicked men of the world, the troubles of the world, the temptations of the world, the corruptions that are in the world through luſt. Now Chriſt having overcome the world, all perſons and things in it are at his diſpoſal, and can do no nothing but by his permiſſion; and as he has overcome the world himſelf, ſo he will enable us through faith in him to overcome it alſo. 1 John v. 4. *This is the victory over the world, even our faith.*

CHAP. XVII.

THESE words ſpake Jeſus; and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee.

Our bleſſed Saviour having ended his conſolatory and valedictory ſermon, contained in the three foregoing chapters; in this chapter we have recorded his laſt prayer, with and for his diſciples, before he left the world, which is a copy left upon earth, of what he doth now intercede for, as an advocate in heaven. "It is good (ſaith one) to compare ſcripture with ſcripture, but not to prefer ſcripture before ſcripture; all ſcripture being written by inſpiration of God;" but if any part of ſcripture be to be magnified above another, this chapter claims the pre-eminence; it contains the breathings out of Chriſt's ſoul for his church and children before his departure; not for his diſciples only, but for the ſucceeding church to the end of the world. In the verſe before us, *obſerve*, 1. The order of our Saviour's prayer: *Theſe words ſpake Jeſus*; that is, after he had finiſhed his excellent ſermon, he cloſes the exerciſe with a moſt fervent and affectionate prayer; teaching his miniſters, by his example, to add ſolemn prayer and ſupplication to all their inſtructions and exhortations: If every creature of God be to be ſanctified by prayer, much more the word of God, which works not as a natural agent, but as a moral inſtrument in God's hand. Now as God ſets the word on work, ſo is it prayer that ſets God on work. 2. As the order of Chriſt's prayer, ſo the geſture in which he prayed; *He lifted up his eyes to heaven*, as an indication of his ſoul's being lifted up to God in heaven; to ſignify his reverence of God, whoſe throne is in heaven; and to denote his confidence in God, and raiſed expectation of aid and help from God, and not from any creature. *Learn*, That the geſtures which we uſe in prayer, ſhould be ſuch as may expreſs our reverence of God, and denote our affiance and truſt in him. 3. The perſon prayed to, God, under the appellation of a *Father*: it intimates a ſweet relation; it is a word of endearing affection, and implies great reverence towards God, and great confidence and truſt in him. *Learn*, It is very ſweet and comfortable in prayer, when we can come and call God *Father*. 4. The mercy prayed for: *The hour is come*; *glorify thy Son, that thy Son may alſo glorify thee*. The hour is come; that is, "The hour of my ſufferings, and thy ſatisfaction; the hour of my victory, and of thy glory; the hour, the ſad hour, determined in thy decree and purpoſe." No calamity can touch us till God's hour is come; and when the ſad hour is come, the beſt remedy is prayer, and the only perſon to fly unto for ſuccour is our heavenly Father. Father, the hour is come, the doleful hour of my death and paſſion; glorify thy Son, glorify him at his death, by manifeſting him to have been the Son of God; glorify him in his death, by accepting it as the death of thy Son for the ſins of the world; glorify him after his death, by a ſpeedy reſurrection from the grave, and triumphant exaltation at thy right hand. Here *note*, How the glory of the Father and the Son are inſeparably linked together; it was the Father's deſign to glorify the Son, and it was the Son's deſire to have glory from the Father, for this end, that he might bring glory to the Father: *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee.*

2 As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him.

Note here, 1. The dignity which Chriſt was inveſted with, *power over our fleſh*; that is, authority to judge and ſentence all mankind. 2. How Chriſt came to be inveſted with this power; it was given him by his Father: *Thou haſt given him power over all fleſh.* Hence the Socinians would infer, that he was not God, becauſe he received all from God: But the text ſpeaks not upon his divine power as God, but of his power as Mediator. And the *note* is, That all mankind is under the power and authority of Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator: He has a legiſlative power, or a power to execute the laws which he hath given. 3. The end for which Chriſt was inveſted with this power; *That he might give eternal life to as many as God hath given him.* Here *note*, 1. That is, all ſincere and ſerious chriſtians, are given by God the Father unto Chriſt; they are given to him as his charge, to redeem, ſanctify, and ſave; and as his reward, Iſa. liii. 13. *Note*, 2. All that are given to Chriſt, have life from him; a life of juſtification and ſanctification on earth, and a life of glory in heaven. 3. The life which Chriſt gives to them that are given him, is eternal life. 4. That this eternal life is a free gift from Chriſt unto his people; though they do not work for wages, yet they ſhall not work for nothing: *I give unto them eternal life.*

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.

That is, "This is the true way and means to attain eternal life, namely, by the true knowledge of God the Father, and of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, who was commiſſioned and ſent by his Father to accompliſh the work of redemption for a loſt world." Here *note*, Chriſt calls God the Father *the only true God*, not in oppoſition to the Son and Holy Ghoſt, who being one in eſſence with the Father, are truly and really God, as well as the Father, but in oppoſition to idols and falſe gods. There is a great difference between theſe two propoſitions: The Father is the only true God, and the Father only is true God. Chriſt ſaith the former: *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God.* The Socinians ſay the latter: This is life eternal, to know only thee to be the true God; and that neither Jeſus Chriſt nor the Spirit are God, but the Father only. But how comes eternal life to depend as well upon the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, as of God the Father, if Jeſus Chriſt be only man, and not truly and really God? For thus our Saviour affirms, *This is life eternal, to know thee and Jeſus Chriſt.* Whence *learn*, 1. That the beginning, increaſe, and perfection of eternal life lieth in holy knowledge. 2. That no knowledge is ſufficient to eternal life, but the knowledge of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, who is alſo God; for who can think that the knowledge of a mere creature ſhould be accounted equally neceſſary to ſalvation, with the knowledge of the great and mighty God? Surely, if our happineſs conſiſts equally in the knowledge of God and Chriſt, then God and Chriſt are of the ſame nature, equal in power and glory. The comprehenſive ſenſe of the words ſeems to be this, "That the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, is the life of grace, and the neceſſary way to the life of glory."

4 I have glorified thee on the earth:——

Learn hence, That the whole life of Chriſt, while here on earth, was a glorifying of his Father; he glorified his Father by the doctrine which he preached; he glorified his Father by the miracles which he wrought; he glorified his Father by the unſpotted purity and innocency of his life, and by his unparalleled ſufferings at his death.

—I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.

That is, I am now about to finiſh it: He ſpeaks of what he was reſolved to do, as already done. Here *note*, 1. That it is work that glorifies God. 2. That every man has his work, his proper work, aſſigned him by God. 3. This work muſt be finiſhed here upon earth. 4. That, when we have done our proportion of work, we may expect our proportion of wages. 5. That it is a bleſſed thing at the hour of death to be able to ſay in ſincerity and uprightneſs, that we have glorified God in the world, and have finiſhed the work which he appointed us to do: *Father, I have glorified thee on earth, and have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.*

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

From the connection of this with the former verſe, *learn*, 1. That whoever expects to be glorified with God in heaven, muſt glorify him firſt here upon earth. 2. That, after we have glorified him, we may expect to be glorified with him, and by him. *I have glorified thee. And now, O Father, glorify thou me*; it follows, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Here *note*, 1. That Chriſt, as God, had an eſſential glory with God the Father before the world was: He had this glory not in the purpoſe and decree of God only, as the Socinians would have it; for he doth not ſay, "Glorify me with the glory which thou didſt propoſe and prepare for me before the world was;" but, "by which I had and enjoyed with thee before the world was;" by which words our Lord plainly aſſerts his own exiſtence and being from eternity, and prays for re-exaltation to that glory which he enjoyed with his Father before his incarnation. 2. That Chriſt, as Mediator, did ſo far humble himſelf, that he needed to pray for his Father to beſtow upon him the glory which he wanted; namely, the glory of his aſcenſion and exaltation. *Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own ſelf.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Father, glorify me, embrace and honour me as thy Son, who have been, in the eyes of the world, handled diſgracefully as a ſervant." It is an actual glory which Chriſt ſpeaks of, not in degree and purpoſe only, for that believers had as well as he; but this was a glory when no creature had a being.

6 I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word.

By the name of God, we are here to underſtand his nature, his properties and attributes, his deſigns and counſels for the ſalvation of mankind: Chriſt, as the prophet of his church, made all theſe known unto his people. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt has made a full and complete diſcovery of his Father's mind and will unto his people; *I have manifeſted thy name unto them which thou gaveſt me. Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word.* *Learn*, 1. That all believers are given unto Chriſt, as his purchaſe, and as his charge: 1. They are given him as his ſubjects, as his children, as the wife of his boſom, as the members of his body. 2. That none are given to Chriſt, but thoſe that were firſt the Father's: *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* 3. That all thoſe that are given unto Chriſt, do keep his word; they keep it in their underſtandings, they hide it in their hearts, they feel the force of it in their ſouls, they expreſs the power of it in their lives: *They have kept thy word.*

7 Now they have known that all things, whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee.

Note here, 1. The faithfulneſs of Chriſt in revealing the whole will of his Father to his diſciples. 2. The proficiency of his diſciples in the ſchool of Chriſt, they knew all the things which Chriſt had told them; namely, that whatſoever he had, was given him of the Father, and that he had theſe things from him to be a Mediator. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt hath approved himſelf a faithful prophet to his church, a faithful meſſenger from his Father to his people, in that he hath added nothing to his meſſage, nor taken nothing from it. 2. That it is our duty to know and believe on Chriſt, as the only meſſenger and Mediator ſent of God: *Now they have known that all things*, &c.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me; and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "The meſſage by thee, my Father, committed to me, I have communicated to them my diſciples, and they have received it, and will communicate it from thee to the world; being ſufficiently aſſured, that my coming and preaching was all by commiſſion from thee." Hence *learn*, 1. That the doctrine of the goſpel, which was revealed by Chriſt, was received from the Father. 2. That faith is a receiving of the word of Chriſt, and of Chriſt in and by the word. Receiving is a relative term, and preſuppoſes an offer. God offers on his part, and we receive on our part, the whole word with the whole heart. 3. That the miniſters of the goſpel are to preach that, and only that, which they have out of the word of God: *I have given them the word which thou gaveſt me.*

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.

That is, "I now offer up a prayer particularly, 1. For my apoſtles, deſigned for ſo great a work as the preaching of the everlaſting goſpel, to the obſtinate Jews, and obdurate Gentiles. 2. I intercede alſo for all believers at this time, for their perſeverance in faith, and conſtancy in perſecution; but I do not now intercede for the wicked and impenitent world, they not being capable (whilſt ſuch) of theſe mercies and bleſſings;" though at other times we find him praying for the world, yea, for his very crucifiers: *Father, forgive them*, &c. Nay, in this very prayer, at verſe 20. he prays for the world; that is, for the Gentile world; all thoſe that, by the preaching of the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors, ſhould be brought to believe on him to the end of the world. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great and gracious Interceſſor. 2. That all believers, all the children of God in general, are under the fruit and benefit of Chriſt's interceſſion. 3. That as all the members of Chriſt in general, ſo the miniſters and ambaſſadors of Chriſt in ſpecial, have a peculiar intereſt in Chriſt's interceſſion; and great are the advantages of his interceſſion for them; 1. From the perſon interceding, Chriſt: conſider the dignity of his perſon, God-man; the dearneſs of his perſon, God's Son. 2. From the manner of his interceſſion, not by way of intreaty, but meritorious claim. 3. From the ſublimity of the office, our Interceſſor is near to God, even at his right hand. 4. From the fruits of his interceſſion, it procures the acceptance and juſtification of our perſons, the hearing and anſwering of our prayers, the pardon and forgiveneſs of our ſins, our preſervation in grace, and our hopes of eternal glory.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

We may underſtand this two ways; 1. Of all perſons, all my friends, all my diſciples are thence, as well as mine. Thence *learn*, That the Father and Son have a like ſhare and property in all believers. 2. The words in the original being of the neuter gender, ſignify, All thy things are mine, and all my things are thine; Chriſt and his Father are one, and they agree in one; they have the ſame eſſence and nature, the ſame attributes and will; Chriſt hath all things that the Father hath, willeth all things that the Father willeth, and doth all things that the Father doth; he is therefore really and eſſentially God. It followeth, *and I am glorified in them*; that is, I am made glorious by their owning and receiving me, by their believing in me, and accepting of me for their Lord and Saviour. Thence *note*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is eminently glorified in and by all thoſe that believe in him, and belong unto him.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

Here *obſerve*, 1. Our Saviour's preſent condition; *I am no more in the world*; that is, I ſhall continue on earth but a ſmall time longer, and then aſcend to my Father in heaven. *Learn* thence, That Jeſus Chriſt, as he is man, he is gone out of this lower world, into the immediate preſence of his Father; he had been abaſed before, he muſt be exalted now; he had no more work to do on earth, but much to do in heaven, therefore he left this earth to go to heaven. 2. Our Saviour's prayer to his Father for his apoſtles, before he left the world: *Holy Father, keep them*; that is, preſerve them by thy divine power and goodneſs, for the glory of thy holy name. Here *note*, 1. The title and appellation given to God, *Holy Father*. Thence *learn*, That when we go to God in prayer, eſpecially for grace and ſanctification, we muſt look on him as an holy Father, as eſſentially and originally holy, as infinitely and independently holy. 2. The ſupplication requeſted of God; *Keep through thy name thoſe whom thou haſt given me*. Thence *learn*, That the perſeverance of the ſaints in a ſtate of grace is the ſweet effect and fruit of Chriſt's prayer: Chriſt has begged it, and it cannot be denied, there being ſuch an harmony and ſweet conſent between the will of the Father and the will of the Son. Three things concur to the believer's perſeverance. On the Father's part, there is everlaſting love, and all-ſufficient power. On the Son's part, there is everlaſting merit, and conſtant interceſſion. On the Spirit's part, there is a perpetual inhabitation, and continued influence. *Note*, 3. The end of Chriſt's ſupplication on behalf of his people; *That they may be one, as we are one*. Here *obſerve*, 1. That the heart of Chriſt is exceedingly ſet upon the unity and oneneſs of his members. 2. The believer's union with Chriſt their head, and one with another, has ſome reſemblance to that unity that is betwixt the Father and the Son: For it is an holy and ſpiritual union, a cloſe and intimate union, an indiſſoluble and inſeparable union.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled.

Note here, 1. That thoſe which ſhall be ſaved, are given unto Chriſt and committed to his care and truſt. 2. That none of thoſe that are given unto Chriſt as his charge, and committed to his care and truſt, ſhall be finally loſt: *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt*. It follows, *but the ſon of perdition*. A perſon may be ſaid to be a ſon of perdition two ways; actively and paſſively. Actively he is ſo, who makes it his work and buſineſs to deſtroy others: Paſſively, he is a ſon of perdition, who, for his wickedneſs in deſtroying others, is deſtroyed himſelf. Judas was a ſon of perdition in both theſe ſenſes; his heart was maliciouſly ſet upon deſtroying Chriſt, and wilfully ſet upon his own deſtruction: His covetouſneſs and hypocriſy prompted him to betray our Saviour, his deſpair provoked him to deſtroy himſelf.

13 And now come I to thee, and theſe things I ſpeak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves.

In theſe words our Saviour declares the great reaſon why he did at this time ſo publicly and ſolemnly pray for his diſciples; it was to fill them with joy and comfort, that their joy might not be diminiſhed by Chriſt's departure, but rather increaſed by the coming of the Comforter: *That they may have my joy fulfilled in them*; that is, the joy which they take in me, and the joy which they have from me. There is a double care which Chriſt takes of his people; namely, a care of their graces, and a care of their joy and comfort. How ſolicitous was he to leave his diſciples comfort before he departed from them! He delights to ſee his people chearful, and he knows what great uſe ſpiritual joy is in the chriſtian's courſe, both to enable us for doing, and to fit us for ſuffering. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt is the author and original of the joy of his people; *My joy*. 2. That it is Chriſt's will and deſire, that his people might be full of joy: *That my joy may be fulfilled in them*. 3. That the great end of Chriſt's prayer and interceſſion was, and is, that his people's hearts might be full of joy: *Theſe things I ſpeak in the world*, &c.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I have given them thy word, partly by external revelation, and partly by internal illumination; and for thy word's ſake the world hates them, as alſo *becauſe they are not of the world*. *Learn*, 1. That chriſtians, eſpecially miniſters, to whom Chriſt has given his word, muſt expect the world's hatred. Few of the prophets or apoſtles died a natural death: As their calling is eminent, ſo muſt their ſufferings be exemplary. The beſt miniſters, and the beſt men, are uſually moſt hated. There is an antipathy againſt the power of godlineſs, or a cruel, cauſeleſs, implacable, and irreconcileable hatred againſt the ſaints, becauſe of their ſtrictneſs in religion, and contrariety to the world. 2. That it is to the honour of all believers, that they are like unto Chriſt, in being the objects of the world's hatred: *The* *world hates them, becauſe they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.* This Chriſt adds both for information and conſolation; for information, that they ſhould look for ſuch hatred, miſery, and trouble, as they ſaw him grapple with; and for conſolation, to think that the world can never hate us ſo bad as it has hated Chriſt.

15 I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Here *note*, 1. That the wiſdom of Chriſt ſees fit to continue his children and people in the world, notwithſtanding all the perils and dangers of the world. He has work for them, and they are of uſe to him, for a time, in the world: till their work be done, Chriſt's love will not, and the world's malice cannot remove them from hence. Yet Chriſt prays that his Father would keep them from the evil; that is, from the ſins, temptations and ſnares of this wicked world. Thence *note*, That a ſpiritual victory over evil is to be preferred before a total exemption from evil; it is a far greater mercy to be kept from ſin in our afflictions, than from the afflictions themſelves. *Learn* farther, How neceſſary divine aid is to our preſervation and ſucceſs, even in the holieſt and beſt of enterpriſes, and how neceſſary it is to ſeek it by fervent prayer. *Note* alſo, That ſuch as ſincerely devote themſelves to Chriſt's ſervice, are ſure of his aid and protection, whilſt ſo employed.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Sanctify them not initially, for ſo they were ſanctified already, but progreſſively: Let them increaſe more and more in grace and holineſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as are already ſanctified, muſt labour, and ought to endeavour after further meaſures and higher degrees of ſanctification; that the moſt holy may yet be more holy. 2. The word of God is the great inſtrument in God's hand for his people's ſanctification. 3. That the word of God is the truth of God. *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* The word of God is a divine truth, an eternal truth, an infallible truth, an holy truth.

18 As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the world.

Note here, 1. Chriſt's miſſion: The Father ſent him into the world. Chriſt's ſending implies the deſignation of his perſon, his qualification for the work, his authority and commiſſion. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt himſelf did not of himſelf undertake the office of a Mediator, but was ſent; that is, authorized and commiſſioned of God ſo to do; *Thou haſt ſent me into the world.* *Note* 2. As Chriſt's miſſion, ſo the apoſtles' miſſion: *As thou haſt ſent me, ſo have I ſent them.* *Learn*, thence, That none may, or ought, to undertake the miniſtry, without an authoritative ſending from Chriſt himſelf; not immediately and extraordinarily by voice or viſion, but mediately by the officers of the church. And ſuch as are ſo ſent, are ſent by Chriſt himſelf; and if ſo, it is the people's duty to reverence their perſons, to reſpect their office, to receive their meſſage.

19 And for their ſakes I ſanctify myſelf, that they alſo might be ſanctified through the truth.

The word *ſanctify* here, is not to be taken for the cleanſing, purifying, or making holy that which was before unclean; but Chriſt's ſanctifying himſelf imports, 1. His ſeparation or ſetting himſelf apart to be a ſacrifice for ſin. 2. His conſecration or dedication of himſelf to this holy uſe and ſervice. Hence *learn*, That Jeſus Chriſt did dedicate and ſolemnly ſet himſelf apart to the great work and office of a Mediator. *Learn*, 2. That the great end for which Chriſt did thus ſanctify himſelf, was, that he might ſanctify his members; therefore did he conſecrate and ſet himſelf apart for us, that we ſhould be conſecrated to, and wholly ſet apart for him.

20 Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word:

Hitherto our Saviour had been praying for himſelf and his apoſtles; now he prays for all perſons, both Jews and Gentiles, that ſhould believe on him, throughout the world, by the preaching of the goſpel. Hence *learn*, 1. That all believers have a ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt's prayers. 2. That in the ſenſe of the goſpel they are believers, who are wrought upon to believe in Chriſt through the word. 3. That ſuch is Chriſt's care of, and love to his own, that they were remembered by him in his prayer, even before they had a being: *I pray not for thoſe alone, but for all that ſhall believe in me.*

21 That they all may be one: as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.

The ſpecial mercy and particular bleſſing which Chriſt prays for, on behalf of believers, is a cloſe and intimate union betwixt the Father himſelf and them, and alſo betwixt one another; ſuch an union as doth in ſome ſort reſemble that union which is betwixt God and Chriſt; not an unity of eſſence and nature, but of wills and affections. Hence *note*, 1. That the myſtical union betwixt Chriſt and his members carrieth ſome reſemblance with that union which is betwixt the Father and the Son. 2. That union amongſt the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt is of ſo great importance, neceſſity and conſequence, that he did in their behalf principally and chiefly pray for it. An unity of love and affection, of faith and profeſſion, an unity of practice and converſation, are mercies which Chriſt earneſtly prayed for, and has dearly paid for; and nothing is more deſired by him now in heaven, than that his diſciples ſhould be one among themſelves here on earth; *Father, may they be one, as we are one, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* Here Chriſt intimates one ſpecial advantage that would redound to the world by this deſirable union betwixt the miniſters and members of Chriſt; it will, if not convert, yet at leaſt convince the world, that I and my doctrine came from God. Thence *note*, That union amongſt Chriſt's diſciples is one ſpecial mean to enlarge the kingdom of Chriſt, and to cauſe the world to have better thoughts of him and his doctrine.

22 And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one.

Here *note*, 1. Chriſt's communication of that glory to believers, which he had received of the Father; that is, not his eſſential glory, but his mediatorial glory: *The glory which thou gaveſt me*. Now Chriſt hath no glory given him as God, but much glory beſtowed on him as Mediator. 2. The end of this communication, why he gave his diſciples that glory which the Father had given him; namely, that *they might be one*. *Learn*, 1. That God the Father hath beſtowed much glory on Chriſt his Son, as he is man and Mediator of the church. 2. That the ſame glory for kind and ſubſtance, though not for meaſure and degree, which Chriſt as Mediator has received from the Father, is communicated to true believers. 3. That the great end of this communication was, and is, to oblige and enable his people to maintain a very ſtrict union among themſelves: *The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one*. 4. That unity amongſt believers is part of that glory which Chriſt as Mediator hath obtained for them.

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.

Note here, 1. That as the Father is in Chriſt, ſo is Chriſt in believers, and they in him; the Father is in Chriſt in reſpect of his divine nature, eſſence, and attributes; and Chriſt is in believers, by the inhabitation of his holy Spirit. 2. That the believers' happineſs conſiſteth in their oneneſs, in being one with God through Chriſt, and one amongſt themſelves: *That they may be made perfect in one*. 3. That God the Father loved Chriſt his Son: *Thou loveſt them as thou haſt loved me*. God loveth Chriſt, firſt, as God; ſo he is *Primum amabile*, the firſt object of his love, as repreſenting his attributes exactly. Secondly, as Mediator, John x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life for my ſheep*. 4. That God the Father loves believers, even as he loved Chriſt himſelf; that is, he loves them upon the ſame grounds that he loved him; namely, for their nearneſs, and for their likeneſs to him. 1. For their nearneſs and relation to him; he loveth Chriſt as his Son, believers as his children, 1 John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father beſtoweth upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God!* 2. The properties of the Father's love towards Chriſt and believers are the ſame: Doth he love Chriſt with a tender love, with an unchangeable love, with an everlaſting love? So doth he love believers alſo. 5. That Chriſt would have the world know, that God the Father loveth the children of men, as well as himſelf; Chriſt is not ambitious to engroſs all our love unto himſelf, but would have the world take notice of the good-will of his Father, as well as of himſelf, to loſt mankind; of the Father's love in ſending him, as well as of his own love in coming: *That the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.*

24 Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.

Our Saviour had prayed for his diſciples ſanctification before, here he prays for their glorification; 1. *That they be where he is*; now Chriſt is with them in his ordinances, in his word, and at his table; ere long they ſhall be with him, as his friends, as his ſpouſe, as his companions in his kingdom. 2. That they may be with him where he is; that is, more than the former; a blind man may be where the ſun is, but not with the ſun, becauſe he doth not enjoy the light and benefit of it: To be with Chriſt where he is, imports union and communion with him. That being with him where he is, *they may behold his glory*; that is, to ſee it, and everlaſtingly to poſſeſs and enjoy it. *Learn* 1. That all thoſe that are given to Chriſt as his charge, and as his reward, ſhall certainly come to heaven to him; *Father, I will that they be with me:* becauſe I have merited that they ſhould be with me; I will that they behold my glory, becauſe I have purchaſed it at ſo dear a rate. 2. That the work and employment of the ſaints in heaven chiefly conſiſts in ſeeing and enjoying Chriſt's glory; for it will be a poſſeſſive ſight: The language of every look will be, "This happineſs is mine, This glory is mine." 3. That the top and height of the ſaints happineſs in heaven conſiſts in this, that they ſhall be with Chriſt.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.

Note here, 1. The appellation given to God: *O righteous Father*. This is the ſixth time that Chriſt in this prayer has called God Father, it being ſo ſweet a relation, and producing all love, delight, joy, and confidence in God, by him that practically improves it. But *obſerve*, that at ver. 11. when Chriſt prayed for his people's ſanctification, he ſaid, *holy Father*, making uſe of that attribute which is the cauſe of all holineſs in the creature; but now praying for their glorification, he ſays *O righteous Father:* righteous in making good thy promiſes both to me and them. 2. What it is that our Saviour affirms concerning the wicked and unbelieving world, that they have not known God, *the world hath not known thee*: not as if the world hath not known him at all, but not known him aright; the unbelieving and unſanctified part of the world having no ſaving knowledge of God, not living anſwerable to what they know to be their duty. What Chriſt affirms concerning himſelf: *But I have known thee, and theſe have known thee.* Intimating thus much unto us, that Jeſus Chriſt knows God immediately, and all others know him by the means of Chriſt: Chriſt is the original and fontal cauſe of all the ſaving knowledge that believers have of God. There is not the leaſt ray of ſaving illumination, that doth not deſcend from Chriſt and the Spirit of Chriſt.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it:* —

That is, " I have made known unto them thy nature, attributes, counſels, will and commands, and I will continue the manifeſtation of the ſame unto the end." *Learn* thence, That the ſaving knowledge of God was not attainable by natural abilities, but cometh to us by the ſpecial revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: *I have declared unto them thy name.* 2. That they that have the name of God, his nature and will, ſavingly declared to them, do not ſtand in need of any farther declarations and diſcoveries of God's nature and will to be made unto them: *I have declared,* &c.

—That the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

That is, " That the love which is originally in thyſelf, as the fountain of all grace, may be communicated and diſpenſed from thee to them, and become inherent in them.' *Learn* hence, That it is not enough for the people of God that they are beloved of him, and that his love is towards them; but they muſt endeavour to have it in them; that is, experience it in the effects of it, and in the ſenſe and feeling of it in their own ſouls. The ſafety of a chriſtian lies in this, that God loves him: but the joy, the comfort, and happineſs of a chriſtian, conſiſts in the knowledge, in the ſenſible apprehenſion and feeling of this love; therefore Chriſt cloſeth his prayer for his members, with this affectionate and comprehenſive portion, *Let the love,* &c.

CHAP. XVIII.

WHEN Jeſus had ſpoken theſe words, he went forth with his diſciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his diſciples. 2 And Judas alſo which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his diſciples.

No ſooner had our dear Lord, ended his divine prayer, recorded in the foregoing chapter, but he goes forth to meet his ſufferings with a willing chearfulneſs. He retires with his diſciples into a garden, not to hide and ſhelter himſelf from his enemies; for if ſo it had beeen the moſt improper place he could have choſen, it being the accuſtomed place where he was wont to pray, and a place well known to Judas, who was now coming to ſeek him: *Judas which betrayed him knew the place; for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his diſciples;* ſo that Chriſt repaired to this garden, not to ſhun, but to meet the enemy, to offer himſelf a prey to the wolves, which in the garden hunted him, and laid hold upon him: he alſo reſorted to this garden now for privacy, that he might freely pour out his ſoul to God. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was praying to his Father in the garden, when Judas with his black guard came to apprehend him. As the ſin of the firſt Adam, which brought deſtruction upon his poſterity, was committed in a garden, ſo the ſalutary paſſion of the ſecond Adam, which was to reſcue us from that deſtruction, did begin in a garden alſo.

3 Judas then having received a band *of men,* and officers from the chief prieſts and Phariſees, cometh thither with lanthorns, and torches, and weapons.

Note, 1. What a multitude were here employed by the chief prieſts and Phariſees, for apprehending a ſingle perſon; gown men and ſword men, young and old, Jew and Gentile; all ſorts of perſons contriving his death, as all conditions of people were afterwards to receive benefit by it. But what need of theſe lanthorns and torches, it being then, as ſome obſerve, full moon, when they ſought him in the garden? All this argued their zealous induſtry for our Saviour's apprehenſion, that they might be ſure to find him, in caſe he ſhould hide himſelf in any holes or corners of the garden. *Learn* hence, That perſecutors and wicked apoſtates are not aſleep in their deſigns and actings, but very vigilant and active; when at the ſame time Chriſt's own diſciples and followers are aſleep and careleſs: How active was Judas, and how watchful was his bloody crew, even at that time when Chriſt's diſciples could not keep their eyes open!

4 Jeſus therefore, knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth, and ſaid unto them, Whom ſeek ye? 5 They anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am *he.* And Judas alſo which betrayed him, ſtood with them. 6 As ſoon then as he had ſaid unto them, I am *he,* they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Note here, 1. How our Lord's ſufferings were all foreknown to himſelf, before they came upon him, and yet how willingly and chearfully did he go forth to meet them. Should our ſufferings be known unto us before they come upon us, how would it diſquiet and diſturb us! yea, not only diſcompoſe us, but diſtract us! In great wiſdom, therefore, and in tender mercy, has God concealed future events from us. But it was otherwiſe with Chriſt; he had an exact knowledge of thoſe bitter ſufferings which he was to undergo, and yet with a compoſed mind he goeth forth to meet them: *Jeſus knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth.* " Lord, how endearing are our obligations to thyſelf, that when thou kneweſt beforehand the bitterneſs of that cup which the juſtice of God was about to put into thy hand, thou didſt not decline to drink it off for our ſakes!" 2. That it was not man's power, but Chriſt's own permiſſion, which brought his ſufferings upon him. How eaſily could Chriſt have delivered himſelf out of his enemies hands, who, with a word from his mouth, cauſed them to go backward and fall to the ground! Chriſt in ſpeaking thoſe words did let out a little ray or beam of his Deity, and this ſtruck them down. Mark what a ſtrange power was here in the word of Chriſt, and that not an angry word neither: He did not chide them, and ſay, " You wretches, how dare you lay hands on me, and carry me to judgment, who ſhall one day be your judge?" Chriſt only ſaid, *I am he,* and down they fell. O what fear will Chriſt ſend out when he cometh to judge the world, who could ſend forth ſuch a fear when he yielded up himſelf to be judged and condemned in the world! If there was ſo much majeſty in the voice of Chriſt, in one of the loweſt acts of his humiliation, what will the voice of a glorified Chriſt be to ſinners, when he ſhall come as a Judge to condemn the world?

7 Then aſked he them again, Whom ſeek ye? and they ſaid, Jeſus of Nazareth. 8 Jeſus anſwered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way. 9 That the ſaying might be fulfilled which he ſpake, Of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none.

Here *note*, 1. How voluntarily and freely Chriſt laid down his life. When his enemies were fallen to the ground, he ſuffered them to riſe again, and offers himſelf to them, to take and carry him away. *Note*, 2. How the ſight of this glorious miracle of the ſoldiers falling to the ground, did not deter or diſcourage them from their wicked purpoſe; they get up again, and go on with their bloody deſign. *Learn* hence, That obſtinate and obdurate ſinners will not be reclaimed by the moſt evident and convincing, by the moſt miraculous and ſurpriſing appearances of God againſt them. *Note*, 3. How mindful, in the midſt of his ſufferings, Chriſt was of his dear diſciples, to ſecure them, at this time, from death and danger: *If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way*; that is, my diſciples, againſt whom ye have no warrant at this time. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt is ſo tender of his followers, that he will not put them upon trials, or call them forth to ſufferings, till they are ripe and ready fitted and prepared for them. The diſciples yet were weak and feeble, timorous and fearful, and Chriſt had much work and ſervice for them to do in the world; namely, to plant and propagate the goſpel in foreign countries; he therefore reſolves not to loſe any one of them by perſecution at this time: And thus was his word fulfilled, *Of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none.*

10 Then Simon Peter, having a ſword, drew it, and ſmote the high prieſt's ſervant, and cut off his right ear. The ſervant's name was Malchus. 11 Then ſaid Jeſus unto Peter, Put up thy ſword into the ſheath:—

Obſerve here, St. Peter's love unto, and zeal for his Lord and Maſter, in defence of whom he now draws his ſword: But why did he not rather draw upon Judas than upon Malchus? Poſſibly, becauſe though Judas was moſt faulty, yet Malchus might be moſt forward to carry off our Saviour. Oh, how doth a pious breaſt ſwell with indignation at the ſight of an open affront offered unto its Saviour! Farther, The rebuke which Chriſt gave St. Peter for what he did; though his heart was ſincere, yet his hand was raſh; good intentions are no warrant for irregular actions: Chriſt will thank no man for drawing a ſword in defence of him, without a warrant and commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a lawful magiſtrate, even in Chriſt's own defence, is raſh zeal, and diſcountenanced by the goſpel.

—The cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?

Here *note*, 1. A metaphorical deſcription of Chriſt's ſufferings: They are a cup put into his hand to drink off, and that by his own Father. They are a cup, and but a cup; God will not overcharge his people; and this cup is from the hand of a Father, yea, from the hand of our Father: *The cup which my Father hath given me.* 2. Our Lord's reſolution to drink off this cup, how bitter ſoever, being put to his mouth by his Father's hand: *Shall not I drink it?* that is, I will drink it. *Learn* hence, 1. That oft-times the wiſdom of God is pleaſed to put a cup, a very bitter cup, of affliction, into the hand of thoſe to drink, whom he doth moſt ſincerely love. 2. That when God doth ſo, it is their duty to drink it with ſilence and ſubmiſſion: *Shall not I drink it?* that is, I will certainly drink it with chearfulneſs and reſignation.

12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jeſus, and bound him, 13 And led him away to Annas firſt (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high prieſt that ſame year.) 14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counſel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man ſhould die for the people.

Judas having made good his promiſe to the chief prieſts, and delivered Jeſus a priſoner bound into their hands, thoſe evening wolves no ſooner ſeize the Lamb of God, but they thirſt and long to ſuck his innocent blood; yet, leſt it ſhould look like a downright murder, they allow him a mock-trial, and abuſe the law, by perverting it to injuſtice and bloodſhed. How impoſſible it is for the greateſt innocence and virtue to protect from ſlander and falſe accuſation! and no perſon can be ſo innocent or good, whom falſe witneſs may not condemn.

15 ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jeſus, and *ſo did* another diſciple. That diſciple was known unto the high prieſt, and went in with Jeſus into the palace of the high prieſt. 16 But Peter ſtood at the door without. Then went out that other diſciple which was known unto the high prieſt, and ſpake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then ſaith the damſel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou alſo *one* of this man's diſciples? He ſaith, I am not. 18 And the ſervants and officers ſtood there, who made a fire of coals (for it was cold) and they warmed themſelves: And Peter ſtood with them, and warmed himſelf.

All the four evangeliſts give us an account of Peter's fall in denying his Maſter. And therein we have *obſervable*, 1. The ſin itſelf which he fell into, the denial of Chriſt, and this backed with an oath; he ſware that he knew not the man. Lord! how may the ſlaviſh fear of ſuffering drive the holieſt and beſt of men to commit the fouleſt and worſt of ſins: 2. The occaſion of his fall. (1.) His preſumptuous confidence of his own ſtrength and ſtanding; *Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I.* Lord! to preſume upon ourſelves is the ready way to provoke thee to leave us to ourſelves. If ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand; we ſoon fall, if we believe it impoſſible to fall. (2.) His being in bad company, among Chriſt's enemies; Peter had better been a-cold by himſelf alone, than warming himſelf at a fire which was compaſſed in with the blaſphemies of the ſoldiers, where his conſcience, though not ſeared, was yet made hard. 3. The reiteration or repetition of this ſin; he denied Chriſt again and again; he denied him firſt with a lie, then with an oath and curſe. Oh, how dangerous is it, not to reſiſt the beginnings of ſin! If we yield to one temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more and ſtronger. 4. The heinous and aggravating circumſtances of Peter's ſin. (1.) From the character of his perſon, a diſciple, an apoſtle, a chief apoſtle; yet he denies Chriſt. (2.) From the perſon whom he denies, his Maſter, his Saviour. (3.) The time when he denied him; ſoon after that Chriſt had waſhed his feet; yea, ſoon after he had received the ſacrament from Chriſt's own hand. How unreaſonable then is their objection againſt coming to the Lord's table, that ſome who go to it, diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it! Such examples ought not to diſcourage us from coming to the ordinance, but ſhould excite and increaſe our watchfulneſs after we have been there, that our after-deportment may be ſuitable to the ſolemnity of a ſacrimental table.

19 ¶ The high prieſt then aſked Jeſus of his diſciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the world; I ever taught in the ſynagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. 21 Why aſkeſt thou me? aſk them which heard me, what I have ſaid unto them: behold, they know what I ſaid.

Our Saviour being brought before Caiaphas the high prieſt, he examines him concerning his doctrine, and his diſciples, pretending him to be guilty of hereſy in doctrine, and ſedition, in gathering diſciples and followers. Our Saviour anſwers, That, as to his doctrine, he had not delivered it in holes and corners, but had *taught* publicly *in the temple and ſynagogues, and that in ſecret he had ſaid nothing*; that is, nothing contrary to what he had delivered in public. Chriſt never willingly affected corners; he taught openly, and propounded his doctrine publicly and plainly in the world. A convincing proof that both he and his doctrine were of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is not unuſual for the beſt of doctrines to paſs under the odious name and imputation of error and hereſy. Chriſt's own doctrine is here charged; *The high prieſt aſked Jeſus concerning his doctrine.* 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt who have truth on their ſide, may and ought to ſpeak boldly and openly; *I ſpake openly unto the world.* "Veritas nihil erubeſcit præterquam abſcondi." Truth bluſhes at nothing, except at its being concealed. *In ſecret*, ſays Chriſt, *have I ſaid nothing.*

22 And when he had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by, ſtruck Jeſus with the palm of his hand, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou the high prieſt ſo? 23 Jeſus anſwered, If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me? 24 (Now Annas had ſent him bound unto Caiaphas the high prieſt.) 25 And Simon Peter ſtood and warmed himſelf: They ſaid therefore unto him, Art thou not alſo one of his diſciples? He denied it, and ſaid, I am not. 26 One of the ſervants of the high prieſt (being his kinſman whoſe ear Peter cut off) ſaith, Did I not ſee thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

Note here, 1. How inſolently and injuriouſly an officer ſtrikes our Saviour in this court of judicature; *One of the officers ſtruck Jeſus with the palm of his hand.* What had the holy and innocent Jeſus done, to deſerve theſe buffetings? He only made uſe of the liberty which their law did allow him, which was not to accuſe himſelf, but to put them upon the proof of thoſe accuſations which were brought againſt him. But from this inſtance of our Saviour's ſufferings, we *learn*, That Chriſt did endure painful buffetings, ignominious and contemptuous uſage, even from inferior ſervants; *giving his cheek to the ſmiters*, to teſtify that ſhame and reproachful uſage which was deſerved by us, and to ſanctify that condition to us, whenever it is allotted for us. 2. The meek and gentle reproof which the Lord Jeſus gives to this rude officer; he doth not ſtrike him dead upon the place, nor cauſe that arm to wither which was ſtretched forth againſt the Lord's anointed; but only lets him know, that there was no reaſon for his ſtriking of him. Where *note*, That though our Saviour doth not revenge himſelf, yet he vindicates himſelf, and defends himſelf both with law and reaſon; *If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil; but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?* Hence we *learn*, 1. That we are not literally to underſtand the command, Mat. v. of turning the cheek to him that ſmites us. For Chriſt himſelf did not this, but defends the innocency of his words. (2.) That to ſtand up in defence of our own innocency, is not contrary either to the duties of patience and forgiveneſs, or to the practice and example of our Lord Jeſus. *Note* 3. That when the ſoldier had ſtruck Chriſt upon the cheek, he did not turn to him the other alſo, according to Mat. v. 39. Which evidently ſhews, that that precept, *If they ſmite thee on one cheek, turn the other alſo*, commands only this, rather than take revenge, we ſhould bear a ſecond injury. Chriſtians ought rather to ſuffer a double wrong, than to ſeek a private revenge: Chriſtianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently, rather than to avenge one privately: but though it binds up our hands from private revenge, yet it doth not ſhut our mouths from complaining to public authority. Chriſt's own practice here expounds the precept elſewhere, Mat. v. 39. For he complains here of the officer's injuſtice in ſmiting him before the judicatory, and challenges the man to bear witneſs of the evil. Laſtly, How our Lord was not only buffeted, but bound, and ſent bound from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate again: And all this on foot through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, from one end of the city to the other; partly to render his paſſion more public, being a gazing-ſtock to the world, and a ſpectacle both to angels and men. And his condeſcending to go bound from one high prieſt to another, and from one tribunal to another, teaches his people what delinquents they were before the tribunal of God, and what they deſerved by reaſon of ſin; even a ſentence of eternal condemnation at the tribunal of the juſt and holy God.

28 ¶ Then led they Jeſus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early, and they themſelves went not into the judgment-hall, leſt they ſhould be defiled: but that they might eat the paſſover.

There were two courts of judicature which our bleſſed Saviour was brought before and condemned by: 1. That eccleſiaſtical court or ſanhedrim, in which the high-prieſt ſat as judge: Here he was condemned to death for blaſphemy. 2. The civil court or judgment-hall, where Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, ſat judge, who, becauſe he was a Gentile, they would not go into his houſe, leſt they ſhould be defiled: for they accounted it a legal pollution, to come into the houſe of a Gentile. Where *note*, The notorious hypocriſy of theſe Jews; they ſcruple the defiling of themſelves by coming near the judgment-hall, where Pilate ſat, but make no ſcruple at all to defile themſelves with the guilt of that innocent blood which Pilate ſhed. When perſons are over-zealous for ceremonial obſervations, they are oftentimes too remiſs with reference to moral duties. They *brought him to the judgment-hall; but they themſelves went not in, leſt they*, &c.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and ſaid, What accuſation bring you againſt this man? 30 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Note here, 1. How Pilate humours theſe Jews in their ſuperſtition. They ſcruple to go into the judgment-hall to him; he therefore goes out to them, and demands what accuſation they had againſt Chriſt. They charge him here only for being a malefactor, or an evil-doer in the general; but elſewhere (Luke xxiii.) they particularly accuſe him, 1. "For perverting the nation." 2. "For forbidding to pay tribute to Cæſar." 3. "For ſaying that he himſelf was Chriſt a King." All which was filthy calumny; yet Chriſt underwent the reproach of it without opening his mouth: *Teaching* us, when we lie under calumny and unjuſt imputation, to imitate him, who opened not his mouth, but committed his cauſe to him that judgeth uprightly.

31 Then ſaid Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.

The Jews now being under the power of the Romans, though they had a power of judging and cenſuring criminals in ſmaller matters, yet not in capital caſes; they could not pronounce a ſentence of death upon any perſon, ſay ſome: they might, and did, ſay others, puniſh blaſphemers, by ſtoning them to death; but then their ſentence is to be ratified by the Roman power: Accordingly, here they had in their eccleſiaſtical court condemned Chriſt for blaſphemy, now they bring him to Pilate the Roman governor to confirm the ſentence of death. From hence it appears, That Chriſt was the true Meſſias, being ſent into the world when the ſceptre was departed from Judah, according to that ancient prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come.* The Jews had no power abſolutely to condemn any man, or put him to death; but this power the Roman emperor reſerved to his own deputy. This contributed towards the fulfilling of our Saviour's words, Matt. xx. 19. *That he ſhould be delivered to the Gentiles, and ſhould be crucified:* Which was not a Jewiſh, but a Roman puniſhment. Had the Jews put him to death, they had ſtoned him. But Chriſt was to be made a curſe for us by hanging upon a tree; and accordingly the Jews execute the counſel of God, though they knew it not, by refuſing to put him to death themſelves. *Learn* hence, How willing Chriſt was to undergo a ſhameful, painful, and accurſed death, that he might teſtify his love unto, and procure a bleſſing for his people. Thus *the ſaying of Jeſus was fulfilled, which he ſpake*, &c.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? 34 Jeſus anſwered him, Sayeſt thou this of thyſelf, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate anſwered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief prieſts have delivered thee unto me: What haſt thou done? 36 Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Note here, 1. Pilate's enſnaring queſtion, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* How jealous are great men of Jeſus Chriſt, and how afraid are they of his kingdom, power and authority, as if it would be prejudicial to their authority and power in the world, which was far enough from Chriſt's thoughts! 2. The wiſdom and caution of our Saviour's anſwer; he neither affirms nor denies. Though whenever we ſpeak we are bound to ſpeak the truth, yet we are not bound at all times to ſpeak the whole truth. Chriſt tells him therefore, that upon the ſuppoſition that he was a king, yet his kingdom was not earthly, but a ſpiritual kingdom; he was no temporal king, to rule over his ſubjects with temporal power and worldly pomp, but a ſpiritual king, in and over his church only, to order the affairs, and look after the government thereof. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt as God hath an univerſal kingdom of power and providence even over the higheſt of men, and as a Mediator hath a ſpiritual kingdom in and over his church. 2. That it is a clear evidence that Chriſt's kingdom is ſpiritual, inaſmuch as it is not carried on by violence and force of arms, as worldly kingdoms are, but by ſpiritual means and methods: *If my kingdom were of this world, my ſervants would fight for me; but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

37 Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou a king then? Jeſus anſwered, Thou ſayeſt that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

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Note here, 1. That as the death of the croſs was a Roman puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans to whip their malefactors before they crucified them. Accordingly, *Pilate took Jeſus and ſcourged him.* Oh! amazing ſight, the great God of heaven and earth is laſhed and ſcourged like a baſe ſlave. Behold! hard-hearted ſinner, the laſhes wherewith thy Redeemer is cruelly tormented, were to preſerve thee from the ſeverer laſhes of thine own accuſing and condemning conſcience, and to ſave thee from being laſhed by the rage and fury of devils to all eternity. 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling Pilate was to be the inſtrument of our Saviour's death; it is very evident, that he had a mind to releaſe him; and it is concluded that Pilate was thus forward to ſcourge Chriſt, hoping that the Jews would have been ſatisfied with this lighter puniſhment, and to have diſmiſſed him. From this inſtance we may gather, that hypocrites within the pale of the viſible church, may be guilty of ſuch tremendous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſcience of an Infidel and Pagan may boggle at and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, abſolves Chriſt, and ſeeks to releaſe him, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, who had heard his doctrine, and ſaw his miracles, condemn him. 3. How wretchedly Pilate ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the Jews importunity, and, contrary to the light of his own reaſon and conſcience, delivers the holy and innocent Jeſus, firſt to be ſcourged and then crucified. *Learn* thence, That it is a vain apology for ſin, when perſons pretend that it was not committed with their own conſent, but at the inſtigation and importunity of others: For ſuch is the frame and conſtitution of man's ſoul, that none can make him either wicked or miſerable, without his own conſent: *Then Pilate took Jeſus and ſcourged him.*

2 And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And ſaid, Hail, king of the Jews: And they ſmote him with their hands.

Behold here, 1. The crown which they have prepared for him, a crown of thorns, and with great cruelty they preſs it cloſe to his ſacred temples, whilſt thoſe ſharp pointed briers piercing thoſe tender parts, let out that blood which in a ſhort time was to be more freely poured forth for the redemption of captive ſouls. The next part of our Saviour's ſufferings conſiſted of cruel mockings: Chriſt had owned himſelf to be the King of the Jews; that is, a ſpiritual King, in and over his church: But the Jews expecting that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in the pomp of an earthly prince, and finding it to be quite otherwiſe in our Saviour, they look upon him as a deceiver and impoſtor, and accordingly treat him as a mocking, with all the marks of deriſion and ſcorn: For, firſt, they put a crown upon his head, but a very ignominious and painful one; *A crown of thorns:* They put a ſceptre in his hand, but it was that of a reed; a robe of ſcarlet or purple upon his body; and then bowed their knees unto him, as they were wont to do before their princes, crying, Hail, King! Thus were all the marks of ſcorn imaginable put upon our dear Redeemer; yet what they did in jeſt, God permitted to be done in earneſt; for all theſe things were enſigns and marks of ſovereignty, and Almighty God cauſed the royal dignity of his Son to ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt abaſement. Whence was all this jeering and ſport, but to flout majeſty? And why did the Son of God undergo all this ignominy, diſgrace, and ſhame, but to ſhew what was due unto us for our ſins; as alſo to give us an example, to bear all the ſcorn, reproach, and ſhame imaginable, for the ſake of him, who for the joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the ſhame, as well as endured the croſs? Verily nothing was omitted that either the malice of men, or the rage of devils, could poſſibly invent, either to torment or reproach him. But with what a lamb-like meekneſs, with what an aſtoniſhing patience, did he undergo all theſe trials, both for our good, and in our ſtead!

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* ſaith unto them, Behold the man. 6 When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him:* for I find no fault in him.

Note here, 1. The great variety of our Saviour's ſufferings; he is made the foot-ball of cruelty and ſcorn; his ſacred body is ſtript of its garments, and his back diſguiſed with purple robes; his tender temples wounded with a thorny crown; his face ſpit upon, his cheeks buffeted, his head ſmitten, his hand ſceptered with a reed. By his wearing a crown of thorns, he took away the bitterneſs of that curſe, which our ſins brought upon the earth, Gen. iii. 18. Thorns and briars ſhall it bring forth. Chriſt, by his bitter and bloody ſufferings, has turned all the curſes of his people into crowns and bleſſings. 2. The noble teſtimony given of Chriſt's innocency by the mouth of Pilate, *I find in him no fault at all:* He doth not ſay, I find him not guilty of what is laid to his charge; but gives an univerſal teſtimony of our Lord's innocency: I find no fault at all in him. In ſpite of all malice, innocency ſhall find ſome friends and abettors. Rather than Chriſt ſhall want witneſſes, Pilate's mouth ſhall be opened for his juſtification: how fain would he have freed Jeſus, whom he found faultleſs! Our Lord found more compaſſion from Pilate, an Heathen, than he did from them of his own nation. Pilate would have ſaved him, but they cry out for his blood: Hypocrites within the viſible church may be guilty of ſuch monſtrous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſciences of heathens, without the church, may boggle at and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, pronounces Chriſt innocent, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, who had heard his doctrine, and ſeen his miracles, do condemn him. 3. Who influenced the main body of the Jews, to deſire Pilate to put Jeſus to death; it was the chief prieſts and elders, *they perſuaded the multitude:* Wo be to the common people, when their guides and leaders are corrupt; and wo be unto them much more, if they follow their wicked and pernicious counſels: the Jews here followed their guides the chief prieſts, but it was to their own deſtruction, as well as their leaders: *When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.*

7 The Jews anſwered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God. 8 ¶ When Pilate therefore

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Note here, 1. That as the death of the croſs was a Roman puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans to whip their malefactors before they crucified them. Accordingly, *Pilate took Jeſus and ſcourged him.* Oh! amazing ſight, the great God of heaven and earth is laſhed and ſcourged like a baſe ſlave. Behold! hard-hearted ſinner, the laſhes wherewith thy Redeemer is cruelly tormented, were to preſerve thee from the ſeverer laſhes of thine own accuſing and condemning conſcience, and to ſave thee from being laſhed by the rage and fury of devils to all eternity. 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling Pilate was to be the inſtrument of our Saviour's death; it is very evident, that he had a mind to releaſe him; and it is concluded that Pilate was thus forward to ſcourge Chriſt, hoping that the Jews would have been ſatisfied with this lighter puniſhment, and to have diſmiſſed him. From this inſtance we may gather, that hypocrites within the pale of the viſible church, may be guilty of ſuch tremendous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſcience of an Infidel and Pagan may boggle at and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, abſolves Chriſt, and ſeeks to releaſe him, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, who had heard his doctrine, and ſaw his miracles, condemn him. 3. How wretchedly Pilate ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the Jews importunity, and, contrary to the light of his own reaſon and conſcience, delivers the holy and innocent Jeſus, firſt to be ſcourged and then crucified. *Learn* thence, That it is a vain apology for ſin, when perſons pretend that it was not committed with their own conſent, but at the inſtigation and importunity of others: For ſuch is the frame and conſtitution of man's ſoul, that none can make him either wicked or miſerable, without his own conſent: *Then Pilate took Jeſus and ſcourged him.*

2 And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And ſaid, Hail, king of the Jews: And they ſmote him with their hands.

Behold here, 1. The crown which they have prepared for him, a crown of thorns, and with great cruelty they preſs it cloſe to his ſacred temples, whilſt thoſe ſharp pointed briers piercing thoſe tender parts, let out that blood which in a ſhort time was to be more freely poured forth for the redemption of captive ſouls. The next part of our Saviour's ſufferings conſiſted of cruel mockings: Chriſt had owned himſelf to be the King of the Jews; that is, a ſpiritual King, in and over his church: But the Jews expecting that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in the pomp of an earthly prince, and finding it to be quite otherwiſe in our Saviour, they look upon him as a deceiver and impoſtor, and accordingly treat him as a mocking, with all the marks of deriſion and ſcorn: For, firſt, they put a crown upon his head, but a very ignominious and painful one; *A crown of thorns:* They put a ſceptre in his hand, but it was that of a reed; a robe of ſcarlet or purple upon his body; and then bowed their knees unto him, as they were wont to do before their princes, crying, Hail, King! Thus were all the marks of ſcorn imaginable put upon our dear Redeemer; yet what they did in jeſt, God permitted to be done in earneſt; for all theſe things were enſigns and marks of ſovereignty, and Almighty God cauſed the royal dignity of his Son to ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt abaſement. Whence was all this jeering and ſport, but to flout majeſty? And why did the Son of God undergo all this ignominy, diſgrace, and ſhame, but to ſhew what was due unto us for our ſins; as alſo to give us an example, to bear all the ſcorn, reproach, and ſhame imaginable, for the ſake of him, who for the joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the ſhame, as well as endured the croſs? Verily nothing was omitted that either the malice of men, or the rage of devils, could poſſibly invent, either to torment or reproach him. But with what a lamb-like meekneſs, with what an aſtoniſhing patience, did he undergo all theſe trials, both for our good, and in our ſtead!

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* ſaith unto them, Behold the man. 6 When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him:* for I find no fault in him.

Note here, 1. The great variety of our Saviour's ſufferings; he is made the foot-ball of cruelty and ſcorn; his ſacred body is ſtript of its garments, and his back diſguiſed with purple robes; his tender temples wounded with a thorny crown; his face ſpit upon, his cheeks buffeted, his head ſmitten, his hand ſceptered with a reed. By his wearing a crown of thorns, he took away the bitterneſs of that curſe, which our ſins brought upon the earth, Gen. iii. 18. Thorns and briars ſhall it bring forth. Chriſt, by his bitter and bloody ſufferings, has turned all the curſes of his people into crowns and bleſſings. 2. The noble teſtimony given of Chriſt's innocency by the mouth of Pilate, *I find in him no fault at all:* He doth not ſay, I find him not guilty of what is laid to his charge; but gives an univerſal teſtimony of our Lord's innocency: I find no fault at all in him. In ſpite of all malice, innocency ſhall find ſome friends and abettors. Rather than Chriſt ſhall want witneſſes, Pilate's mouth ſhall be opened for his juſtification: how fain would he have freed Jeſus, whom he found faultleſs! Our Lord found more compaſſion from Pilate, an Heathen, than he did from them of his own nation. Pilate would have ſaved him, but they cry out for his blood: Hypocrites within the viſible church may be guilty of ſuch monſtrous acts of wickedneſs, as the conſciences of heathens, without the church, may boggle at and proteſt againſt. Pilate, a Pagan, pronounces Chriſt innocent, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, who had heard his doctrine, and ſeen his miracles, do condemn him. 3. Who influenced the main body of the Jews, to deſire Pilate to put Jeſus to death; it was the chief prieſts and elders, *they perſuaded the multitude:* Wo be to the common people, when their guides and leaders are corrupt; and wo be unto them much more, if they follow their wicked and pernicious counſels: the Jews here followed their guides the chief prieſts, but it was to their own deſtruction, as well as their leaders: *When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.*

7 The Jews anſwered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God. 8 ¶ When Pilate therefore

heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? but Jeſus gave him no anſwer.

Note here, 1. How ambitious the chief prieſts were that Chriſt ſhould die under a colour of law: *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.* The law which they allude to, is the law for putting falſe prophets and blaſphemers to death; of which number they conclude Chriſt to be, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God; whereas he did not make himſelf ſo, or only pretend to be ſo, but really and indeed was ſo; to wit, the eternal Son of God. Such as are indeed blaſphemers, and do arrogate to themſelves what is proper to God only, by the law of God they ought to be put to death; but Chriſt was not guilty of the violation of that law; for he was indeed the Son of God, and did not make himſelf ſo. 2. How full of fear the conſcience of Pilate was, when the Jews told him that Jeſus made himſelf the Son of God; he was afraid to condemn him, not knowing but that he might be ſome divine and extraordinary perſon, and conſequently might draw down divine vengeance on his own head. *Learn* hence, That ſerious thoughts of a Deity will ſtrike terror even into a natural conſcience, eſpecially when the ſinner is following a courſe which his own judgment cannot approve; when Pilate heard of Chriſt's being the Son of God, he was afraid, knowing what he had done to him, was againſt his own conſcience. 3. The queſtion Pilate puts to Chriſt upon this occaſion, *Whence art thou?* that is, What is thy original or parentage? Art thou a divine perſon or not? Our bleſſed Saviour being unwilling to obſtruct his own ſufferings, or to diſcover any thing that might hinder Pilate from proceeding againſt him, would give him no anſwer, having before made a reaſonable and ſufficient defence. O how ready was Chriſt to lay down his life for ſinners, and how willing to pay that ranſom for his people, which the juſtice of God required.

10 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee? 11 Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater ſin.

Note here, 1. How offended Pilate was at Chriſt's ſilence, and how unreaſonably he boaſts of his power and authority; *Have not I power to crucify thee, and power to releaſe thee?* It is the great ſin and ſnare of men in power, to forget from whom they derive their power, and to think that they may employ their power as they pleaſe. 2. The piety and meekneſs of our Saviour's anſwer, *Thou couldeſt have no power againſt me, unleſs it were given thee from above.* That is, thou haſt no power over me, nor couldeſt thou inflict any puniſhment upon me, were it not that my Father had, in his great wiſdom, divine counſel, and for glorious ends, permitted it ſo to be. *Learn*, That Chriſt's being under the power of any man, how great and eminent ſoever, did flow from the peculiar diſpenſation of God, who, in his wiſe and wonderful counſel, ſo ordered it and ordained it, for the redemption and ſalvation of his people; he was above all human power as God, and no ways obnoxious to Pilate's power, being a perfectly innocent man. 3. How Chriſt charges his death more upon Judas and the Jews, than upon Pilate and the Gentiles: *They that delivered me unto thee have the greater ſin.* Not that Pilate was excuſed from ſin, in delivering Chriſt to be crucified; he ſinned heinouſly in abuſing his power; but Judas ſinned more in delivering him up to the chief prieſts, and the chief prieſts in delivering him up to Pilate, than Pilate himſelf, whom they made a tool to ſerve their malice and revenge; they had better means of knowledge than he, and ſo ſinned againſt more light than he; and conſequently their light was greater, and their condemnation heavier than his. *Learn* thence, That the greater means of light and knowledge perſons ſin againſt, the more aggravated is their guilt, and the more heightened will be their condemnation: *He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater ſin.*

12 And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæſar's friend: whoſoever maket himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Cæſar. 13 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the judgment-ſeat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Still *obſerve*, How unwilling Pilate was to put Chriſt to death: Conſcience bid him ſpare, popularity bids him kill; how frequently and how fervently did he contend with the Jews, till they make it a ſtate caſe, and tacitly accuſe him for a traitor to the Roman emperor, if he releaſed him; *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæſar's friend.* When Pilate heard that, he delivers up the innocent Jeſus to be crucified. Hence *learn*, That the natural conſciences of men, and the innate notions of good and evil, may carry men on a great way in oppoſing that which is a bare-faced iniquity; but, at laſt, either fear or ſhame will over-rule, if there be not a ſuperior and more noble principle. Though Pilate's conſcience acquitted Chriſt, and his mouth had declared that he had found no fault at all in him; yet fear of Cæſar's diſpleaſure cauſes him to deliver up to death the holieſt and beſt of men, againſt his judgment and his conſcience: *When Pilate heard that, he brought Jeſus forth unto them.*

14 And it was the preparation of the paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief prieſts anſwered, We have no king but Cæſar. 16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. —

Note here, How careful the Holy Ghoſt is to record and ſet down the time when Pilate gave ſentence againſt Chriſt. In general, it was on the day of the preparation for the paſſover; that is, the day immediately before it, when they prepared every thing needful for the ſolemnization; and in particular, it was about the ſixth hour of that day. St. Mark calls it the third hour, St. John the ſixth; but this is eaſily reconciled thus; the Jews divided the day into four quarters, which they called hours: the firſt was called the third hour, which anſwers to our ninth; the ſecond called the ſixth hour, anſwering our twelfth; the third, called the ninth hour, anſwering our three in the afternoon; the fourth, called the twelfth hour, which was the time of their retirement from labour, and beginning of the firſt night watch. Now the whole time, from the third hour to the ſixth, that is, from nine to twelve, was called the third hour; and the whole intervening time, from the ſixth to the ninth, that is from twelve to three, is called the ſixth hour, and ſo of the reſt. Now when St. John ſays, it was about the ſixth hour when Chriſt was condemned by Pilate, and led away to be crucified, and St. Mark ſays, it was the third hour, we are to underſtand, that St. Mark takes in the whole time of the third hour, from nine to twelve; and St. John ſaying it was about the ſixth hour, implies, that it was near twelve; ſo that between the hours of nine and twelve, our Lord was ſentenced, and led away to his croſs, about twelve faſtened to his croſs, upon which he hung till the ninth hour; that is, to about three in the afternoon; during which time, there was ſuch an eclipſe of the ſun, as did occaſion darkneſs over all the earth. *Learn* hence, The great love and condeſcenſion of Chriſt, in ſtooping ſo low, to have his ſufferings lengthened out upon our accounts, to expiate our guilt which deſerveth eternal ſufferings; that he might, by his example, warn us to prepare for trials of long continuance, and ſanctify a ſtate of continual affliction to us. Behold the Son of God harraſſed all night before he ſuffered, hurried from place to place, poſted backward and forward from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate, wearied, ſcourged, buffeted, crowned with thorns, at laſt nailed to his croſs, and hanging thereupon from about twelve to three, in exquiſite torture of body, and under the ſenſe of his Father's wrath in his ſoul. O Lord! thy kindneſs towards us is matchleſs and inimitable, never was love like thine!

—And they took Jeſus and led him away. 17 And he bearing his croſs, went forth into a place called, *the place* of a ſkull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.

Note here, 1. That it was a cuſtom among the Romans, to cauſe the perſon condemned to crucifying, to carry his own croſs; accordingly our Saviour bare his own croſs part of the way, till fainting under the burden of it, they laid it upon another, not out of mercy, but malice, reſerving him for a more public death; they were loath he ſhould go away in a fainting fit. But why could not Chriſt bear his own croſs, who was able to bear the ſins of the whole world, when hanging upon the croſs? *Anſwer* 1. Probably, the Jews malice provided him a croſs of extraordinary greatneſs, proportionable to the crimes they charged him with. 2. He was much debiliated and weakened, with his long watching and ſweating the night before. 3. The ſharp edges of the croſs grating his late whipped and galled ſhoulders, might occaſion the freſh bleeding of his wounds, and his weakening thereby. 4. Hereby he gave the world a demonſtration of the truth of his humanity, that he was in all things like unto us, with reſpect to his human nature, and the common infirmities of that nature. Herein, like Iſaac, Chriſt chearfully carried the wood on which he was to be offered up a ſacrifice to divine juſtice. *Note* 2. The infamous company which our Lord ſuffered with, two thieves; on either ſide one, and himſelf in the midſt: It had been a ſufficient diſparagement to our bleſſed Redeemer, to be ſorted with the beſt of men; but to be numbered with the ſcum of mankind, is ſuch an indignity as confounds our thoughts. This was deſigned by the Jews to diſhonour and diſgrace our Saviour the more, and to perſuade the world that he was the greateſt of offenders. But God over-ruled this, for fulfilling an ancient prophecy concerning the Meſſias, Iſa. liii. ult. *And he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors.*

19 ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the croſs. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jeſus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. 21 Then ſaid the chief prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am king of the Jews. 22 Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written.

Note here, 1. The inſcription wrote by Pilate over our ſuffering Saviour; *This is Jeſus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.* It was the manner of the Romans, when they crucified a malefactor, to publiſh the cauſe of his death in capital letters over his head, that ſo the equity of their proceedings might more clearly appear to the people. Now it is obſervable, how wonderfully the wiſdom of God over-ruled the heart and pen of Pilate to draw this title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his croſs. *Learn* hence, that the regal dignity of Chriſt was openly proclaimed by an enemy, and in the time of his greateſt reproaches and ſufferings. Pilate, without his own knowledge, did our Saviour an eminent piece of ſervice; he did that for Chriſt, which none of his own diſciples durſt do: not deſignedly, but from the ſpecial over-ruling providence of God. No thanks to Pilate for all this, becauſe the higheſt ſervices performed to Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall neither be accepted nor rewarded by God. 2. How the Jews endeavour to alter this: *Write not, the King of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am King of the Jews.* The Jews thought it would be a diſgrace to them, that Chriſt ſhould be reported abroad to have been their king, therefore they deſire an alteration of the writing: but Pilate, that wrote in honor of Chriſt, ſtiffly defends what he had done: To all their importunity he returns this reſolute anſwer: *What I have written, I have written.* Surely the conſtancy of Pilate at this time, muſt be attributed to ſpecial divine providence. How wonderful was it, that he who before was as inconſtant as a reed, ſhould now be as a pillar of braſs! Whence is this, but from the God of ſpirits moving upon his ſpirit to write, and to defend what was written? The providence of God hath a proſpect beyond the underſtanding of all creatures.

23 ¶ Then the ſoldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments, (and made four parts, to every ſoldier a part) and alſo *his* coat: now the coat was without ſeam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rent it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did.

Here we have recorded our Saviour's ſufferings from the ſoldiers; they ſtript him of his garments, before they faſtened him to the croſs, and divided thoſe garments which could be parted amongſt them, and caſt lots for his woven coat, which could not be divided. Little did theſe vile ſoldiers think that they were now fulfilling a ſcripture prophecy: Yet ſo it was, this action of their's being foretold, Pſal. xxii. 18. *They part my garments among them, and caſt lots upon my veſture.* Not that the prophecy made them do it, but was fulfilled by their doing it. From hence we may gather, that Chriſt ſuffered naked upon the croſs; as naked, ſay ſome, as he came into the world. We had made ourſelves naked to our ſhame; and Chriſt became naked to cover our ſhame. If, ſenſible of our own nakedneſs and ſhame, we flee unto him by faith, we ſhall be clothed with robes of righteouſneſs, and garments of everlaſting praiſe.

25 ¶ Now there ſtood by the croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mother's ſiſter, Mary *the wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother, and the diſciple ſtanding by, whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy ſon, 27 Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that diſciple took her unto his own *home.*

Theſe words contains our Saviour's affectionate recommendation of his diſtreſſed mother, to the care of a dear diſciple. It was an argument of Chriſt's wonderful love to her, that when he was nailed to the croſs, and ready to die, he was more concerned for his mother's ſorrows, than for his own ſufferings. Now was Simeon's prophecy fulfilled, Luke ii. 35. *A ſword ſhall paſs through thine own ſoul alſo.* Her ſoul was pierced for him, both as his natural mother, and alſo as a myſtical member of him her head; therefore Chriſt applies theſe comfortable words as a ſalve to her wounds, even whilſt his own were bleeding unto death. *Woman, behold thy Son.* Where *note*, He calls her *woman*, and not mother; he doth not ſay, Mother, behold thy Son; but, *Woman*, behold him. Not that Chriſt was aſhamed of, or unwilling to own her as his mother; but either, 1. Fearing that calling her by that name ſhould augment her grief and trouble. Or elſe, 2. To intimate his change of ſtate and condition, that being ready to die and return to his Father in heaven, he was above all earthly relations, and knew no one after the fleſh, no, not his very mother; yet ſee at the ſame time, when he was above her, and about to leave her, how his care manifeſted itſelf for her, when his ſoul and body were full of anguiſh to the very brim; yet all this makes him not in the leaſt unmindful of ſo dear a relation. Thence *learn*, That Chriſt's tender care of his mother, even in the time of his greateſt diſtreſs, is an excellent pattern for all children to imitate and follow to the end of the world. St. John here obeyed Chriſt's command, and imitated his example; he took her to his own home; that is, he treated her with all that dutiful regard which a tender and indulgent mother challenges from a pious and obedient ſon. No perſonal trial or trouble upon ourſelves doth exempt us from the performance of our duty towards others, eſpecially towards our near and dear relations: Chriſt in the extremity of his ſufferings, accounted it his duty to take care of, and provide for his dear mother; teaching us by his example, that children ought to evidence that they honour their parents, by taking care of them in their decayed and deſolate condition. Again, inaſmuch as St. John took care of the holy mother after her dear Son's death, *That diſciple took her to his own home*; we *learn*, That the Lord never removes one comfort, and takes away the means of ſubſiſtance from his people, but he raiſes up another in the room of it. It is very probable that Joſeph her huſband was before this time dead, and Jeſus her Son was now dying; but ſtill God provides; he raiſes up St. John to take care of her; who takes her to his own home, and looks upon her as one of his family. But how comes St. John above the reſt to have this honourable ſervice put upon him, and this high truſt repoſed in him? *Anſwer*, The text tells us, *he was the diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; that is, in a more particular manner, treating him with greater freedom and familiarity than the reſt; he alſo evidenced more love unto, and more courage and reſolution for Chriſt, than the reſt of his diſciples, he ſtanding by the croſs, when they got afar off, Mark xv. 50. Thence we *learn*, That ſuch as are beloved of Chriſt, as do keep cloſe unto him, and expreſs moſt zeal and reſolution for him, ſhall be peculiarly honoured by him, and be employed in the higheſt ſervices for him.

28 ¶ After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt. 29 Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar: and they filled a ſpunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth.

Note here, 1. The affliction or ſuffering which our Saviour complained of, and that is, thirſt; there are two ſorts of thirſt, the one natural and proper, the other ſpiritual and figurative; Chriſt felt both at this time. His body thirſted by reaſon of thoſe agonies which it laboured under. His ſoul thirſted under vehement deſires, and fervent longings, to accompliſh that great and difficult work he was now about. 2. The deſign and end of our Lord's complaint: *That the ſcripture might be fulfilled, he ſaith, I thirſt.* Our Saviour finding that all was accompliſhed, which he was to do before his death, but only the fulfilling that one ſcripture, Pſal. lxix. 21. *They gave me vinegar to drink*; he for the accompliſhment thereof, *ſaid I thirſt.* Whence *note*, That ſuch were the agonies and extreme ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the croſs, that they drank up his very ſpirits, and made him cry, *I thirſt.* 2. That when Chriſt cried out, *I thirſt*, it was to ſhew, that whatever was foretold by the prophets concerning him, was exactly accompliſhed, and even to a cirumſtance fulfilled in him: *That the ſcripture might be fulfilled*, &c.

30 When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed: And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

Note here, 1. Our Lord's laſt words, *It is finiſhed.* 2. His laſt act, *He bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.* As to the former, his laſt words, *It is finiſhed*; this might be the probable intendment of it: 1. *It is finiſhed*; that is, now is my Father's counſel concerning me accompliſhed, and now is the promiſe that he made of my becoming a ſacrifice for ſin fulfilled; both my Father's purpoſe and my Father's promiſe are now receiving their final accompliſhment. 2. *It is finiſhed*; that is, the ſcriptures are now fulfilled; all types that did prefigure me, all the prophetical predictions that were made of me, all the Jewiſh ſacrifices that pointed at me, have now received their final accompliſhment in me, and are aboliſhed in my death. 3. *It is finiſhed*; that is, my ſufferings are now ended, my race is run, my work is done, I am now putting my laſt hand to it, my death is before me, I have finiſhed the work, the whole work which I came into the world for, doing as well as dying; all is upon the matter compleated, it is juſt finiſhing, it will be inſtantly finiſhed. Again, 4. *It is finiſhed*; that is, the fury and malice, the rage and revenge of my enemies is now ended, they have done their worſt; the chief prieſts and the ſoldiers, the judges and witneſſes, the executioners and tormentors, have all tired out themſelves with the exerciſe of their own malice; but now their ſpite and ſpleen, their envy and enmity is ended, and the Son of God is at reſt. 5. *It is finiſhed*; that is, the glorious work of man's redemption and ſalvation is perfected and performed, conſummated and completed, the price is paid, ſatisfaction is given, redemption is purchaſed, and ſalvation inſured to a miſerable world. Wo unto us, if Chriſt had left but one farthing of our debt to the juſtice of God unpaid, we muſt have lain in hell to all eternity, as being inſolvent; *but Chriſt has by one offering for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt hath perfected, and completely finiſhed the great work of redemption committed to him by God the Father. *Note*, 2. Our Saviour's laſt act; *He bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.* Whence *learn*, The ſpontaneity and voluntarineſs of Chriſt's ſufferings, how freely he ſurrendered to death; his ſoul was not rent from him, but yielded up to God by him; Chriſt was a volunteer in dying; though his death was a violent death, yet it was a voluntary ſacrifice: *He bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.*

31 The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath-day (for that ſabbath-day was an high day) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the ſoldiers, and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. 34 But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that ſaw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe. 36 For theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of him ſhall not be broken. 37 And again another ſcripture ſaith, They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.

Theſe verſes contain ſeveral remarkable paſſages, tending to the confirmation of our faith, in the belief and certainty and reality of our Saviour's death; in which the Jews, the ſoldiers, and St. John, do all give their ſeveral and ſufficient evidences. *Obſerve*, 1. The Jews part in clearing up this truth; they deſire Pilate (who had power alone to diſpoſe of the dead bodies of condemed perſons) that the legs of the crucified perſons might be broken to haſten their death, that ſo they might be taken away and buried; becauſe, according to the law, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. the land was defiled with thoſe that were hanged, if not timely buried; and they judged, if the bodies of theſe perſons did remain on the croſs all that night, and the next ſabbath-day, *which was an high day*, (the ordinary ſabbath, and the firſt day of the paſſover, or feaſt of unleavened bread meeting together) it might pollute both them and their feaſt. Whence *note*, The curſed hypocriſy of theſe Jews; they look upon themſelves as ſtrictly bound to obſerve an outward ceremony, but their conſcinces never ſcruple to violate the moſt weighty precepts of the moral law; they ſtrictly obſerve the ceremonial precept, that the dead bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs, but they ſcruple not to crucify the Son of God, and to uſe him with the utmoſt rigour, deſiring his bones may be broken. 2. The ſoldiers part contributed to clear the truth of Chriſt's death; they execute what the Jews had deſired, and Pilate granted, breaking the legs of the two thieves, but not of Jeſus, becauſe he was already dead; but one of the ſoldiers, reſolving to make ſure work, thruſts a ſpear into his ſide, and there came out ſtraightway blood and water, proving that he was really dead. All which points out to us, that it is he who came by water and blood, 1 John v. 6. and that from the merit and efficacy of his death, there floweth out blood for the obtaining remiſſion of ſin, and water to regenerate and waſh us from uncleanneſs. From the barbarous ſoldier's piercing of Chriſt's ſide after he was dead, we *learn*, That no cruelty was omitted towards Chriſt, either dead or alive, which might teſtify the great deſert of our ſin, nor was there any needful evidence wanting, which might make clear the truth of his death; the ſoldier's piercing of our Saviour's ſide, was at once an exerciſe of their cruelty, and an evidence of the certainty of Chriſt's death. 3. St. John's part in this evidence; he avouches, That Chriſt really died, and expreſsly affirms, that he ſaw with his own eyes, for the confirmation of our faith; *He that ſaw it bare record, and his record is true.* And further ſhews, That by theſe actions of the ſoldiers, *that* was done, by which ſeveral ſcripture prophecies *were fulfilled*, and received their accompliſhment; particularly, that of Exod. xii. 46. concerning the paſchal lamb, which was a type of Chriſt, *That a bone of it ſhould not be broken*; and that prediction, Zech. xii. 10. *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced.* *Learn* hence, That Chriſt is the truth and ſubſtance of that type, the paſchal lamb mentioned Exod. xii. and the true paſſover ſacrificed for us; therefore what was ordained concerning the paſchal lamb, is applied here to Chriſt, as the ſubſtance of that type; *A bone of him ſhall not be broken.*

38 ¶ And after this, Joſeph of Arimathea, (being a diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly for fear of the Jews) beſought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jeſus: and Pilate gave him leave: he came therefore and took the body of Jeſus. 39 And there came alſo Nicodemus (which at the firſt came to Jeſus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40 Then took they the body of Jeſus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation-*day*, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

This laſt paragraph of the chapter gives us an account of our Lord's honourable burial; ſuch a funeral as never was ſince graves were firſt digged. Where *note*, 1. Our Lord's body muſt be begged before it could be buried, the dead bodies of malefactors being in the power, and at the diſpoſal of the judge: Pilate grants it, and accordingly the dead body is taken down, wrapped in fine linen, and prepared for the ſepulchre. 2. The perſons who beſtowed this honourable burial upon Chriſt, Joſeph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, the one provided fine linen, and the other fine ſpices, and they jointly wound and embalmed his body after the Jewiſh manner; both of them worthy, though cloſe, diſciples: Grace doth not always make a public and open ſhew where it is; but as there is much ſecret treaſure unſeen in the bowels of the earth, ſo there is much grace in the hearts of ſome ſaints, which the world takes little notice of. We read of none of the apoſtles at Chriſt's funeral; fear had put them to flight; but Joſeph and Nicodemus appeared boldly: If God ſtrengthen the weak, and leave the ſtrong to the prevalency of their own fears, the weak ſhall be as David, and the ſtrong as tow. 3. The grave or ſepulchre in which our Lord was buried, it was a *ſepulchre* in a *garden*, to expatiate Adam's ſin committed in a garden: as by the ſin of the firſt Adam we were driven out of paradiſe, the garden of pleaſure, ſo by the ſufferings of a ſecond Adam, who lay buried in a garden, we may hope for entrance into the heavenly paradiſe. And it was a *new* ſepulchre, wherein never any man was laid, leſt his adverſaries ſhould ſay, it was another that was riſen, who was buried there before, or that he aroſe as one of the old prophets did, by touching the bones of ſome other dead perſon. 4. The manner of our Lord's funeral; it was haſty, public, and decent; it was haſty, by reaſon of the ſtraitneſs of time, the ſabbath was approaching, and all buſineſs is laid aſide to prepare for that. *Teaching* us, How much it is our duty to diſpatch our wordly buſineſs early on the eve of the Lord's day, that we may be the better prepared to ſanctify that day. Again: Our Lord's funeral was public and open, all perſons that would, might be ſpectators, to cut off occaſion from any to object, that there was deceit and fraud uſed in or about our Lord's burial; yet he was alſo interred decently, his holy body being wrapt in fine linen, and perfumed with ſpices, according to the Jewiſh cuſtom. 5. The reaſons why our Lord was thus buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other men lie by the walls: doubtleſs it was to declare the certainty of his death, and the reality of his reſurrection, to fulfil the types and prophecies which went before of him; *As Jonas being three days and three nights in the whale's belly*: He was alſo buried to complete his humiliation this being the loweſt ſtep to which he could deſcend in his abaſed ſtate. Finally, He went into the grave, that he might conquer death in its own territories. Laſtly, Of what uſe our Lord's burial is to us his followers: It ſhews us the amazing depth of his humiliation, from what and to what his love brought him, even from the boſom of his Father to the boſom of the grave. It may alſo comfort us againſt the fears of death: the grave could not long keep Chriſt, it ſhall not always keep us: it was a loathſome priſon before, it is a perfumed bed now: he whoſe head is in heaven, need not fear to put his feet into the grave. Awake and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the duſt, for the enmity of the grave is ſlain by Chriſt.

CHAP. XX.

This and the following chapter gives us an account of our Saviour's exaltation and victorious triumph over all his enemies, by his powerful reſurrection. All the four evangeliſts do confirm the truth of it, by recording the ſeveral ſteps and degrees of the manifeſtation of it. In this chapter Chriſt's reſurrection is confirmed, firſt to Mary Magdalene, next to Peter and John, then to all the diſciples, except Thomas.

THE firſt *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre.

In this verſe is recorded how Mary Magdalene came early to the ſepulchre, on the firſt day of the week, to anoint the dead body of our Lord Jeſus. Where *note*, That though her heart did burn with an ardent zeal and affection to her crucified Lord, yet the commanded duties of the ſabbath were not omitted by her; ſhe kept cloſe, and ſilently ſpent that holy day in a mixture of grief and hope: Her example is a good pattern of ſabbath-ſanctification, and worthy of our chriſtian imitation. 2. What magnanimity and courage is found in this weak woman: ſhe followed Chriſt courageouſly, when his diſciples left him cowardly; ſhe accompanied him to his croſs, ſhe followed his hearſe to the grave, when his diſciples durſt not appear; and now very early in the morning ſhe goes to viſit his ſepulchre, fearing neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the preſence of the watchmen. *Learn* thence, That courage is the ſpecial gift of God, and if he gives it to the feebler ſex, even to timorous and fearful women, it is not in the power of man to make them afraid.

2 Then ſhe runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

It was a great honour that God put upon this poor woman Mary Magdalene, that ſhe has the firſt notice of our Saviour's reſurrection, and is the firſt that diſcovers it to the apoſtles. But why had not the virgin Mary, his diſconſolate mother, this privilege conferred on her, rather than Mary Magdalene, who had been a grievous ſinner? Doubtleſs this was for the comfort of all true penitents, and adminiſters great conſolation to them: As the angels in heaven rejoice, much more doth Chriſt joy in the recovery of one repenting ſinner, than in multitudes of holy and juſt perſons (ſuch was the bleſſed Virgin) who need no repentance.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre. 5 And he ſtooping down, *and looking in*, ſaw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lie; 7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf. 8 Then went in alſo that other diſciple which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead.

Here *note*, 1. How Peter and John, moved with Mary Magdalene's words, *They have taken away the Lord*, &c. do run to the ſepulchre to ſatisfy themſelves in the truth of it. Such as ſincerely love Chriſt, upon the leaſt intimation that he is miſſing, beſtir themſelves with great activity and diligence, that they may ſee him, or hear of him: Peter and John run to the ſepulchre to ſee what was become of their holy Maſter. 2. That there was ſuch clear evidence about Chriſt's grave, as made it apparent that he was indeed riſen from the dead, and not conveyed away, either by friends or foes: It cannot be ſuppoſed that any of his friends (could they have come at it) would have ſo handled his holy body, as to carry it away naked; and for his foes, had they ſtole away the body, they would never have left the fine linen behind them. 3. That when Chriſt aroſe from the grave, he left his grave-clothes behind him: whereas when Lazarus aroſe, he came forth with his grave-clothes about him: It *teaches* us, That Chriſt roſe never to die more, but to live and reign for ever; therefore he left his grave-clothes in the grave, as never to make uſe of them more. But Lazarus was to die again, death was once more to have dominion over him: he therefore came forth with his grave-clothes about him. Laſtly, How ignorant the apoſtles were of the doctrine of Chriſt's reſurrection and of the holy ſcriptures, which declared he was to riſe again from the dead: *They knew not the ſcriptures*, that is, they did not heed and regard them, ponder them in their hearts, and feed upon them by faith.

10 Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home. 11 ¶ But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre, weeping: and as ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, *and looked* into the ſepulchre, 12 And ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain:

Here we have a deſcription of the great love of Mary Magdalene, which ſhe expreſſed towards Chriſt after his reſurrection; ſhe went to his ſepulchre early, when it was yet dark; ſhe haſtily calls the diſciples, Peter and John, to the ſepulchre; and ſhe ſtays behind weeping at the ſepulchre, when they were gone away to their own home. And as Mary firſt ſought him, and longeſt ſought him, ſo ſhe firſt found him. Here *note*, 1. Mary's carriage and behaviour towards her Saviour; this is diſcovered by her patient attendance, *She ſtood without at the ſepulchre:* by her paſſionate mourning, ſhe ſtood at the ſepulchre *weeping:* by her unwearied diligence, *ſhe ſtooped down and looked into the ſepulchre:* Here was great love indeed in this poor woman, a love ſtronger than death; a love which did outſtrip and go beyond the greateſt apoſtles. *Learn*, 1. That true love to Chriſt ſuffers not itſelf to be ſtinted or limited, no, not by the greateſt examples: the weakeſt woman that truly loves Chriſt, may piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt apoſtle in this point: though he be learneder, wiſer, more uſeful, and more eminent than any of us, yet it is holy and wiſe, not to ſuffer ourſelves to be exceeded by any in our love to Chriſt; every chriſtian may ſtrive to exceed any one in grace, and to attain the higheſt place in the kingdom of heaven. 2. That ſtrong love is valiant and undaunted, it will grapple and encounter with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition: Mary fears nothing in ſeeking of her Lord, neither the darkneſs of the night, nor the terror of the ſoldiers, nor the malice of the Jews: Love is ſtrong as death, and the flames thereof are vehement. Farther, The ſucceſs of Mary Magdalene's love to Chriſt, and unwearied attendance on his ſepulchre; ſhe found not the dead body of Chriſt, and it is well ſhe did not; for if death could have held him, it would not have let us go. But though ſhe found not her Lord in the grave, ſhe found two of his ſervants there, two angels: of all things in the world, one would leaſt have expected to find an angel in a grave, ſpirits in the place of dead bodies, and immortality in the place of corruption. But from hence we *learn*, That ſuch as ſincerely ſeek the Lord, ſhall certainly find, if not the very thing which they ſeek, yet that which is much fitter and better for them; Mary did not find Chriſt's dead body, but ſhe finds that which is more comfortable for her to find; namely, two angels to teſtify that he was riſen. Where *note*, The poſture of theſe angels deſcribed; the one ſitting at the head, the other at the feet: It is matter of comfort to the members of Chriſt, that angels do not wait upon the head only, but upon the feet alſo; and it ought to be matter of imitation alſo. Let us imitate our bleſſed Saviour, in having an angel not at our head only, but at our feet alſo: Many have an ambition to have an angel at their head, a great meaſure of light and knowledge there, but they care not for an angel at their feet, they delight not to walk anſwerably to their light and knowledge, they have an evangelical underſtanding and a diabolical converſation: it is ſad for a man to have all his religion in his brain and tongue, and nothing in his heart and life.

13 And they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? ſhe ſaith unto them, Becauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 And when ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe turned herſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jeſus. 15 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? She, ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away.

Note here, 1. That the beſt company in the world will not ſatisfy or content ſuch as are ſeeking for Jeſus Chriſt, when they find not him whom their ſouls ſeek: Mary now enjoyed the preſence and company of two angels, but this did not ſatisfy her in the abſence of Chriſt himſelf. 2. How paſſionately did Mary mourn for the loſs and want of Chriſt's bodily preſence, thereby giving teſtimony of her great affection towards him; but truly our love to Chriſt is beſt ſhewn, not by our paſſionate deſires for his bodily preſence, but by our holy longings after his ſpiritual preſence in his word and ordinances here on earth, and his bleſſed and immediate preſence in heaven. 3. How Chriſt may be preſent with, and very near unto his people, and yet not be preſently diſcerned by them; *Jeſus ſtood by Mary, but ſhe knew not that it was Jeſus:* her not expecting a living Chriſt, was one cauſe why ſhe did not diſcern him. 4. How exceedingly Mary's thoughts were taken up with Chriſt: She ſaith to the gardener, *If thou haſt borne him hence*: What *him?* She doth not ſay whom; but her heart was ſo taken up with Chriſt, and her mind ſo full of him, that ſhe concluded every body would underſtand whom ſhe meant, though ſhe did not ſay whom ſhe meant. Hence *learn*, 1. That the ſoul of a ſincere believer is full of earneſt and longing deſires after Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That ſuch a ſoul is yet ſometimes at a loſs for Chriſt, and cannot tell where to find him. 3. That whilſt the ſoul is at a loſs for Chriſt, its deſires are often quicker and more ſtirring after Chriſt. This was the caſe of Mary here; with the ſpouſe by night on her bed, and early in the morning, ſhe ſought him whom her ſoul loved.

16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turned herſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni, which is to ſay, Maſter. 17 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and *to* my God and your God.

In the former of theſe verſes, Chriſt makes himſelf known to Mary, and calleth her by her name. In the latter he gives her a prohibition and injunction. *Note*, 1. The prohibition, *Touch me not*; together with the reaſon of it, *For I am not yet aſcended to my Father.* It is concluded by interpreters, that Mary Magdalene was now fallen at Chriſt's feet, and embraced them; that having found him whom her ſoul loved, ſhe hugs him now, and hangs about him: but Chriſt forbids any further embracing, and rejects ſuch teſtimonies of her love; as if he had ſaid, Although I will allow you as much familiarity as ſhall ſatisfactorily convince you of the verity of my reſurrection, yet you muſt not expect to converſe with me in the bodily manner which you did before my death; for I am aſcending to my Father, and muſt be enjoyed no longer after a corporeal, but ſpiritual manner. *Learn* hence, That our love to Jeſus Chriſt is beſt ſhewn, not by our human paſſionate affections to his bodily preſence, but by our ſpiritual communion with him by faith here on earth, in order to an immediate communion with him face to face in heaven.— Chriſt now after his reſurrection was advanced to a more ſpiritual condition, therefore refuſes at Mary's hand the offices of human converſation, but expects of her the duties and ſervices of ſpiritual devotion. 2. Chriſt's injunction: *But go to my brethren, and ſay, I aſcend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.* Where *note*, The endearing title given to the diſciples, *My brethren:* He had before his death called them his ſervants, his friends, his children; but now, after his reſurrection, he calls them his brethren: he became our brother by aſſuming our nature in his incarnation, he continues our brother by reſuming that nature at his reſurrection. Farther, That Chriſt calls his diſciples brethren, after his exaltation and reſurrection: thereby ſhewing, that the change of his condition had wrought no change in his affection towards his poor diſciples; but thoſe that were his brethren before, in the time of his humiliation and abaſement, are ſo ſtill, after his exaltation and advancement; *Go to my brethren, and ſay:* humility doth not only go before honour, but dwells with honour, and doth evermore accompany it. Laſtly, The good news or meſſage of joy which Chriſt ſends by Mary to his dear diſciples; *Say, I aſcend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God:* as if nature and adoption gave the ſame intereſt. Chriſt calls God, his God, and his diſciples' God; his Father, and their Father; firſt his, and then their's, and their's becauſe his. *Learn* hence, That God for Chriſt's ſake hath dignified believers with that near and dear relation of his being a Father to them in and through his Son; ſo that as they ought to carry it towards him like children by obedience, ſubjection, and reſignation, ſo they may expect he will retain a fatherly affection towards them, and they may expect from him fatherly compaſſion, proviſion, protection, correction, and and all things needful. Laſtly, Remark from Chriſt's ſaying, *I go to my God, and your God*, the falſe inferences of the Socinians, viz. That becauſe Chriſt ſtyled God his God, hence, ſay they, it is evident that Chriſt is not God; but from thoſe words it only follows, that he was not God according to that nature which aſcended. Thus, Pſal. xlv. it is ſaid of Chriſt, *God, even thy God, hath anointed thee*; and yet he adds of the ſame perſon, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the diſciples that ſhe had ſeen the Lord, and that he had ſpoken theſe things unto her. 19 ¶ Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt *day* of the week, when the doors were ſhut, where the diſciples were aſſembled for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had ſo ſaid, he ſhewed unto them *his* hands and his ſide. Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.

Our bleſſed Saviour's firſt appearing after his reſurrection, having been to Mary Magdalene, as the former verſes acquainted us, the ſame day at evening, when the doors were ſhut for fear of the Jews, Jeſus miraculouſly, and, as to the diſciples, inſenſibly opens the door, and ſtands in the midſt of them; and ſays, *Peace be unto you*, and ſhews them his hands and his ſide. Where *note*, 1. That it has been no ſtrange thing in the church, that the beſt members of it have been put to frequent their aſſemblies with great fear, and been forced to meet in the night with great caution, becauſe of the fury of the perſecutors: Here Chriſt's own diſciples were forced to meet together in the night, the doors kept ſhut *for fear of the Jews*. 2. Let Chriſt's diſciples meet together never ſo privately, and with never ſo much hazard and jeopardy, they ſhall have Chriſt's company with them; neither bolts, nor locks, nor faſtened doors, ſhall hold Chriſt from them: *When the doors were ſhut, Jeſus came and ſtood in the midſt of them.* Laſtly, The evidence which our Saviour offers to evince and prove the certainty of his reſurrection: *He ſhewed his diſciples his hands and his ſide.* Chriſt appealed to and admitted of the judgment of their ſenſes, to aſſure them that it was his real body. And if we muſt not be allowed to believe our ſenſes (as the Romiſh ſynagogue would perſuade us) we ſhall want the beſt external evidence we can have to prove the truth of the chriſtian religion; namely, the miracles of our Saviour; for how can we be aſſured thoſe miracles were true, but by the judgment of our ſenſes? Now, as our ſenſes tell us Cthat hriſt's miracles were true, ſo they aſſure us that the popiſh doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is falſe.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. 22 And when he had this ſaid, he breathed on *them*, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. 23 Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whoſe ſoever *ſins* ye retain, they are retained.

Note here, 1. The repetition of our Saviour's endearing ſalutation to his diſciples, *Peace be unto you, Peace be unto you.* This was not more than might be needful, to ſignify his firm reconciliation to them, notwithſtanding their late cowardice in forſaking of him, and flying from him, when the ſtorm fell upon him. 2. How Chriſt doth renew his diſciples commiſſion for the work of the miniſtry, who poſſibly were much diſcouraged with the remembrance of their faint-heartedneſs in the time of his ſufferings; he doth therefore anew commiſſionate them, and ſends them forth in theſe words, *As my Father hath ſent me:* that is, to preach, plant, and propagate the goſpel; *ſo ſend I you.* By the ſame authority, and for the ſame ends, in part, for which I was ſent by my Father, do I ſend you; namely, to gather, to govern, and inſtruct my church. *Learn* hence, That when Chriſt left the world, he did not leave the church deſtitute of a goſpel miniſtry, which ſhall continue to the end of the world. As Chriſt was ſent by the Father, ſo are his miniſters ſent by him; and they may expect, having the ſame authority and commiſſion, the ſame ſucceſs and bleſſing; and the contempt caſt upon them and their meſſage, ultimately reflects upon God and Chriſt, whoſe meſſengers they are. 3. How Chriſt that ſends them forth, doth furniſh them with the gifts of the Spirit, for their office: *He breathed on them, and ſaid, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt:* that is, the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. They had received the Holy Spirit before as a ſpirit of ſanctification, here they receive it in its extraordinary gifts, to fit them for their office. And Chriſt's conferring the Holy Ghoſt, by breathing upon them, ſhews that the Holy Spirit proceeds as well from the Son, as from the Father. And as by God's breathing, the firſt man was made a living ſoul: ſo by Chriſt's breathing on the apoſtles, they were quickened, and extraordinarily enabled for the ſervice they were called to. *Learn* hence, That when Chriſt ſends forth any about his work, he will furniſh them with endowments anſwerable to their vaſt employment; and the beſt furniture they can have, is the Holy Spirit in his gifts and qualifications ſuitable to their work: *He breathed on them, and ſaid, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* 4. How Chriſt aſſerts their authority in the diſcharge of their commiſſion, and declares, that what they act miniſterially, according to their commiſſion here on earth, is ratified in heaven: *Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit they are remitted.* Where *note*, That there is a two-fold power of remitting or forgiving ſins: the one magiſterial and authoritative; this belongs to Chriſt alone: the other miniſterial and declarative; this belongs to Chriſt's ambaſſadors, who have a power in his name to bind and looſe. It is a pious note of St. Auſtin upon this place, That Chriſt firſt conferred the Holy Ghoſt upon his apoſtles, and then ſaid, *Whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted.* Thereby intimating, that it is not they, but the Holy Ghoſt by them, that puts away ſin; *for who can forgive ſin, but God only?* The power of forgiving ſin, that man hath, is only to declare, that if men be truly and really penitent, their ſins are forgiven them for the ſake of Chriſt's ſatisfaction.

24 ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jeſus came. 25 The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.

What the cauſe of Thomas's abſence was, is not declared; it is evident that he was not with the reſt of the diſciples when Chriſt appeared to them: and his abſence had like to have coſt him dear, even the loſs of his faith: and he might have had reaſon for ever to have bewailed his abſence from that meeting of the diſciples, had not Chriſt been more merciful. *Learn* hence, That the letting ſlip of one holy opportunity may prove exceedingly prejudicial to the ſoul's advantage: It is wiſe and ſafe to lay hold of every opportunity for enjoying communion with God, and fellowſhip with his ſaints. Thomas's abſence deprived him not only of the good news of Chriſt's being riſen, but alſo of the ſight of him, which the other diſciples got by aſſembling together; and for want thereof Thomas is left under many doubts and fears. Verily, we know not what we loſe, when we abſent ourſelves from the aſſembly of God's people. Such views of a crucified Jeſus may be communicated to others, whilſt we are abſent, as would have confirmed our faith, and eſtabliſhed our joy, had we been preſent. Farther, What a ſtrange declaration Thomas makes of his obſtinate unbelief, *Except I ſee the print of the nails, and put my finger into his ſide, I will not believe.* Where *note*, How ſtrangely rooted unbelief is in the hearts of holy men, inſomuch that they deſire the objects of faith ſhould fall under the view of their ſenſes. Thomas carries his faith at his fingers ends: he will believe no more than he can ſee or feel; whereas *faith is the evidence of things not ſeen.* Oh! Thomas, how deplorable had been thy caſe, if Chriſt had never given thee that proof which was very unreaſonable in thee to expect. But Chriſt takes compaſſion on him, and appears to him, and cures his obſtinate unbelief, which he might have juſtly puniſhed, as appears by the following verſes.

26 ¶ And after eight days, again his diſciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jeſus, the doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide: and be not faithleſs, but believing.

Note here, 1. Our Saviour's appearing again to his diſciples after his reſurrection; it was eight days after he firſt aroſe, which was the firſt day of the week. Here *note*, That Chriſt's riſing the firſt day of the week, and appearing on the next day of the week after to the diſciples, and they obſerving that day for their ſolemn aſſemblies, and St. Paul adminiſtering on that day the Lord's ſupper, Acts xx. and commanding on that day collections for the poor, 1 Cor. xvi. and St. John calling it the *Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10. From theſe authorities, and the primitive practice, we derive our Chriſtian ſabbath: For we do not find in all the ſcripture, one inſtance of any one congregation of chriſtians only aſſembling upon the Jewiſh ſabbath, but on the firſt day of the week, on which we ground our obſervation of that day. 2. The wonderful condeſcenſion of Chriſt to the weakneſs of Thomas's faith; he bids him *reach forth his hand, and thruſt it into his ſide.* Not that Chriſt was pleaſed with, but only pitiful towards Thomas's infirmities; and it ought to be no encouragement to any perſon to follow his example, in ſeeking or expecting the like ſigns of their own preſcribing for the helping of their faith. 3. How mercifully Chriſt over-ruled Thomas's unbelief, for the confirmation of our faith. His doubting proved a means for the confirmation of his own and our faith; therefore ſays Gregory well, *Plus mihi profuit dubitatio Thomæ quam credulitas Mariæ*; "Had not Thomas doubted, we had not been ſo fully aſſured, that it was the ſame Chriſt that was crucified who roſe again."

28 And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord, and my God.

Theſe words may be conſidered two ways: 1. As an abrupt ſpeech, importing a vehement admiration of Chriſt's mercy towards him, and of his own ſtupidity and dulneſs to believe. *Learn* hence, That the convincing condeſcenſion of Chriſt, turns unbelief into a rapture of holy admiration and humble adoration. 2. This expreſſion of Thomas, *My Lord, and my God*, contains a ſhort, but abſolute confeſſion of faith. Thomas rightly collects from this reſurrection, that he was Lord, *God bleſſed for evermore*, the true Meſſias, the expected Redeemer; and accordingly, with an explicit faith, he now profeſſes his intereſt in him, ſaying, *My Lord, and my God.* Yet *note*, That this reſurrection could not make him God, and render him then the object of divine worſhip, if he had been only a creature before. And farther *obſerve*, That Chriſt doth not reprove Thomas for owning him as God, which ſhews that Thomas did not miſtake in owning the divinity of Chriſt.

29 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: bleſſed *are* they that have not ſeen, and *yet* have believed.

Here we have Chriſt's reprehenſion of Thomas for not believing without ſuch ſenſible evidence as he deſired. He believed now that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, but it was upon the teſtimony of his ſenſes only. Therefore Chriſt tells him, That his faith would have been more excellent and more eminently rewardable, if he had believed without ſuch demonſtrative evidence: *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen.* Therefore to give credit to a thing upon the evidence of ſenſe is not properly believing.

Farther, How Chriſt pronounces them, bleſſed who ſhould hereafter believe on him through the preaching of the goſpel, though they did not ſee him as Thomas did, nor handle him as he might. This is a ſure rule, that by how much our faith ſtands in leſs need of the external evidence of ſenſe, the ſtronger our faith is, and the more acceptable it is, provided what we believe be revealed in the word of God: *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.*

30 And many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Note here, 1. The true end for which the miracles of Chriſt were ſo carefully recorded; namely, *that we might believe.* By believing that Chriſt is the Son of God, we have life; and by the evidence of his miracles, we know and believe him to have been the Son of God: The miracles which Chriſt wrought, were the beſt external evidence of his miſſion. 2. That all Chriſt's miracles, both before his paſſion, and after his reſurrection, were not recorded by the Evangeliſts. 3. The great point concerning Chriſt, to be known and believed from the ſcriptures, is this, That Jeſus, the Son of the virgin, is the promiſed Meſſiah, the anointed of the Father, he in whom all the types and ſhadows of the law are accompliſhed; and that this Jeſus is for nature co-eſſential, for dignity co-equal, and for duration co-eternal with the Father; one in eſſence, equal in power and glory. Thus believing that Jeſus is the Son of God, and accompanying that belief with a holy life, if we believe well, and live well, we ſhall have life through his name.

CHAP. XXI.

AFTER theſe things, Jeſus ſhewed himſelf again to the diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias; and on this wiſe ſhewed he *himſelf:*

The foregoing chapter acquainted us with ſeveral appearances of Chriſt to his diſciples after his reſurrection: All which were in Jeruſalem. This chapter acquaints us with his appearing to his diſciples in Galilee, whither he had ordered his diſciples to go, promiſing there to meet them. Jeruſalem now becomes a forſaken place, a people abandoned to deſtruction; Chriſt will not ſhew himſelf openly to them, but Galilee was a place where Chriſt's miniſtry had found better acceptance: to Galilee therefore doth he go. Such places wherein Chriſt is moſt welcome to preach, ſhall be moſt honoured with his preſence: *Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias,* called elſewhere the ſea of Galilee.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *ſons* of Zebedee, and two other of his diſciples. 3 Simon Peter ſaith unto them, I go a fiſhing. They ſay unto him, We alſo go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ſhip immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Note here, That after Chriſt was crucified, the diſciples returned for a time to their trade and employment of fiſhing; though they were called to be fiſhers of men, yet churches not being gathered and conſtituted at preſent, nor being able to maintain them, they labour with their hands to ſupply their preſent neceſſities. Afterwards, when at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, they had received thoſe viſible gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which did furniſh them for preaching the goſpel to all nations, and they went forth to plant and propagate the goſpel, we may believe they then gave over the labour of their ſecular callings, and applied themſelves wholly to the work of the miniſtry. That may be done *(eccleſia conſtituenda)* in a church which is conſtituting, or about to be conſtituted. *Note* farther, How Peter, with the reſt, *toil all night, and catch nothing;* but no ſooner was Chriſt come among them, but they incloſe a multitude of fiſhes. Thereby *teaching* us, That all human labours and endeavours are in vain, unleſs Chriſt by his preſence and bleſſing crown them with ſucceſs.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore: but the diſciples knew not that it was Jeſus. 5 Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered him, No. 6 And he ſaid unto them, Caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip, and ye ſhall find. They caſt therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fiſhes.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt was near, very near to his diſciples, but they perceived it not: *Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore, and they knew not that it was Jeſus. Learn,* Chriſt is not always diſcerned by us when he is preſent with us; it is a double mercy to enjoy his company, and to know indeed that is he. 2. Although they had laboured all night in vain, yet at Chriſt's command they go to work again, and with great ſucceſs: *They were not able to draw the net for the multitude of fiſhes.* When Chriſt is about to do great things for his people, yet will he have them exert all poſſible endeavours of their own; and the want of former ſucceſs muſt not diſcourage from future endeavours. 3. What a proof Chriſt here gives of his divinity and Godhead: How were all the fiſh in the ſea at his pleaſure, and obedient to his command! He knew where they ſwim, and brings them from one part of the lake to the other: *Where the diſciples had toiled all night, and caught nothing.* Chriſt our Mediator is true God, and as ſuch, as he has a ſovereign power and providence over all the creatures, the cattle on a thouſand hills, and all the fiſh ſwimming in the ſea, are obedient to his power, and obſervient to his commands.

7 Therefore that diſciple whom Jeſus loved, ſaith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fiſher's coat *unto him* (for he was naked) and did caſt himſelf into the ſea. 8 And the other diſciples came in a

little ſhip (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fiſhes. 9 As ſoon then as they were come to land, they ſaw a fire of coals there, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread.

Note here, 1. The great zeal and forwardneſs of Peter: hearing that it was Chriſt, he leaps into the ſea to get to him. O how inviting, attractive, and alluring is a ſight of Chriſt! It will make thoſe that know him, break through all difficulties to come unto him. It is not a ſea of water, no, nor ſeas of blood, that can keep a zealous ſoul at a diſtance from Chriſt. *When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat and caſt himſelf into the ſea.* 2. What a complication of miracles here were; as ſoon as they came to land they diſcerned another miracle, viz. a fire of coals, and fiſh thereon, and bread, all created and produced by Chriſt out of nothing, at this time, as an evidence of his divine power; for before they could get the fiſh to ſhore, they ſaw fiſh broiling upon coals, which makes it evident that theſe were none of the fiſh which they had catched. Chriſt, when he pleaſes, for the benefit and comfort of his people, will work miracle upon miracle, mercy upon mercy, one wonder upon the head of another: for here, after a miracle at ſea, they met with another miracle at land; *As ſoon as they came to land, they ſaw a fire.*

10 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Bring of the fiſh which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fiſhes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were ſo many, yet was not the net broken.

Note here, 1. What was Chriſt's end in commanding his diſciples to bring forth the fiſh which they had now taken; namely, that the ſight of their number and bigneſs, together with the ſight of the net remaining unbroken, might confirm them in the believe of its being a real miracle. Chriſt had fed their bellies before, his buſineſs now is to feed their minds with the contemplation of the greatneſs and reality of the miracle. All Chriſt's miracles were obvious to ſenſe, and would bear the examination of the ſenſes: not like the lying wonders of the church of Rome, which are commonly wrought in the dark to cozen the vulgar, and are mere cheats and impoſtures. 2. That this full draught of fiſhes, which Peter and the reſt of the diſciples now had, might probably preſage that great and wonderful ſucceſs which he and they afterwards were to have in fiſhing for men. Here we have an hundred fifty and three great fiſhes caught at one draught; but, Acts ii. we find three thouſand ſouls converted by St. Peter at one ſermon. Oh the marvellous ſucceſs of the goſpel at the firſt preaching and planting of it! Three thouſand then proſelyted by one ſermon! Now we have cauſe to fear that there are three thouſand ſermons preached, and ſcarce one ſoul ſavingly converted: *Lord, who hath believed our report?*

12 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the diſciples durſt aſk him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jeſus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fiſh likewiſe. 14 This is now the third time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples after that he was riſen from the dead.

A twofold reaſon may be aſſigned why Chriſt did at this time invite and call his diſciples to dine with him: The firſt and more principal reaſon was, to evidence to them the reality of his reſurrection, and to aſſure them of the truth of his manhood, that they might not think it was an apparition only. By the miracle in catching the fiſhes, he proved himſelf to be God; by his preſent eating of the fiſh, he evidenced himſelf to be man; and conſequently teaches us, that our exalted High Prieſt continues our kinſman in heaven: He is ſtill bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh; he has taken poſſeſſion of heaven in our nature, ſitting there in our glorified humanity, united to the glorious Deity, clothed with that body which hung in its blood and gore upon the croſs, but now ſhining brighter than ten thouſand ſuns. The ſecond and leſs principal reaſon why Chriſt called his diſciples to dine with him, was this, to ſhew his tender care over the bodies of his dear diſciples, as being the tabernacles of his own Spirit, the temples of the Holy Ghoſt; therefore Chriſt encourages, though not to the pampering, yet to the refreſhing of them: *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come and dine:* And he would not confer with them till they had dined, as the next verſe ſhews.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He ſaith unto him again the ſecond time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep. 17 He ſaith unto him the third time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt puts Peter upon a threefold profeſſion of his love unto him, anſwerable to his threefold denial of him: His threefold denial, required a threefold confeſſion. True repentance ought, and will be as eminent in the fruit and effects of it, as the ſaint's fall hath been. A threefold denial of Chriſt ſhall be attended with a threefold poſſeſſion of love unto him. 2. The ſolemn queſtion put by our Saviour unto Peter, *Loveſt thou me? Loveſt thou me more than theſe?* that is, more than thy occupation and employment, more than thy nets and fiſhing-boats; if ſo, leave them, and wholly employ thyſelf in feeding my ſheep and lambs. Or, more than theſe? that is, more than the reſt of my diſciples: Doſt thou love me more than thou loveſt theſe? or more than they love me? If ſo, evidence the ſincerity of thy love to me by thy care of mine. Thence *note*, That miniſters who are called to take care of Chriſt's flock, had need of much love to Jeſus Chriſt, and great compaſſion for ſouls; by which they will be animated and fortified to go through with the labours and difficulties, as well as to encounter the dangers and ſufferings which do accompany their calling: *Simon loveſt thou me? Feed my flock.* Farther, That the ſureſt argument and beſt evidence of a miniſter's love to Jeſus Chriſt, is his conſcientious care to feed; that is, to teach, inſtruct, and govern the whole flock of Chriſt; lambs and ſheep, weak and ſtrong; the feebleſt in the fold were purchaſed by the great Shepherd: And if he judgeth them worth his blood, well may we judge them worth our ſweat. Again, That ſuch as would be faithful in their miniſterial charge, ought to look upon their people as committed to them by Chriſt himſelf, as loved of him, and committed to their care by him, and for which they muſt be accountable to him: Chriſt calls them three times over, his lambs and his ſheep, and as often charges Peter to feed them. *Note* next, Peter's threefold anſwer to Chriſt's queſtion, *Simon, loveſt thou me more than theſe? Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* Where *note*, 1. The great modeſty of Peter in his reply. *Loveſt thou me more than theſe?* ſays Chriſt; Peter replies, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee:* He doth not ſay, Lord, I love thee above them all, and before them all; here is no boaſting now: Once it was ſaid that Peter vaunted, *Though all men forſake thee, yet will not I*; but now his fall had taught him humility; he boaſts not of his love above others, and makes no compariſon with others, but only ranks himſelf among the true lovers of Chriſt; *Lord, I love thee.* 2. The evidence that Peter gives of his ſincere love to Chriſt; he dares to appeal to Chriſt himſelf, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee:* yea, that art omniſcient, the all-knowing and heart-ſearching God, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee. Oh! It is a bleſſed thing, when we can and dare appeal to God's knowledge; and it is matter of high conſolation, to know that God knoweth our ſincerity and love unto him, and that he knoweth and approveth us as ſuch: *Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt*, &c. Laſtly, From theſe words, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things*, an argument of Chriſt's divinity. He that knows all things, and particularly the hearts of all men, is God, 1 Kings viii. 29. but ſo doth Chriſt, if St. Peter's teſtimony here be true; ſaying, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things*: that is, ſay the Socinians, very many things: but this would have deſtroyed St. Peter's argument at once; for it follows not that Chriſt knew the ſincerity of Peter's heart, unleſs he knew the ſecrets of all hearts; and if he knew the ſecrets of all hearts, he is really God.

18 Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thyſelf, and walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldeſt not. 19 This ſpake he, ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

In theſe words our Saviour forewarns Peter of his future ſufferings, intimating that he ſhould prove more ſtout than in his former trial. When he was young and unexperienced, he enjoyed his liberty; but when he was grown older in years, and ſtronger in grace, he ſhould willingly ſtretch forth his hands, and quietly ſuffer himſelf to be bound to the croſs; for Peter (ſay ſome) was not nailed, but tied and bound to the croſs only, and ſo, as a martyr or witneſs for the truth of Chriſt, glorified God by his death. *Learn* hence, 1. The miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, when they undertake the charge of his flock, muſt prepare for ſuffering work, and their lot upon it. Therefore is this prediction of Peter's ſuffering joined with the former injunction, *Feed my ſheep.* 2. That human nature in Chriſt's miniſters, as well as in other men, reluctates ſufferings, has an antipathy againſt a violent death: *They ſhall carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not.* 3. From the time of St. Peter's ſufferings, *when he is old: learn*, That the timing of the ſaints ſufferings is in Chriſt's hands; he can, and when he pleaſeth doth, ſcreen them from ſuffering till old age; when their work is almoſt done for God, they cloſe their days with ſuffering for him: *When thou art old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thine hands, and another ſhall gird thee.* Laſtly, That the ſufferings of the ſaints in general, and of the miniſters of Chriſt in particular, do redound much to the glory of God, which is a conſideration that ought to reconcile them to the croſs of Chriſt, and ſupport them under it.

20 ¶ Then Peter turning about, ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved, following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter ſeeing him, ſaith to Jeſus, Lord, and what *ſhall* this man *do!* 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? Follow thou me.

Our Saviour having foretold the manner of Peter's death in the foregoing verſes; here in theſe, Peter is inquiſitive after, and very ſolicitous for the knowledge of what kind of death St. John ſhould die. Chriſt checks him for his curioſity, as meddling with that which did not concern him; yet intimates to him, that John ſhould live till he came to take vengeance on the Jews, and deſtroy Jeruſalem: *If I will that he tarry till I come*; that is, till I come to execute judgment upon Jeruſalem. Here we may *note*, There are two great vanities in men with reference to knowledge, the one a neglect to know what is our duty to know; the other, a curioſity to know what doth not belong to us to know. Chriſt tells Peter, it was none of his buſineſs to enquire what John ſhould do; but he ought rather to be preparing for what he himſelf ſhould ſuffer.

23 Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaid not unto him, He ſhall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

Obſerve here, How ſtrangely our Saviour's words were miſtaken and miſunderſtood by his own diſciples; they apprehend preſently that John ſhould not die, and ſo it paſſed current among them. From hence we may *note*, How much the wiſdom of God is, and ought to be admired, in giving us a written word, and tying us to it, when we ſee erroneous traditions ſo ſoon on foot in the world, and our Saviour's own ſpeeches ſo much miſtaken, and that by wiſe and holy men themſelves in the pureſt times: Much more may the words of others be miſreported, and wreſted contrary to their ſenſe and meaning. How great then is the vanity and uncertainty of oral tradition! Men are naturally prone to miſtake, to miſtake themſelves, and to miſtake one another. The more to be admired is their over-daring ignorance, who think they cannot err. Such an haughty opinion of a man's ſelf, concludes him to be neither good nor wiſe.

24 This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things: and we know that his teſtimony is true.

The great modeſty of the holy Evangeliſt St. John is all along throughout his goſpel very obſervable; he mentioneth himſelf hitherto under a third perſon; he calleth himſelf a diſciple, a learner, who excelled the moſt accompliſhed doctors of the ages ever ſince. Here he ſpeaks more plainly and expreſly concerning himſelf, declaring that he was an eye-witneſs and an ear-witneſs of what he wrote, for the greater certainty thereof. And this proteſtation here made by the evangeliſt of the truth of what he wrote, was highly neceſſary, leſt any ſhould think that Chriſt's extraordinary love and affection to him (he being the beloved diſciple) ſhould move him to exceed (as we are prone to do) in writing the hiſtory of their lives who are dear to us, and we to them. *Learn* hence, That this goſpel was written by John the beloved diſciple, and the narration is of divine truth, worthy to be embraced and received by us as a perfect rule of faith and life: *We know that his teſtimony is true.*

25 And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written. Amen.

John being about to conclude the hiſtory of our Saviour's life, aſſerts, that there were many other miracles and ſpecial deeds done by Chriſt both before and after his paſſion, which he had not recorded or ſet down; becauſe, ſhould all that Chriſt did and ſaid be committed to writing, it would even fill the world, the volumes would be ſo many. From hence we gather, 1. The wonderful activity, induſtry and diligence of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he was never idle, but that his whole life was ſpent in doing good; becauſe ſhould all the particular inſtances have been recorded, it would amount to an incredible bulk. 2. That it is impoſſible to get all ſaid, which might be ſaid of Chriſt, and in his commendation; ſuch is the tranſcendent excellency of his perſon, and the weakneſs of our apprehenſions and judgments, that if all were written, which might be written concerning him, the world itſelf could not contain the books which ſhould be written. Laſtly, That although many of Chriſt's ſermons, conferences, miracles, and actions, be not recorded; yet it doth not follow, nor can it be inferred from thence, that any neceſſary doctrine is omitted, or not ſufficiently confirmed: There being ſo much written as it pleaſed God we ſhould know, and was neceſſary for us to know, in order to our improvement in faith and holineſs. If then, after all the revelation and diſcovery which God has made of his Son Chriſt Jeſus, and of the way that leads to eternal ſalvation by him, perſons remain willingly ignorant of him, and of their duty to him, "Where ſhall they appear, and how ſhall they eſcape?"

Rev. i. ver. 5, 6.

Now unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father: To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The CLOSE.

THE deſign of the foregoing *notes* upon the holy Evangeliſt, being to recommend the inſtructive life of our bleſſed Redeemer to our obſervation and imitation: Although I have upon all occaſions propounded his example to be followed by us in all the ſteps of an imitable virtue, as the matter every where occurred; yet adjudging it may be profitable to ſum up together the ſeveral graces and virtues which were ſo orient in the *life* of *Chriſt*, that having them daily before our eyes, we may be continually correcting and reforming of our lives by that bleſſed pattern; I ſhall therefore briefly offer it. Becauſe

Nothing is ſo proper to form us to holineſs, as the example of the Mediator, it being abſolutely perfect, and thoroughly accommodated to our preſent ſtate; there is no example of any mere man, that is to be followed without limitation; but the *life* of *Chriſt* was as the pureſt gold without the leaſt alloy. His converſation was a living law, and Chriſtianity, which is the beſt and holieſt inſtitution in the world, is nothing elſe but a conformity to his precepts and pattern. The univerſal command of the whole goſpel is this, *To walk as Chriſt walked.* This denotes a ſincere intention, deſign and endeavour to imitate and follow him in all the paths of holineſs and obedience.

Particularly let us imitate Jeſus,

I. IN *his early piety.* We find him at twelve years old *about his Father's buſineſs, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing and aſking them queſtions.* See on St. Luke ii. 46, 47. An early piety gives both the perſon and the ſervice a peculiar pre-eminency: no comfort in life, no happineſs in death, like the happineſs and comfort of being good betimes.

II. *In his obedience* to his earthly parents. See on St.

Luke ii. 51. *He went down to Nazareth, and was ſubject to them.* He paid homage to the womb that bare him, and to his ſuppoſed and reputed father that provided for him: let a perſon be never ſo high above others, he is ſtill below his parents: if the higheſt upon earth think their parents beneath them, and themſelves above their parents commands, our Saviour did not ſo. What ſhall we think of thoſe monſters of ingratitude, the reproach of human nature, who are aſhamed to own their parents becauſe of their poverty, or deſpiſe them becauſe of the infirmities of their age! Prov. xxiii. 22. *Hearken to thy father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old.*

III. *In his unwearied diligence in doing good.* Acts x. 38. *Who went about doing good.* This was his meat and drink by day; his reſt and ſleep by night. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, viſited the ſick, was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and adminiſtered to ſuch as were in neceſſities and ſtraits. And he has declared that he will judge us at the great day, according to our imitation of him in doing good to all mankind. See the notes on St. Matt. xxv. the ten laſt verſes.

IV. *In his humility and lowlineſs of mind.* Matt. ix. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*; witneſs his ſtooping to the meaneſt office, even that of waſhing his diſciples feet, St. John xiii. 5. He that came in the form of a ſervant, performs the office of the meaneſt ſervant to his diſciples. And all this was to ſet us an example of mutual condeſcenſion to each other; *If I your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your feet, you ought alſo to waſh one another's feet*; which precept, though it doth not bind us to the ſame action, yet it obliges us to the ſame condeſcenſion; namely, to think no office of love beneath us, which the neceſſities of our brother call for from us.

V. *In the unblameableneſs and inoffenſiveneſs of his life and actions.* He injured none, and juſtly offended none, but was harmleſs as well as holy: He wrought a miracle to pay tribute-money, rather than give offence to the government. See on Matt. xvi. 27. Accordingly, let us be harmleſs and blameleſs; wiſe as ſerpents, and innocent as doves: piety without policy is too ſimple to be ſafe; policy without piety is too ſubtle to be good.

VI. *In his eminent ſelf-denial.* He emptied himſelf and became poor. When he was rich as God from all eternity, he impoveriſhed himſelf by becoming man. Oh! What did he not deny when he left the boſom of his Father, with the ineffable delights and pleaſures which he there enjoyed from all eternity; and inſtead thereof, to drink the cup, the bitter cup of his Father's wrath for our ſake? Lord, how can we enough abaſe ourſelves for thee, who thus denied thyſelf for us?

VII. *In his contentment in a low and mean condition* in this world; yea, in a ſuffering and afflicted condition. He would not honour the world ſo far as to have any part of it in his own hand, and was therefore of himſelf leſs provided of comfortable accommodations than the birds of the air, or the beaſts of the field. See Luke ix. 58. *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* Let us learn from him to manage an afflicted condition with a contented ſpirit; let there be no murmurings, complaints, or fooliſh charging of God heard from us, whatever ſtraits or troubles we may be brought into: *But in whatſoever ſtate we are, let us be therewith content,* Phil. iv. 11.

VIII. *In his frequent performance of the duty of private prayer and faſting.* He ſometimes ſpent a whole night in prayer, Luke vi. 12. *He went into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* And, Mark i. 35. *In the morning riſing up a great while before day, he went into a ſolitary place and prayed.* It is certain, that we have much more buſineſs with Almighty God in prayer than Chriſt had; he had no ſins to confeſs, no wants to make known; yet did he delight with frequency and fervency to perform this homage to his heavenly Father. Lord, how doth thy zeal and forwardneſs condemn our remiſſneſs and lukewarmneſs in praying to our heavenly Father!

IX. *In his affectionate performance of the duty of praiſe and thankſgiving.* Our bleſſed Saviour was a great pattern of thankfulneſs. Matt. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,* &c. John xi. 40. *Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me:* When he was to eat common bread, he received it with thankſgiving. What a pattern of thankfulneſs then was Jeſus to his followers! There is hardly any one external duty which we do not find the hypocrite performing in ſcripture, except this of thankſgiving and praiſe: we find Judas repenting, Ahab humbling himſelf, Saul ſacrificing; but rarely do we find any wicked man bleſſing and praiſing God: Need will make us beggars, but grace only thankſgivers.

X. *In his compaſſion towards thoſe that were in diſtreſs and miſery,* Matt. xx. 34. Great was his compaſſion to the bodies of men: He healed all that came unto him; he healed many undeſired; with great condolency and tender ſympathy, he exerciſed acts of mercy and compaſſion, when the object of compaſſion was before him, and did perfectly abhor, and ſeverely condemn all acts of cruelty: How great was his compaſſion towards the ſouls of men! What pains did he take, and what hazards did he run, in preaching the goſpel to loſt ſinners, in his fervent prayers for them; but eſpecially in dying for them! Let us imitate Chriſt herein: As his compaſſion was univerſal to all mankind, to the whole man, ſoul and body; as it was active and operative; as it was exerciſed with marvellous complacency and delight; as it was a preventing compaſſion, and unwearied compaſſion: ſo let ours be alſo.

XI. *In his holy and fruitful diſcourſe.* His lips dropt as the honey-comb, and his tongue was as choice ſilver: When walking with his diſciples to Emmaus, with what heavenly diſcourſe did he entertain them in the way! See Luke xxiv. 13. &c. A good pattern for our imitation, when providentially caſt into ſuch company as will bear it. Lord! what a ſhame and reproach is it to us, that in common converſation we ſpend ſo many hours together, in talking over the news of the city and country, and part without ſpeaking one word of Jeſus Chriſt our beſt friend!

XII. *In his free converſation:* The Son of man came eating and drinking, Matt. xi. 19. That is, was of a free and familiar converſe, affable and ſociable, not ſour or moroſe, never ſhunning the ſociety of the worſt of men, even of the Phariſees themſelves; but complying with their innocent cuſtoms, and accompanying them at their feaſts. See on Luke v. 29. We do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any public entertainment, that ever he refuſed to go; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of converſing and doing good; Chriſt converſed with bad men, but as their phyſician, not as their companion: Let us go and do likewiſe.

XIII. *In his patience under ſufferings and reproaches. When he was reviled, he reviled not again*; but underwent the burthen of his ſufferings with admirable patience and meekneſs of ſpirit, when his name and honour ſuffered the vileſt indignities, blaſphemies, and reproaches, that the malice of Satan, and the malignity of wicked men, could belch out againſt it; when he was called a blaſphemer, a ſorcerer, a devil, a wine-bibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and ſinners. For an innocent perſon, and a dignified perſon, to bear all this, when he could have looked all his enemies into hell, and have frowned them into nothing; verily, to bear all this, without the leaſt diſcompoſure of ſpirit, is the higheſt triumph of patience that ever the world was acquainted with. And why all this, but to leave us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps? 1 Pet. ii. 21. 22.

XIV. *In his readineſs to forgive injuries.* One of his laſt words upon the croſs, was a prayer for his murderers; *Father, forgive them*, Luke xxiii. 34. He offered up his blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it. Thus to forgive our enemies, and to beg forgiveneſs of them, will be an evidence of a Chriſt-like frame and temper; when the grace of God calms thoſe tumultuous and outrageous paſſions which at any time we find raging in our breaſts, moulding our ſpirits into ſweetneſs and gentleneſs, freeing us from all malicious deſires of revenge, which are ſo far beneath a chriſtian, that it is the baſeneſs of a man; yea, as jealouſy is the rage of a man, ſo malice is the rage of the devil; it is the ſpirit of the apoſtate nature.

XV. *In his laying to heart the ſins, as well as the ſufferings of others.* Mark iii. 5. *He was grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts.* Such was his zeal for his Father's glory, ſuch was his compaſſion on the ſouls of men, ſuch his antipathy againſt, and hatred of ſin, that he was grieved for ſin wherever he found it, and mourned over thoſe, who had no hearts to mourn for themſelves. Lord! how far are they off from a Chriſt-like ſpirit and temper, who, inſtead of mourning for other men's ſins, rejoice in iniquity, and take pleaſure to ſee their brother ſtab at once the chriſtian name and his own ſoul?

XVI. *In his zeal for the public worſhip of God.* John ii. 17. *The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.* Now as Chriſt was, ſo chriſtians ought to be, intenſely zealous for the glory of God, the honour of his houſe, and the purity of his public worſhip. *The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.* Our zeal for the public worſhip of God glorifies him moſt, and he accepts it beſt. Now we own that God, whom we ſerve in the face of the world; and this creates a veneration and eſteem of God in the minds of men.

XVII. *In his glorifying of his Father in all he did.* John xvii. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth.* The whole life of Jeſus, whilſt here on earth, was a glorifying of his Father; he glorified his Father by the doctrine which he taught, by the miracles which he wrought, by the unſpotted purity of his life, and by his unparalleled ſufferings at his death. In like manner ſhould we glorify God in all we do, in all we deſign, in all we deſire; in our natural actions of eating and drinking; in our civil employments, buying and ſelling; in our lawful recreations, taking care that too much of our time be not conſumed therein. Recreation is not to be our buſineſs, but to fit us for buſineſs; but eſpecially let us ſeek to glorify God in our religious duties, public, private, and ſecret.

XVIII. *In his impartiality in reproving ſin.* He feared the faces and ſpared the faults of no offenders; the Phariſees were a proud and haughty ſort of people, who diſhonoured God above moſt, when they pretended to glorify him above any. Therefore we find Chriſt denouncing a bead-roll of woes againſt them in one chapter, Matt. xxiii. *Wo unto you ſcribes, Phariſees, hypocrites.* Eight ſeveral woes are denounced againſt them, for ſo many ſeveral ſins committed by them. Thoſe to whom God has given his authority to reprove the ſins of others, ought to imitate their pattern in his impartiality in reproving ſin. His very enemies gave him that character, Matt. xxii. 17. *Thou careſt not for any man, thou regardeſt not the perſon of men*; that is, thou ſpareſt none, but telleſt all men of their faults.

XIX. *In his univerſal obedience to his Father's will, and chearful ſubmiſſion to his Father's pleaſure.* He obeyed the will of his Father univerſally, voluntarily, ſincerely, and with a ſingle eye to his glory, perſeveringly, and to the end; and as he was, ſo muſt we be faithful to the death, if we expect the crown of life. And in like manner did he ſubmit to the will of his providence; *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; *not my will, but thine be done.* O let us keep this example continually before us, and every day obey the will of God's precept univerſally, and ſubmit to the will of his providence very chearfully! This is heaven on earth.

XX. *In his love and practice of univerſal holineſs, both in heart and life.* He was holy in nature, holy in his principles and motives, holy in his aim and ends; he was perfectly holy, preciſely holy, uniformly holy, exemplarily holy; he delighted only in holy perſons and holy things; it concerns us to imitate herein, if ever we expect to be where he is: *Heaven is the habitation of holineſs*; the company is holy, the employent is holy, the enjoyments holy; no unclean thing can enter into heaven, or could be happy in heaven; heaven is rather a nature than a place. It is not the place of heaven can make us happy, but the diſpoſition and temper of our minds in heaven; without conformity to the nature of God, there can be no communion with him, or delight in him. What a diſcourteous courteſy would it be to turn a filthy ſwine into a garden of flowers, to lodge it in a bed of ſweet perfumes, to bathe it in a clear and cryſtal fountain? Alas! its unclean temper and ſordid inclinations would rather chuſe to lie down in a kennel, and wallow in the mire, its proper element. Thus unſuitable would heaven be; that place of greateſt happineſs would be the greateſt uneaſineſs to an unholy heart. Let us then pray and endeavour that the temper of our minds, and the actions of our lives, may be a lively tranſcript of the mind and life of the holy Jeſus, that we may like him in purity and holineſs, in juſtice and righteouſneſs, in patience and meekneſs, in charity and univerſal goodneſs; that as he was, we may be in the world, *holy, humble, harmleſs, heavenly-minded, glorifying God* on earth, that we may be glorified with him and by him in his eternal kingdom.

XXI. Yet before I cloſe this exhortation to an imitation of Jeſus, I muſt ſubjoin this cautionary direction: Take heed that you do not ſo imitate Chriſt for your pattern, as to diſown him for your prieſt. This is the dangerous error of thoſe who affirm, that the great end of Chriſt's death was to give the world an example of patience, humility, meekneſs, and the forementioned chriſtian graces, and that his ſufferings were exemplary, but not properly ſatisfactory. We acknowledge that Chriſt's giving us an example was one end of his coming into the world, and dying for us, but not the great end. A ſubordinate end, but not the ultimate. God preſerve us from the contagion of this growing error; other errors only ſcratch the face, but this ſtabs the heart of the chriſtian religion, in that it deprives us of the choiceſt benefit of Chriſt's death; namely, the expiation of ſin, by a proper ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God. But bleſſed God, we *have not ſo learned Chriſt*; as we are taught, ſo we believe, that the holy Jeſus, by the ſacrifice of his death, has redeemed us from death and hell, and ſaved us from the wrath to come, by a full and adequate payment to divine juſtice, and, by the redundancy of his merit, has purchaſed an eternal inheritance for us; and as we are taught and believe, ſo we pray:

Almighty God, who haſt given thine only Son to be unto us both a ſacrifice for ſin, as alſo an example of godly life; Give us grace that we may always moſt thankfully receive this his ineſtimable benefit, and alſo daily endeavour ourſelves to follow the bleſſed ſteps of his moſt holy life; through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Almighty and everlaſting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, has ſent thy Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him our fleſh, and to ſuffer death upon the croſs, that all mankind ſhould follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and alſo be made partakers of his reſurrection, through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

END OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The moſt illuſtrious life of the holy Jesus *being recorded at large in the foregoing* Goſpels, *by the ſeveral* Evangeliſts, *whoſe names they bear; this next book of the* Acts *undertaketh theſe three things:*

I. *It recommends to our obſervation and imitation the lives and actions of the holy apoſtles, particularly St.* Peter *and St.* Paul; *and acquaints us with their fervent zeal, and unwearied diligence in planting and propagating* Chriſtianity, *not only in* Judea *and* Samaria, *but alſo in* Syria, Aſia, *and* Macedonia; *yea, even in* Rome *itſelf: Where, by the way,* note, *That there is not one word in all this hiſtory, of St.* Peter's *primacy, of his ſuperiority over the reſt of the* apoſtles, *or of any biſhopric that he had at* Rome; *the leaſt intimation of which, would have made a louder noiſe than* Paſce oves, *or* Tu es Petrus.

II. *We have here an eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of the firſt and pureſt churches, informing us how the Chriſtian church in its infancy was planted and watered, gathered and propagated, both among Jews and Gentiles; how ſhe obſerved and obeyed* Christ's *commands to his apoſtles, both in matters of faith, worſhip, communion and government, that therein the primitive church might be an exemplary pattern to ſucceeding churches throughout all ages.*

III. *This hiſtory gives all the miniſters of the goſpel, to the end of the world, a great and noble pattern of miniſterial diligence, faithfulneſs, and prudence; acquainting us what the apoſtles did, the pains which they took, the hazards which they run, in preaching the glad tidings of ſalvation to a loſt world: How they inſtructed the ignorant, reduced the wandering; how they bare with the weakneſs of ſome, and patiently contended with the obſtinacy and perverſeneſs of others. Likewiſe as ſtewards of* God's *family, they gave to the whole houſhold* their portion of meat in due ſeaſon.

This firſt chapter relates, 1. *The time and manner of our* Lord's *aſcenſion.* 2. *The hundred and twenty diſciples joint devotion.* 3. *Their election of* Matthias *by lot, to ſucceed in the apoſtleſhip, in the room of the apoſtate* Judas.

CHAP. I.

THE former treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach,

Note here, 1. The penman of this ſacred hiſtory, St. Luke, the ſame that wrote the goſpel, which he calls his *former treatiſe*, dedicated, both that and this, to the ſame Theophilus: *The former treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus.* 2. The time when St. Luke wrote this holy hiſtory, and the place where, namely, when he was the companion of St. Paul; and, as ſome think, during the time of his impriſonment at Rome: If ſo, we may profitably remark, the favour which God gave the apoſtle and companion in the ſight of the keeper of the priſon, that they were not denied pen and paper. When perſecutors ſend the ſaints to priſon, God can provide a keeper for their turn. But how do the apoſtle and his companion ſpend their time in priſon? Very advantageouſly; the former in writing epiſtles to the churches for their confirmation; the latter in recording the acts and monuments of the holy apoſtles for our imitation. There is no ſuch way to be even with the devil and his inſtruments, for all their malice and ſpite againſt us, as by doing all the good we can, wherever we come. Satan had better have let theſe two holy men alone, than have caſt them into priſon; for by their pens they battered the walls of his kingdom, and made them ſhake about his ears. 3. The integrity and impartiality of this hiſtorian St. Luke; he wrote of all *things that Jeſus both did and taught* in his *Goſpel*, and what the apoſtles did and taught, in the *Acts*; not that this is to be underſtood ſtrictly and abſolutely, but comparatively only; not as if St. Luke recorded every action that Jeſus did, or every expreſſion our Saviour ſaid; for St. John ſays, they were ſo many, that they could not be written, chap. xxi. 25. But by *all things*, we are to underſtand very many things: the moſt neceſſary and uſeful things; every thing that the Holy Ghoſt thought fit to dictate to him, and enjoin him to publiſh for the church's uſe and ſervice. *Learn* thence, That St. Luke was a very faithful and impartial hiſtorian, withholding nothing which was neceſſary for the church to know, and leaving no room for unwritten or uncertain traditions: *I have wrote all that Jeſus began*, &c.

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghoſt had given commandments unto the apoſtles, whom he had choſen:

Note here, The ſpecial concern and care which Chriſt had for his church on earth, before he aſcended into heaven. The very firſt night that he appeared to his diſciples, after his reſurrection, he breathed on them, and diſtributed the Holy Ghoſt among them, St. John xx. 22. both to inform their judgments of what they did not know, and to direct their practice, what he would have them to do: *He, through the Holy Ghoſt, gave commandments unto the apoſtles*; that is, he diſtributed the Holy Ghoſt amongſt them, to be their conſtant inſtructor and director, what they ſhould do, in order to the execution of their office and employment. *Learn* thence, That as the apoſtles had, ſo the miniſters of Chriſt, in their meaſure, ſhall have, the gracious and ſpecial influences of the holy Spirit to direct and inſtruct, to quicken and ſupport them in the faithful diſcharge of their miniſterial office to the end of the world; that gracious promiſe, *Lo, I am with you alway*, St. Matt. xxviii. 20. We that live ſeventeen hundred years after the firſt making of it, may by faith draw out the comfort of it, as well as the apoſtles, to whom it was originally made.

3 To whom he alſo ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Note, 1. The time which our Lord ſpent here upon earth, between his reſurrection and aſcenſion; it was forty days: Chriſt would not preſently aſcend into heaven, as ſoon as he was riſen, but thought fit to ſtay ſome time with his diſciples, to confirm their faith in the belief of his reſurrection, and to ſatisfy them that it was he himſelf, their Lord and Maſter, that died for them, that was indeed riſen, and now appeared unto them: *He was ſeen of them forty days.* 2. What our Saviour did in that forty days upon earth: *He ſhewed himſelf alive unto his diſciples*, appearing ſometimes to them, and giving them many infallible proofs of the verity of his reſurrection, by eating, drinking, talking, and converſing with them, by ſhewing his wounds to them, and ſubmitting himſelf to be touched and handled by them. Not that Chriſt's converſation with his diſciples, in this his exalted ſtate after his reſurrection, was ſo frequent and familiar, as it was before his death, when he was in a ſtate of humiliation; and accordingly we never read, I think, that Chriſt ever lodged or continued all night with his diſciples, after he was riſen from the grave. But he converſed with them only upon occaſion, as he pleaſed himſelf, and when he pleaſed. 3. What our

Saviour ſaid, as well as what he did, in his intervening time betwixt his reſurrection and aſcenſion, being forty days: *He ſpake to his diſciples of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:* That is, 1. Of the things pertaining to his church militant, or the kingdom of grace here on earth, how he would have his church planted and propagated by the apoſtles doctrine, guided and governed by their diſcipline: Or, 2. By the kingdom of God, may be underſtood the church triumphant, or the kingdom of glory in heaven; what perfect bliſs and happineſs he was now going to prepare for them in the preſence of his Father. Where *note*, That Chriſt's kingdom is purely ſpiritual; that Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom is his church; and the preaching of the goſpel is the great inſtrumental mean for the erecting of the kingdom of grace, and enlarging of the kingdom of glory.

4 And being aſſembled together with them, commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, *ſaith he*, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence.

Note here, 1. How frequently Chriſt renewed his promiſes to his diſciples, of ſending down the Holy Ghoſt to confer upon them the gifts of tongues and miracles, in order to the fitting and furniſhing of them for their work of preaching and publiſhing the goſpel to all nations: *Ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence:* That is, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt ſhall be largely poured forth upon you, (as water upon the perſon baptized) which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecoſt. When Chriſt calls his miniſters to extraordinary ſervice, he affords them extraordinary aſſiſtance, furniſhing them with endowments anſwerable to their great employments. 2. The place where Chriſt commands the apoſtles to wait for the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them; namely, at Jeruſalem: *He commanded them not to depart from Jeruſalem, but wait there for the promiſe.* Of all places the apoſtles would leaſt have choſen Jeruſalem to tarry in, had not Chriſt commanded them to wait there. For Jeruſalem was now a juſtly abhorred and deteſted place, reeking afreſh with the blood of the holy and innocent Jeſus; yet Jeruſalem is the place choſen by Chriſt for the pouring forth the holy Spirit upon his apoſtles: Becauſe, 1. There had been his greateſt humiliation. There Chriſt had ſuffered the greateſt ignominy, therefore there will he ſhew forth his power and glory. 2. Becauſe at Jeruſalem there was the greateſt company of ſpectators to behold this noble work, and to be wrought upon by it. Such as would not be convinced by our Saviour's death and reſurrection, might probably be convinced by this miraculous effuſion of the Holy Spirit, deſcending upon the apoſtles in fiery cloven tongues. Lord! what an inſtance was this of thy love to thine enemies! How deſirous wert thou of the converſion and ſalvation of thy very murderers! In and at Jeruſalem, where our Lord was crucified, the Holy Ghoſt firſt deſcended: And when Chriſt appointed where the goſpel-combination ſhould begin, Jeruſalem is the firſt place in nomination by him. St. Luke xxiv. 47. *And he ſaid unto them, that repentance and remiſſion of ſin*, &c.

6 When they therefore were come together, they aſked of him, ſaying, Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? 7 And he ſaid unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Note here, the diſciples' queſtion and our Saviour's anſwer: 1. The queſtion propoſed by the diſciples, *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael?* That is, Wilt thou repair the ruinous condition of the Jewiſh ſtate, and reſtore it to that great dignity and ſplendour which we have always expected ſhould be done by the Meſſias? Where *note*, That notwithſtanding Chriſt had ſo often rebuked the Jews in general, and his diſciples in particular, for their conceit of a temporal kingdom (who were ſo full of ambitious expectations to receive great honours and preferments here on earth) yet it evidently appears, that this notion ſtill ran in their minds, and that their Maſter being now riſen from the dead, this was the time both for his and their dignity and advancement. *Learn* hence, That it is no wonder that unbelievers ſtumbled at the poverty and meanneſs of Chriſt's outward condition when he was here on earth, ſeeing it was ſo hard for the diſciples themſelves to be convinced, and believe that his kingdom was not of this world. I know not any thing wherein the biſhop of Rome may ſo properly call himſelf apoſtolical, as in his following this error of the apoſtles. Were they always dreaming of a temporal kingdom? So is he always doting upon it, and his eyes dazzled with the ſplendour and glory of it. The diſciples, not only all the time whilſt Chriſt was with them, but even now, when upon the point of departing from them, when he was juſt aſcending, yea, in part aſcended, having one foot upon the earth, and the other in the cloud which took him up to heaven, yet ſtill they aſked him, Wilt thou now reſtore the kingdom? that is, ſettle upon us thy followers ſecular power, and temporal dominion here on earth? But *mark*, 2. Our Lord's anſwer, ver. 7. *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put only in his own power.* Our Saviour's anſwer doth not in the leaſt imply that any ſuch kingdom ſhould ever be granted as they dreamt of; but he checks their curioſity in enquiring into the times and ſeaſons, and nature of God's ſecrets, which it no way concerned them to pry into: *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons.* Here *note*, 1. Something implied, *namely*, That there are certain times and ſeaſons, the knowledge of which only belongs to God, which yet man's curioſity has an itching deſire to ſearch and pry into. There is nothing more natural to man, than a deſire to know both what ſhall be hereafter, and when that hereafter ſhall be. We are very careleſs in ſeeking out the ſeaſon of that which we ourſelves ſhould do; but over careful and curious in ſeeking out the ſeaſon of what God will do. *Note*, Here is ſomething expreſſed, namely, that God has times and ſeaſons for executing his own purpoſes, which it is neither proper, or profitable, nor poſſible for us to know. Not proper, becauſe none of our buſineſs. Not profitable, becauſe no part of our intereſt. Not poſſible, becauſe out of our reach. It is not poſſible for us to know it as men, by a natural ſagacity; nor as chriſtians by a ſupernatural illumination; no, nor as miniſters and apoſtles, without divine inſpiration and extraordinary revelation, which we have no warrant to expect, and ſhould have no curioſity to deſire. *Learn* hence, That it much better becomes us with an awful ſilence to adore, than with a bold curioſity to pry into God's hidden and unrevealed ſecrets. Yet though it be not for us to know God's times and ſeaſons, it is our duty to expect them, and be prepared for them. We know not when our Lord will come to us by death and judgment, whether *in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock crowing, or in the morning.* But it is our duty to believe and expect it, to wait and prepare for it, and be always ready to receive him. Finally, Though it is not for us to know the times and ſeaſons which God hath put in his own power, yet it is for us to know the times and ſeaſons which God has put in our power; namely, the preſent time to improve it, and the time paſt to bewail our miſimprovement of it. To improve the time of affliction, for conſideration and humiliation; and the time of proſperity, mercy, and deliverance, for gratulation and thankfulneſs; and to improve both in farther meaſures, and increaſe of holineſs and ſanctification both of heart and life.

8 But ye ſhall receive power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you: And ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth.

Note here, How Chriſt, inſtead of gratifying his diſciples curioſity, acquaints them with their own duty; he tells them, that although they had received his Spirit before, in ſome meaſure, yet very ſhortly the Spirit ſhould be poured forth upon them in a plentiful manner, to confer the gift of tongues, prophecies, and miracles upon them, for rendering them to preach the goſpel throughout all nations, and alſo to teſtify and bear witneſs unto the truth of what Chriſt did and ſaid in Judea and Samaria, both to Jews and Gentiles, even to the uttermoſt parts of the earth. Here *note*, What is the ſpecial work of the miniſters of the goſpel; namely, to bear witneſs unto Chriſt: *Ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me.* This they do three ways, *Chriſtum predicando*; *ſecundum Chriſtum vivendo*; *propter Chriſtum patiendo*: "By the purity of their doctrine, by the piety of their lives, and by their patience under ſuffering, both for Chriſt, and from Chriſt." 2. What it was that enabled the apoſtles thus to bear witneſs unto Chriſt, namely, the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon them: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon you, and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me.* Thence *learn*, That ſome meaſure of miniſterial gifts and ſanctifying graces from the Holy Spirit, is abſolutely neceſſary to enable the miniſters of the goſpel to bear their teſtimony unto Chriſt with faithfulneſs and ſucceſs.

9 And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight.

Here an account is given of our Saviour's triumphant aſcenſion into heaven, with ſeveral remarkable particulars thereunto belonging. *Note*, 1. Who and what it was that aſcended; even the ſame that deſcended. Chriſt Jeſus, in his divine nature as God, and in his human nature as man, his perſon conſiſting of ſoul and body, he now aſcended in both. 2. The place he aſcended from; from this world in general, and from mount Olivet in particular, that very place where he began his laſt ſorrowful tragedy. Where his heart began to be ſad, here it is now made glad. *Learn* thence, that God can make the very places of our trouble and torment, (as ſick beds, priſons, ſtrange countries) to become places of comfort and triumphant joy unto us, when he pleaſes. 3. The place whither he aſcended, into heaven; that is the third heaven, the throne of God, the ſeat of the bleſſed. Hence he is ſaid to *aſcend far above all heavens*; that is, above the aerial and ſtarry heavens which we ſee, into the higheſt heavens; unto the place where he was before, as himſelf expreſſes it, John vi. 62. Thence learn, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is returned back again to that ſweet and glorious boſom of delight and love, from which he came at his firſt incarnation; *What and if he ſhall ſee the* Son of man *aſcending up where he was before?* 4. The time when our Lord aſcended, forty days after his reſurrection. The care and love of Chriſt to his church was manifeſted by this his ſtay with them. Unſpeakable glory was prepared for him, and did now await him; but he would not go to poſſeſs it, till he had ſettled all things for the good of his church. And when he had ſettled his family in order, and given charge to his diſciples concerning the diſcipline of his houſe, he would ſtay no longer, leſt he ſhould ſeem to affect a terrene life. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt deſired to be no longer here, than he had work to do for God and ſouls. A good pattern for our imitation, to deſire life upon the ſcore of uſefulneſs: To be willing to be gone when our work is done. 5. How and after what manner Chriſt aſcended up into heaven. (1.) He aſcended, as well as was raiſed from the grave, by his own power, ver. 10. *Whilſt they looked ſtedfaſtly, he went up*; that is, by his own divine power. True, the angels did attend him, but they did not aſſiſt him. Elias went to heaven in a chariot of fire, but he was fetcht up, he could not carry himſelf up; but Chriſt needed no chariot, no carriage of angels for his conveyance, being the author of life and motion. (2.) He aſcended magnificently, with great triumph into his kingdom in heaven; *God went up with a ſhout, the Lord with the ſound of the trumpet.* A cloud is prepared as a royal chariot, to carry up this King of glory to his royal pavillion: *A cloud received him out of their ſight.* And oh! what jubilations of the bleſſed angels were heard in heaven! The triumphs and univerſal acclamations are not ended to this day, nor ever ſhall end. 3. He aſcended munificently, ſhedding forth innumerable and ineſtimable gifts upon his church at his aſcenſion: *When he aſcended up on high, he gave gifts to men, prophets, apoſtles, evangeliſts, paſtors, and teachers.* And oh! how many thouſands now in heaven, and upon earth alſo, are bleſſing Chriſt at this day, for theſe his aſcenſion-gifts! 6. The witneſſes of our Lord's aſcenſion. Elias had but one witneſs of his rapture into heaven, St. Paul not one, but Chriſt will neither have all eye-witneſſes of his aſcenſion, nor yet too few; he did not carry all Jeruſalem forth to ſee his glorious departure, but the ſelect company of his diſciples only: The number of witneſſes was about an hundred and twenty. Thoſe who had been partners with him in his humiliation, are now made witneſſes of his glorious aſcenſion. If we will converſe with Chriſt in his lowly eſtate here on earth, we ſhall be made happy with the ſight of his tranſcendent glory ere long above. 7. The cauſe and reaſons why he thus aſcended; namely, becauſe, had he not aſcended, he could not have been inaugurated and inſtalled in the glory he now enjoys above. Had he not aſcended, he could not have interceded, as now he doth, for us here below. Had he not aſcended into heaven, we could never have entered heaven: He entered as our forerunner, as our head and repreſentative, and we aſcend after him, in the virtue of his aſcenſion before us. In a word, had he not aſcended before us, the Holy Spirit had not been enjoyed by us, as a ſanctifier, and as a comforter, at leaſt not in that meaſure in which he has been ſince enjoyed by his church: *If Chriſt had not gone, the Comforter had not come.* He begins where Chriſt ended. Take we good heed then, how we treat the Holy Spirit whom Chriſt ſent down from heaven at his aſcenſion thither: that we do not grieve him by our unkindneſs, nor vex him by our diſobedience, nor quench him by our ſinful neglects of duty; for in grieving the Spirit, we grieve our Comforter, and in grieving our Comforter, we grieve ourſelves. But let us entertain him kindly, on the account of his nature; for he is God, Acts v. On the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him; for he is *Vinculum Unionis*, the bond of union betwixt Chriſt and our ſouls, without which we can never have either intereſt in Chriſt, or communion with him.

10 And while they looked ſtedfaſtly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them in white apparel; 11 Which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.

Note here, How the ſpectators of our Lord's aſcenſion were juſtly tranſported into an ecſtacy of wonder and admiration. Chriſt aſcended gradually and leiſurely, that he might at once confirm the faith, and delight the eyes and minds of his beholders. Whilſt they thus ſtood admiring, two angels, in the ſhape of men, appear in white (a colour which they oft appeared in, to ſhew both that they retained their native purity, and alſo to repreſent the joyfulneſs of their errand which they went upon) and call to the apoſtles, who were ſome of them men of Galilee, to take notice, that this Jeſus whom they now beheld aſcending up into heaven, ſhould come again to judge the world, and ſo come again *in like manner*, that is, viſible in a cloud, by his own power, with the like majeſty, and with the ſame ſoul and body. But not one word of the time when; that, not knowing the hour, we may be upon the watch every hour: *Ideo latet unus dies ut obſerventur omnes.*

12 Then returned they unto Jeruſalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jeruſalem a ſabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James. 14 Theſe all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with his brethren.

The apoſtles having ſeen our Saviour thus gloriouſly aſcended into heaven from mount Olivet, they return to Jeruſalem, which is called a ſabbath-day's journey, that is, about two miles. Eight furlongs make a mile, and Bethany, in which was the mount of Olivet, was from Jeruſalem about fifteen furlongs, John xi. 18. This was the common walk which the Jews uſed on the ſabbath-day, but rather for meditation than recreation's ſake. The apoſtles thus returned, aſſemble together at Jeruſalem, where they lay the foundation of the firſt goſpel-church. And here *note*, 1. How the names of all the eleven apoſtles are repeated and diſtinctly ſet down, to ſhew, that although they had fallen from their profeſſion, and forſaken Chriſt, yet they had recovered themſelves by repentance, and were riſen again; and upon their recovery, were continued by Chriſt in their former office and dignity. O the mighty power of a ſincere repentance, to reinſtate us in the favour and friendſhip of an offended God! 2. How the ſight of Chriſt's aſcenſion had eſtabliſhed and confirmed the apoſtles faith: they now adore and worſhip him, and aſſemble together to perform their joint devotions to him. Before Chriſt's reſurrection and aſcenſion, we ſcarce read of any act of adoration that the diſciples paid unto him. True, they looked upon him as a perſon ſent from God, a great prophet, and the Son of David: But his Deity being evinced, and now made evident to them by his reſurrection from the grave, and aſcenſion into heaven, they now worſhipped him as the Son of God. See Luke xxiv. 52. 3. The place where this chriſtian congregation did aſſemble; *In an upper room*; that is, ſays Dr. Hammond, in one of the chambers belonging to the temple; in the large upper room, ſay others, where Chriſt had lately eaten the paſſover with his diſciples; it was no doubt the moſt convenient place they could find for that ſolemnity; an upper room being remote from noiſe and company, and capacious enough to receive this primo-primitive church, conſiſting of an hundred and twenty perſons. It *teaches* us, That all advantages, with reſpect to time and place, and other circumſtances, for the better performance of holy duties, ought to be made uſe of and improved by us. 4. The perſons who were the firſt conſtituting members of this new conſtituted church; together with the apoſtles, mention is made of women in general, and of the Virgin Mary in particular; where we may remark, That this is the firſt and laſt time that the ſcripture makes mention of her after Chriſt's death. None of the Evangeliſts record one word of our Lord's appearing once to her, during his forty days ſtay and continuance upon earth after his reſurrection.—Doubtleſs the Spirit of God in the holy ſcriptures, by ſpeaking ſo ſparing of her life, and nothing at all of her death, took care that all thoſe fabulous reports of her aſſumption, which have ſince ariſen, ſhould find no footſteps in the word of God. God dealeth with her, as with Moſes, of whoſe ſepulchre no man knoweth unto this day, leſt it ſhould be abuſed to idolatry. The learned Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion that ſhe continued under the care of the beloved diſciple, unto whom Chriſt committed her for ſome time, and at laſt was taken away by martyrdom, according to Simeon's prophecy, Luke ii. 35. *A ſword ſhall pierce through thine own ſoul alſo.* Which prophecy, he thinks, pointed at the manner of her death: but notwithſtanding the ſilence of the ſcriptures, the church of Rome confidently affirms, that the Virgin lived ſixty-three years, and that all the apoſtles were at her funeral, except St. Thomas, who deſiring afterward to ſee her holy corpſe, the ſepulchre being opened the third day, the body was gone, being aſſumed and taken up into heaven.

15 ¶ And in thoſe days Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the diſciples, and ſaid, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty) 16 Men *and* brethren, This ſcripture muſt needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David ſpake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jeſus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this miniſtry. 18 Now this man purchaſed a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his bowels guſhed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jeruſalem; inſomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to ſay, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Pſalms, Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His biſhopric let another take.

During the ten days ſtay and continuance of the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, before the feaſt of Pentecoſt, a motion was made amongſt them for filling up the vacancy in the ſacred college of the apoſtles, which was occaſioned by the death of the traitor Judas; and here we have *obſervable*, 1. The perſon that made this motion, St. Peter: *In thoſe days Peter ſtood up, and ſaid.* Whence the church of Rome would infer his ſupremacy, but very groundleſly. For St. Peter's being the chief ſpeaker, and ſometimes the ſole ſpeaker, is not to be attributed to his ſuperiority; but, 1. To his ſeniority, he being probably elder than the reſt. 2. To his apoſtolical office; he was appointed to be the firſt and chief miniſter of the circumciſion, to preach among the Jews; and therefore no wonder that Peter is firſt mentioned, when any thing relating to the Jewiſh affairs is recited. 3. His forwardneſs to ſpeak and act for Chriſt and his intereſt, may be imputed to his repentance, it being but neceſſary that he, who had ſo ſcandalouſly fallen, ſhould, by his future zeal, convince the world both of his repentance and recovery. And accordingly he ſpeaks, acts, and labours more abundantly than [illegible] the apoſtles; not that the reſt were idle or inſignificant; for they were equal with him, having an equal authority, an equal gift of miracles, an equal number of tongues, an equal power to preach the goſpel, and equal wiſdom in preaching of it: For the reaſons abovementioned, St. Peter ſpake and did ſo much; having diſhonoured Chriſt before by his cowardly denial of him, he now reſolves to ſignalize himſelf by ſhewing extraordinary meaſures of zeal and activity for him. 2. The honourable office and ſtation which Judas once had; *He was numbered with the apoſtles, and obtained part of that miniſtry with them.* Judas though (ſecretly) a thief, a traitor, yea, a devil, yet had he, by Chriſt's own choice, a part or office in the apoſtolic order. Oh Lord! how poſſible, and yet how ſad is it to preach to others, and to become caſt aways ourſelves! to propheſy in thy name, and yet to periſh in thy wrath! to caſt devils out of others, and yet be caſt to the devils ourſelves! to have our miniſtry bleſſed to others comfort and ſalvation, and at the ſame time to miniſter to his own condemnation! *Quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis?* 3. Judas's ſin deſcribed; *He was guide to them that took Jeſus,* ver. 16. A guide to the chief prieſts in their counſels, as to the manner of apprehending Chriſt; and a guide to the ſoldiers, as to the time and place of his apprehenſion. *Note* thence, that there cannot be a greater ſin, than for a perſon to be a guide and leader of others into ſin. Wo to magiſtrates! wo to miniſters! wo to parents! that are found guilty of this ſin. 4. Judas's puniſhment declared: 1. *He was hanged or ſtrangled:* ſome think by his own hand; others by the devil's. No doubt that Satan, who had ſo great a hand in his ſin, had more than a finger in his puniſhment. Of all mortals, no wretch ever deſerved ſo direful a fate as this traitor Judas: And doubtleſs it was the dreadfulleſt that the devil could inflict. It is added, that *he burſt aſunder, and his bowels guſhed out.* The rope, or that to which it was faſtened, breaking, he fell down headlong, and burſt aſunder, and his bowels guſhed out. A juſt and ſuitable puniſhment for his want of bowels to his kind and innocent Maſter. 3. *He went to his own place*; that is, he went and was ſent to hell and damnation, the proper place for the ſon of perdition; called his own place, becauſe of his own chuſing, of his own deſerving, of his own procuring; it was what he had purchaſed to himſelf by the wages of iniquity, and juſtly deſerved for his final impenitency.

21 Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day that he was taken up from us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his reſurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joſeph called Barſabas, who was ſurnamed Juſtus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and ſaid, Thou, Lord, which knoweſt the hearts of all *men*, ſhew whether of theſe two thou haſt choſen, 25 That he may take part of this miniſtry

and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apoſtles.

Judas having in the forementioned manner made void his office, and being gone to his own place, St. Peter moves the company, that another perſon may be choſen to fill up the place. Where *note*, 1. The electors or perſons chuſing; namely, the hundred and twenty; theſe were the eleven apoſtles, the ſeventy diſciples, and about thirty-eight more, all of Chriſt's own kindred, country, or converſe; not that theſe were all the believers that were found in Jeruſalem, for *he appeared to five hundred brethren at once*; but theſe followed him continually, were of his family and ſociety, and of his immediate train and retinue, and appointed by him for the miniſtry: Theſe therefore make the choice; and of one among themſelves was the choice made. 2. The qualification of the perſon which St. Peter directs the company to obſerve in the choice they make of this new apoſtle; *One that had accompanied with them all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among them:* That is, one that had followed Chriſt from his baptiſm to his aſcenſion, to the intent that he might be an authentic witneſs, both of the doctrine and miracles, but particularly of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: For the article of the reſurrection includes many other articles of faith in it; for if he aroſe from the grave, he was buried; if he was buried, he died; if he died, he was born. Therefore the perſon whom they chuſe, was to be one that had accompanied with them. 3. That the apoſtles did not preſume to ordain an apoſtle by impoſition of hands; but the other apoſtles being choſen of God immediately, it was neceſſary that he who was to act in the ſame office, ſhould be choſen after the ſame manner. Accordingly they caſt loſts, and leave the determination to God, who devolving it upon Matthias, he was thereupon numbered with the eleven apoſtles. Lots were uſed among the Jews for dividing inheritances, for compoſing differences, for determining elections; and how caſual ſoever it ſeemed, God was the undoubted determiner of it. Therefore, to caſt lots upon trivial occaſions, and ſolemnly to appeal to God's determination in ludicrous matters, is profanely to take the name of God in vain.

CHAP. II.

The ſecond chapter gives us an account of the miraculous effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles at the feaſt of Pentecoſt. *This was matter of wonder and amazement to ſome, but of ſcorn and mocking deriſion unto others. Hereupon St.* Peter *ſtands up, and in a moſt excellent ſermon defends the apoſtles, convicts the* Jews *of crucifying the Lord of life, and exhorts them to believe on him whom they had ignominiouſly put to death: and the Holy Spirit crowned his endeavours with a deſirable ſucceſs.*

AND when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In this extraordinary and miraculous deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the apoſtles; *obſerve*, 1. The time when, *When the day of Pentecoſt was fully come*; that is, fifty days after Chriſt's reſurrection. The day of Pentecoſt is probably believed to have fallen then upon the Lord's day; it is certain, from Acts i. that the Spirit deſcended when the apoſtles were unanimouſly aſſembled for his worſhip, and continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication. There is no way to obtain the Holy Spirit from heaven, both as a ſanctifier and as a comforter, like fervent prayer, aſſiduity and perſeverance in our devotions, eſpecially in the public aſſemblies of the ſaints. 2. The place where, at Jeruſalem, the more general place where our Lord had undergone his ignominy and reproach, there he manifeſts forth his glory and dignity: Firſt by his triumphant aſcenſion, and afterwards by his miraculous miſſion of the Holy Spirit. The more particular place was the upper room where they were aſſembled and conſtantly prayed. This upper chamber was moſt raiſed towards heaven, moſt remote from noiſe and company, and worldly diſtractions, The Spirit of God deſcends upon and reſts with ſuch as have raiſed affections above the world, and are neareſt unto heaven; not upon ſuch as are buried alive in worldly buſineſs: Earth will extinguiſh fire as well as water, and ſome ſay ſooner; not only ſenſual luſt, but an exceſs of earthly buſineſs and worldly drudgery, will quench the Holy Spirit, and cauſe him to depart and go away aggrieved from us. 3. The perſons on whom the Holy Ghoſt thus deſcended, namely, the apoſtles: not that they were without the Holy Spirit until now: they had him before in his ſanctifying graces; here they receive him in his extraordinary gifts, to fit them for extraordinary ſervices. When God extraordinarily calls any of his ſervants to more than ordinary ſervice, they may expect more than ordinary aſſiſtance. The Holy Spirit now deſcended upon the apoſtles in his miraculous gifts, and if we be not wanting to ourſelves, he will deſcend upon us in inviſible favours every day, making our ſouls and bodies a temple, and fit habitation for himſelf to dwell in, by his ſanctifying impreſſions, by his powerful aſſiſtances, by his quickening influences; pouring in both the oil of grace, and alſo the oil of joy and gladneſs, into our hearts. 4. The manner how the Holy Ghoſt at this time deſcended on the apoſtles: 1. Suddenly, like the wind; *A mighty ruſhing wind from heaven:* Inſinuating, that it was not the apoſtles' prayer that brought, but Chriſt's promiſe and power, that ſent the Holy Ghoſt thus miraculouſly down upon them. This ruſhing wind alſo did repreſent the mighty efficacy of the Holy Spirit now deſcending. 2. In the appearance of fiery cloven tongues; cloven, to ſignify the variety of languages which the apoſtles ſhould be enabled to ſpeak, and to qualify them to preach the goſpel unto all nations: And fiery, to repreſent that fervent heat and zeal they ſhould be endued with themſelves; that divine light they ſhould impart to others; as alſo that purity and holineſs which they and all ſucceeding miniſters of the goſpel ought to appear beautified and adorned with: Finally, As fire diſſipateth and diſperſeth, multiplieth and increaſeth, even ſo the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, the more they are diffuſed and employed, the more they will be increaſed; by imparting to our people, we ſhall gather to ourſelves. Thus was our Lord's promiſe fulfilled to his apoſtles, in ſending down the Holy Ghoſt upon them, but not upon them only; the private chriſtian, no doubt, as well as the public apoſtle, did receive the Holy Spirit according to his meaſure: To enlighten, as a ſpirit of knowledge; to enliven, as a ſpirit of life; to warm and heat, as a ſpirit of zeal; to mollify and ſoften, as a ſpirit of holy fear; to quicken and ſtrengthen, as a ſpirit of wiſdom and counſel; to unite and knit their hearts together, as a ſpirit of love. And bleſſed be God for the promiſe of the ſame Holy Spirit to abide with all believers, though not in his miraculous gifts, yet in his ſanctifying operations and ſaving graces, to the end of the world.

5 And there were dwelling in Jeruſalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, becauſe that every man heard them ſpeak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, ſaying one to another, Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Aſia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and Proſelytes, 11 Cretes, and Arabians; we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, ſaying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking ſaid, Theſe men are full of new wine.

The fame of the foregoing miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit being inſtantly ſpread abroad in Jeruſalem, and there being preſent at that time great multitudes of Jews, who had come from all parts of Judea, to the feaſt of Pentecoſt, and alſo many other Jews and proſelytes born in other nations, Meſopotamia, Cappadocia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, who were now come up to worſhip the true God at Jeruſalem; when they heard the apoſtles ſpeak in their own language, which they never underſtood before, the wonderful works of God, in the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſome of them wondered to hear illiterate men ſpeaking all languages; others derided the miracle, and imputed it to drunkenneſs. Here *note*, 1. The wiſdom and providence of Almighty God, in ſo ordering the firſt publication of the goſpel, that the fame thereof, and of that convincing miracle which gave authority thereunto, might be carried unto all nations by ſo many eye and ear-witneſſes, as were worſhipping at Jeruſalem at this time: For *there were now ſojourning at Jeruſalem, men of every nation under heaven*; that is, of every nation, where any Jews were ſcattered at this time throughout the world, there were ſome particular perſons come up now to Jeruſalem to worſhip God. 2. The commendatory character given of thoſe perſons, who from their ſeveral countries came up to the houſe of God in Jeruſalem, to worſhip him there: They are ſtyled *devout men:* And they received from God the reward of their piety and devotion. Had they ſtaid at home, as many of their brethren no doubt did, they had not been witneſſes of ſo wonderful a miracle for the confirmation of their faith as now they were. Yet *note*, 3. The different influence and effect which this miracle of the holy Spirit's deſcent in fiery cloven tongues, had upon the minds of the people in Jeruſalem. Some were ſtruck into an ecſtacy of admiration and awful wonder; others (the ſcribes and Phariſees probably) ſcornfully deride, and impute the miracle to drunkenneſs, ſaying, *Theſe men are full of new wine.* A ſenſeleſs ſlander; for though exceſs of wine may give a man more tongue, yet not more tongues. O! how have the holy operations of the bleſſed Spirit from the beginning been ſlandered and blaſphemed; accounted the effects of drunkenneſs then, of enthuſiaſm or melancholy now.

14 ¶ But Peter ſtanding up with the eleven, lift up his voice and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jeruſalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel, 17 And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh: and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſy, and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams: 18 And on my ſervants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit; and they ſhall propheſy: 19 And I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns on the earth beneath; blood and fire, and vapour of ſmoke: 20 The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.

Obſerve here, The holy courage of St. Peter, in defending the innocency of the apoſtles, and confuting the calumny of drunkenneſs, which was now caſt upon himſelf and them: *Theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day.* Where *note*, 1. How he argues negatively from the time of the day; it was but the third hour of the day, that is, nine o'clock in the morning, which was the hour for the morning ſacrifice and and prayer, and the worſhippers of God (at the great feaſt eſpecially) were never wont to eat or drink before thoſe holy ſervices were performed. In thoſe times they went to their public devotions faſting; they ſerved God before they ſerved their bellies. The firſt-fruits of the day were offered in the the temple then; in the tavern now: ten morning and evening viſits are made by ſome to the latter, for one to the former. *Note* farther, How he argues poſitively: he aſſures them, that the apoſtles were full of the Holy Ghoſt, and not full of wine; filled with the Spirit of God; and that what was now done, was the completion of a prophecy uttered by Joel: *That in the laſt days*, that is, in the days of the Meſſias, there ſhould be a moſt plentiful effuſion of the holy Spirit *upon all fleſh*; that is, upon Jews and Gentiles, and upon all ſorts of perſons without diſtinction, old and young, ſons and daughters, bond and free. *Learn* thence, That the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, not confined to any party, to any order and degrees of men, but plentifully and abundantly poured forth under the goſpel-diſpenſation upon all believers. It is one of the great cheats which the Pope has impoſed upon the world, to perſuade men that the Spirit of God is tied to the pommel of his chair: That he, and his cardinals, have monopolized the Holy Ghoſt. But, bleſſed be God, he has promiſed to pour out his Spirit upon all fleſh, even upon ſervants and handmaids, to ſhew, that he doth not deſpiſe perſons of the loweſt rank and condition in this world, but that the promiſe of the Spirit is made unto them alſo. Laſtly, What is here foretold that ſhould come to paſs after this great effuſion of the holy Spirit, namely, *Wonders in the heaven, and ſigns in the earth, the ſun turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood.* Which expreſſions ſignify the great miſeries and troubles, the calamities and deſolations which ſhould befal the Jews before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, for their crucifying the Lord of life and glory: Unto which is ſubjoined the only way to eſcape and avoid them; namely, calling upon the Lord in fervent prayer and ſupplication: *Whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.* Intimating, that prayer makes us ſhot-free, and is a ſure defence in all ſtorms; that no evil ſhall fatally touch our perſons, or come near our dwellings, whilſt we take hold of God by faith, and approach unto him by prayer. Lord! how happy is it when ſtrong afflictions from thee, raiſe ſtrong affections in us towards thee!

22 Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know; 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain: 24 Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.

St. Peter having wiped off the unjuſt aſperſion of drunkenneſs caſt upon himſelf and his brethren in the foregoing verſes; in theſe he makes it his buſineſs to convince the Jews that they were the murderers of the beſt man that ever lived in the world, even Jeſus of Nazareth, the true and promiſed Meſſiah. In order to this, he treats in this ſermon, 1. Of the perſon and life of Chriſt. 2. Of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt. 3. Of the reſurrection of him from the grave. 1. As touching his perſon, the apoſtle ſhews, That he was evidently ſent from God, and approved of by him, by thoſe many miracles, wonders, and ſigns which were wrought by him. Hence *note*, That the many and great miracles wrought by Chriſt, evidently prove that he was ſent of God, and came from him, and was approved by him. Our Saviour's miracles, for the nature of them, were beneficial to mankind; for the number of them, they were many; for the manner of their operation, they were public and open, in the ſight and view of all the people; not in corners, like the popiſh miracles, (wrought before their own creatures only) but before his enemies; and for the quality of them, they were of the greateſt magnitude, cleanſing the lepers, raiſing the dead, giving ſight to them that were born blind; by a word ſpoken, by a touch given: So that our bleſſed Saviour had all that atteſtation that miracles can give, that he was commiſſioned by God, and came from God. The ſecond part of St. Peter's ſermon treats of the ſufferings and death of Chriſt: *By wicked hands ye have crucified and ſlain him who was delivered by the determinate counſel of God.* Where *note*, 1. The name and kind of death which Chriſt died: This is deſcribed more generally, it was a violent death, Ye have *ſlain him*; more particularly, it was an ignominious, curſed, and diſhonourable death, Ye have *crucified him*. *Learn* thence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was not only put to death, but to the worſt of deaths, even the death of the croſs. Now the death of the croſs was a violent death, a painful death, a ſhameful death, a lingering death, a ſuccourleſs death, and an accurſed death. 2. The cauſes of Chriſt's death here expreſſed. The principal cauſe, permitting and ordering, was the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God. The inſtrumental cauſe effecting, was, the wicked hands of the Jews; *Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and ſlain.* *Learn* hence, That there was not any one particular action or ſingle circumſtance relating to the death of Chriſt, but what came under the holy counſel and wiſe determination of God. Yet this foreknowledge and counſel of God, as it did not neceſſitate and enforce them to it, ſo neither doth it excuſe them in it. God's foreknowledge and determinate counſel did no more compel or force their wicked hands to do what they did, than the mariner's hoiſting up his ſails to take the wind to ſerve his deſign, can be ſaid to compel the wind to blow. God's end in acting was one, their end in acting was another: His moſt pure and holy; their's moſt malicious and daringly wicked. In reſpect of God, Chriſt's death was juſtice and mercy; in reſpect of man, it was murder and cruelty; in reſpect to himſelf, it was obedience and humility. The third part of the apoſtle's ſermon reſpects the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the grave. Ver. 24. *Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death; becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* Chriſt, though laid, was not loſt in the grave; but revived and roſe again, and roſe by the power of his Godhead. True, God is here ſaid to raiſe him, and the Spirit elſewhere; but we are not to underſtand it ſo, as if they had raiſed it by their power, without his own power; for he declares it expreſsly, John ii. In three days I will raiſe up the temple of my body: And if he had not raiſed himſelf by his own power, how could he be ſaid, Rom. i. 4. *To be declared to be the Son of God by the reſurrection from the dead?* What more had appeared in Chriſt's reſurrection than in any other, if that were all? For others were raiſed by the power of God as well as he. Now, becauſe the Jews, to whom St. Peter here preaches, were filled with prejudice againſt Chriſt, the apoſtle thought fit to tell them that God had raiſed him from the dead; yet, by conſequence, it ſufficiently appears in the following diſcourſe, that Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the dead. *Learn* hence, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the omnipotent power of the Godhead, the Father's, the Spirit's, and his own Godhead, revived, and roſe again from the dead, to the terror and conſternation of his enemies, and the unſpeakable conſolation of all believers. As by the eternal Spirit, or the power of his own Godhead, he offered up himſelf to God when he died; ſo when he was put to death in the fleſh, he was quickened by the Spirit; that is, by the power of his divine nature. The ſame Spirit enabled him to do both. *Obſerve* alſo, The reaſon annexed, why God raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt: becauſe *it was impoſſible* that death ſhould hold him. But how impoſſible? 1. It was *naturally* impoſſible, upon the account of that divine power which was inherent in his perſon as God. 2. It was *legally* impoſſible, becauſe divine juſtice being fully ſatisfied by his ſufferings, required, that he ſhould be raiſed to life: as when a debt is paid, the priſoner is diſcharged, and the priſon door opened.

25 For David ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I ſhould not be moved. 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover alſo, my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope: 27 Becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. 28 Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life: Thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the fleſh he would raiſe Chriſt up to ſit on his throne; 31 He ſeeing this before, ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption. 32 This Jeſus hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhewed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear. 34 For David is not aſcended into the heavens: but he ſaith himſelf, The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footſtool.

St. Peter here proceeds in this memorable ſermon, which he preached at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, to convince the Jews, that Jeſus, whom they had crucified, was undoubtedly the promiſed Meſſias, becauſe he was raiſed from the grave according to the prophetical prediction, Pſal. xvi. *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.* And accordingly, St. Peter doth ſtrongly prove that theſe words, in their literal ſenſe, could not be ſpoken of David, becauſe he was left in the grave, and ſaw corruption; but muſt be applied unto Chriſt, who though he was laid, yet was not loſt in his grave, but ſaw no corruption, being raiſed by God the third day. Hence *note*, That though death bound the hands and feet of Jeſus Chriſt, and laid him in his grave, yet, Sampſon-like, he ſnapt and broke thoſe bands aſunder, it being impoſſible that he ſhould be holden of them, or confined by them. It was impoſſible for Chriſt to continue death's priſoner in the grave longer than three days: 1. Becauſe he was Lord of life and death, he was the reſurrection and the life, life to quicken himſelf, and the reſurrection to raiſe us; he was the reſurrection effectively, the life eſſentially and formally. Now it was impoſſible for death to hold him that was life himſelf under its power, any longer than he who is life pleaſed; and for this reaſon he is ſaid *to ſwallow up death in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54. *Note*, 2. Becauſe of his undertaking for us; for if Chriſt had been held by corporal death, we muſt have continued for ever under the power of ſpiritual death; therefore the holy One was not ſuffered to ſee corruption, the leaſt corruption, according to the prophetical prediction, Pſal. xvi. *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell*; that is, my dead body in the grave; (for David was left in that hell, from which Chriſt was raiſed; but the hell that David was in, was not beyond the grave) *nor ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption*; that is, I ſhall neither ſee, nor feel, nor lie under the power of corruption; but ſhall ſuddenly riſe again, and then my Father will ſhew me the path of life, and make me full of joy with his countenance; that is, after my reſurrection, I ſhall live for ever in glory, in the preſence of my Father, where I ſhall have *fulneſs of joy, and rivers of pleaſure for evermore.* The laſt part of St. Peter's ſermon treats of Chriſt's aſcenſion: Ver. 33. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted*, &c. intimating, That when the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had finiſhed his work upon earth, he was placed in the ſeat of the higheſt honour and authority, at the right hand of God in heaven: To convince the Jews of the certainty thereof, St. Peter applies that promiſe, Pſal. cx. i. unto Chriſt, *Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footſtool*, Shewing that theſe words are not at all applicable unto David; for David is not aſcended into heaven in his own perſon, but his body remained in the ſepulchre then amongſt them; but Chriſt was aſcended, and at the right hand of God exalted, and, purſuant to his promiſe, had now ſent down the Holy Ghoſt in fiery cloven tongues, and divers languages upon them. Where *note*, The great and wonderful change in the ſtate and condition of Chriſt, ſince his aſcenſion into heaven. A little while ſince they called him the *carpenter's ſon*, *this fellow*, *this deceiver*; now he has obtained a more excellent name than angels. Then he had not a place to lay his head on; now he is exalted to be *heir of all things*. Here he ſweats, there he ſits; here he groaned, there he triumphs, never to groan, weep, or bleed more. His human nature is now advanced to the higheſt honours, even to be the object of adoration both to angels and men. This was the doctrinal part of St. Peter's ſermon: It treated of the perſon, life, miracles, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus, in a very cloſe and convincing manner. His warm application of the whole now follows, ver. 36.

36 Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Chriſt.

That is, God the Father hath ordained and appointed this Jeſus whom ye have crucified, to be the head and Saviour of his church, he being the true and promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was conſtituted and appointed by his Father, to be the ſupreme Governor and only Saviour of his church. God had made Jeſus *both Lord and Chriſt*, both a Prince and a Saviour. *Note* farther, How very cloſe and home the apoſtle is in applying what he had ſaid to his auditors; he doth not reſt in generals; but ſays plainly, Ye are men. This is *the ſame Jeſus* whom ye have crucified, whom ye with wicked hands have ſlain: Had not the application been ſo cloſe, it is probable the ſucceſs of the ſermon had not been ſo conſiderable. Thence *learn*, That the ſucceſs and efficacy of the word preached, depends upon a particular and warm application of it to every man's conſcience; generals will not affect. See an inſtance of it in what follows.

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men *and* brethren, what ſhall we do?

Here the ſucceſs of St. Peter's ſermon is recorded: The auditors were not only affected, but their hearts were touched with a kindly remorſe; they mourn for ſin, and enquire what they ſhould do to be ſaved: Some in our days would have been offended at ſuch inquiry, and told them, it was not doing, but believing only, that God expected; that Chriſt had *done* all for them, and that they had nothing *to do*, but to believe ſtrongly that all was done to their hands; but St. Peter reproves them not for their iniquity, but puts them upon doing; namely, the exerciſe and practice of repentance, in the next verſe. Here *note*, 1. That converſion, where it is in truth, begets and occaſions a very great and ſenſible change. 2. That the preaching of the word is the inſtrumental means for the effecting and accompliſhing of this change. 3. That the beſt preaching is that which pricks men's hearts, wounds and convinces their conſciences, and makes them thoroughly ſenſible both of their ſin and danger, and of the great neceſſity of a change. 4. That when men are once convinced of their bad ſtate, and dangerous condition, their firſt inquiry will be, yea, ſhould, and ought to be, What they ſhould do to be ſaved? They ſaid, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* The apoſtle liked that inquiry very well; and anſwers it in the next verſe.

38 Then ſaid Peter unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. 39 For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. 40 And with many other words did he teſtify and exhort, ſaying, Save yourſelves from this untoward generation.

Note, 1. St. Peter exhorts them to repentance. But did they not repent already? were they not now pricked at their hearts? and will the apoſtle add grief to grief, and pain to ſmart? Know, that the apoſtle adviſes them to join to their legal ſorrow, evangelical repentance, ſuch as is attended and accompanied with owning Chriſt to be the true Meſſias, with believing in him, with deſire and hope of pardon from him. Where, by the way, *obſerve*, That St. Peter preſcribes a doſe of the ſame phyſic for them, which he had very lately taken himſelf with good ſucceſs, when upon his hearty ſorrow he obtained pardon for denying his Lord and Maſter, Matt. xxvi. 75. *He went out and wept bitterly*. No ſermons are ſo ſovereign and ſo ſucceſsful as thoſe which proceed from the miniſter's perſonal and comfortable experience. St. Peter preſſes upon his auditors the doctrine of repentance, which he himſelf had practiſed. 2. Upon their repentance, their owning of, and believing in Chriſt, he directs them to be baptized in his name, and then they ſhould be capable of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; even of thoſe miraculous gifts which they now ſaw and admired in the apoſtles. *Learn* hence, That baptiſm is a ſolemn ordinance and ſacred inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt, which is not to be adminiſtered to any out of the chriſtian church, till they profeſs repentance and faith in Chriſt, and ſincere obedience to him: *Repent, and be baptized every one of you.* 3. The argument which the apoſtle uſes with them, by way of encouragement, to perſuade them to repent and be baptized; for, ſays he, *The promiſe unto you, and to your children:* To you Jews of the ſeed of Abraham, and to your ſeed; and to as many of the Gentiles, and their ſeed, as ſhall be called by the preaching of the goſpel, to profeſs faith in Chriſt, and ſubjection to him. Where, by the *promiſe*, is meant the gracious covenant of God, whereby he offers pardon and peace to ſuch as will accept them. Now this acceptance is two-fold: 1. Cordial; which intitles a perſon to all the benefits of the covenant, temporal, ſpiritual and eternal. And, 2. Profeſſional only; which intitles a perſon and his ſeed to church privileges only. Hence *learn*, That when God takes believing parents into covenant with himſelf, he takes alſo their children or ſeed into covenant with himſelf likewiſe. And if ſo, then the ſeal of the covenant, which is baptiſm, ought to be applied to them. It is evident, that under the Old Teſtament, children were in covenant with God, as well as their parents. And do we any where find that ever they were caſt out under the goſpel? The apoſtle doth not ſay, The promiſe was unto you and to your ſeed; but ſtill is; for otherwiſe children would be in a worſe condition under the goſpel of Chriſt, than they were under the law of Moſes; but ſurely the privileges of the goſpel are not ſtraiter and narrower than thoſe of the law. Laſtly, How St. Peter cloſes all with an exhortation to his auditors, *to ſave themſelves from that untoward generation*; that is, from the ſcribes and Phariſees, that four ſort of men, who deſperately and maliciouſly oppoſed Chriſt and his goſpel, and, by their authority and example, kept people from embracing the only way of ſalvation revealed by Jeſus Chriſt.

41 ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the ſame day there were added *unto them* about three thouſand ſouls.

Note here, 1. The wonderful ſucceſs of St. Peter's ſermon: About three thouſand were converted to the profeſſion of the chriſtian religion in one day, by hearing a ſingle ſermon. How many thouſands of ſermons have been ſince preached, without the converſion of a ſingle perſon! Oh! what an high holiday was this memorable day in heaven! This *All Saints Day* was a feſtival of great ſolemnity there, where there is joy over one ſinner that repenteth. But here did concur ſeveral advantages, to render Peter's ſermon more effectual: 1. The ſufferings of our Saviour were ſo near in place, and ſo late in time, that his wounds were ſtill freſh bleeding on the guilty memories of the people now aſſembled. 2. The preſent miracle of tongues beſtowed on Peter, and his unlearned companions, did wonderfully make way for the word delivered. And, 3. His auditors were devout men, ver. 5. ignorant enough, but yet brought with them minds fairly diſpoſed for information and conviction. 4. The Holy Spirit wrought now extraordinarily by and with the word, and cauſed this miraculous improvement. How did our Saviour fulfil his promiſe to his diſciples. John xiv. 12. *Greater works than theſe ſhall ye do, when I go to my Father.* Now was Peter the diſciple above his Maſter in ſucceſs: Chriſt all his life time was angling for a few fiſhes, whilſt Peter comes with his drag-net, and catches three thouſand at one caſt. 2. Theſe three thouſand were baptized the ſame day in which they were converted, and probably in the ſame place, which was at Jeruſalem; either in the temple, or in ſome houſe, where the ſermon was preached. We need need not inquire, whether the apoſtles did it by dipping or ſprinkling, both being lawful: but this may be ſaid, it is hard to gueſs how ſuch a quantity of water could be brought to the place, as might ſerve for the decent dipping of three thouſand perſons in ſo ſhort a time. And, upon ſuppoſition that the water was not brought to them, but they went down to that; baptizing ſo many by dipping, would have required a week rather than a day to diſpatch it in.

42 And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Which words give us an account of the behaviour of the firſt chriſtians, particularly in their religious aſſemblies, and of the way of worſhip uſed in the church of Jeruſalem, the true mother-church in the time of the apoſtles. Where *note*, 1. The doctrine which they adhered to, the doctrine of the apoſtles; that is, the doctrine delivered by Chriſt, and taught by the apoſtles, and contained in the holy ſcriptures. This was the rule which the firſt chriſtians governed themſelves by, both as to faith and manners. It was infinite wiſdom in God to inſpire holy men for committing this doctrine to writing, and not to leave it to the hazardous and uncertain way of tradition. 2. The ſteady adherence of the firſt chriſtians to this doctrine of the apoſtle; *They continued ſtedfaſtly in it*; that is, they were conſtant hearers of it, and attendants upon it; they received it not upon truſt, but due examination. *Learn* hence, That religion being the great intereſt and common concern of mankind, he that eſpouſes it aright, muſt firſt underſtand and examine the fundamental grounds and principals of it, and then chuſe accordingly; otherwiſe our adherence to the beſt religion in the world, will rather be the reſult of chance than of judgment and choice. 3. They continued ſtedfaſt in fellowſhip: This may ſignify and import three things: (1.) Their communion with the apoſtles, their keeping cloſe to their own teachers, in oppoſition to ſchiſm, which is cauſeleſs, and therefore a culpable ſeparation; they were obedient to their ſpiritual governors and inſtructors. (2.) Their ſociety among themſelves, and communion one with another; as the communion of ſaints in heaven is a conſiderable part of the happineſs of heaven, ſo the fellowſhip of ſaints on earth is a ſort of heaven upon earth: The comfort of our lives depends much upon ſociety, but more upon the ſuitableneſs of ſociety. The primitive ſaints were all of one mind, and therefore fit to make one body. For though man loves company, yet it is the company of thoſe he loves. (3.) Mutual aſſiſtance which they gave and received, a communication or free diſtribution to the neceſſities of each other: they did by love ſerve one another, and parted with their poſſeſſions for the ſupport of each other: This liberality and ſupplying one another's wants, did plainly ſhew, that they eſteemed themſelves as fellow-members of the ſame body, and that they were perfectly united in heart and affection. *Note*, 4. Another religious office, in which they continued conſtant, was breaking of bread; that is, receiving the ſacrament. So great and fervent was the devotion of the firſt chriſtians, that none of their religious aſſemblies paſſed, in which they did not make this ſolemn commemoration of our Saviour, and ſhew forth his death: looking upon their other religious ſervice as lame and defective without this. Our Saviour's blood was ſtill warm, and thoſe firſt chriſtians kept it ſo, by their devout and frequent remembrances of it: and it was their conſtancy in breaking bread, which quickened and put life into all their religious actions: This fitted them both for doing and dying. Their frequent drinking of the blood of Chriſt fired them with zeal for ſhedding their blood for Chriſt. Lord! what reaſon can men now give for neglecting ſo holy and uſeful an inſtitution? Are we above theſe helps to a good life which they uſed? Have we not as much need to arm ourſelves againſt ſin and temptation as they had? But the plain truth is, Men are not willing to be ſo holy now, as they were then. This ordinance, their conſciences tell them, would engage them to a greater ſtrictneſs of life than they are willing to undergo. They muſt leave their ſins, which they are loth to part with; they muſt forgive their enemies, whom they had rather be revenged of; they muſt enter into new engagements, whereas they had rather be at liberty: So that thoſe things which make men loath to come to the ſacrament, are indeed, if duly conſidered, the greateſt arguments to draw them thither; and according to the example of theſe primitive chriſtians, to be conſtant in *breaking of bread*. *Note*, 5. The laſt thing which they continued ſtedfaſt and conſtant in, was prayer; that is, in the public and ſolemn addreſſes made to God in the religious aſſemblies, whereby they poured out their ſouls to God, both in prayer and ſupplication, and in praiſe and thankſgivings. The public prayers and interceſſions of the church of Chriſt, are greatly to be eſteemed by all chriſtians; they glorify God moſt, he eſteems and accepts them beſt: This keeps up a ſenſe of God and religion in the world, and nothing delights God more than the joint prayers and praiſes of his people. Pſal. lxxxvii. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all* performances *in the dwellings of Jacob.*

43 And fear came upon every ſoul: and many wonders and ſigns were done by the apoſtles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common, 45 And ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

Note here, 1. What awful reſpect God obliged the people of Jeruſalem to pay unto the apoſtles: *Fear came upon every ſoul, at the ſight of thoſe wonders and ſigns which were wrought by the apoſtles.* It is God that keeps up the authority and reverence of his miniſters in the minds of their people: Did not he hold theſe ſtars in his own right hand, how ſoon would men trample them under their feet! 2. An extraordinary inſtance of a noble charity among theſe primitive chriſtians: *They had all things common*; that is, they choſe rather to part with their eſtates, than that any of their brethren ſhould want, the rich very readily ſold their poſſeſſions and goods to help and relieve the poor. Yet *obſerve*, 1. That this community was not of all their goods, but of that part only which every one did voluntarily conſecrate and devote to the relief of the church's neceſſities. It was not in a ſtrict ſenſe a community of goods that was here practiſed: but, by *all things*, we are to underſtand, ſuch things as every one freely laid aſide for the maintenance of the poor. 2. That this practice was only uſed in Jeruſalem, in the beginning of chriſtianity, without being a precedent for after-times and places. *Res quæ erat temporaria neceſſitatis & liberi arbitrii, non debet in exemplum trahi, multo minus ut neceſſaria obtrudi.* Chriſt's goſpel doth not deſtroy the moral law; the eighth commandment is ſtill in force, which it could not be, if there were no property. The leſſon for your inſtruction, to be gathered from this inſtance, is this, That they who have ability ought to abound always in ordinary and ſometimes extraordinary works of charity: We muſt always relieve the ſaints' wants as we are able, and ſometimes, upon an extraordinary occaſion, above what we are well able.

46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, 47 Praiſing God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.

This chapter concludes with giving us an account how theſe primitive chriſtians ſpent their time together in the ſervice of God, and in great ſimplicity and ſincerity amongſt themſelves. They continued daily in the temple; that is, at the uſual time of prayer they joined with the Jews in their prayers in the temple: We muſt not think that they preached ſermons, and adminiſtered ſacraments in the temple; that would not be endured, as appeareth chap. iv. 1. But having performed their public devotions daily in the temple at the accuſtomed times of prayer there, they uſed to reſort to a private and particular place to celebrate the Lord's ſupper, and afterwards took their ordinary and neceſſary repaſt with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart. And thus theſe holy chriſtians converſing together with great ſimplicity and ſincerity, they went on chearfully in their chriſtian courſe, praiſing God for what he had done for them and by them; and their holy and harmleſs converſation procured them favour with the generality of the people, who had not their hearts poſſeſſed with the prejudice againſt chriſtianity as the Phariſees had. And thus, by the purity of the apoſtles' doctrine, and the exemplary piety and unblameableneſs of their lives, the Lord daily added more and more converts to his infant chriſtian church. *Learn* hence, That the work of a thorough and ſaving converſion upon the hearts, and in the lives of men, is God's work. It was not the mighty ruſhing wind, nor the miracle of the fiery cloven tongues, nor St. Peter's ſermon, nor any of theſe, nor all of theſe, that did or could alone produce this great effect without God, and the internal operation of his holy Spirit. Therefore it is expreſsly ſaid, That the Lord added to the church, not St. Peter, nor all the apoſtles. Yet *note*, 2. That though God and his holy Spirit be the author and efficient cauſe, yet the preaching of the goſpel, and an exemplary converſation agreeable thereunto, were the ſubordinate helps and inſtrumental means conducing thereunto. *They continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their bread with gladneſs,* &c.

CHAP. III.

The conſtituting of the firſt goſpel-church, we had recorded in the former chapters. The firſt perſecution raiſed againſt that church, is here related in this and the next chapter, together with the occaſion of it; which

which was, St. Peter*'s healing the lame beggar. No ſooner was the primitive church planted, though miraculouſly, but a perſecution is ſtirred up againſt it, moſt maliciouſly to root it up, and lay it waſte: Wherever God has his church, the devil will be ſure to ſet up his chapel*; not a chapel of eaſe for the ſaints, but a chapel of ſervice for himſelf; *hoping at once to ſtrengthen the walls of his own kingdom, and to raze the foundation of Chriſt's church, which yet the* gates of hell ſhall never *fully nor finally* prevail againſt.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

Note here, 1. The remarkable diligence and induſtry of St. Peter and the other apoſtles in preaching the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. At the third hour of the day on the feaſt of Pentecoſt, that is, at nine o'clock in the morning, St. Peter preached a ſermon, chap. ii. 14. which, by the bleſſing of the holy Spirit accompanying it, converted three thouſand ſouls. Here, at three o'clock in the afternoon on the ſame day (as the learned Dr. Lightfoot notes) he preached a ſecond ſermon, which converts five thouſand more. This affords at once a good precedent, and a good encouragement to the apoſtles' ſucceſſors, the miniſters of Chriſt, to the end of the world, for the preaching twice upon the Lord's day: If, in the room of three and five thouſand ſouls, we be inſtrumental for the converſion of one ſingle ſoul, it is infinitely worth the indefatigable pains and diligence of our whole lives. 2. The place which the apoſtle preaches in is *the temple*; thither the apoſtles went, not to offer ſacrifice, but to inform the Jews, that the law of ſacrifices was now aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt; not to communicate with them in their antiquated worſhip, but that they might have a larger field to ſow the ſeed of the goſpel in. 3. The circumſtance of time, *at the hour of prayer*. In all ages, ſince God had a church in the world, there have been ſtated times and places for ſolemn public worſhip; by which means a ſenſe of God and religion has been preſerved and kept up in the world, which otherwiſe would be in danger of being loſt. The worſhip of God in the cloſet will not do this, becauſe it is unſeen; but ſtated, ſolemn, public worſhip, glorifies God moſt, and he accepts it beſt, Pſal. lxxxvii. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. The apoſtles went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.* Sine ſtationibus non ſtaret mundus.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to aſk alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who ſeeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, aſked an alms. 4 And Peter faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them.

Obſerve here, 1. The condition of this perſon. 1. He was poor, even to beggary; but poverty is no ſign of God's disfavour, nor doth exclude any from partaking of the beſt of bleſſings. 2. He was born a cripple, not lamed by caſualty or accident, but lame from his mother's womb. 3. He had continued a cripple forty years, chap. iv. 22. *The man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed.* Conſequently the cure was the harder, and the perſon cured the more credible witneſs againſt them that cavilled at his cure. 2. The wonderful mercy and goodneſs of God towards this poor cripple; his miſeries and calamities, his lameneſs and poverty, are over-ruled by God for good to him, even for the beſt good; namely, for bringing him to the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſalvation by him. O how good is God at making up all our loſſes, and exceeding not only our deſerts, but our expectations alſo! This poor man only begged an alms, God gives him his limbs; yea, gives him his Son and ſalvation by him. Thus we receive of God daily more than we can either aſk or think. 3. The apoſtle's advice to the lame man, and his ready compliance with that advice. *Look on us*, ſays St. Peter; he doth not ſay, believe on us, but *look on us*, and believe on Chriſt. This the apoſtle ſpake to quicken his attention and excite his hope. As if Peter had ſaid, "You look upon many others as able to relieve your neceſſities; now *look on us*, and ſee what we can do for you." Accordingly he faſtened his eyes upon the apoſtles, and beheld them as expectant of relief. Here *note*, 1. The great mercy of God that was mingled with this poor man's affliction; though he was lame, he was not blind. He could and did ſtedfaſtly behold the apoſtles, with a fixed eye both of body and mind. 2. That what the cripple could do, he muſt and did do, towards his own healing; he could not move a foot, but he could fix his eye. We are ſpiritual cripples, leading under a moral impotency; being *without ſtrength*, Rom. v. 1. But God expects the exerciſe of our faculties, and the uſe of our endeavours in order to our recovery, help, and healing. As the cripple looked up to the apoſtles, ſo may we look up to the miniſters of God; hear them and apply to them, place ourſelves under the word diſpenſed by them; for he that made us without ourſelves, will never ſave us without ourſelves; but we muſt *work out our own ſalvation*, Phil. ii. 12.

6 Then Peter ſaid, Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have give I thee: In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth riſe up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength. 8 And he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God.

Note here, 1. The poverty of this great apoſtle St. Peter, and his holy contempt of the world; ſilver and gold he had none; his pretended ſucceſſor the pope upon his election ſays the ſame; but with as little ſincerity as he ſays, *Nolo epiſcopari*: The apoſtles poverty was real not fictitious. The holieſt, the wiſeſt, and beſt men, are ſeldom the wealthieſt. *Silver and gold have I none, but ſuch as I have I give:* As if he had ſaid, “I have no money to give thee, but that which is better than money: I have received power from Chriſt to cure and heal diſeaſes, and having received it freely, I will give it freely: Therefore, *in the name of Jeſus*; that is, by the power of Jeſus, whom in contempt you call *Jeſus of Nazareth*, be healed, riſe up and walk.” 2. The nature of the miracle here wrought; it was, (1.) Public and open, not done in a corner, but before all the people at a public time, (Pentecoſt) and at a public place (the gates of the temple). The miracles, that is, the lying wonders wrought in the church of Rome, will not bear the light. Miracles are by them moſt pretended to, where people are moſt ignorant, and a dark ſhop is fitteſt for their falſe wares. (2.) Inſtantaneous and ſudden; *immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength.* This evidently ſhewed it to be God's work, he was perfectly cured, and inſtantly cured, though he was lame from his birth, and had continued lame above forty years. All things are eaſy, yea, equally eaſy, to an Almighty power: If God ſpeaks but the word, *the lame ſhall leap as an hart*, Iſa. xxxv. 6. *Note*, 3. The humility and faith of this great apoſtle diſcovered in the manner of the cure; his humility, in not diſdaining to touch and take hold of, and lift up this poor cripple from the ground; his faith in being fully perſuaded of Chriſt's preſence, relying upon his power, and depending upon his promiſe, Mark xvi. 18. They ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover. The apoſtles had not a power at their pleaſure to work miracles; but when God pleaſed to work them, he made it known to them by inſpiration, and put them upon it. 4. How the poor cripple piouſly aſcribes the praiſe of this miracle to God only; *He leaped and praiſed God*, not the apoſtles. No inſtrument muſt rob God of his glory; we may pay and gratify the meſſenger, but muſt return our prime and principal thanks to our benefactor. No doubt the cripple returned thanks to the apoſtle, but his prayers unto God only. To conceal God's mercies is ingratitude; to attribute them to ſecond cauſes is ſacrilege.

9 And all the people ſaw him walking and praiſing God. 10 And they knew that it was he which ſat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 ¶ And when Peter ſaw *it*, he anſwered unto the people, Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this man to walk?

Note here, 1. As ſoon as ever the poor cripple received ſtrength, all the people beheld him praiſing and bleſſing God. *Learn* thence, That the very firſt appearances of the power and mercy of God towards ourſelves or any of ours, ſhould put us upon the works of praiſe and rejoicing. We truly ſay, “Better late than never;” but it is beſt to be early in every good work, eſpecially in the nobleſt and moſt angelical work; namely, that of thankſgiving and praiſe. *My voice ſhalt thou hear*, ſays David, *betimes in the morning*; my praying voice, my praiſing voice. 2. The influence and effect that this miracle had upon the minds of the multitude; it occaſioned wonder, but did not produce faith. *They wondered*, but not believed. Miracles will confirm faith, but not alone beget it. The Spirit's extraordinary works may produce aſtoniſhment; but it is the work of the Spirit that muſt produce faith. 3. How the apoſtle abaſeth himſelf and his fellow-diſciple, that he might exalt Chriſt; he will not ſuffer the leaſt part of the praiſe and glory of this miracle to ſtick to their own fingers, but gives it all to Chriſt. Think not *that we by our own power and holineſs have made this man to walk.* The Jews had a conceit, that extraordinary holineſs would enable a man to work miracles: The apoſtle denies it: For though there be a great difference betwixt miraculous faith and juſtifying faith, yet true juſtifying faith has a miracle in it, though not ſo obvious to ſenſe, requiring the ſame power to work it in us, which raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, Eph. i. 11. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's power, not his apoſtles' holineſs, was the cauſe of all the miracles that were wrought by them. *Why look you ſo earneſtly upon us, as though by our holineſs we had made this man to walk? Through faith in his name, is this man made ſtrong*, ver. 16.

13 The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jeſus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the preſence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One, and the Juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raiſed from the dead; whereof we are witneſſes. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man ſtrong, whom ye ſee and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all.

Note here, 1. How St. Peter lays hold upon this opportunity (when the people are gathered together to gaze upon this lame beggar) to preach a ſecond awakening ſermon to the Jews; in which he rebukes them ſharply for their curſed contempt of Chriſt, and the horrible indignities offered to him. (1.) They denied him, although he was an holy and juſt One. (2.) They delivered him up to Pilate, when he was inclined to let him go. (3.) They preferred Barabbas, the worſt of men, and a murtherer, before Jeſus, the beſt of men, and a Saviour. (4.) They murthered the Meſſias, called *the Prince of Life*, becauſe he came to bring life into the world. Where *note*, That though probably none of the Jews then and there preſent, did actually nail Chriſt unto his croſs, yet they having given their conſent unto it, they are charged with *killing the Lord of Life.* A plenary and full conſent to the ſins of others, makes us deeply guilty of others' ſins: Ver. 15. *Ye delivered up and denied the Holy One*; *ye have crucified the Lord of Life.* 2. How St. Peter aſcribes the whole of this miracle to the power of faith; ver. 16. *Through faith in his name, and the faith which is by him, hath given this man perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all.* Faith is twice named in this one verſe, becauſe of the apoſtle's faith in working the miracle, and the cripple's faith in receiving of it, ſays Dr. Lightfoot: But queſtionleſs, it was chiefly the apoſtles faith; for the lame man ſhewed no faith in Chriſt before he was healed; he expected an alms, but little thought of receiving the uſe of his limbs; but the apoſtle firmly relying on the power and promiſe of Chriſt for healing, did believe that Chriſt could and would help and heal him. *Learn* hence, That as it is the property and prerogative of God to do the great things, it is the duty and property of faith to expect great things from God; great expectations from God honour the greatneſs of God: We diſhonour God as much, or more, when we believe little, as when we do little. A great God and a ſmall faith ſuit not well together; accordingly St. Peter here, knowing the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt's power, exerts ſtrength of faith, and through faith in the name of Chriſt, makes this man whole.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* alſo your rulers. 18 But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. How careful the apoſtle was, not to drive thoſe murderers of Chriſt (and conſequently the worſt of men) to deſpair, but to draw them to repentance; in order to which, 1. He mitigates their ſin, imputing it rather to ignorance and blind zeal, than to malice. (2.) He is ſo charitable as to impute it to the ignorance of the Phariſees their rulers alſo. (3.) He calls them brethren, though guilty of ſo great a miſtake in their judgment, and fault in their practice. *Now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers. Learn* thence, That God uſed the ignorance of ſome, and malice of others, for his own glorious ends, in accompliſhing the foreordained and foretold death of our Redeemer. 2. St. Peter acquaints them, to keep them from deſpair, that God hath decreed the ſufferings of Chriſt for man, and by his prophets foretold them, who, as they ſpake by one Spirit, did all ſpeak the ſame things, as if they had all ſpoken out of one mouth. So that what the Jews did, he tells them, was, though unknown to them, a fulfilling of ancient prophecies and promiſes for man's redemption. *Thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath now fulfilled.* The death and ſufferings of Chriſt, with all the circumſtances relating thereunto, were all ordained by God, and foretold by the prophets; which though it doth not excuſe his murderers from the guilt of a dreadful ſin; yet may be improved as an argument to keep them from deſpair. *What God before had ſhewed, he hath now fulfilled.*

19 ¶ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.

The apoſtle, like a wiſe phyſician, having diſcovered to the Jews the danger of their diſeaſe in the foregoing verſes, now directs them to the only effectual remedy, viz. Repentance: *Repent, and be converted*; that is, repent of your rejecting Jeſus Chriſt, and be converted to true chriſtianity. To repent, doth denote a change of the mind and judgment; and to be converted, a change in the life and converſation. The exhortation doth denote our duty, and ſuppoſes our ability alſo, by the aſſiſtance of that grace, which will never be wanting to ſincere endeavours. They were ſubjects recipient of that *vis gratiæ verticordiæ* as St. Auſtin calls it, "The heart-changing power of the grace of God," which could and did enable them to convert and turn to God. *Note* farther, How this duty of repentance is urged from the effect and fruit, and profitable conſequents of it. 1. *Your ſins ſhall be blotted out*, a metaphor taken from the creditors which have the books of accounts in which all debts and reckonings are ſet down. 2. *The times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord:* by which ſome underſtand more generally the times of the goſpel, others more particularly underſtand it of the time of Jeruſalem's deſtruction; as if St. Peter had ſaid, "Know, O my brethren, that the time of Chriſt's coming to Jeruſalem to execute vengeance on his murderers, is now at hand! Repent therefore ſpeedily of what you have done, that thoſe dreadful days to his enemies, may be days of refreſhment to you." But the days of refreſhment are thought by moſt to ſignify the day of judgment, which will be a day of refreſhing to all penitent ſinners; becauſe they ſhall there enjoy a complete and full abſolution from all their ſins. *Note* here, 1. That Almighty God has his book of remembrance, in which he writes down all the ſins which every perſon commits, in order to their accuſation and charge. 2. That it is the great wiſdom, intereſt and duty of every perſon, to take care that he get his ſins now blotted out of God's debt book, as ever he hopes that the reckoning-day may be a day of refreſhing to him. 3. That without repentance, converſion, and turning unto God, there will be no forgiveneſs, comfort, or refreſhment from him. *Repent, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhment ſhall come.* 4. That a complete abſolution and full diſcharge from all ſin is not yet enjoyed, till the day of judgment. We are in this life continually ſubject to new ſins; and conſequently are daily contracting new guilt, whereby ariſe new fears; ſo that a ſoul has not a full reſt till the final abſolution be pronounced at that ſolemn day.

20 And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven muſt receive until the times of reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began.

Here St. Peter enforces his exhortation to repentance with a ſtrong motive; namely, the certainty of Chriſt's coming to judge the world. God *ſhall ſend Jeſus*, this Jeſus whom we preach to you, viſibly, to juſtify and glorify all penitent and pardoned ſinners, whom yet *the heaven muſt contain till the reſtitution of all things*; that is, to the end of the world, when the whole creation which now groaneth will be delivered, and man particularly reſtored to God, to himſelf, and to a bleſſed immortality. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt, being aſcended into heaven in our human nature, ſhall abide and continue there until the reſtitution of all things, and his corporal preſence here on earth is not to be expected, until he has put all his enemies under his feet. Now if his body be, and muſt continue in heaven, ſurely then it is not in the ſacrament, as the Papiſt's dream; who aſcribe to Chriſt's human nature the property of a Godhead; namely, to be in ten thouſand places at one and the ſame time, contrary to the nature of an human body. If the heavens muſt contain Chriſt, Chriſt muſt be contained in heaven, and then his preſence in the ſacrament doth not draw him from heaven; his bodily preſence is in heaven, his ſpiritual preſence with his people in the ſacrament.

22 For Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. 23 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every ſoul which will not hear that prophet ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people.

Theſe words are recorded, Deut. xviii. 15. and here by St. Peter pertinently applied unto Chriſt, to convince the unbelieving Jews, that he is the true and only Meſſiah, the great Prophet and Teacher of his church, whoſe doctrine it was highly dangerous to condemn, though out of the mouth of ſuch contemptible perſons as he and St. John appeared to be unto them. Where *note*, 1. Chriſt according to his prophetic office is largely deſcribed, and that three ways. (1.) By his title, a prophet; one that by his office is to declare the whole will of God to man. (2.) By his type, a prophet like unto Moſes; one that went between God and the people as Moſes did; carrying God's mind to them, and returning their mind to God. As Moſes confirmed his doctrine by miracles, ſo did Chriſt. As Moſes brought Iſrael out of literal Egypt, ſo Chriſt brings us out of ſpiritual Egypt, whereof the Egyptian bondage was a figure. 3. By his ſtock and original, from which according to the fleſh he ſprang: *I will raiſe him up from among thy brethren.* Chriſt honoured the nation of the Jews, and the tribe of Judah with his nativity. Thus this great prophet is deſcribed. *Note* 2. A ſtrict injunction to hear and obey this great prophet; hear him only, hear him univerſally. The word *(him)* is to be underſtood excluſively, him and none but him; that is, in the ſame manner that we hear him; *him* for his own authority's ſake: his miniſters for his ſake, as ſpeaking from him, and in his name: And we muſt hear him univerſally, in all things; every command is to be obeyed, none to be diſputed, be the duty commanded never ſo difficult, and the ſin forbidden never ſo tempting. 3. A ſevere commination. *The ſoul that will not hear ſhall be cut off*; that is, God will ſeverely revenge himſelf upon the ſtubborn and diſobedient. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is conſtituted and appointed by God to be the great Prophet and Teacher of his church: He reveals the will of God perfectly, powerfully, perſuaſively, plainly, and infallibly. 2. That it is the duty of all to hear and obey the voice of this great Prophet, and this under the penalty of eternal deſtruction: *Every ſoul that will not hear that prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people.*

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days.

That is, "All the prophets from Moſes to Samuel, and particularly Iſaiah the evangelical prophet, did foretel the coming and kingdom of the Meſſias, the ſpecial mercies to them that believe on him, and the deſtruction of thoſe that reject him." Where *note*, That Samuel is mentioned as the firſt prophet between them, becauſe he was the firſt prophet after Moſes that wrote his prophecy, and firſt erected the ſchools of the prophets. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt was the ſum of the law, as well as the ſubſtance of the goſpel, all the legal ſacrifices pointed at him, all the prophets propheſied of him, and received their completion in him. He was Abel's ſacrifice, Iſaac's Ram, Iſaiah's Emmanuel, Daniel's Holy One, Zachary's Branch, and Malachi's Angel.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed.

Still *note*, How ſweetly St. Peter invites and encourages theſe murderers of Chriſt to repentance; the worſt of men muſt neither be driven to deſpair, nor be too haſtily deſpaired of. He tells them, they were the poſterity of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, with whom God firſt entered into covenant; and conſequently they were children of the covenant, and alſo children of the prophets; that is, the people to whom God primarily and chiefly ſent the prophets. So great were the prerogatives of the Jews, that they are called the children of the prophets, children of the promiſe, children of the covenant, children of the kingdom. But the higher a people are exalted by ſpiritual privileges, the lower they fall if they miſcarry.

26 Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Here *note*, 1. That the offer of Jeſus Chriſt, and eternal ſalvation by him, was firſt made to the people of the Jews, becauſe they were the children of the covenant; that is, the only people in viſible communion with God throughout the whole world. 2. The benefit offered; God's Son is raiſed up; that is, either, (1.) Authoriſed, conſecrated, and appointed to be a Saviour; or, (2.) Raiſed from the grave. You crucified him with wicked hands; but behold the divine clemency! He is firſt offered to you his crucifiers; God has ſent his Son, in the preaching of the goſpel, firſt to you; and this not to take vengeance on you, but to bleſs you: He being the great High Prieſt, bleſſes you authoritatively and effectually; and the bleſſing he diſpenſes is not a temporal bleſſing as you expected, a pompous

Meſſiah, a ſecular kingdom, but ſpiritual, in turning ſouls from ſin to God: He offers to bleſs you by turning every one of you from your iniquities. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is Chriſt's proper work to turn ſinners from their iniquities. Oh! that we would all ſubſerve Chriſt in that great work! He is the principal agent; let us be ſubordinate inſtruments, by practiſing holineſs ourſelves, and promoting holineſs in others. 2. That to be turned by Chriſt from our iniquities, is the greateſt bleſſing we can receive from him; becauſe it is a ſpiritual bleſſing, a fundamental bleſſing, a comprehenſive bleſſing, an endearing bleſſing, an everlaſting bleſſing.

CHAP. IV.

The foregoing chapter gave us an account of a miraculous cure wrought by the apoſtles upon a cripple that was lame from his birth. This chapter acquaints us how exceedingly the governors both in church and ſtate were offended and enraged thereat, to ſuch a degree, that they impriſon the apoſtles, and raiſe a perſecution againſt the church; which yet God over-ruled for his own glory, and his church's increaſe. This infant-goſpel church in the time of the apoſtles, being like unto the infant-Jewiſh church in Egypt *in the days of* Moſes, *the more the church was moleſted, the more ſhe multiplied; the more they were oppreſſed, the more they increaſed.*

AND as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the next day. For it was now even-tide. 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thouſand.

Note here, 1. How the apoſtles preaching to, and inſtructing the people, ſtirs up the devil's rage, and brings upon themſelves a ſevere perſecution: Well might Luther ſay, *Quid eſt evangelium prædicare, niſi in nos furorem diaboli derivare?* "At the preaching of the goſpel the gates of Satan's priſon fly open, and the walls of his kingdom are ſhaken; he finds himſelf in danger of loſing his principality.' No wonder then that he raiſes all the powers of hell, and ſtirs up all his inſtruments on earth to ſtop the mouths of the preachers of the goſpel. 2. The perſons by whom, and the cauſe for which, this perſecution was now ſtirred up againſt the apoſtles! namely, the Jewiſh prieſts, the Gentile captain, and the ſottiſh Sadducees: *As they ſpake, the captain of the temple, the prieſts and Sadducees came upon them.* Theſe were diſtinct perſons, and they were differently diſtaſted; the *captain*, who was placed with the band of ſoldiers near the temple to guard it, was offended for fear of a tumult from ſuch a vaſt appearance of people as came to ſee the recovered cripple. The *prieſts* were offended, becauſe the apoſtles, being private men, went about publicly to teach and inſtruct the people, not conſidering the extraordinary call the apoſtles had. The *Sadducees* were diſpleaſed, becauſe they preached the reſurrection from the dead (a doctrine which they denied) and becauſe they preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead; that is, through the power and efficacy of Jeſus: Aſſerting Chriſt to be both the efficient and alſo the exemplary cauſe of the reſurrection; and inferring from Chriſt's reſurrection, that all his followers ſhould ariſe with him, and like unto him. 3. How far God ſuffered theſe perſecutors and this perſecution to proceed: *They laid hands upon them, and put them in hold.* How eaſily might this band of ſoldiers have taken away the lives, as well as impriſoned the bodies of the apoſtles! But God reſtrained them, and led on the apoſtles to their ſuffering gradually; they were yet but young pupils in Chriſt's ſchool; therefore they ſhall not have trials beyond their ſtrength. God will not call his ſervants to a martyr's fire, till he has firſt endued them with a martyr's faith; for this reaſon God ſuffered not the ſtorm of perſecution to break forth with over-much violence upon this new planted church at firſt. 4. What was the event of that violence which was now offered to the apoſtles; God over-ruled it for his church's advantage, and a wonderful increaſe, by a new addition of five thouſand ſouls more added to it. O wonderful draught of fiſh at the ſecond caſting out of the goſpel-net! Theſe fiſhermen, Peter and John, now became, by the help of the Holy Spirit, fiſhers of men, according to their Maſter's prediction, Matt. iv. 19. *Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men. Many which heard the word believed, and the number of them was about five thouſand*, ver. 4. This infant-church flouriſhed the more by the frownings of men upon her. *Plures efficimur, quoties metimur ab illis*, Tertull. "Like a green meadow, which the oftner it is mowed, ſprings the faſter, and becomes the thicker."

5 ¶ And it came to paſs on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and ſcribes, 6 And Annas the high prieſt, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high prieſt, were gathered together at Jeruſalem. 7 And when they had ſet them in the midſt, they aſked, By what power or by what name have ye done this? 8 Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſaid unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. 11 This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Here *obſerve*, 1. What a combined force did unite and join together of *rulers*, *ſcribes*, *elders*, *high prieſts*, *high prieſts' kindred*, and who not? They all, though of different intereſts, yet hold together as one, to extinguiſh and put out the light of the goſpel, as ſoon as it began to ſhine forth. Need we wonder that the devil ſtruggled ſo hard at the dawning of the reformation to blow out the light of the goſpel; when we conſider what oppoſition he diſcovered againſt the firſt plantation and propagation of the goſpel? As Herod would have ſtrangled Chriſt in his cradle, ſo would the high prieſts have ſtrangled Chriſtianity in its infancy. *They all gathered together at Jeruſalem.* Sad! that a meſſage of ſuch glad tidings as the goſpel, ſhould meet with ſo bad entertainment. 2. How the apoſtles are here arraigned and queſtioned, By what name and authority; that is, by what power or virtue they had done this? Some think, they ſuſpected the apoſtles to have wrought by the black art, being aſſiſted by the devil. But did not this miracle give a ſufficient convincing light, to demonſtrate that it was heaven born, and ſhewed evidently that it was wrought by a ſupernatural and divine power? Curſed men! who accounting it a credit for themſelves to do evil, make it a crime for the apoſtles to do good: Was there any reaſon for their aſking, by *what power*, when the thing itſelf proclaimed it to be done by the power of God? 3. The bold and reſolute anſwer of Peter, to the foregoing malicious and ridiculous queſtion. Where *note*, 1. His holy courage. 2. The cauſe of it, *He was filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* In the 5th and 6th verſes, we find a full bench, not of juſtices, but of profeſſed enemies, enough to have daſhed ten priſoners at the bar out of countenance. But behold the ingenuous and holy boldneſs of a good chriſtian in a good cauſe. St. Peter, who formerly, when full of himſelf, was baffled by a damſel, and frighted into a denial of Chriſt by a ſilly wench; now being *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, ſilences and confounds his moſt potent aud malicious accuſers. Lord! how wofully weak are we when we rely on our own ſtrength, but how able to do all things, when Chriſt ſtrengthens us! *In te ſtas et non ſtas*, ſays St. Auſtin. "Thou art ſure to come down when thou ſtandeſt on thine own legs; but ſhalt be mightily upheld and carried on, when ſupported and conducted by God's hand." 4. A ſingular inſtance of the apoſtle's boldneſs; namely, in preaching Jeſus Chriſt to them that had impriſoned them. Be it known unto you, that *this Jeſus, whom ye crucified, is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, and is become the head of the corner*; *neither is there ſalvation in any other*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The title given to the rulers of the Jewiſh church, *Builders*: So they were by office, and here are called ſo, to remind them of their duty; namely, to increaſe, ſtrengthen, and beautify the building, *the church of God*; not to demoliſh, weaken, or deface it. 2. The contempt which theſe builders caſt upon *Chriſt the chief corner ſtone*; they refuſed him and ſet him at nought, according to the prophecy, Pſalm cxviii. 22. which was a prophecy of the rejection of the Meſſiah, though the Jews would not ſo underſtand it; for they dreamt of ſuch a pompous Meſſias coming according to their hearts' deſire, that it ſhould be incredible that any of the Jews ſhould ever reject or deſpiſe him. 3. The title given to Chriſt, *the corner ſtone*; ſo called, becauſe he ſupports and ſuſtains the whole building; and as the corner ſtone is equally neceſſary for both ſides of the building, which are united to it, and born up by it, in like manner both Jew and Gentile are united by Chriſt, and ſaved by him.

12 Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

Note here, 1. A poſitive aſſertion, that there is no ſalvation but by Chriſt; or, that beſides, or without him, there is no poſſibility of ſalvation, either for Jew or Gentile; both thoſe under the Old Teſtament had, and we under the New Teſtament have, one and the ſame common Saviour. 2. The ground and reaſon of this confident aſſertion, That there is no ſalvation but by Chriſt; namely, becauſe *there is no other name given under heaven by which we muſt be ſaved*: That is, no other perſon deſigned or appointed by God, to be the author of redemption to, and procurer of ſalvation for, a loſt and miſerable world, but only Chriſt. Take we good heed then, that we do not reject or ſet him at nought; for in rejecting of Chriſt, we reject the wiſdom of God, the authority of God, the love of God, yea, the ſalvation of God.

13 ¶ Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jeſus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them, they could ſay nothing againſt it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conferred among themſelves, 16 Saying, What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But that it ſpread no further among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of Jeſus.

Note here, 1. How convincing the boldneſs of the apoſtle was, together with the undeniable evidence of the miracle wrought by them: When the council obſerved both, they marvelled, the apoſtles being unlearned men, yet now able to ſpeak all languages, and the cripple, born lame, now able to leap and walk. Theſe men were convinced, but not converted; ſilenced, but not ſatisfied; they marvelled, but not believed, they were full of admiration, but far from faith. The evidence of the fact, with the courage of the apoſtles, ſtopped their mouths at preſent, but did not cure their hard hearts. 2. At what a nonplus the council was, to know what to do with the apoſtles; they confeſs the miracle, but conſult upon ways and means how to conceal it; and at laſt conclude upon threatning them, That for the time to come they ſpeak no more in the name of Jeſus: That is, not to preach in his name, nor work miracles by a power and authority derived pretendedly from him. But the apoſtles ſoon let them underſtand, that they eſteemed not the threatnings of the council, nor looked upon them as any excuſe for the forbearing of their duty, as appeareth by the next words.

19 But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard.

Note here, The prudence and integrity of the apoſtles, in referring it back to the judgment of their very adverſaries, whether it was reaſonable to obey their command, when they charged them to preach no more in the name of the Lord Jeſus: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "We have received a command from God to preach, *Go teach all nations*, Matt. xxviii. 19. and we have receive a command from you not to preach: Now we leave it with you, whether it be fitteſt and moſt reaſonable to obey God or you." It is a ſtrong way of conviction, to refer a matter to their judgment and conſcience, againſt whom we make oppoſition. *Learn*, That when the commands of God's vicegerents run counter to the commands of God himſelf, God is to be obeyed, and not man.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them, becauſe of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed. 23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou *art* God which haſt made heaven and earth and the ſea, and all that in them is; 25 Who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt. 27 For of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy ſervants that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word. 30 By ſtretching forth thine hand to heal; and that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus.

Here *obſerve*, 1. That notwithſtanding this rational plea, which the apoſtles uſed, the council added further threatenings and ſo diſmiſſed them, *becauſe of the people*, who looked upon the miracle with admiration, and glorified God for working it by the apoſtles' hands. Where *note*, That it was not the ſenſe of ſin, nor any apprehenſions of God's diſpleaſure, that influenced the council to ſet the apoſtles at liberty; but either the fear or favour of the people. Thus God made the people a reſtraint to the rulers' rage. 2. That the apoſtles thus diſmiſſed, went immediately to their own company (that is, to the hundred and twenty mentioned, chap. i. 15.) and acquainted them both with their danger and deliverance, the better to prepare them for ſufferings, and encourage them to hope for the like ſupport under them. 3. What uſe the church makes thereof; they hearing how their enemies lay in wait to perſecute and deſtroy them, apply themſelves to God by fervent prayer. Thence *learn*, That it is the church's duty, when enemies combine together to do miſchief, to give themſelves much unto prayer. Thus did the church here, and the like, chap. xii. 4. The prayer itſelf, which they jointly put up at the throne of grace, with one heart and ſpirit. And here *note*, 1. They began their prayer with invocation, and a reverend compellation, ſuitable to their preſent ſufferings; adoring God's omnipotency in creating and governing of the world. *Lord! thou art God, who haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that is therein.* Whence *learn*, That the power and wiſdom of God in creating and governing the world, doth afford ſingular ſupport and comfort under the preſent or future ſufferings. He that made all things by his power, will over-rule all things by his providence for his own glory and his church's good. *Note*, 2. The apoſtles uſed ſcripture-language and expreſſions in their prayer: they allude to Pſal. ii. and acknowledge that all that enraged malice of men and devils againſt the Meſſias, which was foretold long ago by the prophet David, was now come to paſs; For both the Jewiſh council and the Roman governors had combined together againſt Chriſt, and in oppoſing him, had oppoſed the Father that ſent him. *Of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus are they gathered together, to do what thy hand and thy counſel had determined before to be done.* Where we ſee, 1. That all the ſufferings of Chriſt were foreordained and determined by God the Father; God from all eternity decreed that Chriſt ſhould die a ſacrifice for ſin. 2. That this decree of God did not neceſſitate the Jews to ſin; but they acted freely and voluntarily, according to the wicked determinations of their own wills. God foreſaw and permitted it, but no ways influenced or compelled them to it. He overruled thoſe evil inſtruments to fulfil his holy purpoſes, while they intended only to fulfil their own wicked counſels. Laſtly, They cloſe their prayer with a fervent petition, that God would ſtrengthen them, and glorify his Son. (1.) That God would ſtrengthen them againſt their fears; ſteel them with courage, and fortify them with impregnable reſolution: *Grant that with all boldneſs we may ſpeak thy word:* Boldneſs to preach the goſpel, when unjuſtly forbidden is a ſpecial gift of God, and a great effect of God's grace unto his ſervants. (2.) They requeſt that God would magnify, not them, but his Son by them, in giving them power to work miraculous cures in the name of Jeſus, for confirming of the goſpel. *Grant that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus.* Where *note*, That the gift of miracles, though promiſed by

Chriſt, is yet prayed for by the apoſtles. God will have the performance of his promiſes to be the anſwer of our prayers.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs. 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one ſoul: neither ſaid any *of them*, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own: but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes, ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, 35 And laid *them* down at the apoſtles feet; and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joſes, who by the apoſtles, was ſurnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The ſon of conſolation) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, ſold *it*, and brought the money, and laid it at the apoſtles feet.

Note here, 1. The ſpecial and ſpeedy anſwer which the Lord gave to the apoſtles' prayer: As a teſtimony thereof, the place where they prayed is miraculouſly ſhaken, and many eminent graces and ſpecial gifts of the holy Spirit were poured out upon the apoſtles, particularly, a greater meaſure of boldneſs to preach the goſpel; and, as ſome think, the wonderful gift of conferring the Holy Ghoſt was now conferred upon the twelve; ſo Dr. Lightfoot. The holy Spirit, which cauſed them thus to pray, gave them that holy boldneſs which they prayed for; with ſignal ſhaking of the place which they prayed in. O! how ready is God to hear and anſwer the prayers and pleadings of his righteous ſervants, eſpecially when ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake? 2. The great unity, and happy unanimity which was found amongſt the miniſters and members of this infant church, this pureſt and moſt primitive chriſtian church: *They were of one heart and of one ſoul:* That is, they were one in doctrine and opinion, and they were one in heart and affection: A ſingular pattern for ſucceeding chriſtians to the end of the world, ſo to carry it one towards another, as members of the ſame body, and influenced by the ſame head. 3. As their unanimity, ſo their liberality, in contributing to the neceſſities of each other. *They called nothing their own*, when their brethren's wants required it; the rich readily ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, to help and relieve the poor. Notwithſtanding, this example cannot be a copy for after-times, to follow as a command, or to imitate as a perfection: Seeing that ſuch was the ſtate of the church at that time, as was never ſince, nor like to be; it was but newly born: It was all in one city; all in a poſſibility to be ſoon ſcattered by perſecution. *Res quæ erat temporariæ neceſſitatis & liberi arbitrii, non debet in explum trahi, multo minus ut neceſſaria obtrudi.* The leſſon to be gathered from this inſtance for our inſtruction, is this, That thoſe who are of ability, ought to abound always in ordinary, and ſometimes in extraordinary acts of charity. We muſt always relieve the ſaints wants as we are able, and ſometimes upon an extraordinary occaſion, above what we are well able. 4. How the apoſtles with great authority and aſſurance gave teſtimony to the reſurrection of Chriſt, and their doctrine found great favour and acceptation with the people, ſee ver. 33. The reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead, was the great point now in controverſy, therefore with evident miracles and wonderful gifts of the holy Spirit, did the apoſtles perform their teſtimony of his reſurrection. So that as Chriſt was declared to the apoſtles to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead; in like manner, the apoſtles by miracles and wonderful gifts did bear witneſs to the certainty of our Saviour's reſurrection, and their doctrine found acceptance with the people. *Learn* hence, 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by the almighty power of his Godhead revived and roſe again from the dead, to the conſternation of his enemies, and the conſolation of all believers. 2. That the doctrine of Chriſt's reſurrection being not only atteſted by the preaching, but confirmed by the miracles of the apoſtles, found deſervedly belief in the world, and is a point of infallible certainty amongſt all thoſe whom wilful obſtinacy has not blinded.

CHAP. V.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ſold a poſſeſſion, 2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife alſo being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apoſtles feet. 3 But Peter ſaid, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power? why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God.

The laſt verſes of the foregoing chapter acquainted us with the practice of the primitive chriſtians at the firſt plantation of the goſpel, in ſelling their poſſeſſions for charitable uſes, and laying down the money at the apoſtles feet, for the relief of their fellow-brethren and members in Chriſt. Now this chapter informs us, that according to their example, one Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, conſecrated a poſſeſſion unto God, and ſold the ſame for that purpoſe, but fraudulently kept back part of the price, and thus, as St. Chryſoſtom notes, was found ſtealing his own goods: He had the formality to ſell his lands as others did, but had not the ſincerity to part with his money as others had. *Note* here, The true nature of Ananias's ſin, it was ſacrilege; that is, a purloining or ſtealing of that which is conſecrated unto God, not by actual performance, but by vow or inward purpoſe of heart: covetouſneſs and vain-glory, lying and hypocriſy, did all attend and accompany this ſin; but the ſin itſelf was ſacrilege. *Learn* hence, 1. That what is conſecrated to God, muſt not be alienated or applied to other uſes. 2. That ſuch an alienation is ſacrilege, and a ſin againſt God, being a breach of vow or promiſe made unto him; *a lying unto God*, as the text calls it. 3. That it is an heinous ſin, which God will ſeverely puniſh. *Note*, 2. How this ſecret ſin, lying in the intention of the heart, was known unto God, and by divine revelation made known to St. Peter. *Learn* thence, That not only our outward actions are taken notice of by God, but even the purpoſes and intents of our hearts are all manifeſt and open to him, and thoroughly underſtood by him. 3. How St. Peter juſtly aggravates their ſin from the divinity of the perſon (the Holy Ghoſt) againſt whom it was committed, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt? Thou haſt not lied unto man, but unto God.* But why is Ananias ſaid to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt, rather than to God the Father, or Jeſus Chriſt the Son? *Anſwer*, Either, (1.) Becauſe it is the proper work of the Spirit to ſearch the heart, and to know the thoughts and purpoſes thereof: Or, (2.) Becauſe the wealth brought in to the apoſtles and laid at their feet, was an effect of the holy Spirit's inclining the hearts of believers ſo to do. *Learn* hence, The divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, that he is truly and really God; he whom the ſcripture calls the great and true God: therefore the Holy Ghoſt is God. Either the great Holy Ghoſt is man, and God's meſſenger, or God himſelf; but the antitheſis or oppoſite ſhews, that he is not man; for, ſays the apoſtle, *Thou haſt not lied unto man:* And if the Holy Ghoſt had been only God's meſſenger, it had been as great a ſin to lie to Peter, (he being God's extraordinary meſſenger) as to lie to the Holy Ghoſt; therefore the apoſtle, in the fourth verſe, doth explain what he meant, by lying to the Holy Ghoſt, in the third verſe; namely, lying unto God: *Thou haſt not lied unto man*, a creature like thyſelf, *but unto God*, to the Holy Ghoſt who is God.

5 And Ananias hearing theſe words, fell down, and gave up the ghoſt: And great fear came on all them that heard theſe things. 6 And the young men aroſe, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. 7 And it was about the ſpace of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter anſwered unto her, Tell me whether ye ſold the land for ſo much? And ſhe ſaid, Yea, for ſo much. 9 Then Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold the feet of them which have buried thy huſband *are* at the door, and ſhall carry thee out. 10 Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghoſt; and the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her huſband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.

Obſerve here, 1. The juſtice of the puniſhment inflicted upon Ananias for his ſin; he is ſtruck dead upon the ſpot for his ſacrilege, covetouſneſs, hypocriſy and lying: Doubtleſs it was a very heinous ſin which God ſo ſeverely puniſhed, and it was the firſt ſin of this kind under the New Teſtament. This was the firſt conſecration of goods that was ever made unto Chriſt our Lord, after he was exalted at the right hand of God in heaven; and this was the firſt ſacrilege: The firſt ſin of this kind, and therefore the firſt perſons that were found guilty of it met with this ſeverity, *in terrorem*, to make all others afraid of it. The firſt tranſgreſſors in any kind have been made public examples. Thus the angels before the Jewiſh church; Nadab and Abihu at the beginning of the Jewiſh church; and here Ananias and Sapphira, at the beginning of the Chriſtian church. 2. How Sapphira, the wife's ſubjection to her huſband, doth not excuſe her for partaking of his ſin, nor exempt her from the ſeverity of the puniſhment. God's authority in commanding or forbidding, muſt firſt be obſerved and obeyed, otherwiſe we put the creature in God's place, debaſe him and ſet up an idol, which the jealouſy and holineſs of God will never endure. 3. How the ſame ſin meets the ſame puniſhment: Huſband and wife had here agreed both what to do and what to ſay, and they that ſinned together ſuffered together. God is no reſpecter of perſons, male or female, Jew or Gentile, prince or ſubject, huſband or wife; the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall ſurely die; *Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghoſt*, ver. 10. *Note*, 4. That this miraculous way of puniſhing offenders with immediate death by the apoſtles, was not common: This is the only inſtance in the New Teſtament of ſo ſevere a puniſhment inflicted by the mouth of the apoſtles for any ſin whatſoever; and it ſeems accommodated and ſuited to that particular time, in which the magiſtrates were ſo far from defending the church, that they furthered the perſecution, and endeavoured the extirpation of it. Laſtly, The effect which this miracle had upon the whole church; it awfully affected them with fear and trembling; *Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.* God's extraordinary providences, either judgments or mercies, towards ourſelves or towards others, ought to affect us with holy fear, and that fear which works righteouſneſs. Iſa. xxvi. 9. *When his judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteouſneſs;* that is, they ought to do ſo, and, if ever they will do it, they will do it then: Judgments work fear, and fear works righteouſneſs.

12 ¶ And by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people: And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the reſt durſt no man join himſelf to them; but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women: 15 Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the leaſt the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them. 16 There came alſo a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed every one.

Three things are here obſervable: 1. How that act of ſeverity upon Ananias and Sapphira for their hypocriſy, is inſtantly ſucceeded with acts of clemency and mercy upon others: The former acts of ſeverity in the apoſtles were neceſſary to prevent the intruſion of hypocrites into the chriſtian church: Theſe ſubſequent acts of mercy were as neceſſary for the propagating of the goſpel, and to invite people to the love of chriſtianity. Accordingly the apoſtles, after the death of Ananias, are endued with power from on high to work ſigns and wonders, to heal diſeaſes, to caſt out devils; inſomuch, that the people brought forth their ſick into the ſtreets, and laid them upon beds and couches, hoping that the ſhadow of Peter, as he paſſed by, might reach and recover ſome of them. The church of Rome makes a noiſe with this text, and produces it to prove St. Peter's ſupremacy over the reſt of the apoſtles, becauſe his very ſhadow cured the diſeaſed: But very groundleſsly; for, 1. By the ſame argument they prove St. Peter to be ſuperior to Chriſt himſelf; this being more than what Chriſt himſelf wrought, according to what he foretold, St. John xiv. 12. *Greater works than theſe ſhall ye do*, &c. 2. The papiſts might obſerve, were they not wilfully blind, that the napkins and handkerchiefs, which were carried from St. Paul's body, cured diſeaſes alſo, and diſpoſſeſſed devils, Acts xix. 12. *Obſerve*, 3. Beſides all this, it is not here expreſsly ſaid, that any ſick were actually healed by St. Peter's ſhadow, but that the diſeaſed were brought, in hopes that his ſhadow would produce ſuch effects; and if it did ſo, Almighty God thereby put honour upon the goſpel, and upon all the apoſtles, without any particular reſpect, or ſpecial regard to the perſon of St. Peter. 4. The place where the apoſtles aſſembled to preach the goſpel, and work miracles for the confirmation of the ſame, *They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.* Where *note*, (1.) Their unity and unanimity: There were no perſons among them guilty of ſchiſmatical ſeparation in forſaking the public aſſembly; but with one mouth, as well as with one mind and heart, they glorified God. (2.) Their prudential boldneſs and holy courage appeared in preaching to the people in Solomon's porch; for the ſanhedrim, or great council ſat in, or very near that place, even that council, which in the former chapter impriſoned them, and in this beat them. (Ver. 40.) *Learn* thence, That nothing better becomes the miniſters and meſſengers of Jeſus Chriſt, than an holy and humble, a wiſe and meek, a zealous and convincing boldneſs, in aſſerting the truths of the goſpel, and in reproving ſin, and denouncing judgments againſt impenitent ſinners. Conſider we how bold and zealous our Lord and Maſter was in his miniſtry. Luke xx. 21. *We know that thou teacheſt the way of God truly, and accepteſt not the perſon of any.* And the apoſtles learnt the ſame of their Maſter, Acts iv. 13. *When the high prieſts ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jeſus.* *Obſerve*, 5. How God over-ruled the judgment inflicted upon Ananias and Sapphira, and cauſed it to work for ſpecial good. Thus, ſuch of the apoſtles' hearers, who were unſound and inſincere, durſt not join themſelves to them, having ſeen a great inſtance of ſeverity upon concealed hypocriſy! They were afraid to come amongſt them any more, or to make a ſhew of ſuch piety and zeal as Ananias did, for fear of the ſame, or ſuch like puniſhment as he had. But however the people extolled and magnified, admired and applauded them, and multitudes were daily added to the church. This ſeems to be the ſenſe of ver. 13. *And of the reſt durſt no man join himſelf to them, but the people magnified them, and believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* Nothing doth more affect and afflict unſound and droſſy hypocrites, than the ſight of God's judgments inflicted upon others in this world, and the fear of the righteous judgment of God upon themſelves in the world to come.

17 ¶ Then the high prieſt roſe up, and all they that were with him, (which is the ſect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apoſtles, and put them in the common priſon. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon doors, and brought them forth, and ſaid, 20 Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

Note here, 1. How the perſecutions of the holy apoſtles did gradually advance and increaſe. In the former chapters the apoſtles were only ſecured, kept in hold for a night, and diſmiſſed with a threatening next day; but now, being filled a ſecond time with the holy Spirit, they are better enabled to grapple with ſufferings, and to glorify God under them; and accordingly here they are committed to the common priſon amongſt malefactors, and afterwards beaten and expoſed to public ſhame, ver. 40. O the tenderneſs of God towards his tender ſervants! While theſe apoſtles were ſtriplings, their faith feeble, and their grace weak, God ſtayeth the rough wind, keeps off the ſtorm of perſecution from them. God will ever ſuit the ſtroke to his people's ſtrength, proportion their burden to their back, and never ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able. *Note*, 2. The apoſtles being priſoners for Chriſt and his goſpel, they have an angel for their keeper and deliverer, who opens the priſon door, and overpowers and puts out the devil. God could otherwiſe have delivered them, but he makes uſe of the miniſtry of angels for the confirming of their faith, and to let them ſee by experience that he had given angels charge over them. Since the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel, God will have us live more by faith, and to walk leſs by ſenſe, and therefore we muſt not now (ordinarily) ſee thoſe miniſtering and beneficent ſpirits: but although their viſible apparitions be ceaſed, yet their inviſible operations for the heirs of ſalvation ſhall never ceaſe, Heb. i. ult. *Are they not all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?* 3. The apoſtles being thus brought out of priſon by an angel, are commanded to preach, and they have their text given them by the angel that opened both the priſon and the pulpit door for them: The angel ſaid unto them, *Go, and ſpeak unto the people all the words of this life*, ver. 20. That is, of this life for which you were impriſoned, this life which the Sadducees, who impriſoned you, deny; namely, the reſurrection of the body, and eternal life. *Learn*, That not the things of this life, but the things of eternity and the life to come, the unſeen things of another world, are the things which all the miniſters of Chriſt ought to preach, and preſs their people to the purſuit of; *Go, and ſpeak unto the people all the words of this life*: That is, the goſpel, which is the word of life, and directs them how to attain eternal life and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high prieſt came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael, and ſent to the priſon to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the priſon, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The priſon truly found we ſhut with all ſafety, and the keepers ſtanding without, before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high prieſt and the captain of the temple and the chief prieſts heard theſe things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, ſaying, Behold, the men whom ye put in priſon are ſtanding in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence. For they feared the people, leſt they ſhould have been ſtoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they ſet *them* before the council: and the high prieſts aſked them, 28 Saying, Did not we ſtraightly command you that you ſhould not teach in his name? and behold, you have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

Note here, 1. No ſooner were the apoſtles out of priſon, but they enter into the temple and preach with a redoubled zeal and diligence; no doubt, Satan had better have let theſe holy men alone, than have caſt them into priſon; for the cold blaſts of perſecution and impriſonment beating upon their outward man, by a ſpiritual antiperiſtaſis, augmented the heat of grace within. There is no ſuch way to be even with the devil and his inſtruments, for all their ſpite and malice againſt us, as by doing all the good we can to the ſouls of men. 2. How the deliverance which God wrought for the apoſtles, in bringing them miraculouſly out of priſon by the conduct of an angel, did confound the council which laid them in: They were nonpluſſed and horribly perplexed at it; *They doubted whereunto this would grow.* They ſtood amuſed and amazed, and knew not what meaſures to take; but were at their wits end. Sin oft-times brings men into ſtraits, but ſtraits do not always bring men off from their ſins. Thus here, notwithſtanding their preſent perplexity of ſpirit, they ſpur on, and bring them again before the council, ver. 26. *Then went the captain with the officers of the temple, and brought them without violence.* 3. The crimes which the holy apoſtles were unjuſtly accuſed of; namely, obſtinacy and ſedition: They are charged with obſtinacy in perſiſting to preach the goſpel, when they had ſtrictly (but very wickedly) forbidden them: And they are accuſed of ſedition, as if they endeavoured to ſtir up the people to avenge the blood of Chriſt upon the rulers, as being unjuſtly ſhed by them. The greateſt innocency cannot protect the holieſt perſons from ſlander and falſe accuſation. The beſt of men have ſometimes been charged with the blackeſt crimes. No wonder then the ſanhedrim, or great council, which charged Chriſt himſelf with impoſture and blaſphemy, did accuſe the apoſtles of ſedition and contumacy; *The diſciple is not above his maſter.* 4. The contumelious reflection which they had made upon our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; *You intend*, ſays the council, *to bring this man's blood upon us:* As if the holy Jeſus had not been worthy of the naming by them. Chriſt told his diſciples, Luke vi. 22. that the world ſhould caſt out their name as evil. Behold! his own is uſed no better: He is *homo nullius nominis.* This man, this fellow, this deceiver, were the opprobious titles which the learned Rabbies thought fit to impoſe upon the beſt man that ever the world had. Lord! how can we be abaſed enough for thee, who waſt degraded and abaſed for us?

29 Then Peter and the *other* apoſtles anſwered and ſaid, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to *be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins. 32 And we are his witneſſes of theſe things, and *ſo is* alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counſel to ſlay them.

To the foregoing charge of obſtinacy brought in againſt the apoſtles, St. Peter anſwers in the name, and as the mouth of the reſt; owning that he had not obeyed them in their injunction, becauſe they had commanded that which was contrary to the command of God. Where *note*, How the apoſtles aſſert the prerogative of Chriſt as their apology for diſobedience to human commands; *We ought to obey God rather than men.* The ſecond part of the charge was ſedition; as if the apoſtles endeavoured to ſtir up the people to revenge the blood of Chriſt upon the chief prieſts and rulers. Thence *obſerve*, That it is no new thing to tax the miniſters of Chriſt for preaching ſedition, when rulers deſign to ſtop their mouths, and not ſuffer them to preach at all. But to remove this part of the charge, the apoſtle tells them, that this Jeſus whom they ignominiouſly ſlew on earth, is now an exalted Prince in heaven, able to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins to the worſt of his murderers, if they unfeignedly deſire it; *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance*, &c. Whence *learn*, 1. That Jeſus will be a Saviour to none to whom he is not a Prince. We muſt ſubmit ourſelves to his ruling power, as well as commit ourſelves to his ſaving mercy. For it is in vain to expect ſalvation by him, if we do not yield ſubjection to him. 2. That repentance and remiſſion of ſins are the ſpecial fruits and advantages of Chriſt's exaltation; *Him hath God exalted to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins.* 3. That it is the ſole prerogative of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins. Where *note*, The encouragement which the apoſtle's miniſtry gave to the murderers of Chriſt to hope for pardon; he preaches the duty of repentance, and the privilege of remiſſion of ſins, but aſſureth them, for their comfort, that Chriſt ſtands ready to diſpenſe both. But obſerve the ſad effects which this ſermon had upon theſe hearers; it was for ſubſtance the ſame which St. Peter preached, chap. ii. when ſo many thouſands were pricked at the heart with ſorrow and compunction; whereas theſe men were cut to the heart with anger and indignation. Whence *learn*, 1. That the moſt ſound and ſacred doctrine, is an intolerable torment to an unſound and unholy heart: That the word of God diſpenſed by the ſame miniſter, and in the ſame manner, has not always the ſame ſucceſs. The ſubſtance of both theſe ſermons was the ſame, (Jeſus and the reſurrection) and the preacher (St. Peter) was the ſame, but the ſucceſs was not the ſame; to let the apoſtle know, that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of himſelf, as St. Paul ſpeaks, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

34 Then ſtood there up one in the council; a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace; 35 And ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to yourſelves, what ye intend to do as touching theſe men. 36 For before theſe days roſe up Theudas, boaſting himſelf to be ſomebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themſelves: who was ſlain, and all, and as many as obeyed him, were ſcattered and brought to nought. 37 After this man roſe up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he alſo periſhed, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were diſperſed. 38 And now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this counſel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God. 40 And to him they agreed. And when they had called the apoſtles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the preſence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.

Note here, 1. A general council erring, and that fundamentally, in matters of faith. They determined peremptorily, That the doctrine and practice of the apoſtles was not from God; and accordingly reſolved to repreſs them, and that by death. Thence *learn*, That no determination of a council againſt a doctrine or practice, is any demonſtrative or ſufficient proof, that ſuch a doctrine or practice is not from God. 2. How God raiſed up a particular perſon in the council, Gamaliel, to interpoſe on the apoſtles' behalf, as Nicodemus before had done on Chriſt's behalf; and uſes him as an inſtrument to preſerve them from the rage and fury of their perſecutors. Without queſtion, Gamaliel's ſpirit was actuated and influenced by the Spirit of God, to give ſuch counſel as is here given. 3. The counſel and advice given in the ſeveral parts of it. (1.) He adviſes them to take heed what they did to theſe men, ver. 35. implying, that men had need take heed how they engage themſelves in ſuppreſſing or deſtroying any ſort of men whatſoever, until they have clear and expreſſive warrant from heaven for the execution. (2.) He aſſures them, That if this work be of men, it will certainly come to nought; which he proves by a double inſtance, namely, Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, who both pretended to be ſent of God as Saviours of their country, and gathered many followers, but miſcarried in their enterpriſe; intimating, That every invention, contrivance, or device of man, eſpecially in things pertaining to God and religion, will in time be blaſted and blown up by God, and come to nothing. (3.) He adds, That if this work be of God, it can never be overthrown, but the attempt will be deemed a fighting againſt God: Signifying to us, That for any perſon to attempt the ſuppreſſion of any doctrine or practice that is from God, is to fight againſt God himſelf. (4.) He intimates to them the great peril and danger of fighting againſt God, in the word *even*, leſt ye be found *even* fighting againſt God. Thence *learn*, That fighting againſt God is a moſt dangerous enterpriſe for any perſon at any time to be found engaged or concerned in. *Note*, 4. The ſucceſs or iſſue of Gamaliel's counſel; his advice being ſo wiſe and rational, it prevailed with the rulers to deſiſt from their former intention of putting the apoſtles to death; but they come not off without blows, though without bloodſhed; they are ſcourged, as their Maſter was before them, which was both a painful and reproachful puniſhment: Yet were they ſo far from being diſcouraged, that they were the more reſolved. They *rejoiced* that they were ſo graced as to be diſgraced for Chriſt, and accounted it their higheſt honour to be diſhonoured for him; eſteeming it a very great favour and happineſs to bear reproach for Chriſt, according to that of the apoſtle St. Peter, 1 Epiſt. iv. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you.* This ſent them from the preſence of the council *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name.* Laſtly, How wiſely and well the apoſtles improve their reſtored liberty; they redouble their pains and diligence in preaching the goſpel, and are unwearied in the way of their duty, and in the work of their God, verſe 42. *Daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and to preach Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, they laid hold on every opportunity, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, publicly and privately, to publiſh the goſpel to thoſe that had not received it, and farther to inſtruct thoſe that had already received the faith of Chriſt. Thus the more outrageous were their adverſaries, the more courageous were the holy apoſtles. They religiouſly profeſs the name of Chriſt, and reſolutely abide by their profeſſion, though they were derided, impriſoned, perſecuted, and beaten for the ſame. Lord, help thy miniſters at this day to ſuffer reproach for thy goſpel; but never let any of them either reproach it, or be a reproach unto it. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

In the foregoing chapters, an account is given of the two firſt perſecutions that befel the chriſtian church after Chriſt's aſcenſion; the former in impriſoning, the latter in the beating of the apoſtles. This and the next chapter acquaints us with a third blow given to this infant-church, blacker and bloodier than both the former, in the death of the holy Martyr St. Stephen; *and the occaſion of it was thus:*

AND in thoſe days, when the number of the diſciples was multiplied, there aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their widows were neglected in the daily miniſtration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the diſciples unto them, and ſaid, It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs. 4 But we will give ourſelves continually to prayer and to the miniſtry of the word.

Here *obſerve*, 1. How the number of chriſtians increaſed upon the foregoing perſecution: as the Jewiſh church in Egypt, the more it was oppreſſed, the more it multiplied; ſo the Chriſtian church here got ground by oppoſition: ver. 1. *In thoſe days the number of the diſciples was multiplied.* 2. How the number of believers increaſing, there aroſe (as it too often happens among a multitude) a murmuring among them: The Grecians, that is, ſuch Jews as were diſperſed abroad among the Greeks, complaining that their widows were neglected, and received leſs than the widows of the Hebrews in the daily diſtributions of the church's money, for charitable uſes. Thence *learn*, That neglect of the poor, particularly of the godly poor, is a ſin in all, but eſpecially in the churches of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. How the apoſtles deſiring to have the poor well provided for, and not having leiſure themſelves perſonally to take care of them, adviſe the church to chuſe ſeven perſons out of the hundred ond twenty, mentioned chapter the firſt, to be ſtewards and diſpenſers of the church's ſtock, to diſtribute the ſame with equity and indifference to all proper objects of charity without exception. Thence *learn*, That a general concern for the poor, and a tender regard to their neceſſities and wants, is a duty that well becomes the miniſters and ambaſſadors of God: God's poor are his treaſure, his jewels, the ſignet upon his arm; they are always in his eye, and upon his heart: how well then doth it become the miniſters of God to take care of them who are ſo dear to him? *Obſerve*, 4. How the apoſtles reſolve to perform their duty to God and their people, with ſuch zeal and application, as became perſons of their holy character and profeſſion. *We will give ourſelves continually unto prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word.* Where *note*, 1. That ſuch as are called by God to the work of the miniſtry, ought to give themſelves wholly to it; *We will give ourſelves continually thereunto.* 2. That a miniſter's giving himſelf unto prayer, is as great, if not a greater duty than giving himſelf to the preaching of the word; *We will give ourſelves continually unto prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word:* To the one as the end, to the other as the mean; it is God that ſets the word on work, but it is prayer that ſets God on work: That miniſter that is not fervent in prayer cannot expect to be ſucceſsful in preaching. Pray for us, ſays the apoſtle to the Theſſalonians, that the word may run and be glorified; he that begged prayer of others, did not neglect it himſelf, but prayed without ceaſing.

5 And the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude. And they choſe Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghoſt, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas a proſelyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they ſet before the apoſtles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. 7 And the word of God increaſed; and the number of the diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem greatly; and a great company of the prieſts were obedient to the faith.

Obſerve here, That to remove the forementioned murmuring at the inequality of the poor's relief, ſeven deacons were choſen to aſſiſt the apoſtles, and to diſpoſe of that treaſure (which had been laid down at the apoſtles' feet) with more indifferency to all fit objects of charity without exception. Here *note*, 1. The qualification of the perſons choſen; *men full of the Holy Ghoſt:* That is, perſons that were extraordinarily aſſiſted by the Spirit to perform the duties required of them; for the office of a deacon was, beſides the taking care of the poor, to preach the goſpel, and to baptize, as it appears Philip did; had it been only to take care of the poor, they needed not to be ſo inquiſitive to find out men full of the Holy Ghoſt for that ſervice. Here *note*, That the ſcripture mentions a threefold fulneſs of the Holy Ghoſt, according to a threefold capacity of the receivers. There is *plenitudo ſufficientiæ*, the fulneſs of a veſſel; this every believer hath; there is *plenitudo abundantiæ*, the fulneſs of a ſtream; this the apoſtles had, when extraordinarily inſpired, and filled with the Spirit at the firſt plantation of the goſpel; and there is *plenitudo, ſuperabundantiæ*, the fulneſs of a fountain; and this Chriſt had, Col. i. 19. *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* 2. The manner how theſe deacons enter into their office; it is by prayer and impoſition of hands, ver. 6. *They prayed and laid hands on them.* This rite of laying on of hands was uſed anciently upon a threefold occaſion in the Jewiſh church: namely, in their ſacrifices, Exod. xxix. 15. In their bleſſings, Gen. xlviii. 14. And in their deſignation unto a charge or office, Numb. xxvii. 18. Thus Moſes laid his hands on Joſhua; and from hence it was derived and brought into the goſpel-church, when miniſters were ordained by the apoſtles in the primitive times, they laid their hands upon them, 1 Tim. v. 22. *Note*, 3. The mighty ſucceſs of the goſpel, notwithſtanding all the violent oppoſition that was made againſt it; *The word of God*, that is, the doctrine of the goſpel, *increaſed, the number of believers multiplied*: yea, ſome of the prieſts themſelves, though formerly bitter enimies to Chriſt, now embraced the faith, and were joined to the church; great is truth, eſpecially the ſpirit of truth, and will prevail. Naked truth is too hard for armed error. Truth has the ſtrength of God in it, and therefore human power can never prevail againſt divine truth. *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

8 And Stephen full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people. 9 ¶ Then there aroſe certain of the ſynagogue which is called *the ſynagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Aſia, diſputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to reſiſt the wiſdom and the Spirit by which he ſpake. 11 Then they ſuborned men which ſaid, We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes and *againſt* God. 12 And they ſtirred up the people and the elders and the ſcribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, 13 And ſet up falſe witneſſes, which ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this holy place and the law. 14 For we have heard him ſay, That this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this place, and ſhall change the cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us. 15 And all that ſat in the council, looking ſtedfaſtly on him, ſaw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Note here, The great character given of St. Stephen; a man full of the grace of God, full of faith, full of power to work miracles, mighty in word and deed; able to do all things, and to ſuffer all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him. 2. The violent oppoſition which this good man met with in the way of his duty. He is, (1.) Encountered by diſputation with the heads of five colleges in Jeruſalem, namely, Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Aſiatics. Behold here, an admirable *act* kept, wherein St. Stephen was the reſpondent, againſt whom opponents appeared from all parts of the known world; but all too few to reſiſt the wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake. He aſſerted the truth ſo convincingly, that all his oppoſites had no power to oppoſe him. See here how faithful Chriſt was in fulfilling of his promiſe, Luke xxi. 15. *I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor oppoſe.* (2.) His adverſaries being baffled in their diſputes, they burn with revenge; they hire men to accuſe him falſely, that they might take away his life. The beſt arguments of a baffled adverſary are ever found to be craft and cruelty; it has been an old artifice of the devil, to ſwear innocent men out of their lives: And therefore it is next to a miracle, that no greater number of innocent perſons have been murdered in the world by perjury and falſe accuſation; when ſo many thouſands hate them, who make no conſcience of falſe oaths. 3. The charge and accuſation brought againſt Stephen, that he ſpake diſhonourably of the Jewiſh religion, that he was continually foretelling deſtruction to the temple, and threatening the change of all Moſaic rites. It is very probable, that he told them the ſhadows and ceremonies were to vaniſh, now the ſubſtance was come; and that the Moſaic rites were to give place, that a more excellent and ſpiritual worſhip might ſucceed. For as God was worſhipped aright four hundred years before either tabernacle or temple were built, or the Jewiſh rites inſtituted: So he might again be truly worſhipped after they were aboliſhed. Laſtly, How Almighty God, by a miracle, bears witneſs to the innocency of his holy ſervant St. Stephen; and to convince his accuſers, that he had done no wrong to Moſes, God makes his face to ſhine now as Moſes's face had ſhined of old, and gave him an angelical countenance, in which appeared an extraordinary luſtre and radiancy; not that an angel has a face, or ſhines viſibly; but it intimates that amazing brightneſs of beauty which was inſtamped upon the face of Stephen. He now began to border upon heaven, and had received ſome beams of glory approaching: It pleaſeth God ſometimes to give his children and ſervants ſome prelibations and foretaſtes of heaven before they ſtep into heaven, eſpecially holy martyrs and confeſſors, who love not their lives unto death: God bears an honourable reſpect to them that bear witneſs to his name and truth; and as they ſhall ſhine forth in the kingdom of their Father, ſo will God ſometimes put a luſtre upon their faces here: *All in the council ſaw St. Stephen's face, as it had been the face of an angel.*

CHAP. VII.

THEN ſaid the high prieſt, Are theſe things ſo? 2 And he ſaid, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham: when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I ſhall ſhew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell. 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not *ſo much as* to ſet his foot on; yet he promiſed that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

This chapter contains St. Stephen's apology, or defenſative plea which he makes for himſelf: The Jews had in the foregoing chapter accuſed him for blaſpheming their law, and profaning their temple, imagining that Almighty

God was ſo pleaſed with the temple-ſervice and Moſaic rites, that no other way of worſhip could be acceptable to him. Therefore by an hiſtorical deduction, he ſhews them that God was worſhipped aright before either tabernacle or temple was built, or any of the Moſaic rites inſtituted or ordained, and conſequently that the true worſhip of God was not neceſſarily and inſeparably annexed to any of theſe things. For the proof of this, he begins at Abraham, and ſhews them, that he living of old at Ur of the Chaldeans, in the midſt of idolaters, God was pleaſed of his free mercy to call him, to enlighten, and draw him to own and worſhip the true God, and commanded him to leave his native country, and go into a land which he ſhould ſhew him: He promiſed to make of him a great nation, and that in him all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. Now the deſign and drift of Stephen in this relation, is to prove, that Abraham, from his firſt call in Chaldea, when he was ſeventy years old, to the time of his being ninety years old, had ſerved God faithfully all that time, without either circumciſion or ceremony, without tabernacle or temple; and conſequently, that the true worſhip of God might be now performed acceptably after theſe ceremonies were aboliſhed, as well as it was performed before they were inſtituted. *Learn* hence, 1. That religious worſhip is manifeſtly due to God by the law and light of nature. 2. That the manner how that worſhip ſhould be acceptably performed, was not known by the law of nature, but diſcovered by divine revelation. Adam in innocence knew God was to be worſhipped; yet he did not know by what outward acts he was to teſtify that homage, till God the Sovereign Governor and Supreme Lawgiver did give direction. 3. That the worſhip due from the creature to God the Creator, is a ſpiritual worſhip, and ought to be ſpiritually performed. 4. The Judaical worſhip, though appointed by God himſelf, was fleſhly and carnal, and never pleaſed God for its own ſake. 5. The evangelical worſhip being ſpiritual, and moſt ſuitable to the nature of God, is therefore moſt acceptable and beſt pleaſing to him. The ceremonial worſhip was therefore good, becauſe God commanded it; but the evangelical worſhip is therefore commanded, becauſe good. The legal worſhip is called *fleſh* in ſcripture, and a carnal ordinance, in oppoſition to the goſpel, which is called *ſpirit*, and *a miniſtration of the Spirit*, becauſe attended with a more ſpiritual efficacy on the hearts and lives of men.

6 And God ſpake on this wiſe, That his ſeed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange land; and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and intreat *them* evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation to whom they ſhall be in bondage will I judge, ſaid God. And after that ſhall they come forth, and ſerve me in this place. 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumciſion. And ſo *Abraham* begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day; and Iſaac *begat* Jacob: and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

Note here, The great trial which God put Abraham's faith unto: The lord promiſed to give him the land of Canaan for a poſſeſſion, but he gave him not a foot's breadth: He promiſed to give it unto his ſeed, when as yet he had no child; and when God gave him ſeed, yet they were to ſojourn in a ſtrange land, Egypt; and continue there in bondage four hundred years. *Learn* hence, That there is no grace which God delights more to exerciſe and try, than the faith of his people; as faith puts honour upon God, ſo doth God put honour upon faith; and faith never honours God more, nor is more highly honoured by him, than when it is put upon the greateſt exerciſe and trial: 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, might be found*, &c.. Here the apoſtle compares faith unto, and prefers it before gold, even the moſt precious gold purified in the fire. Is gold precious and rare? So is faith. Is gold pure and reſplendent? So is faith. Is gold laſting and durable? So is faith. Is gold purified and improved by trying in the fire? So is faith by exerciſe; as the inſtance of Abraham here fully proves. 2. How God takes Abraham and his ſeed into covenant with him, and gives him circumciſion, the ſeal of the covenant. Thence *learn*, That in the covenant which God made with Abraham, he gave himſelf to be a God to Abraham and to his ſeed, and received Abraham and his ſeed to be a people unto himſelf. 2. That circumciſion was both the ſign and the ſeal of the covenant which God made with Abraham, and his ſeed, the people of the Jews: It is here called the covenant of circumciſion, becauſe circumciſion was both the ſign and the ſeal of that covenant made with Abraham. (1.) Circumciſion was a ſign, and that in ſeveral reſpects: It was a commemorative ſign of God's covenant with Abraham; it was a repreſentative ſign of Abraham's faith and obedience towards God. A demonſtrative ſign of original ſin, and the depravity of human nature. A diſcriminating and diſtinguiſhing ſign of the true church, and people of God, from all the reſt of the world. An initiating ſign, by which all ſtrangers were admitted into the Jewiſh church. And laſtly, It was a prefigurative ſign of baptiſm, which ſucceeded in the room of circumciſion in the Chriſtian church. (2.) Circumciſion was not only a ſign, but a ſeal alſo; Rom. iv. verſe 11. *He received the ſign of circumciſion, the ſeal of the righteouſneſs by faith.* It was a ſeal on God's part, to confirm all the promiſes made to Abraham and his ſeed: And it was a ſeal on his and their part, to bind him to renounce the ſervice of all other gods, and to oblige them to the obſervation of the whole Jewiſh law.

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt: but God was with him, 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wiſdom in the ſight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his houſe. 11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no ſuſtenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he ſent out our fathers firſt. 13 And at the ſecond *time* Joſeph was made known to his brethren: and Joſeph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then ſent Joſeph, and called his father Jacob to
him and all his kindred, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls.
15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he
and our fathers, 16 And were carried over into
Sychem, and laid into the ſepulchre that Abraham
bought for a ſum of money of the ſons of Emmor
the father of Sychem. 17 But when the time of
the promiſe drew nigh which God had ſworn to
Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,
18 Till another king aroſe, which knew not Joſeph.
19 The ſame dealt ſubtilely with our kindred, and
evil entreated our fathers, ſo that they caſt out
their young children, to the end they might not
live.

From the hiſtory of Abraham, Stephen proceeds to that of Joſeph; and ſhews, as he did before, that Joſeph, as well as Abraham, worſhipped God acceptably without either tabernacle or temple, and without ſuch cuſtoms as Moſes delivered; and conſequently, that the worſhip of God is not confined to an outward temple, or a Moſaical miniſtration; and that therefore it was not blaſphemy in him to ſay, That God might be ſo worſhipped. This is St. Stephen's argument from the inſtance of Joſeph. As to the particular ſtory of Joſeph, *obſerve*, 1. The great and ſore afflictions which befel that holy and good man; he was envied and hated of his brethren, they conſpired againſt him, and ſought to take away his life; he is thrown into a pit and afterwards ſold for a bond-ſlave to the Midianites; they ſell him into Egypt, where he was impriſoned ſo long, till the iron entered into his ſoul; that is, ſo loaded with irons, that his fleſh was eaten with them. *Learn* thence, That afflictions, many and great afflictions, long and ſore afflictions, have been, and may be, the lot and portion of the holieſt and beſt of men, and all theſe occaſioned by their own brethren: *Joſeph's brethren moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt.* 2. The ſingular ſupport and comfort which Joſeph experienced in, and under, his great afflictions; *God was with him.* God was with Joſeph in Potiphar's houſe, and gave him favour in the eyes of his maſter, who repoſed an entire confidence in him. God was with Joſeph in priſon, and cauſed his impriſonment to make way for his enlargement. God was with Joſeph in Pharaoh's court, and gave him a prudent and provident ſpirit, making him a father unto Pharaoh, and to all his people; giving him alſo a compaſſionate and merciful ſpirit to his brethren; pardoning their cruelties, and forgiving the injuries done unto him. Hence we *learn*, That all the envy, malice, and miſchievous deſigns of men, ſhall never be able to hinder or diſappoint the purpoſe and pleaſure of God: *The patriarchs, moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt: But God was with him.* 3. The religious deſire which Jacob and Joſeph, and the reſt of the holy patriarchs had to be buried together in the land of Canaan, ver. 15, 16. *Jacob died, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in a ſepulchre.* No doubt, this was done by way of declaration of their own faith, and in order to the confirmation of the faith of others, that their poſterity ſhould enjoy and poſſeſs that land; ſo that this act of theirs was a profeſſion of their faith in the promiſes which God had made to them of their poſſeſſing and enjoying the land of Canaan. There is a natural deſire in perſons to be buried by their anceſtors; but here it was a religious deſire, they died in the faith of their anceſtors, and laid down their heads together upon the ſame pillow of duſt, in hope of a bleſſed and glorious reſurrection.

20 In which time Moſes was born, and was ex-
ceeding fair, and nouriſhed up in his father's houſe
three months. 21 And when he was caſt out, Pha-
raoh's daughter took him up, and nouriſhed him for
her own ſon. 22 And Moſes was learned in all
the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in
words and in deeds. 23 And when he was full
forty years old, it came into his heart to viſit his
brethren the children of Iſrael. 24 And ſeeing one
of them ſuffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged
him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian:
25 For he ſuppoſed his brethren would have under-
ſtood how that God by his hand would deliver them,
but they underſtood not. 26 And the next day he
ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would
have ſet them at one again, ſaying, Sirs, ye are
brethren: why do ye wrong one to another? 27
But he that did his neighbour wrong thruſt him
away, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge
over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didſt the
Egyptian yeſterday? 29 Then fled Moſes at this
ſaying, and was a ſtranger in the land of Midian,
where he begat two ſons.

From the hiſtory of Abraham and Joſeph St. Stephen deſcends to that of Moſes; where we have obſervable, 1. The birth and education of Moſes, *he was born, and hid three months in his father's houſe:* and then being caſt out, was taken in by Pharaoh's daughter, and had a noble education given to him; being inſtructed in all kinds of good literature, to fit him for ſuch great ſervices as a prince's court might probably have brought him to: *Moſes was learned.* Hence *note*, That the greater men are, the greater ſhould their care be for the learned and religious education of their children; becauſe nothing is more incongruous and unſuitable than greatneſs of eſtate and meanneſs of underſtanding. It is a ſhame to great men to breed up their children ſenſually, to gaming, ſporting, and exceſs, as if an inheritance did ſerve for no other purpoſe but to make the heir of it uſeleſs, and good for nothing. Again, The latitude and extent of Moſes's learning. *He was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians.* Where remark, 1. The different end which God had in his providence, from what Pharaoh's daughter had in her particular care. She intended, by this education, the good of Egypt; but God intended the good of Iſrael: She deſigned the ſervice of Pharaoh; but God deſigned Moſes to be a deliverer from Pharaoh. Thus the wiſe and holy providence of God uſeth the diligence of men to effect and bring things about which they never thought of. 2. We may *remark*, How that Moſes the great prophet, whom God ſpake to, mouth to mouth, is here commended for his learning, yea, for Egyptian learning. Thence we may gather, That human learning is a noble and beneficial gift of God, and a very great ornament and honour unto the greateſt and moſt excellent men; for it is in itſelf an ornament and perfection to the mind; it renders men the more uſeful and ſerviceable in their generation, and a greater bleſſing to human ſociety, but eſpecially to the holy church of God. Human learning indeed is far inferior to holineſs; but in holy men, learning is a rare ornament and acceſſion to holineſs. Sanctified wit beautifies religion, ſanctified reaſon defends it, ſanctified power protects it, ſanctified elocution perſuades others to the love of it; ſo that to decry the uſe of human learning muſt proceed either from ignorance or from malice, and a deſire to have religion betrayed. Let us ſee that we get our learning ſeaſoned with holineſs, that we uſe it with humility, moderation, and ſobriety, as an handmaid unto Chriſt; not vain-gloriouſly unto oſtentation, not proudly with contempt of others, not heretically in defence of error; never ſuffering human learning, but divine revelation, to determine articles of faith; then, if with Moſes we be learned in all the learning of the philoſophers, the more glory we ſhall bring to God, and be the more uſeful and beneficial to mankind. 2. As the education of Moſes in Pharaoh's court, ſo the time of his continuing there; namely, till he was *forty years old:* After which God put it in his heart to viſit his brethren, the children of Iſrael, and offer himſelf to be a deliverer to them; and he ſuppoſed that they would have underſtood the purpoſe of God to ſave them by his hand, but they underſtood it not. But what reaſon was there for the Iſraelites to ſuppoſe, that Moſes was the perſon deſigned by God for their deliverer? *Anſwer*, Very great reaſon; becauſe, (1.) They knew that the time of their deliverance did now draw very near. (2.) From the extraordinarineſs of Moſes's preſervation; by his being hid three months in his father's houſe without diſcovery; by his floating upon the waters in an ark of bulruſhes without danger, when an infant; they might have rationally thought that ſuch a perſon was deſigned by God for very great purpoſes. 3. From his readineſs to defend them at this time, when an Iſraelite and an Egyptian contended; for it was wonderful that ſo great a perſon as Moſes was, and might have been, ſhould concern himſelf in a private quarrel betwixt two obſcure perſons. Moſes might well ſuppoſe, that his brethren would have underſtood, how that God by his hand would have delivered them; but they underſtood it not. 3. The ill treatment given to Moſes, when he offered himſelf to be a reconciler; they thruſt him from them, and expoſtulate with him, *Who made thee a ruler or a judge?* The meek man replies, *Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?* Where *note*, 1. Who were the perſons doing wrong to each other; they were Iſraelites, both Iſraelites: To ſee an Iſraelite and an Egyptian ſtruggling, had been no wonder; but to ſee two Iſraelites, who were brethren, brethren by nation, brethren by religion, brethren in tribulation, both of the ſeed of Abraham, both initiated into the ſame covenant, both in bondage to a cruel tyrant, Pharaoh, who had condemned them to an ignominious ſlavery, and deſigned ſuch a degree of cruelty, as to murder all their male iſſue: This was an aſtoniſhing ſight, and Moſes might well ſay, *Why do ye wrong one to another?* Plainly implying, that both parties were to blame; but that party moſt, who would not hear of a reconciliation, or putting a ſtop to the quarrel; a reconciler is more odious than a ſtranger in the apprehenſion of ſome. Laſtly, How Moſes being thus ill treated by them, departs from them, and they hear no more of him for forty years, verſe 29. *Then fled Moſes, and was a ſtranger in the land of Midian:* Where *note*, The years of Moſes's life were an hundred and twenty: Forty years he ſpent at the court in Egypt; forty years he ſpent in Midian with his father-in-law Jethro; and the laſt forty years of his life in the wilderneſs. Now all this time Moſes was a worſhipper of the true God, and that in an acceptable manner; and moſt of this time he worſhipped God without either tabernacle or temple. From whence St. Stephen draws his argument to prove, that as God was acceptably worſhipped by holy men, before either tabernacle or temple were erected, in like manner he may be ſo again, after both tabernacle and temple are deſtroyed; and conſequently, that they unjuſtly accuſed him of blaſphemy, or ſpeaking blaſphemous words againſt Moſes, and againſt God.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderneſs of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a buſh. 31 When Moſes ſaw *it*, he wondered at the ſight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32 *Saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moſes trembled, and durſt not behold. 33 Then ſaid the Lord to him, Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet; for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 34 I have ſeen, I have ſeen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will ſend thee into Egypt. 35 This Moſes, whom they refuſed, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the ſame did God ſend *to be* a ruler and deliverer by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the buſh. 36 He brought them out, after that he had ſhewed wonders and ſigns in the land of Egypt, and in the Red-ſea, and in the wilderneſs forty years. 37 ¶ This is that Moſes which ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren like unto me: him ſhall ye hear. 38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs with the angel, which ſpake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us. 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thruſt *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again unto Egypt, 40 Saying unto

Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for*
this Moſes which brought us out of the land of
Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41
And they made a calf in thoſe days, and offered
ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of
their own hands. 42 Then God turned, and gave
them up to worſhip the hoſt of heaven; as it is
written in the book of the prophets, O ye houſe of
Iſrael, have ye offered to me ſlain beaſts and ſacrifices
by the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs?
43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and
the ſtar of your god Remphan, figures which ye
made to worſhip them: and I will carry you away
beyond Babylon. 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle
of witneſs in the wilderneſs, as he had appointed,
ſpeaking unto Moſes that he ſhould make
it according to the faſhion that he had ſeen. 45
Which alſo our fathers that came after brought in
with Jeſus into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, whom
God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto
the days of David, 46 Who found favour before
God, and deſired to find a tabernacle for the God of
Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him an houſe. 48
Howbeit the moſt High dwelleth not in temples
made with hands; as ſaith the prophet, 49 Heaven
is my throne, and earth *is* my footſtool; what houſe
will ye build me? ſaith the Lord: or what *is* the
place of my reſt? 50 Hath not my hand made all
theſe things?

St. Stephen here goes on with the hiſtory of Moſes, and having, in the former verſes, made mention of what occurred to him in Egypt and in Midian, here an account is given of what happened to him in the wilderneſs; and the firſt thing obſervable, is the appearance of God to him in a flame of fire out of the midſt of a buſh, which burned, but was not conſumed. This buſh was an emblem of the church: This buſh burning, pointed out the afflicted ſtate of the church in Egypt, having been a long time in the fiery furnace there; but the burning buſh, not conſumed, ſignified the church's preſervation. God was in the midſt of the buſh, whilſt the buſh was in the midſt of the burning. Where *note*, How almighty God, intended to ſend Moſes as a deliverer of his people out of Egypt, gives him a viſible ſign for confirming of his faith, in the ſight of this burning, but unconſumed buſh: 1. To aſſure him of his people's deliverance, that though they were now ſlaves in Egypt, yet they ſhould be ſet free, and inſtated in a land flowing with milk and honey; next to ſatisfy him, that *he* ſhould be the inſtrument to bring to paſs ſo glorious a work. O how gracious is God's condeſcenſion towards his ſervants, who is pleaſed, by viſible ſigns, to ſupport the weakneſs of their faith! *The Lord appeared to Moſes in a flame of fire in the buſh.* 2. How Moſes, in the faith of God's preſence with him, protection over him, and aſſiſtance of him, goes forth for Egypt, where he works many ſigns and wonders before Pharaoh, at laſt brings the people forth into the wilderneſs to Mount Sinai, where God gave them his law, and appointed Moſes then to make a tabernacle for his worſhip. Now, the uſe which St. Stephen makes of this, is to convince the Jews, that for above four hundred years their fathers had worſhipped God without any tabernacle at all, and conſequently, that now that ſort of worſhip was aboliſhed, God might be very acceptably ſerved and worſhipped in the abſence of it. 3. That notwithſtanding Moſes was raiſed up by God, and ſent to be a deliverer into Egypt, and a law-giver to the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs; yet they rebelled againſt him, and againſt God in him; for they ran into the vileſt idolatry, even to make and worſhip a golden calf, to adore the hoſt of heaven, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, for deities; yea, they carried about with them the images and pictures of the heathen gods, Mars and Saturn, with deſign to worſhip them; for which groſs idolatry God ſent them into captivity beyond Babylon. Hence *learn*, 1. That there is a ſtrange inclination in man's heart to the ſin of idolatry; the reaſon is, becauſe it is a worſhip of our own invention. Now, man is moſt fond of, and forward for, that ſervice of God which is of his own finding out and ſetting up. We love a devotion of our own deviſing very dearly. 2. That idolatry in worſhipping the ſun, moon, and ſtars, is a very ancient ſin; both the old Gentiles and old Jews were guilty of it; and conſequently, we may infer, that neither antiquity nor univerſality will bear us out in idolatrous worſhip. Example is no plea againſt a rule, nor antiquity againſt truth: It is no excuſe to us, when we do evil, to ſay our forefathers did ſo before us. 3. That the idolatry of the Jews was a grand iniquity, and much worſe than the idolatry of the heathens; the Gentiles knew not God, but the Jews owned him, and gloried in him. But *though they knew God, they worſhipped him not as God.* 4. The Iſraelites being come out of Egypt by the conduct of Moſes, and having entered the wilderneſs at God's appointment and particular direction, the tabernacle for his worſhip and ſervice is erected: This is here called, ver. 44. *The tabernacle of witneſs*; it being the place where God uſed to witneſs and manifeſt his glorious preſence, and becauſe the ark of the covenant, the law and the teſtimonies, were laid up in it, which were witneſſes and declarations of God's will how he would be ſerved. Now this tabernacle was an ambulatory temple, as the temple was a ſtanding tabernacle. This tabernacle was moveable: they carried it with them from place to place, while they ſojourned in the wilderneſs, and at laſt they brought it with them into Canaan, ver. 45. which tabernacle our forefathers brought in with Jeſus, (that is, Joſhua) into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, that is, the land of Canaan, where it continued all the days of David, till Solomon began his reign, who built the temple in a moſt magnificent and ſumptuous manner. Here *note*, 1. That the public worſhip of almighty God is a moral duty, founded in the light of nature, and the common reaſon of mankind. 2. That ſolemn places for public worſhip have been from the beginning, before the giving of the law. The ancient devotion of the world delighted much in groves, Gen. xxi. 33. *Abraham planted a grove, and called there on the name of the*

the Lord. This was a ſort of oratory or chapel, whither Abraham and his family reſorted, to worſhip the true God. After the giving of the law, while the people of the Jews were in an unſettled condition, God was contented with a mean tabernacle; but when they were ſettled in Canaan, then a magnificent temple is built, in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the greatneſs and majeſty of that God who was to be worſhipped in it. From whence we may infer, That the public worſhip of God, though it doth require inward and ſpiritual devotion, yet, as public, is neceſſarily external; and as ſuch, it ought to expreſs, in the beſt manner we are able, that profound reverence which we pay to divine Majeſty. And therefore that the circumſtances of it ſhould not only be decent, but very ſolemn and magnificent, the light of nature ſeems plainly to require, and the goſpel doth no where gainſay. When David reſolved to build God an houſe for public worſhip, he determined it ſhould be exceedingly magnificent; which reſolution was not a piece of ceremonial piety, but grounded on a moral and eternal reaſon, of equal force in all ages; namely, that the greateſt and beſt of Beings be moſt awfully adored by us in the beſt manner we are able; and that we declare our high regard and eſteem of ſo glorious a Majeſty, by all outward fitting teſtimonies of reſpect and reverence. Laſtly, That, after the temple was built, the worſhip of God was not ſo tied to that place, as that he could not be worſhipped acceptably any where elſe; for God hath declared, by the mouth of his holy prophet, Iſa. lxvi. 1, 2. *That he delighted not in temples made with hands*, as if He was included therein, and bound thereto. And thus St. Stephen, by a large induction of particulars, made good his defence, that he was not guilty of blaſphemy, for affirming that Chriſt would deſtroy the temple, and change the cuſtoms which Moſes delivered. He cloſes his apology with this argument, That which was not blaſphemy to affirm of the tabernacle, though it was ſet up by God's ſpecial appointment given to Moſes, is not blaſphemy to affirm of the temple: But it was no blaſphemy to affirm the uſe of the tabernacle to have been temporary, and conſequently alterable; therefore to affirm the ſame of the temple is not blaſphemy; eſpecially ſince the Lord hath ſaid, That *he dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*

51 Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt; as your fathers *did*, ſo *do* ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of the juſt One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the diſpoſition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

Obſerve here, 1. How St. Stephen, having finiſhed his general diſcourſe in the foregoing verſes to the Jews, comes now to a particular and cloſe application of it to them. All the while he was generally diſcourſing, they were quiet and ſtill, and made no noiſe at all; for generals do not affect: But when he came to apply it particularly, and ſay, "You are the men, *ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſed in heart*," this enrages them, and drives them into the worſt kind of madneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That the efficacy of the word preached lies in a particular and cloſe application of it to every man's conſcience. 2. That it is miniſters' great duty not to ſatiſfy themſelves with delivering general truths to their people, but they muſt point at their particular ſins (though not at their particular perſons) and reprove them for the ſame, what hazards ſoever they run, and whatever the event may be. St. Stephen's cloſe preaching here, and impartial reproving of ſin, he ſaw would coſt him his life; but, nothing terrified by his adverſaries, he ſpares not to tell them, the greateſt of them, of their faults. Accordingly, *obſerve*, 2. The particular ſins which St. Stephen here convicts them of and reproves them for: 1. The ſtoutneſs, and ſtubbornneſs, and ſtiff-neckedneſs of their hearts; *Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart:* A metaphor taken from a bullock not uſed to the yoke, who therefore will not ſubmit his neck to bear it. Wicked men are often called children of Belial, becauſe they will not endure the yoke of obedience: but when God comes to put it upon their necks, they lift up their heel againſt him. 2. He charges them with rebelling againſt, and reſiſting of the holy Spirit of God; *Ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt:* That is, both the outward teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking to them in the miniſtry of the prophets and apoſtles, and alſo the inward operations of the holy Spirit, in that work of illumination and conviction which they had been under. 3. For their imitating their cruel anceſtors, who killed the old prophets, and crucified the Lord of life and glory; *As your fathers did, ſo do ye.* 4. For their wicked violation of the holy law of God, which was given them by the glorious miniſtry and proclamation of angels: *Ye received the law by the diſpoſition of angels*; that is, the angels were *teſtes* and *internuncii*, witneſſes and meſſengers betwixt God and Moſes, in giving of the law, or Jeſus Chriſt the angel of the covenant, who is God's meſſenger, and the angel that appeared to Moſes in the buſh: He gave that law to Moſes, and by Moſes to you, which law ye have notwithſtanding violated and never kept.

54 ¶ When they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with *their* teeth. 55 But he being full of the Holy Ghoſt, looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God, 56 And ſaid, Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the Son of man ſtanding on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And caſt *him* out of the city, and ſtoned *him:* and the witneſſes laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whoſe name was Saul.

Obſerve here, 1. The Jews angry and unreaſonable reſentment of the foregoing repreſentation; though it was exact truth and matter of fact, yet were they cut to the heart; that is, they were angry even unto madneſs. Here was a moſt proper corroſive, and applied by a ſkilful hand, but they would not let it ſtick, nor endure a cure; ſuch is the enmity of wicked hearts, that when the miniſters of God reprove ſin ſharply, inſtead of receiving the meſſage, they rage at the meſſenger: *When they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart.* 2. How they diſcover their rage againſt the holy man two ways; by their geſtures, and by their actions: Their geſtures made a full diſcovery of their enraged minds. 1. *They gnaſhed upon him with their teeth*; the action of damned fiends. 2. They made a great outcry with an unanimous and tumultuous rage; *They cried out with a loud voice.* 3. *They ſtopped their ears*, reſolved to hear no more either of his counſels or complaints. 4. *They ran upon him with one accord*, like perſons united and combined together in malice and madneſs. 5. They caſt him out of the city, not out of the ſynagogue only, but out of the city alſo. They look upon this good man, of whom the world was not worthy, as a perſon not fit for human ſociety. "Lord! why ſhould any of thy preſent miniſters and ambaſſadors wonder at, or be diſcouraged by the ill treatment which an unkind world now gives them, when thy bleſſed apoſtles, full of the Holy Ghoſt, and endowed with power to work miracles, were *caſt out* before us, as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things!" But this was not all; not only by their geſtures, but by their actions did they diſcover the utmoſt effects of their rage and malice againſt this holy and innocent perſon; for they put him to death; yea, ſtoned him to death; ſhooting a whole volley of cruelty at his naked breaſt; a ſhower of ſtones came down upon him, from thoſe hands which ought to have caſt the firſt ſtone at themſelves; but all this did but join him the cloſer to Chriſt, the Corner-ſtone; *Et per tot lapides petræ conjungitur uni.* *Learn* hence, That it is not in the power of piety and religion to exempt and ſecure the moſt holy and religious perſon either from the attempts of popular fury, or from the ſtroke of a violent and bloody death; *They caſt him out of the city, and ſtoned him.* *Obſerve*, What a bleſſed ſight St. Stephen had of heaven, and of Jeſus in heaven, to prepare and fit him for his ſufferings, and to ſupport and uphold him under them, ver. 56. *Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God.* Bleſſed Jeſus! what an encouragement it is to us, ſuffering for thee on earth, to look up ſtedfaſtly by faith unto thee in heaven, who art continually ſtanding there to behold and obſerve, to ſupport and ſtrengthen, to receive and reward thy ſuffering ſervants; to count every ſtone caſt at them, and to revenge all the injuries and wrongs done unto them! Laſtly, How theſe bloody perſecutors manage their cruelties under a form of law, that they may appear the more ſpecious. By the law of God, ſtoning was the puniſhment due to blaſpheming; and they that witneſſed againſt the blaſphemer were, by the law of God, to caſt the firſt ſtone at him, Deut. xvii. 7. Accordingly the witneſſes here put off their upper garments to fit themſelves for their bloody work; and a young man called Saul undertook to look to them, kept their garments for them, and conſequently conſented unto his death, and had a hand in ſtoning of him: *The witneſſes laid down their garments at a young man's feet, whoſe name was Saul.* By conſenting to the ſins of other men, we certainly become partakers of other men's ſins.

59 And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.

Note here, 1. The holy deportment of this humble ſaint at his death; he prays. *Learn* thence, That good men ſhould ſhut up their lives with prayer, and die with prayer in their mouths. Our Saviour did ſo; his firſt martyr here did ſo. St. Stephen imitated the death of Chriſt, and he imitated Chriſt in his death; turning from malicious men, to ſpeak unto a merciful God in prayer. They ſtoned Stephen calling upon God. 2. The object of his prayer, or whom St. Stephen prays to, Jeſus Chriſt: He doth not ſay, "O bleſſed Virgin! O St. Thomas! O St. Bridget! intercede with my Saviour for me." But he directs his ſupplication immediately to Chriſt, ſaying, *Lord Jeſus!* From whence we may ſtrongly infer the divinity of Chriſt. Prayer is an act of religious worſhip, and he that is the proper object of religious worſhip muſt be God: None muſt be the object of my prayer, but he that is the object of my faith. How ſhall I pray to him, in whom I have not believed? 3. The ſubject of his prayer, or what he prays for, his ſoul; *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit*; he doth not ſay, Lord Jeſus ſave my life, which is in ſo much danger of being taken away; O, deliver me from the hands of my perſecutors, and bring me off ſafe! Not a word like this; but let it go well with my ſoul: Lord, receive my ſpirit. *Learn* hence, that the godly man's care, living and dying, is for his ſoul; becauſe this is the principal and immortal part, becauſe this is the greateſt talent that ever God put into our hands, and becauſe the happineſs and eternal welfare of the body depends upon the bleſſed condition of the ſoul: If the ſoul be happy, the body cannot be miſerable. 4. The ſweet ſurrender, the willing and chearful reſignation which the good man makes of his ſoul into the hands of Chriſt; *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.* (1.) The godly man's ſpirit or ſoul is his own, he has not ſold it to ſin, nor pawned it to Satan, nor exchanged it for the world; but he has reſerved it for Chriſt, who redeemed it for him. (2.) *Receive.* *Learn* thence, It is the duty and diſpoſition of a gracious perſon, to reſign up his ſoul willingly and chearfully into Chriſt's hands, whenever God calls for it: his ſoul is ſurrendered by him, not extorted from him. The knowledge that a good man has of Chriſt's love and care, of his faithfulneſs and power, encourages him to this reſignation, Pſal. xxxi. 6. *Lord, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeemed it.* And ſurely he that redeemed it will not hurt it.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep.

We had St. Stephen's prayer in the foregoing verſe for himſelf; in this verſe he prays for his murderers. Where *note*, 1. His pious charity in forgiving his enemies, and praying for them, that God would forgive them alſo, *Lord lay not this ſin to their charge*: How doth this holy martyr imitate his dying Saviour? Luke xxiii. 34. *Father forgive them.* *Note*, 2. His regular charity; his charity began at home: he prays firſt for himſelf, then for his murderers: firſt, *Lord Jeſus, receive myſp irit*; next, *Lord, lay not this* *ſin to their charge.* Where *remark*, That Chriſt prayed firſt for his enemies, then for himſelf, Luke xxiii. 34. 36. *Father, forgive them*; *Father, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit*; but St. Stephen intercedes firſt for himſelf. The reaſon of the difference is this, Chriſt needed no prayer for himſelf, but Stephen did: We are to love our enemies as ourſelves; but Chriſt loved his enemies above himſelf, and better than himſelf. Chriſt's love to his enemies was the copy and pattern, St. Stephen's but the tranſcript. *Note*, 3. His holy fervency in prayer; he cried out with a loud voice, endeavouring by his prayers to drown the noiſe of the ſtones which rattled about his ears, and to divert that ſhower of vengeance from them, which their ſhower of ſtones upon him deſervedly called for from heaven. 4. The holy martyr prayed for himſelf ſtanding, but for his enemies kneeling. Ver. 59. He ſtood when he ſaid, *Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit*; but, ver. 60. when he ſaid, *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge, he kneeled down and cried.* He was more importunate for his enemies, than he was for himſelf. How near did St. Stephen, the firſt martyr, come to his bleſſed Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, in praying for his enemies? 5. The ſucceſs and benefit of his prayer: God heard and anſwered Stephen's prayer in Paul's converſion, recorded in the ninth chapter. *Si Stephanus non oraſſet eccleſia Paulum non habuiſſet*, ſaith one of the antients; "Saul's converſion was owing to St. Stephen's interceſſion." 6. The holy man's exit and happy concluſion, *He fell aſleep.* Where *note*, 1. The thing recorded of him is his death. 2. The metaphor which his death is ſet out by, and clothed with, and that is *ſleep.* 3. The circumſtance of time when he fell aſleep; namely, after he had ſerved Chriſt, and ſuffered for him. *Learn* thence, That it is a bleſſed thing when death calls us off the ſtage of this world, after a life of ſervice and ſuffering: *When he had ſo ſaid, he fell aſleep.* Happy is that chriſtian who falls aſleep with his Lord's work in his hand.

CHAP. VIII.

The hiſtory of Saul's *cruelty and converſion is next recorded; the former in this chapter, the latter in the next; the deſign of both is to excite us to conſider, what a great change the grace of God can make in turning* Sauls *into* Pauls; *perſecutors into profeſſors; and the oppoſers of Chriſt and his truth, into faithful ſervants unto both.*

AND Saul was conſenting unto his death.—

That is, St. Stephen's, mentioned in the cloſe of the laſt chapter; how far he conſented to his death, the text tells us, *He kept the garments of them that ſtoned him, they laid down their clothes at his feet*, chap. vii. 58. His hand did not throw one ſtone at the holy martyr's head, but his will concurred with others in that bloody act; and this denominated him guilty. *Learn* hence, That God chiefly inſpects the heart, and if the vote be paſſed there, he looks upon the man as guilty, though he proceeds no farther. It is eaſy to murder another by ſilent wiſh, or paſſionate deſire. In all moral actions God values the will for the deed, and reckons that man an actor, that is an applauder. Conſent unto the ſins of others makes their guilt our own: *Saul was conſenting unto his death.* It follows:

—And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Jeruſalem: and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles.

Note here, 1. How the ſpite and cruelty of the church's adverſaries was not quenched, but rather inflamed by the blood of Stephen: From whence aroſe a bitter perſecution againſt the church at Jeruſalem, upon which the multitude of believers fled from thence. Perſecution ſcatters the profeſſors of religion; but God makes ſcattering the way to increaſing, and what was intended for the hinderance, God over-ruled for the furtherance of the goſpel: As God overpowers the devil, ſo he outwits him too. This ſcattering perſecution at Jeruſalem, which was deſigned to ſmother and ſuppreſs the goſpel, did propagate and ſpread it more and more. 2. How God ſets bounds and limits to this ſharp perſecution: though the believers were ſcattered, yet the apoſtles continued at Jeruſalem: *they were all ſcattered, except the apoſtles.* The twelve ſtay there untouched in the midſt of the fiery furnace of perſecution, to comfort and cheriſh the church in that ſad and doleful day, maugre the malice of angry men, and of enraged devils: and thoſe who were ſcattered, carried the light of the goſpel among the Gentiles. Thus out of the darkneſs of perſecution, God bringeth forth the light of the goſpel, providing at once for the ſafety of ſome by their flight, and for the calling home of others by their diſperſion: *They were all ſcattered abroad*, &c.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to *his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

Note here, 1. Though St. Stephen was ſtoned to death by his bloody perſecutors, yet are they not ſo inhuman as to deny him burial; it is a mercy to have a grave, and a decent burial is a bleſſing: The body is the garment of the ſoul; we lay up this garment in the wardrobe of the grave, with aſſurance that we ſhall put it on again (when made ſpiritual and incorruptible) in the morning of the reſurrection, and wear it to all eternity. 2. The perſons deſcribed who carried Stephen to the bed of the grave; *devout men:* that is, truly religious men, men of eminent piety and holy courage alſo; *Devout men carried Stephen to his burial.* A noble inſtance of a generous and chriſtian courage, that they durſt, among ſuch a multitude of perſecutors and furious zealots, own their eſteem of, and pay their laſt reſpects to the name and memory of the holy martyr. 5. The doleful ſolemnity of his funeral, *They made great lamentation over him*; and reaſon enough there was for it, becauſe of the church's great loſs at that time. When any of the miniſters of God are ſnatcht away by death, eſpecially by a violent death, from the ſervice of the church, there is juſt cauſe for great and ſolemn lamentation: *Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.*

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every houſe, and haling men and women, committed *them* to priſon.

"Bloody Saul! was it not enough for thee to ſee a ſingle ſaint deſtroyed, but wilt thou ſeek to deſtroy the whole fraternity and communion of ſaints?" Behold the fiery zeal of this furious perſecutor; he ſpares neither age nor ſex, neither men nor women, neither young nor old, but without reſpect he hales them to priſon. O fury! worſe than inhuman, not only to drag men ſpitefully, but to hale women ſhamefully to priſon. Women in all ages have been exempted from the inſults of tyranny, but not always freed from the perſecutor's fury. And bleſſed be God for that maſculine courage and conſtancy which the feebler ſex have ſhewn, when they have been called forth to bear their teſtimony for Chriſt: out of weakneſs they have been made ſtrong. With what wiſdom and courage have they anſwered their examiners, convicted their accuſers, confuted their oppoſers, kiſſing the ſtake, hugging the faggots, embracing the flame! Thus can God help the weak things of the world to confound the ſtrong; and teach the fooliſh to confute the wiſe.

4 Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.

This ſevere perſecution at Jeruſalem, diſperſed the whole body of the church, and ſcattered both members and teachers thereof, except the apoſtles. Some went to Damaſcus, ſome to Samaria, ſome to Phœnice, Cyprus and Antioch. But God over-ruled this ſcattering for his church's encreaſing; he brought good out of evil, light out of darkneſs, order out of confuſion. It is a great and certain truth, that the Holy God would ſuffer no ſort of evil to be, did he not know how to bring ſome excellent good out of that evil.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean ſpirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were poſſeſſed *with them:* and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

Note here, 1. Amongſt the diſperſed, who went to Samaria, Philip was one; not Philip the apoſtle (for all of them remained at Jeruſalem) but Philip the deacon, who was the ſecond in order after Stephen, among the ſeven deacons: He comes to Samaria, and preaches there. 2. The doctrines which he preached; he preached Chriſt unto them; that is, Chriſtianity, or the Chriſtian religion; namely, The doctrine of Chriſt's incarnation, holy life and death, reſurrection and aſcenſion, together with remiſſion of ſins through faith in his name. 3. The ſucceſs of Philip's doctrine at Samaria; the people with one accord embrace the goſpel, *Giving heed to the things which he ſpake:* The preſence of the holy Spirit accompanying his miniſtry, united his hearers hearts, as well as their ears to attend diligently to the doctrine of Chriſt delivered to them. This diligent attention was a bleſſed preparative to the Samaritans converſion, ſeeing faith comes by hearing: Yea, they did not only attend to, but acquieſce in all he ſpake. *Note* thence, That were there a more reverent attention to the word, there would be more converſions by it than at this day there are. 4. The external ground and reaſon of Philip's ſucceſs in his miniſtry at Samaria; the miracles which he wrought. Theſe were undeniable evidences of the truth of what he ſpake, and by which he ſhewed God's authority for what he did and ſaid; he healed diſeaſes, and caſt out devils (called unclean ſpirits, becauſe they delight in ſin, that ſpiritual uncleanneſs of the ſoul) who cried out with a loud voice, as very loath to loſe their lodgings, had they not been conſtrained to it. The miracles which Chriſt and his apoſtles wrought were heaven's broad-ſeal, to confirm the truth of what they taught: *The people gave heed to what Philip ſpake, ſeeing the miracles which he did.* Laſtly, What joy and rejoicing there was among the Samaritans at their receiving and entertaining of the goſpel: *There was great joy in that city*; not only for the cures wrought upon their bodies, but for the doctrine of reconciliation and ſalvation preached to their ſouls. As the goſpel is in itſelf a meſſage of joy and glad-tidings, ſo it fills that ſoul with joy unſpeakable, that cordially receives and entertains it. Joy in the Holy Ghoſt is one of the ſweet effects of the kingdom of God; that is, the goſpel, Rom. xiv. verſe 17. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs*, &c.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the ſame city uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himſelf was ſome great one. 10 To whom they all gave heed from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying, This man is the great power of God.

An account is here given of one of Philip's auditors at Samaria, Simon Magus by name, or Simon the ſorcerer, a vile man, the blackeſt Ethiopian that ever baptiſmal water wet or waſhed. Notorious for ſorcery, for hypocriſy, for final apoſtaſy, and avowed impiety. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory informs us of the hereſies he broached, of the divine honours he aſſumed, of the ſtatutes and images built to him and his ſtrumpet Helen, which lewdly accompanied with him; of an altar erected to him with this blaſphemous inſcription, *Simoni Deo ſancto*, "To Simon the holy God;" and of his tragical end, by breaking his neck, when attempting to fly up to heaven, becauſe the people would no longer be cheated with his impoſtures here below. From this example, *note*, 1. That into the moſt eminent and populous cities do oft-times enter the greateſt and vileſt impoſtors, the moſt atheiſtical and diabolical ſorcerers: There they lurk and lodge, there they ſeek to ſet up and play their prizes. 2. That the vileſt impoſtors, and the worſt ſeducers, have yet many, very many followers: The ſilly multitude is ſoon deluded: *To him they all gave heed, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* 3. That ſuch vile deceivers have the confidence to brag, and the multitude have the weakneſs to believe, that they are very extraordinary perſons, and can do extraordinary things. Simon gave it out himſelf, that he was *ſome great one*; and the people *cry him* up as the *great power of God*.

11 And to him they had regard, becauſe that of long time he had bewitched them with ſorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized both men and women. 13 Then Simon himſelf believed alſo: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and ſigns which were done.

Note here, 1. How long a time this vile ſorcerer, by God's permiſſion, and Satan's power, wrought theſe lying wonders among the people: *He had of a long time bewitched them with ſorceries*, verſe 11. Deceivers are not always ſuddenly detected, and droſſy hypocrites are not preſently diſcovered; but the vizor will drop off ſooner or later. 2. That where the true knowledge of God comes, and the clear light of the goſpel ſhines, there groſs impieties and impoſtures, there cheats and deluſions will be found out, deteſted and abhorred: *When they believed Philip's preaching, they were baptized, both men and women.* Where the light ſhines, Satan falls as lightning; magic vaniſhes. This Dagon cannot ſtand before the ark of God: When the people of Epheſus received the goſpel, they ſoon made a bonfire of their magic books, Acts xix. 19. 3. The ſucceſs of the goſpel preached by Philip; the people believed, and *were baptized, both men and women. Mark*, 1. Believed, and then baptized; theſe were adult, or grown perſons, not infants, and they were heatheniſh idolaters, ſtrangers to the covenant; and therefore muſt believe the goſpel, and profeſs their faith in Chriſt, before their baptiſm. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſtered to any that are out of the viſible church, till they profeſs their faith in Chriſt, and obedience to him. 2. The perſons baptized were women as well as men: *When they believed Philip they were baptized*, &c. Women under the goſpel are capable of the ſeal of the covenant as well as men. Under the law they were; then they were circumciſed in the men: Now they are baptized for themſelves: *They were baptized*, &c. 4. A great and ſudden change wrought in Simon himſelf, by the preaching of Philip; *He believed alſo, and was baptized*: Behold, the ſorcerer is become a profeſſor, a believer, a baptized perſon. The goſpel preached may have a common operation upon a ſoul, where it never produced inward ſanctification. All that are by the goſpel proſelyted, are not ſavingly converted. All are not good fiſh that are incloſed in the goſpel's net; but ſome fiſh, ſome traſh. As there will be wheat and tares in the ſame field, chaff and corn in the ſame floor; ſo will there be ſome ſaints and ſome ſinners in the pureſt earthly church. Laſtly, Upon a bare profeſſion of faith, Simon Magus is baptized. *Learn* thence, That outward profeſſion juſtly gains admiſſion into the chriſtian congregation, and gives a perſon right to external ordinances; *De occultis non judicat eccleſia.* "The church's judgment is a judgment of charity, not of certainty;" of the outward, not of the inward man; of the life, not of the heart. The faith of Simon Magus was no other than a temporary, hiſtorical, yea, hypocritical faith; however, Philip baptizes him upon his making profeſſion of it. An heart-hypocrite is no hypocrite *(in foro eccleſiæ)* in the ſight of the church, though moſt abominable in the ſight of God. Simon the unſound profeſſor was more odious in the ſight of God than Simon the ſorcerer.

14 ¶ Now when the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John. 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt. 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.) 17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

Note here, 1. How the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, hearing the glad tidings of Samaria's converſion by Philip's miniſtry, thought fit to ſend down two of the twelve to confirm the new converts in their faith, and to conſtitute a church there by their apoſtolical authority. 2. The perſons whom the college of apoſtles at Jeruſalem thought fit to ſend to Samaria, Peter and John. Where *note*, That Peter's being deputed by the reſt of the apoſtles to this ſervice, is an argument that Peter had no primacy or ſuperiority over the reſt of the apoſtles: Or, if in this employment there was any ſign of primacy, John was ſharer in that as well as Peter. *The apoſtles ſent Peter and John.* 3. What the apoſtles Peter and John did when they came to Samaria, *They prayed, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.* Where, by the Holy Ghoſt, is not to be underſtood the ſanctifying graces of the Holy Ghoſt, which the apoſtles never did, nor could diſpenſe, but the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, the gift of tongues and prophecy, and a power to work miracles. Theſe were now conferred on ſuch perſons whom the Holy Ghoſt directed them to lay their hands upon, as perſons appointed and choſen to be preachers of the goſpel. Where *note*, That impoſition or laying on of hands has been an ancient rite uſed by the officers of the church, in their ſolemn dedicating of perſons to the ſervice of God and his church.

18 And when Simon ſaw that through laying on of the apoſtles hands the holy Ghoſt was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghoſt. 20 But Peter ſaid unto him, Thy money periſh with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with money. 21 Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God.

Here *note*, 1. How infinitely miſtaken this wretch was, in thinking that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt could be purchaſed with money. 2. In ſuppoſing that the apoſtles had a power to diſpenſe theſe gifts, when and where, and to whom they pleaſed. 3. And that they could enable others to impart this alſo; which were all very groſs conceits. From this deed of Simon's, it is called *ſimony*, to ſeek to buy ſpiritual gifts or offices with money. 2. What it was that put Simon upon purchaſing this power; doubtleſs it was covetouſneſs and vain-glory. He hoped to make a penny of this privilege, and render himſelf famous among his followers by this prerogative. *Learn* thence, That cunning and cloſe hypocrites, corrupt and hypocritical profeſſors, do ſeek to make a gain of godlineſs, and a merchandize of chriſtianity. Simon had never bid ſo freely for the Holy Ghoſt, if he had not expected to receive as freely of others for the Holy Ghoſt; which he deſired to buy, but not to keep; and intended to ſell, not to give. 3. How St. Peter ſcorns the vile motion made by Simon, and rejects it with the greateſt deteſtation: *Thy money periſh with thee.* *Learn*, That wicked (though gainful) motions are to be ſcorned and refuſed by the godly with the greateſt deteſtation and abhorrence. Our hearts can never riſe too high in a juſt indignation againſt ſin, and againſt all temptation unto ſin: *Thy money periſh with thee*; thou and thy money periſh together. *Obſerve* How plainly St. Peter deals with him; he ſearches him to the quick, to the heart, ſounds the depth of ſin; lays open the core of his hypocriſy before his face, and tells him to his teeth, that his heart was rotten and unſound; *Thy heart is not right in the ſight of God.* The baptiſmal water had waſhed his outſide, but his inwards were unclean. The heart is the worſt part of man till it be mended, and then it is beſt: Where moſt evil lies, there we muſt firſt begin to be good; all will be good, if the heart, which is the ſeat, the ſink and ſeed-plot of all evil, be made good. The life would not be ſo bad, if the heart were not worſe: All the obliquity of our lives proceeds from the impurity of our heart and nature, as the muddineſs of the ſtream from the foulneſs of the fountain.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and *in* the bond of iniquity. 24 Then anſwered Simon, and ſaid, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things which ye have ſpoken come upon me. 25 And they, when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jeruſalem, and preached the goſpel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Obſerve here, 1. The odious character wherewith ſin in general, and hypocriſy in particular, is branded, it is bitterneſs and bondage; it is the gall of bitterneſs and the bond of iniquity. *Learn* thence, 1. That ſin is an exceeding bitter thing: It is bitter to God, it provokes him to bitter anger; it was bitter to Chriſt, it laid him under the bitter wrath of God; it was bitter to the angels, it turned them out of heaven, and baniſhed them from the preſence of God evermore; it is bitter to good men, it coſts them bitter repentance, and it occaſions them bitter chaſtiſements; and it will be bitter, eternally bitter to the wicked and impenitent world. Now the bitterneſs of ſin is not a medicinal and wholeſome bitterneſs, but an intoxicating and ſtupifying bitterneſs, a poiſonous and a baleful bitterneſs. Sin's bitter draught is a baneful draught. 2. That not only bitterneſs, but bondage attends the ſervice and ſervants of ſin: As ſin is the gall of bitterneſs, ſo it is the bond of iniquity, and the bondage of ſin; it is a ſhameful and ignominious bondage, a fruitleſs and unprofitable bondage, a ſtupifying and inſenſible bondage, a reſtleſs and unwearied bondage, an endleſs and eternal bondage. 3. That every ſoul before converſion is in and under this deplorable bondage; *Thou art in the bond of iniquity. Obſerve*, 2. The means preſcribed and directed to for the ſoul's delivery out of this deplorable bondage; namely, repentance and prayer. 1. Repent. *Learn*, That timely and ſincere repentance is a ſpecial mean, preſcribed and appointed by God, for the recovery of the worſt of ſinners out of this deplorable bondage. 2. Pray. Here *note*, 1. A wicked man may pray, and ought to pray. As bad as Simon Magus was, St. Peter doth not drive him to deſpair, but directs him to his duty: *Pray to God.* Prayer is a part of natural worſhip, which we owe to God; it is the ſoul's motion Godward; therefore to ſay a wicked man ſhould not pray, is to ſay, he ſhould not turn to God. 2. That all the prayer in the world, without a man's own prayer to God for pardon and remiſſion, will be ineffectual and unavailable to ſalvation. Simon Magus deſired the apoſtle to pray for him, ver. 24. But St. Peter bids him to pray for himſelf, as ever he hopes for forgiveneſs with God: Repent of this thy wickedneſs, and pray to God. *Obſerve*, 3. The encouragement given to make uſe of the means preſcribed, namely, a probability of forgiveneſs and acceptance with God. *Repent and pray*, &c. *Learn*, That the vileſt and worſt of ſinners upon their repentance, accompanied with prayer and ſupplication unto God, have good ground of encouragement to hope for pardon of ſin and acceptance with him. 4. How St. Peter takes moſt notice of that, of which Simon Magus took leaſt, and that was the wickedneſs of his thoughts; *That the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* Hence *learn*, That wicked and evil thoughts, lodged and entertained in the heart, ought in a ſpecial manner to be repented of, and humbled for, by all that expect forgiveneſs with God; for ſinful thoughts are radical and ſeminal evils; they were the root of the angels apoſtaſy and Adam's apoſtaſy alſo. A world of ſin may be lodged in the thoughts.

26 ¶ And the angel of the Lord ſpake unto Philip, ſaying, Ariſe, and go toward the ſouth, unto the way that goeth down from Jeruſalem unto Gaza, which is deſert. 27 And he aroſe and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treaſure, and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip, 28 Was returning, and ſitting in his chariot read Eſaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit ſaid unto Philip, Go near, and join thyſelf to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Eſaias, and ſaid, Underſtandeſt thou what thou

readeſt? 31 And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? and he deſired Philip that he would come up and ſit with him.

Here we have recorded the remarkable converſion of the eunuch by the preaching of Philip; concerning which ſeveral circumſtances are to be obſerved: 1. The author or inſtrument converting, Philip, who was commanded by the angel in a viſion to go to Gaza; but not the common way, or ordinary road, but by the way of the deſert, a difficult, and perhaps a dangerous way, over mountains and through vallies: Philip knew not whither he was going; but God knew whither, and wherefore he ſent him. O Philip! it was worth thy going many ſteps out of the way, to convert one ſoul: Happy for the eunuch that thou wenteſt out of the way, and that he as happily met thee. 2. The ſubject or perſon converted, (1.) An Ethiopian, the moſt deſpiſed of all the Gentiles in the ſight of the Jews. Behold! the ſanctifying grace of God waſhing a blackmoor white, and making an Ethiopian clean. (2.) A nobleman, a courtier, a treaſurer to the queen; yet he concerns himſelf with religion, and, being a proſelyte, travels in his chariot as far as Jeruſalem, to worſhip God in a ſolemn manner. O how will this example riſe up in judgment againſt our great ones, who have more light, but leſs heat; more knowledge, but leſs love! (3.) A bookiſh man, one that delighted in reading, and in reading of the ſcriptures too, and thus whilſt he was riding in his chariot, to loſe no time for gaining the knowledge of his duty. If our courtiers and great men read not at all in their coaches, or if ſo, plays or romances only, this ignorant Ethiopian lord did better, though he knew not ſo much as theſe. *He read in his chariot the prophet Eſaias.* 3. The means which God ſanctified and bleſſed for the eunuch's converſion; it was the reading and expounding of the holy ſcriptures: The word of God, read and preached, is the great inſtrument in the hand of the Spirit for ſinners illumination, converſion, and ſalvation; and bleſſed are they that hear and read the word with attention, affection, and application. 4. The wonderful modeſty and humility of this great man, he thankfully accepts Philip's offer to inſtruct and teach him, (ſome would have huffed at it as a rude affront) but he condeſcends to learn of one beneath him. Such as are modeſt and thoroughly humble, are alſo truly docile and teachable, willing to learn knowledge, although from the mouth of an inferior: *He deſired Philip to come up and ſit with him.*

32 The place of the ſcripture which he read was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch anſwered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The particular text of holy ſcripture which God directed the eunuch to read in order to his converſion: It was a prophecy of Chriſt the promiſed Meſſias, recorded in the liii. of Iſaiah; *He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and as a lamb dumb before the ſhearer:* Pointing out the innocency, the meekneſs, and patience of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in and under all his ſatisfactory ſufferings for our ſins: *In the day of his humiliation,* particularly in the day of his trial and ſentence: *His judgment was taken away;* that is, his right was taken away by the unrighteous judgment of the Jewiſh ſanhedrim, and no right or juſtice done him; and who can declare ſufficiently the wickedneſs of that generation, which cut off ſo innocent a perſon from the land of the living? This text, Philip informs the eunuch, was truly applicable to the Meſſias, who was certainly come into the world, and both did and ſuffered all that was propheſied of him. Here *note,* How the divine providence did work in a concurring tendency towards the eunuch's converſion. God moves his heart to read, to read the ſcriptures, to read this ſcripture, which informed him of the ſufferings of the Lord Jeſus, and ſends Philip out of his way to meet him, and he meets him juſt as he was reading that portion of ſcripture which moſt concerned him: He wanted to be informed concerning Chriſt, and Philip is at his elbow at that very juncture, to inſtruct him in a moſt fundamental truth in order to his converſion and ſalvation. O the wonderful love, and manifold wiſdom of God, in finding out ways and methods for bringing home ſouls to himſelf! If his providence brings them not under the means, it will bring the means to them. This eunuch wanted the ordinary means of knowledge; but being deſirous of ſpiritual knowledge, God ſteps out of the ordinary road to meet him, though an Ethiopian, commonly eſteemed the meaneſt of mankind; and thereby ſhews, that as there is no reſpect of perſons, ſo no difference of nations with him; but whoever feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him. In the cloſe, Philip preaches a goſpel ſermon to him, diſplaying Jeſus Chriſt before him, and by the bleſſing of God upon the ordinance, ſaving faith was effectually wrought in the eunuch's ſoul.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water. And the eunuch ſaid, See, *here is* water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and paſſing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Ceſarea.

Obſerve 1. The eunuch is inſtructed before baptized, and he deſired baptiſm of Philip; it was not forced upon him by Philip againſt his will, *The eunuch ſaid, What hinders me to be baptized?* To drive men to baptiſm, as they drive beaſts to watering, and force chriſtianity upon them againſt their wills, to ſend forth booted apoſtles with javelins in their hands, and croſſes on their breaſts, as the Romiſh church doth to dragoon men into chriſtianity, is the way to make hypocrites, but not proſelytes; for it is not whole armies that can beſiege my reaſon, nor cannons batter my will. It is conviction, not compulſion, that muſt induce aſſent. 2. The eunuch after inſtruction deſired baptiſm, *See, here is water*; let me be baptized. As if he had ſaid, "O Philip! as thou haſt inſtructed me, I pray thee alſo baptize me. Now that I have received the benefit of thy doctrine, let me not want the comfort of the ſacrament." Where the heart is truly touched by the miniſtry of the word, and the ſoul thoroughly converted unto God, there is a deſire to be partaker of the ſacraments. 3. The condition required of the eunuch before he was baptized, namely, A profeſſion of his faith in the promiſed Meſſias; *If thou believeſt*, thou mayeſt be baptized. There is a neceſſity of faith, to render a man a meet partaker of the holy ſacraments: If we come to any of the ſacraments without faith, we are ſure to depart without fruit. 4. The qualification of that faith which gives a right to the holy ſacrament; *If thou believeſt with all thine heart*; only that faith gives a right to baptiſm, and intitles to ſalvation, which is with all the heart. This eunuch believed with his whole heart, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God. This gave him at once a right to baptiſm, and a title to heaven. 5. The manner of the adminiſtration of baptiſm to the eunuch; he went down into the water and was baptized by Philip: In thoſe hot countries it was uſual ſo to do, and we do not oppoſe the lawfulneſs of dipping in ſome caſes, but the neceſſity of dipping in all caſes. In ſacraments, it is not the quantity of the elements, but the ſignificancy of them that ought to be attended to; as in circumciſion, it was not the quantity of the fleſh cut off; and in the Lord's ſupper, it is not the quantity of the bread and wine taken down; ſo in baptiſm, a few drops of water poured upon me, doth ſignify and ſeal, and convey and confirm to me a right and intereſt in all the benefits of my Saviour's death and reſurrection, as fully as if, with Jonah, I were plunged into the main ocean, 6. What followed upon the eunuch's baptizing, and coming out of the water. (1.) The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; by the miniſtry of an angel he was carried out of ſight, that the eunuch might be the more aſſured of the truth of thoſe things which were taught him by Philip's miniſtry; and that he was a perſon ſent of God to direct him in the way to true happineſs. (2.) The eunuch went on his way rejoicing, as well he might; it was the happieſt journey he ever took, to meet with Chriſt and converſion in his way, and heaven and ſalvation at his journey's end. A converted man hath great cauſe of rejoicing; the goſpel proclaimed, much more, heartily embraced, is matter of great joy. Behold the fruit of faith, joy and rejoicing; the eunuch is inſtructed, believed, is baptized, and goes home rejoicing. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Laſtly, Philip was found at Azotus, or Aſhdod, thirty-four miles from Gaza, ſo far had the miniſtry of the angels carried him, and there ſafely ſet him down. *Learn*, How good it is to obey God in the moſt difficult command. Philip had a hard and tireſome journey from Samaria to Gaza, footing it through a deſert, in untrodden paths, and running as faſt as the eunuch's chariot, to join himſelf unto it at the command of God. But now from Gaza to Azotus he has a ſwifter and eaſier paſſage, he rides in an angelical flying chariot. When we attend the execution of God's commands, the holy angels ſhall attend us, and take care of us, and adminiſter neceſſary help unto us: like tender nurſes, they keep us ſafe whilſt we live, and bring us home in their arms to our Father's houſe when we die. Bleſſed be God for the miniſtry of his holy angels.

CHAP. IX.

This chapter relates to us both Saul's *cruelty and converſion; and acquaints us with the wonderful method which the infinitely wiſe God took for his church's deliverance from the fury of perſecution; whereby the church had reſt and peace.*

AND Saul yet breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, went unto the high prieſt, 2 And deſired of him letters to Damaſcus to the ſynagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem.

Note here, 1. The lively character of a bloody perſecutor: *He breathes out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the members of Chriſt.* His very breath ſmells of fire; threatenings and ſlaughter, like lightnings and thunder, proceed out of his mouth. Whilſt a perſecutor hath in him the breath of his own life, he breathes nothing but death againſt others: Nothing will ſatisfy him but the death and deſtruction of the members of Chriſt. An indiſcreet and ungovernable zeal ſoon degenerates into fury and madneſs. 2. How reſtleſs unwearied perſecutors are in the proſecution of their bloody deſigns and purpoſes. Saul was now *inquiſitor hæreticæ pravitatis:* aways he trots to the high prieſt for a commiſſion to bind heretics, who believed on Jeſus, and oppoſed the traditions of the fathers; and having, as he thought, ſwept Jeruſalem of ſaints, he reſolved next to ranſack Damaſcus, though it was five or ſix days journey from Jeruſalem: However he ſpurs on, away he goes through fire and water to revenge his malice on the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That perſecutors will ſpare neither purſe nor pains, they will ſtick at nothing, though never ſo toilſome and hazardous, ſo they may glut their malice, and ſatisfy their revenge upon the poor diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. The high prieſt needed not to hire Saul to this black work, he both offers himſelf, and ſues for the office: No doubt the high prieſt and council highly applauded his zeal and forwardneſs for extirpating heretics, commending the gallantry of his reſolution, and the bravery of his mind; and having ſealed his commiſſion, ſent him away with wiſhes of ſucceſs.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damaſcus: and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven. 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying unto him, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 5 And he ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whem thou perſecuteſt. *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks.

Saul was now onward of his journey to Damaſcus (the worſt journey that ever he intended, but the beſt he ever undertook) a journey moſt maliciouſly purpoſed by him, but moſt mercifully diſpoſed by God. Heaven had deſigned him for better ſervice, and work of another nature; and accordingly he is ſtopped in his way, knocked off his horſe, a ſudden beam of light beyond the brightneſs of the ſun darts upon him, dazzles him, and he hears a voice, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* that is, *me* in my *members*. Whatever is done againſt Chriſtians for any thing that Chriſt commandeth them, he takes it as done againſt himſelf. Such as perſecute the ſaints for their ſanctity, perſecute Chriſt himſelf; and he can no more endure to ſee them wronged, than himſelf. As the honour of Chriſt the Head, redounds to the members, ſo the ſorrows of the members are reſented by the Head. Chriſt ſaid not thus to his murderers on earth, Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why ſcourge ye, and why crucify ye me? But here, when the members ſuffer, he cries out from heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord! thou art more tender of thy body myſtical, than thou waſt of thy body natural; more ſenſible of thy members ſufferings, than of thine own. 2. The wonderful power of the heart changing grace of God. Saul cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Saul is no longer a lion, but a lamb; the wolf that hunted before for his prey, now gently couches like a ſheep; hears and obeys the voice of Chriſt the great Shepherd; and of a perſecutor of the church, becomes the great doctor of the Gentiles. Behold! the tare is become wheat; the child of wrath a choſen veſſel; the prodigy of nature, the miracle of grace. Lord! who can enough admire and magnify the ſovereignty and omnipotent prevalency of divine grace, which could refine and did extract very precious gold from ſo rough, ſo coarſe, and ſo baſe a metal? Converſion is a work of wonder in all men, but a miracle in this man, and extraordinarily ſtrange, and inſtantaneouſly ſudden; and therefore is by no means to be made the meaſure and ſtandard of every man's converſion. Shall we think no man converted, unleſs he be ſtruck down with a light and power immediately from heaven, and be taken with a fit of trembling, and frighted almoſt out of his wits? How many by the benefit of a good education, others by the bleſſing of God upon ſome affliction, and upon calm conſideration, without any great terrors and amazement, have been viſibly changed and converted? The effects and fruits of converſion are very viſible in all, but the manner of converſion is not alike in all. Things may be very viſible in their effects, which yet are not viſible in their cauſe. If the fruits of our converſion be viſible, the certainty of it is unqueſtionable, and the advantage of it will be unſpeakable, although we cannot tell the time when, or the manner how, the holy Spirit wrought it in us.

6 And he trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the Lord ſaid unto him, Ariſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.

Note here, 1. How eaſily God can make the fierceſt perſecutor to quake and tremble: Saul is ſtruck down, but it is to convert him, not confound him; he trembles, but his trembling was in order to rejoicing. It was a favourable, though an affrighting ſtroke, which ſtruck him down, but with deſign to raiſe him up again. Humiliation for ſin, in ſome meaſure always goes before a ſoul's acceptance of Chriſt, and ſubjection to him. 2. How ready and deſirous a converted perſon is to know and do the mind and will of God: *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* He is inquiſitive after his duty, and deſirous of the knowledge of it. We may ſooner find fire without heat, than a true convert without operative grace. It is not, Lord, what wilt thou have me to ſay? but, What thou wilt have me to do? It is not the talking, but the walking and working perſon that is the true chriſtian. 3. God's anſwer to Saul's inquiry; *Ariſe, go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do. Mark,* He was going to Damaſcus before on the devil's errand, now God bids him go; he had better authority for his going thither now, than what he had from the high prieſt before: he went before for others deſtruction; he now goes for his own inſtruction, in order to ſalvation: *There it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.*

7 And the men which journeyed with him ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, but ſeeing no man.

Note here, The teſtimony or witneſſes of Saul's converſion, to wit, the men that journeyed with him; it is probable that he had a conſiderable number of officers with him, to bring both men and women that profeſſed chriſtianity bound to Jeruſalem. Theſe ſaw the light ſhining, and heard a confuſed noiſe like thunder; but they ſaw not Chriſt himſelf, as he did, nor heard the articulate voice of Chriſt that he heard, which ſpake ſo powerfully, ſo convincingly, and ſo convertingly to his ſoul. Lord, how many are there that come under thine ordinances, who hear only (like Saul's companions) a confuſed noiſe and empty ſound! They do not hear the diſtinct voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to their hearts with a ſtrong hand, inwardly and effectually, and ſo remain under the power of unbelief, in an unconverted ſtate.

8 And Saul aroſe from the earth: and when his eyes were opened he ſaw no man; but they led *him* by the hand, and brought *him* into Damaſcus. 9 And he was three days without ſight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Note here, 1. The change of Saul's poſture; *He aroſe from the earth.* He that fell to the earth a perſecutor, riſes up a ſaint. O free mercy, and aſtoniſhing rich grace! that the earth upon which he lay did not open her mouth and ſwallow him up alive: He that had run away from God, and employed his feet in the ſervice of the devil, is once more ſet upon his feet again. 2. His blindneſs and loſs of ſight: *When his eyes were opened, he ſaw no man.* Chriſt taught him, by his bodily blindneſs, the blindneſs of his ſoul in ſpiritual things, which till now he was inſenſible of. As Saul was, ſo all men naturally are ſpiritually blind, before regeneration and converſion: True, he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and was a great proficient in human learning, but after his converſion he counted that knowledge no better than blindneſs, Phil. iii. 7, 8. *Note*, 3. His manuduction or leading by the hand into the city; *They led him by the hand into Damaſcus.* Who led him? Doubtleſs his companions that came along with him upon his bloody deſign from Jeruſalem. Here the blind led the blind; thoſe very hands lead him to Damaſcus, which ſhould have haled the ſaints from Damaſcus to Jeruſalem. But, O Saul! thou hadſt a better leader than all theſe, even Chriſt himſelf: He led thee by the hand into the city, in order to the completing of thy converſion: Now happy Saul! though formerly rebellious, who haſt thy Saviour for a leader, thou ſhalt neither wander nor miſcarry. 4. The duration and continuance of Saul's blindneſs: *He was three days without ſight.* This was a long night to him who perſecuted the children of the day; a juſt time for him to be in darkneſs, who ſo implacably attempted to blow out the light of the goſpel: But perhaps no leſs time would have been ſufficient to humble him for his rage and madneſs againſt Chriſt and his members. Beſides, there are ſome that think, that, in theſe three days of his continued blindneſs, he had that rapture into the third heaven, which is mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 2. But however that be, doubtleſs in that time his mind was filled with divine contemplations; and that glorious goſpel was taught him in three days, which he taught to others all his days. 5. His abſtinence from food; *He did neither eat nor drink:* He ſpent thoſe three days, we may believe, in faſting and prayer, and extraordinary humiliation before God, for his former wicked life, and particularly for his violent perſecution of the church of Chriſt: He faſted, to make him more fervent in prayer; for faſting prepares for prayer, and gives wings to prayer.

10 ¶ And there was a certain diſciple at Damaſ-
cus named Ananias, and to him ſaid the Lord in a
viſion, Ananias. And he ſaid, Behold, I *am here*,
Lord. 11 And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and
go into the ſtreet which is called Straight, and in-
quire in the houſe of Judas for *one* called Saul of
Tarſus; for behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath ſeen
in a viſion a man named Ananias coming in, and
putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his
ſight.

Note here, 1. Though Chriſt converted Paul himſelf, yet Ananias his miniſter muſt inſtruct him. By Chriſt is grace infuſed, but by his miniſters increaſed; ſuch an honour doth Chriſt put upon the miniſters of the goſpel, that he makes uſe of their endeavours ordinarily both for the production and augmentation of grace in the hearts of his people. O, the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of a ſtanding miniſtry! It is a ſingular favour to have the mind of God made known to us by men like ourſelves: And behold the honour that God puts upon the miniſters, in uſing them as conduit pipes, for conveying the water of life to us, which he is not pleaſed to communicate immediately from himſelf. 2. What an exact knowledge the Lord has of particular perſons and particular places: He tells Ananias in what city Saul was, in Damaſcus; in what ſtreet he was, in the ſtreet called *Straight*; in whoſe houſe he was, in the *houſe of Judas.* It is a matter of conſolation, yea, of higheſt conſolation to the children of God, to know and remember that God knows them, that God knows their perſons, knows their purpoſes, knows their performances, knows their place of abode; that he knows who they are, what they do, and where they dwell. It aſſures them as to their perſons, they ſhall be accepted; as to their performances, that they ſhall be rewarded; as to their habitations, that they ſhall be loved, bleſſed and protected by him. So dear are the holy ſervants of God unto him, that he loves the very ſtreet in which they lodge, the houſe in which they dwell; the walls of their habitation are always before him, and he delights continually to look upon them. Let holineſs to the Lord then be always writ in fair and legible characters upon the walls of our houſes, Zech. xiv. 10. *Note*, 3. The courſe which Almighty God takes to remove all fear from Ananias's mind, and to encourage him to go to Saul, according to the direction given him; although he had been ſuch a bloody perſecutor, he tells him, That, *Behold, he prayeth*; as if he had ſaid, "Though he has been bad, he is not now what he was, he is another man; nay, he is a new man, he is truly and thoroughly converted; and this is the undeniable evidence and teſtimony of it, That whereas before he perſecuted, now he prayeth; *Behold he prayeth.*" *Learn* thence, That ſpiritual breath is a good ſign of ſpiritual birth: None of God's children are ſtill-born, they all come crying into the world. The duty of prayer faithfully and perſeveringly performed, is a good evidence that a ſoul is thoroughly converted and brought home by repentance unto God: *Behold, Saul prayeth!* But did he never pray till now? Yes, no doubt, many a time when he was a ſtrict Phariſee, he prayed after a looſe and cuſtomary manner; but he never prayed ſo ſenſibly and ſo feelingly, ſo ſpiritually and affectionately, ſo fervently and perſeveringly before, as he did after his converſion: His prayer before, was the cry of the old, now of the new creature; before, he prayed with coldneſs and indifferency, now he prays with warmth and fervency, as a perſon in earneſt for his ſoul's happineſs and ſalvation; therefore Chriſt brings it in with a note of attention and obſervation: Now, *Behold, he prayeth.*

13 Then Ananias anſwered, Lord, I have heard
by many of this man, how much evil he hath done
to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem. 14 And here he hath
authority from the chief prieſts to bind all that call
on thy name. 15 But the Lord ſaid unto him, Go
thy way: for he is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear
my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the

children of Iſrael. 16 For I will ſhew him how
great things he muſt ſuffer for my name's ſake.

Note here, 1. Ananias's reluctancy and fear to go to Saul, becauſe of his former violent perſecution, and preſent commiſſion; *Lord, I have heard of this man*, &c. *Learn*, That ſuch as are very ready and forward for Chriſt's ſervice, may, upon appearing difficulties, hang back, till they be helped over thoſe difficulties by the helping hand of Chriſt, Thus it was with Ananias: *Behold*, ſays he, *here am I, Lord*, ver. 10. to ſhew his readineſs to run on any errand that Chriſt would ſend him: But when he came to underſtand his meſſage, he was affrighted and began to draw back: Therefore the Lord graciouſly condeſcends to remove the ſtumbling-block that lay in the way of his ſervant's obedience. Fear not; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "*Go thy way*, he is not what he was, he is another man: yea, he is a new man." 2. The honourable title which Chriſt puts upon Saul, *He is a choſen veſſel*; that is, a perſon choſen of God to convey the divine treaſure of the goſpel, not only to Jews, but Gentiles alſo, even to the greateſt and higheſt among them; *He is a choſen veſſel*, &c. Where *obſerve*, 1. The term of uſefulneſs; he is a veſſel. Now a veſſel is not a natural, but an artificial inſtrument. No man is born, but made a miniſter of the goſpel. Veſſels are not of equal capacity, ſome are greater, others leſs; all miniſters have not like endowments, nor are they equally fitted for the ſacred employment. Again, veſſels are receptive inſtruments; they muſt take in before they can give out. What the miniſters of the goſpel have received of the Lord, that they deliver to their people; they give out what God gives in. Finally, veſſels are for effuſion, as well as for reception; they let out, as well as take in; yea, therefore take in, that they may let out; therefore have the miniſters of Chriſt a treaſure of divine knowledge in themſelves, that they may communicate and impart it to others. And it is not impaired by imparting, but like the *oil in the widow's veſſel*, increaſed by pouring out. A miniſter, by communicating the treaſure of his knowledge, enriches others without impoveriſhing himſelf. 2. The term of excellency, *He is a choſen veſſel, choſen* to preach Chriſt, *choſen* to ſuffer for Chriſt; a *veſſel choſen* to bear the divine treaſure of the goſpel both to Jews and Gentiles. Lord! what honour doſt thou put upon thy miniſters in making them veſſels of honour fit for the maſter's uſe and the family's ſervice! If I may not be a veſſel of gold or ſilver, let me be a veſſel of wood or ſtone, ſo I may be a veſſel unto honour, a ſucceſsful inſtrument in thy hand, for thy glory, and the church's good.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into
the houſe; and putting his hands on him, ſaid,
Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jeſus, that appeared
unto thee in the way as thou cameſt, hath ſent me
that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled
with the Holy Ghoſt. 18 And immediately there
fell from his eyes as it had been ſcales: and he received
ſight forthwith, and aroſe, and was baptized.
19 And when he had received meat, he was ſtrengthened.
Then was Saul certain days with the diſciples which were at Damaſcus.

Note here, 1. Ananias, though no apoſtle, no deacon, nor miniſter that we read of, but an ordinary and private chriſtian only, yet he has power to heal Saul of his blindneſs, and to confer the Holy Ghoſt; *Receive thy ſight, and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt*: If ſo, undoubtedly he had an extraordinary warrant for this extraordinary work; for none but the apoſtles had power to confer the Holy Ghoſt.—No ordinary perſon ought to undertake any part of the miniſterial function without an extraordinary call and commiſſion. 2. The title given by Ananias to Saul, *Brother Saul*; they were now brethren by faith and profeſſion, owning the ſame God, united to the ſame Saviour, animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame promiſes, partakers of the ſame hope, and heirs of the ſame glory. As the ſcripture ſpeaks of a brotherhood betwixt Chriſt and believers, *He is not aſhamed to call them brethren*; ſo it ſpeaks of a brotherhood betwixt believers themſelves, *Love the brotherhood*; that is, the whole fraternity and ſociety of chriſtians, who are *ſanguine Chriſti conglutinati*, cemented by the blood of Chriſt, and united by the bond of love. 3. How this converted perſon, Saul, takes upon him the badge of chriſtianity by baptiſm; *He aroſe, and was baptized*. Liſting himſelf thereby a ſoldier under Chriſt's exalted banner, and entering himſelf a member of that church which heretofore he had made havock of. 4. The prudent care which Saul takes of his health, by giving nature its neceſſary refreſhment; *He received meat, and was ſtrengthened*. Doubtleſs his body was much weakened and enfeebled, by his long journey partly, but by his conſternation, fear, and grief eſpecially, as alſo by his humiliations, watchings, faſting and prayer: It was therefore his duty to refreſh nature, and to ſtrengthen himſelf for the ſervice of his great Maſter, wherever he ſhould pleaſe to ſend him. Whilſt we are in the body, there is a debt of care which we owe to the body: Meat and drink are the ſupports of life, under the influence of the divine bleſſing; and all ſuperſtitious abſtinence from food is no better than will-worſhip. Laſtly, Saul is no ſooner changed himſelf, but he changeth his company and acquaintance. He no longer aſſociates with the chief prieſts and rulers of the ſynagogues, but with the followers of Jeſus, ver. 19. *Then was Saul*, &c. Men who cunningly conceal their inclinations, may yet be known by their conſtant companions. Saul was now a companion of them that feared God, and kept his commandments. The diſciples at Damaſcus, whom he came to deſtroy, are now become his delight.

20 And ſtraightway he preached Chriſt in the
ſynagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But
all that heard *him* were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this
he that deſtroyed them which called on this name
in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that
he might bring them bound unto the chief prieſts?
22 But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and
confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus,
proving that this is very Chriſt. 25 ¶ And after
that

that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counſel to kill him. 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the diſciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a baſket.

Here we have an account of St. Paul's entrance upon his miniſterial office in preaching the goſpel; *Straightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues.* Where *note*, 1. The time of his preaching, *Straightway*; he fell preſently to his Maſter's work, not conſulting fleſh and blood about the difficulties and dangers that might attend it: but performs his duty with ſuch zeal and immediate application, as became a perſon of his holy character and profeſſion. 2. The place where he preached, *In the Jewiſh ſynagogues:* He was afterwards indeed the apoſtle of the Gentiles, but, according to Chriſt's command, he firſt preached the word of life to the Jews, to convert ſome, and to leave others without excuſe: After which he turned from them unto the Gentiles, according to Acts xiii. 46. *It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt be ſpoken to you*, &c. 3. The doctrine he preached; *That Jeſus was the Son of God*, the true, promiſed, and expected Meſſias; and that all the prophecies and predictions of the prophets concerning the Meſſias, were exactly fulfilled in his perſon. 4. The effect of his preaching: (1.) Some of his auditors were amazed, admiring that ſo peſtilent a perſecutor was become a powerful preacher, *Theſe glorified God in him.* (2.) Others were confuted, yea, confounded, being unable to withſtand the force and dint of his argument, by which he proved, that this is the very Chriſt. *Note*, 5. The hazard which the apoſtle ran in preaching the goſpel at Damaſcus; his enemies, who were not able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake, took counſel to kill him, and in order to this, watched the gates of the city day and night, there being in their apprehenſions no poſſibility of his eſcaping. 6. The manner and means of his deliverance; ſome chriſtians who dwelt at Damaſcus, let him down in a baſket by the wall, and ſo he eſcaped the hands of his bloody enemies. The wiſdom of God is never at a loſs to find out ways and means, either ordinary or extraordinary, for the deliverance of his ſervants, when their deliverance makes moſt for his own glory, and the goſpel's advantage. God had much work for Paul to do; and till he had finiſhed his work, his enemies could not take him off with all their combined power and malice.

26 And when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a diſciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, and that he had ſpoken to him; and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jeruſalem. 29 And he ſpake boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and diſputed againſt the Grecians: but they went about to ſlay him. 30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ceſarea, and ſent him forth to Tarſus.

Here we have an account of the ſecond place which Paul exerciſed his miniſtry in; namely, Jeruſalem. Having eſcaped with his life at Damaſcus, he comes to Jeruſalem, and attempts to join himſelf to the diſciples there, who were all afraid of him, knowing how bloody a perſecutor he had been. The converſion of a perſecutor is ſo rare and ſeldom heard of, that it puts the largeſt charity hard to it, to believe the verity and reality of ſuch a perſon's converſion unto God. The diſciples who had formerly felt the effects of Saul's perſecuting rage and fury, might juſtly be afraid of taking him into an intimate fellowſhip and communion with the church. *Obſerve* next, How Barnabas was ſtirred up by the Spirit of God to preſent Saul to the church, and free their minds of all fears and jealouſies which they had entertained concerning him; and this he doth by a threefold argument: 1. Becauſe he had *ſeen Jeſus Chriſt in the way*, as he went to perſecute the ſaints at Damaſcus. 2. Becauſe *the Lord had ſpoken to him* with a ſtrong hand, and wrought a mighty change in him, and upon him; the perſecutor being now become a great profeſſor. 3. Becauſe he was not only become a *profeſſor*, but a *preacher* of that goſpel he had perſecuted, and this boldly and publicly, both at Damaſcus and in Arabia; proving undeniably that Jeſus was the Chriſt, and the true Meſſiah. This teſtimony of Barnabas was full and ſatisfactory, both to the church at Jeruſalem, and alſo to Peter, James, and John, who gave Paul the right hand of fellowſhip, and he went with them to the work. *Obſerve*, laſtly, How the enemies of the goſpel conſpire againſt Paul's life here at Jeruſalem, as they did before at Damaſcus; for preaching Chriſt, and diſputing with the Grecians in defence of the goſpel of Chriſt, they lay ſiege for his life. *Learn* thence, That always oppoſition, and often perſecution, is the evil ghoſt that haunts the preachers and preaching of the goſpel wherever it goes. To preach the word convincingly, brings the ill-will of an evil world infallibly upon the head of the preacher. But why did theſe men rather ſeek to kill Paul than Peter, James, or Barnabas? *Anſwer*, Becauſe he was formerly one of their own, of their own company, of their own college; a perſecutor like themſelves, and a perſecutor with themſelves. This enraged them; they looked not upon him as an apoſtle, but as an apoſtate; one that had revolted from them, a renegado, and as ſuch they meditate his deſtruction night and day: inſomuch, that it is probable, that never were ſo many ſufferings heaped upon the head of any miniſter of the goſpel throughout the world, as upon St. Paul, (ſee them reckoned up, 2 Cor. xi. 23.) partly through the hatred of the Jews, and partly through the fury of the blind Gentiles; yet the Lord delivered him out of all. Till his work was done, and his race run, and he had finiſhed the courſe of his miniſtry, neither the malice of men, nor the rage of devils, could take him off. Bleſſed be God, our times are in his hands, not in our enemies, nor yet in our own.

31 Then had the churches reſt throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified;

and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.

That is, "After Saul's miraculous converſion, and after he was ſent away, and departed from thoſe parts, where the Jews, his old companions in perſecution, could not endure his preſence, he having been juſt before as zealous a perſecutor as themſelves: Then the churches planted by Philip and others throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, had much reſt and peace, and were greatly edified in knowledge and faith, in holineſs and love; and the graces and comforts of the holy Spirit daily increaſing in them, the number of believers daily multiplied." *Learn* thence, 1. That after the perſecution and weariſome troubles of the church, God has his times for their peace and reſt. God ſends his church ſun-ſhine after ſhowers, a calm after a ſtorm, health after an hectic, and a Canaan's reſt after a wilderneſs journey. 2. That it is the church's duty to improve her peace and reſt for her ſpiritual edifying; that is, for her ſettlement and growth, for her eſtabliſhment and increaſe in all the graces and comforts of the holy Spirit. 3. That it is a very great bleſſing to have the churches of God multiplied, and their multiplication is the happy fruit and conſequent of their having peace: *Then had the churches reſt, were edified, and multiplied.*

32 ¶ And it came to paſs, as Peter paſſed throughout all *quarters*, he came down alſo to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was ſick of the palſy. 34 And Peter ſaid unto him, Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe, and make thy bed. And he aroſe immediately. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron ſaw him, and turned to the Lord.

The Holy Ghoſt now leaves the relation of St. Paul's life and actions for the preſent, and returns to give a farther account of St. Peter, what he ſaid, what he did, and what he ſuffered, particularly at Lydda, at Joppa, and Ceſarea: At Lydda he healed Eneas, at Joppa he raiſed Dorcas, and at Ceſarea he preached the goſpel to the Gentiles. *Obſerve*, 1. What this great apoſtle St. Peter did at Lydda: He there, *in the name*, that is, by the power of Chriſt, healeth Eneas, who lay ſick of the palſy, and had kept his bed eight years. Where *note*, The difficulty of the cure, the manner of the cure, and the effects of the cure. (1.) The difficulty of the cure; the diſeaſe was a dead palſy, which had taken away the uſe of his limbs, and made him bed-rid for eight years: All this is recorded, to ſhew the difficulty of the cure, and the greatneſs of the miracle: *Omnipotenti medico nullus inſanabilis occurrit morbus*; "To ſuch an Almighty Phyſician, as the Great God is, no diſeaſe is found incurable." (2.) The manner of the cure: St. Peter acts in Chriſt's name, not his own; and lets the lame man know whom he ſhould own for his benefactor, Chriſt himſelf: The apoſtle was but the inſtrument in Chriſt's hand; and that the cure was perfectly miraculous, appears by this, The cripple was cured immediately, and cured perfectly; it was a preſent cure, ver. 34. *And he aroſe immediately.* The inſtantaneous manner of the cure ſhews it to be miraculous, and by a divine power; for nature and art act in time and by degrees, bringing nothing to perfection on a ſudden: Whereas this cure was wrought in a moment, his ſtrength is reſtored in an inſtant. It was alſo a perfect cure, and as an evidence of it, he takes up his bed. This was to ſhew that he was fully recovered. (3.) The effects of this cure: It had ſuch an influence upon the ſpectators of this miracle, *that all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron, when they ſaw it, turned to the Lord*, ver. 35. That is, they embraced the faith, ſeeing the cripple ſo ſtrangely, ſo ſuddenly, and ſo perfectly cured.

36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain diſciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which ſhe did. 37 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that ſhe was ſick, and died: whom when they had waſhed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber. 38 And foraſmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the diſciples had heard that Peter was there, they ſent unto him two men, deſiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter aroſe, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber; and all the widows ſtood by him weeping, and ſhewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while ſhe was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and turning *him* to the body, ſaid, Tabitha, ariſe. And ſhe opened her eyes: and when ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and liſted her up; and when he had called the ſaints and widows, he preſented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa: and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to paſs, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

This chapter concludes with a relation of a ſecond miracle wrought by St. Peter at Joppa, in raiſing dead Dorcas to life. Where *note*, 1. The miracle upon whom this miracle was wrought, Dorcas, a woman rich in good works, full of alms-deeds; yet neither her piety towards God, nor her liberality to the poor, could preſerve her either from death or from diſeaſes. A dear diſciple may be diſeaſed, and die: *Behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick*, John xi. 3. yea, and dead too. Strength of grace, and dearneſs of reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail againſt diſeaſes. Good Dorcas here lies dead, with her body waſhed, not only to fit her for burial, but eſpecially to ſhew their hope of the reſurrection. 2. The doleful lamentation made by the widows for the loſs of this good woman, who uſed to clothe the naked with the labour of her hands: She did not ſpend her time in making rich apparel for herſelf, but in making garments for the poor; and it ſeems ſhe had good ſtore of them ready made by her for the poor's uſe, as their neceſſities did require; *They ſhewed*

ſhewed coats and garments which Dorcas had made; the undoubted tokens and evidences of her pious charity. *Learn* thence, That the beſt relics of ſaints that can remain in honour of them when departed, are acts of piety towards God, and of charity to the poor. 3. The manner of St. Peter's working this miracle. (1.) He puts them all out of the room where the dead lay; partly to prevent oſtentation and vain-glory; partly to prevent diſturbance by their immoderate mourning; and partly to prevent interruption in the exerciſe of prayer, which he was now about to perform. (2.) He kneeled down; which recommends to us that reverential poſture in our prayers to the great God, of kneeling before him. (3.) He prayed; thereby owning and acknowledging, that the power of raiſing her was from God, not from himſelf. *Note*, laſtly, The effect of this miracle: Many believed in the Lord: She was raiſed more for the good of others than her own; for her reſtoring to natural life was the occaſion of raiſing many to a life of faith: Upon the ſight of this famous miracle performed by St. Peter, many believed.

CHAP. X.

This chapter acquaints us with the firſt overtures which the apoſtles made to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles: According to Chriſt's command, they began at Jeruſalem, *and preached to the Jews throughout* Judea, Samaria, *and* Galilee; *but now time was come, for beating flat and laying down the partition-wall betwixt Jew and Gentile, which accordingly is done in this chapter, by St.* Peter*'s preaching to* Cornelius, *who was the firſt fruits of the Gentiles converſion to Chriſtianity.*

THERE was a certain man in Ceſarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*, 2 *A* devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway:

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon deſcribed, to whom St. Peter is ſent to preach the goſpel; by his name, Cornelius; by his occupation, a ſoldier; by his religion, a proſelyte or converted Gentile, of which there were two ſorts; ſome were proſelytes of the covenant, that is, ſuch Gentiles as ſubmitted themſelves to circumciſion, and the whole Moſaical pædagogy: Theſe were counted as Jews, and freely converſed with as ſuch. Others were called proſelytes of the gate: Theſe were not circumciſed, nor did they conform to the Moſaic rites, but were obliged only to obſerve the ſeven precepts of Noah; namely, to worſhip the true God, and not idols; to abſtain from blood, from fornication, from robbery, to adminiſter juſtice impartially, and to do as they would be done unto. Such a proſelyte as this, the Jews would not converſe with, but counted unclean, being a Gentile, and ſuch an one was this Cornelius; but though a Gentile, though a ſoldier, though a commiſſion-officer, yet a pious, charitable, good man. In all nations, in all places, of all employments, God has a number of holy and gracious perſons to honour him in the world, according to their preſent meaſure of light received from him. 2. The evidence which Cornelius gave of his religious fearing God; *He feared God with all his houſe, he gave much alms, and prayed to God always.* Cornelius was therefore really, becauſe relatively, religious; he obligeth his family to fear God as well as himſelf, and together with himſelf, like Abraham, *He commands his houſhold after him to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. And thus the bleſſing of Abraham came upon this Gentile, Cornelius. *He feared God with all his houſe*; and his charity was as eminent as his piety: *He gave much alms to the people*; that is, to the people of the Jews, to whom alms was not unclean, though given by an heathen perſon. It is further added, That *He prayed to God always:* He prayed to the true God, not to idols; and he prayed to God always; that is, at every fitting ſeaſon, and convenient opportunity for the duty. We are ſaid in ſcripture to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably. Thus to pray always, to pray evermore, to pray without ceaſing, is firſt, to keep the heart continually, as much as may be, in a praying frame and diſpoſition; and, ſecondly, to embrace the proper ſeaſons and opportunities for prayer. The beauty of religion lies much in the harmonious performance of the duties of it; when one duty doth not interfere with another, but we prudently find time for all. Thus did Cornelius here: *He feared God with all his houſe*, &c.

3 He ſaw in a viſion evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and ſaying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and ſaid, What is it, Lord? And he ſaid unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Obſerve here, 1. The extraordinary favour afforded to Cornelius; namely, the viſion of an holy angel. This devout man did not ſeek the face of God in vain; God ſends him firſt an angel to comfort him, then an apoſtle to inſtruct him: *He ſaw in a viſion an angel of God.* 2. The effect which the ſight of the angel had upon Cornelius; *He was afraid. Learn* hence, That whilſt our ſouls inhabit theſe mortal and ſinful bodies, the appearance of angels is terrible and frightful to them, and cannot be otherwiſe; partly upon a natural, and partly upon a moral account: Upon a natural account, becauſe the dread of ſpirits ſtrikes our natural ſpirits, they ſhrink and tremble at the approach of ſpirits; ſpirits of men and beaſts quake at it; witneſs the aſs, Numb. xxii. 25. that Balaam rode upon: And alſo upon a moral account, becauſe of our conſciouſneſs of guilt; wherever there is guilt, there will be a fear upon an extraordinary appearance of God to us, though it be but mediately by an angel. 3. The joyful meſſage which the angel brings to Cornelius; that *his prayers and his alms were come up for a memorial before God. Learn*, That as God records all the prayers of his people, ſo he books all the acts of mercy which any of them at any time do exerciſe and ſhew unto his members; he takes notice of the perſon, of the action, of the time when, of the manner how, of the meaſure and degree, how much; if it be but a cup of water, yea, a cup of cold water, given in love to Chriſt in his members, it ſhall not be forgotten, but recorded and rewarded.

5 And now ſend men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon whoſe ſurname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea-*ſide*; he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.

Note here, 1. That although God ſent an angel to Cornelius, to acquaint him with his will; yet the angel was to direct him to the apoſtle, who was to inſtruct him in the faith. This, no doubt, God did, to put honour upon the miniſters and miniſtry of the goſpel; as alſo to let us underſtand and know, that we are not to expect extraordinary ways of teaching, when God affords us the uſe of ordinary means. *Send to Joppa, and call for Peter, he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.* 2. What an exact knowledge Almighty God has of particular perſons, and particular places; he tells Cornelius, by the angel, in what town Peter was, in Joppa; in whoſe houſe he lodged, in Simon the tanner's; in what part of the town the houſe ſtood, by the ſea-ſide. It is matter of conſolation, yea, of great conſolation to the people of God, to know and remember that God knows them: He knows their perſons, their purpoſes, their performances, their places of abode; he knows who they are, what they do, and where they dwell. So dear are the holy ſervants of God unto him, that he loves the very ſtreet in which they lodge, the houſe in which they dwell, the walls of their habitation are continually before him, and he delights perpetually to look upon them: O let holineſs to the Lord be writ in legible characters upon the walls of our houſes? Zech. xiv. 20. Then will God dwell where we dwell, and the beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in ſafety by him.

7 And when the angel which ſpake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier of them that waited on him continually. 8 And when he had declared all *theſe* things unto them, he ſent them to Joppa. 9 ¶ On the morrow as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the houſe-top to pray, about the ſixth hour. 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And ſaw heaven opened, and a certain veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Riſe, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice *ſpake* unto him again the ſecond time, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the veſſel was received up again into heaven.

Obſerve here, That as Cornelius had a viſion from God, to encourage him to ſend for Peter, ſo the apoſtle had likewiſe a viſion to encourage him to go to Cornelius. In which, *note*, (1.) The time when he had this viſion, it was *at the ſixth hour*, or high noon; which was one of the three hours of prayer: When we are upon our knees in prayer, then is the time for receiving gracious manifeſtations from God. (2.) The place where he had this viſion; when at prayer upon the houſe top. The Jewiſh houſes being flat-roofed, with battlements on them, he went up to the houſe-top to pray, as a place of privacy and retirement, free from noiſe and diſtraction; as alſo to take advantage of the place for divine contemplation, and perhaps to look towards the temple, which was formerly a type of Chriſt. It teaches us, that fitting places, as well as fitting ſeaſons for prayer, are to be ſought out and improved by us: *Peter went up upon the houſe to pray.* (3.) The frame wherein St. Peter was as to his body, when he had this viſion; namely, exceeding hungry: God ordered it ſo, to fit him the more for this viſion of dainty meat. O taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is in ſending down a diſh of dainties from heaven to his hungry children, that are praying to him here on earth! (4.) The manner how the viſion was made to St. Peter: It was in the way of a divine rapture or ecſtacy; *he fell into a trance*; his ſoul was as it were abſtracted out of the body, and abſent from it; that is, drawn off from the perception of all earthly and ſenſible objects, and enabled unto a more entire attendance upon ſpiritual and heavenly matters and myſteries: To be ſure it made him forget his dinner, and filled him with divine conſolation; a ſoul fed and filled with divine dainties doth ſometimes forget bodily hunger: We read no more of St. Peter's ſharp hunger after this divine entertainment. (5.) The viſion itſelf, or what was repreſented to St. Peter, firſt to his eye, then to his ear: To his eye firſt, *He ſaw heaven opened*, ver. 11. Teaching, that although heaven had been ſhut to the children of men by the ſin of the firſt Adam, yet now it was opened by the grace of the ſecond Adam to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles. Next, he ſaw a great veſſel deſcending like a large ſheet, with all ſorts of meats in it, both clean and unclean; and he hears a voice from God, giving him a commiſſion, though he was a Jew, to feed freely without diſtinction of clean and unclean; ſignifying to him thereby, that he might indifferently converſe with Gentiles as well as Jews, and preach the goſpel to the one as well as the other. *Note*, laſtly, How St. Peter's Jewiſh principles made him ſtartle at this large commiſſion, looking upon the command as unlawful and impious, verſe 14. *Not ſo, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.* But mark the divine correction: *What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common.* His miſtake was rectified by God, who gave him by this viſion a clear intimation, that the diſtinction of meats was now taken away, and the difference between nation and nation was now removed by the death of Chriſt; and conſequently, that he might go and preach the goſpel to Cornelius, a Gentile, without ſcruple or doubtfulneſs; the partition-wall betwixt Jew and Gentile being now broke down. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of the converſion of the Gentiles came firſt from heaven, was revealed and made known by God himſelf, who has graciouſly declared, Gal. iii. 28. *That there is neither Jew nor*

nor Greek; neither bond nor free, neither male nor female. For we are all one in Chriſt Jeſus. Thanks be to God, *that the bleſſing of Abraham is come upon us, through Jeſus Chriſt.*

17 Now while Peter doubted in himſelf what this viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean, behold, the men which were ſent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's houſe, and ſtood before the gate, 18 And called, and aſked whether Simon which was ſurnamed Peter lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the viſion, the Spirit ſaid unto him, Behold, three men ſeek thee. 20 Ariſe therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have ſent them.

Here *note*, 1. How St. Peter ſets himſelf to meditate upon what he had ſeen and heard from God; *He pondered with himſelf what this viſion, which he had ſeen, ſhould mean.* Whatever paſſes from God to man, either by the eye, or through the ear, ought to be ſubject of our deepeſt meditation. We are to contemplate the excellencies and perfections which are in the word and works of God with an intellectual eye, and to dwell upon them in our ſerious thoughts. 2. The care which the holy Spirit took to reſolve ſatisfactorily the inward doubtings and reaſonings of St. Peter's mind concerning this matter: *I have ſent them* ſays the holy Spirit, *therefore ariſe and go down, nothing doubting.* Where *obſerve*, Both the divinity and perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt: He that knows the thoughts, the doubtings and reaſonings of man's heart, as the Holy Ghoſt here did St. Peter's, is truly and really God; and he that commands and forbids, is really a perſon. So doth the holy Spirit here; he commands St. Peter to go to Cornelius, and forbids his doubting of the lawfulneſs or ſucceſs of his journey; *Go with them, doubting nothing*, &c.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were ſent unto him from Cornelius; and ſaid, Behold, I am he whom ye ſeek: what *is* the cauſe wherefore ye are come? 22 And they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, a juſt man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to ſend for thee into his houſe, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entered into Ceſarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinſmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worſhipped *him*. 26 But Peter took him up, ſaying, Stand up: I myſelf alſo am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath ſhewed me that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent for. I aſk therefore for what intent ye have ſent for me?

Note here, 1. The meſſengers whom Cornelius ſent to St. Peter, two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier. All ſoldiers are not rude; but ſome are religious. Behold a devout ſoldier under a devout captain, and two houſhold ſervants whom their maſter's example had rendered humble and modeſt. 2. The juſt and laudable, not falſe and flattering character, which they gave of their maſter Cornelius; *That he was a juſt man, one that feared God, and one of good report among all the nations of the Jews.* It is both the duty and the commendation of ſervants, to give to their maſters due honour; and, when called to it, their deſerved character. 3. How St. Peter's doubts being reſolved, he diſputes no further, delays no longer, but haſtens immediately to Cornelius: When once God's command is plain, we muſt not diſpute, but diſpatch; we muſt no longer object, but obey. 4. The reverence given by Cornelius to Peter; *he fell down at his feet and worſhipped him.* It ſeems to be more than a civil reverence which he gave him: It looks as if Cornelius took him for an angel in human ſhape, or a perſon ſent immediately from heaven to him; and accordingly he proſtrates himſelf before the apoſtle: But St. Peter would by no means receive any undue honour or reſpect from him, aſſuring him, That he was but a man, and God's meſſenger ſent unto him. Whatever Peter's pretended ſucceſſor challenges as his due, of reverence and homage, St. Peter himſelf would not ſuffer Cornelius to lie at his feet, much leſs to kiſs his feet: The ambaſſador would not run away with the honour which belonged to the prince that ſent him. 5. How St. Peter acquaints Cornelius, that that partition-wall betwixt the Jews and Gentiles, which was erected and ſet up by God's command, was now by the ſame authority pulled down and removed; and that no man is now unclean by any ceremonial uncleanneſs, becauſe he is not circumciſed; and conſequently, that Cornelius, though of another nation, might converſe with, and be converſed with, as freely as if born a Jew. Since the coming of Chriſt, no perſon or nation is legally or ceremonially unclean; but every nation, or every perſon, by nature, morally unclean.

30 And Cornelius ſaid, Four days ago I was faſting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe; and behold, a man ſtood before me in bright clothing, 31 And ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whoſe ſurname is Peter. He is lodged in the houſe of *one* Simon a tanner, by the ſea-*ſide*; who when he cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I ſent

to thee; and thou haſt well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Note here, 1. Cornelius relates the occaſion of his ſending for St. Peter, and the warrant which he had for ſo doing: He declares that as he was faſting and praying in his family, he had a viſion, in which an angel directed him to ſend for the apoſtle. Where *note*, That Cornelius doth not talk of his faſting, praying, and alms-giving, by way of oſtentation, to boaſt of himſelf, but only to give ſatiſfaction to St. Peter, that he had certain advice from heaven for what he did in ſending for him. 2. The readineſs of Cornelius's obedience in ſending for St. Peter; *Immediately therefore I ſent to thee.* Joppa from Ceſarea is computed to be about forty miles; but no ſooner did Cornelius receive the commandment, but without delay he put it in execution, *and ſent men to Joppa.* When our call is clear, our obedience muſt be ſpeedy. 3. The kind reception which Cornelius gives St. Peter; *Thou haſt well done that thou art come*; He doth not only approve of the apoſtle's coming, but thanks him for it. 4. The preparation and readineſs of Cornelius and his friends, to hear and receive the word of God from St. Peter's mouth: *We are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* Where *note*, 1. He deſires the ſame holy doctrine, which the apoſtle came to preach, may be delivered to his family, his friends, and his kinsfolk, as well as himſelf. A good man would not go to heaven alone; but is deſirous of the inſtruction, converſion, and ſalvation of others, as well as of himſelf: *We are all here.* 2. The place of God's pure worſhip is the place of his ſpecial preſence: *We are all here preſent before God.* 3. The end for which they were now come into the preſence of God; it was to hear what God ſhould ſpeak, yea, to hear all things which God ſhould command the apoſtle to ſpeak: Intimating to us, that as St. Peter himſelf was, ſo all the miniſters of Chriſt are, confined within their commiſſion, and muſt only ſpeak what God commands; neither are hearers bound to receive any thing elſe. Wo unto us, if when God ſends us of his errand, we will tell our own tale: The word is the *counſel of God*; now it is the counſel of God only, and the whole counſel of God alſo, that we are to declare, and our people are to hear; *We are all preſent before God, to hear all things*, &c.

34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I now very plainly perceive, that the partition-wall is broken down, and that national prerogatives, or perſonal excellencies, find no acceptance with God: But that any man, be he of what nation or family ſoever, if he feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, ſhall find acceptance with him." *Note* here, 1. That no external qualifications, perſonal privileges and prerogatives, will procure favour and acceptance with God, who neither receives nor rejects men barely for outward reſpects: *I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons.* 2. The true character of a religious man; he is one that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs; that is, a ſtrict obſerver of the duties of both tables, of piety towards God, and of juſtice and charity towards man; and the phraſe of working righteouſneſs, implies diligence, and delight, and perſeverance in the ways and works of righteouſneſs. 3. The privilege of ſuch a religious and truly righteous man: *He is accepted with God.* Thence *learn*, That both the perſon fearing God, and his works of righteouſneſs are accepted with him, of any nation under heaven, of any calling, ſex or condition whatſoever: *In every nation, he that*, &c.

36 The word which *God* ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt: He is Lord of all: 37 That word, *I ſay*, ye know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jeruſalem: whom they ſlew, and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, *even* to us who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

Obſerve here, 1. The antiquity of the goſpel, or of the doctrine of reconciliation by Jeſus Chriſt; it was preached to the patriarchs, and by the prophets to the ancient Iſraelites: *The word, which God ſent to the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt.* Thence *learn*, That there is but one way to ſalvation, namely, reconciliation with God through the blood of Chriſt: and this was declared to the children of Iſrael, as well as unto us; to them more darkly, to us more clearly, They went to heaven then the ſame way that believers do now, namely, by faith in the Lamb of God, who was to be ſlain; we by faith in him as already ſlain. 2. The dignifying title given to Chriſt: *He is Lord of all.* (1.) He is Lord of all, as God together with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt: The abſolute and ſupreme Lord of the whole creation, and unto whom all creatures are ſubject. (2.) He is Lord of all, as Mediator, Lord of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles: He is Lord of his church, Lord over ſaints and ſinners. Hypocrites and ſincere chriſtians, all are his ſubjects by obligation, ſome by voluntary conſent, and by an abſolute obedience unto his commands. 3. The argument by which the apoſtle proveth Chriſt to be *Lord of all:* As Mediator, namely, from his divine unction, ver. 38. *How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power*; that is, endued the human nature of Chriſt with the fulneſs of the graces of his holy Spirit, and conſecrated him to the work and office of a Mediator. 4. How Chriſt faithfully executed this office which he was anointed to: He went about doing good, all the time he was on earth, healing diſeaſes, and caſting out devils: for God was with him, in the fulneſs of his Deity, as he was his eternal Son; and in power, grace, and favour, as he was man and Mediator. Here *note*, 1. The great work and buſineſs of our Saviour's life; it was to do good, namely, to the ſouls and bodies of men, to promote the temporal happineſs of the one, the ſpiritual and eternal happineſs of the other. 2. Our Saviour's diligence and indefatigable induſtry in this work of doing good; he made it the great buſineſs and conſtant employment of his life: *He went about doing good:* that is, ſeeking out all opportunities of being uſeful and beneficial to mankind. 5. The evidence and teſtimony which the apoſtle produces for all that he affirmed concerning Chriſt: *We are witneſſes of all things which he did in the land of Judea and in Jeruſalem.* Chriſt took the twelve apoſtles as it were into his family, that by their familiar converſe, and conſtant converſation with him, they might be enabled to teſtify of him: (1.) Touching his death, that he was ſlain and hanged on a tree; dying an ignominious and ſhameful, as well as a dolorous and painful death. (2.) Concerning his reſurrection, that God raiſed him from the dead; though he was laid, he was not loſt in the duſt: God would not ſuffer the Beloved of his ſoul to rot in a grave, but raiſed him up, and ſhewed him openly. And, (3.) As to the final judgment, the apoſtles were commanded to preach and teſtify to the people, that Jeſus Chriſt was ordained of God to be the Judge both of quick and dead; that is, of all that are in their graves, and of all that ſhall be found alive at his coming.

44 ¶ While Peter yet ſpake theſe words, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumciſion which believed were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. 46 For they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnify God. Then anſwered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Obſerve here, 1. What a miraculous power of the Holy Ghoſt did accompany St. Peter's miniſtry at this time, thereby giving him an aſſurance of the future converſion of the Gentiles, to the great wonder and aſtoniſhment of the Jews, who thought the promiſe of ſending down the Holy Ghoſt belonged only to the houſe of Iſrael. Accordingly, while Peter was thus preaching to Cornelius and his friends, the Holy Ghoſt, by his wonderful gift of tongues, deſcended on them, though Gentiles; at which the Jews marvelled. 2. The concluſion which the apoſtle draws from this; foraſmuch as the Gentiles were baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, he infers, that they ought to be baptized with water; and the argument runs thus: "They that have the grace ſignified by, and promiſed in baptiſm, have an undoubted right to baptiſm, the ſeal of the promiſe; but theſe Gentiles have the grace ſignified by and promiſed in baptiſm; they have the inward part, or thing ſignified; why then ſhould the outward ſign be denied them? He that has the inheritance, may claim the writings, the ſeals, &c. belonging to the inheritance. 3. The apoſtle without ſcruple baptized theſe Gentile converts; *Then commanded he them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus:* That is, he either baptized them himſelf, or gave commandment to others to do it; and though only the name of the Lord Jeſus be mentioned, yet this does not imply, but that they were baptized according to our Saviour's preſcription, *Matt.* xxviii. *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* This done, they deſired him to ſtay ſome days with them, that they might be farther inſtructed, confirmed, and comforted by his miniſtry.

CHAP. XI.

This chapter gives us an account how the promiſe of Jews and Gentiles becoming one flock, and enfolded in one church, received its accompliſhment: This was performed by the miniſtry of St. Peter, *who was the firſt that opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.*

AND the apoſtles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had alſo received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, they that were of the circumciſion contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Jews, apprehending that Chriſt and his grace had been only promiſed and confined to themſelves, the call and converſion of the Gentiles became a dreadful ſtumbling-block unto them, even to the believing as well as the unbelieving Jews. Hereupon *note*, 2. How they contended with Peter for eating and converſing with the Gentiles, and eſpecially for admitting them into the goſpel-communion without circumciſion: Whereas, although God forbad marriages with the Gentiles, he never forbad commerce and converſation with them: No converſation with the Gentiles, in order to the gaining of the Gentiles unto God, was never forbidden by God; but only ſuch as might withdraw the Jews from God, and corrupt them by idolatry.

4 But Peter rehearſed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, ſaying, 5 ¶ I was in the city of Joppa, praying: and in a trance I ſaw a viſion, a certain veſſel deſcend, as it had been a great ſheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me. 6 Upon the which when I had faſtened mine eyes, I conſidered, and ſaw four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild

beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice ſaying unto me, Ariſe, Peter; ſlay, and eat. 8 But I ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice anſwered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the houſe where I was, ſent from Ceſarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, theſe ſix brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's houſe: 13 And he ſhewed us how he had ſeen an angel in his houſe, which ſtood and ſaid unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter; 14 Who ſhall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy houſe ſhall be ſaved. 15 And as I began to ſpeak, the Holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, John indeed baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt. 17 Foraſmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I that I could withſtand God? 18 ¶ When they heard theſe things, they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Obſerve here, 1. How far St. Peter was from pretending to a ſuperiority over the reſt of the apoſtles; he did by no means think himſelf ſo far above them, as to diſdain to render an account of his actions to them, but with great ſincerity and humility, rehearſed and related the whole matter of fact, to their entire and joint ſatisfaction. 2. How he acquaints the apoſtles with the viſion he had ſeen, in which he was commanded to make no diſtinction of clean and unclean: Becauſe there was no natural turpitude in any kind of meat, ſave only as it was prohibited by God; and that God, who having made the law about difference of meats, had now abrogated it, and made all meats clean, and free to be eaten. 3. How he gives them the interpretation of this viſion, and acquaints them with the end for which this viſion was deſigned; namely, not ſo much to reveal to him the lawfulneſs of eating all ſorts of meats, as to acquaint him with his liberty and duty to converſe with and preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, whom he was no longer to look upon as unclean, though they were not circumciſed; but as *heirs and fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God.* Laſtly, The concluſion which St. Peter drew from the premiſes: "Seeing God hath made the Gentiles equal in grace with the believing Jews; ſeeing the Holy Ghoſt came down upon them in the ſame manner, and with the ſame effects as he did upon us apoſtles, I could not reaſonably deny them baptiſm, and by baptiſm admiſſion into the goſpel-church; for having the grace ſignified by baptiſm, they ought to have baptiſm, the ſeal of that grace; they that have the inward, are not to be denied the outward baptiſm; and they that were baptiſed with the Holy Ghoſt (as Cornelius and his family were) might and ought to be baptiſed with water, as Cornelius was; for had I denied them church-communion for want of the ceremony of circumciſion, it had certainly been a downright reſiſtance of, and diſobedience againſt God." Thence *learn*, That it is a downright oppoſition to the will of God, to ſhut them out of the church, and to debar them from the communion of it, who have received the ſanctifying graces of God's Holy Spirit; but differ from us in external rites and ceremonies only.

19 ¶ Now they which were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jeſus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 ¶ Then tidings of theſe things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jeruſalem: and they ſent forth Barnabas, that he ſhould go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. That Antioch becomes the Jeruſalem of the Gentile Chriſtians: That is, the chief place whither the Gentile converts reſorted; as Jeruſalem, before the diſperſion by perſecution, was reſorted to by the Jews, and made the principal ſeat of their reſidence. 2. How God over-ruled the perſecution and aſperſion occaſioned by St. Stephen's death, for diſſeminating and ſcattering the goſpel as far as Antioch, verſe 19. *They which were ſcattered abroad*, &c. Thus has the blood of the martyrs all along been the ſeed of the church, and what the devil and his inſtruments have deſigned for the extirpation, God has conſtantly over-ruled for the propagation of the goſpel. 3. The great ſucceſs which the miniſters and miniſtry of the goſpel had at Antioch: *The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed.* By the hand of the Lord, is meant the power and aſſiſtance of the Lord, which did accompany them in diſpenſing of his word, and enable them to work miracles for the confirmation of it. The hand is the organ or inſtrument of working in man. When it is attributed to God, it denotes his power and help: The hand of God was manifeſted in the miracle which they wrought, and in faith and converſion, which the ſight of thoſe miracles produced. *Learn* hence, That faith and converſion are wrought by the hand of the Lord; they are his work: Study and endeavour is the miniſter's, the bleſſing and ſucceſs is God's; when he takes the ſword of the Spirit into the hand of the Spirit, then ſhall it work wonders. 4. How the joyful tidings of the ſucceſs of the goſpel at Antioch, being heard and underſtood by the apoſtles that remained at Jeruſalem, they ſent Barnabas to confirm the new converts at Antioch in the Chriſtian faith.—*Learn* thence, That the news of any ſinner's, much more of many ſinners, converſion unto God, by the preaching of the goſpel, is matter of great delight and rejoicing to the miniſters of Chriſt. 5. The holy and honourable character which the Spirit of God gives of Barnabas; *he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord.* By a good man, is meant a kind and charitable man; he having actually ſold his eſtate, and laid it at the apoſtles' feet, for the benefit of the poor, as Acts iv. 36, 37. informs us; and his good works accompanying his good preaching, his good life ſeconding his ſound doctrine, was a great mean of the converſion of ſo many, and that much people were added to the Lord. Laſtly, the holy exhortation which Barnabas gave theſe new converts at Antioch; *He exhorted them, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*: That is, with a firm and fixed reſolution of will to keep cloſe to the profeſſion of the truth of Chriſt, whatever tribulation or diſtreſs they might meet with. Young converts need exhortation and counſel, to eſtabliſh and confirm them in the faith of the goſpel, and to encourage them to hold faſt to Chriſt.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarſus, for to ſeek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to paſs, that a whole year they aſſembled themſelves with the church, and taught much people. And the diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt in Antioch.

Note here, A further inſtance of the piety of that good man. Barnabas having a great zeal and fervent deſire that the goſpel might be more and more propagated, he went to Tarſus to ſeek out Saul, that they might join together in the work of Chriſt: and having found him, he brought him to Antioch: where for a whole year they inſtructed the church in that city, and taught much people. O how happy is it for the church of Chriſt, when her miniſters, laying aſide all private intereſt, do unitedly apply themſelves to promote the common intereſt of chriſtianity, by propagating the goſpel far and near! Farther, How the believers both Jews and Gentiles, were united in one common name at Antioch; the Jews had hitherto called them *Nazarites* and *Galileans*, and they called themſelves *diſciples*, *believers*, *brethren*, and *thoſe of the church*; but now in this place, Antioch, they were firſt called *Chriſtians*: A very great honour conferred upon this Gentile city, which exalted her now above Jeruſalem itſelf. At Antioch, a Gentile city, Chriſt ſet up his ſtandard for the Gentiles, and diſplayed his banner, and puts his own name upon the deſpiſed Gentiles. They who before were counted dogs, and the offſcouring of all things, have now the venerable name of Chriſt impoſed on them. Laſtly, The diſciples did not call themſelves chriſtians firſt at Antioch, much leſs did their enemies give them that name; but they had it by divine authority impoſed upon them: God would have Chriſt's diſciples called Chriſtians, (1.) As ſcholars, who receive their denomination from their maſter, they are taught to learn of and imitate Chriſt, whoſe name they bear. (2.) As the word Chriſtians ſignifies anointed ones, it puts them in mind of their divine unction, which they have received from the holy One, whereby they are made kings and prieſts unto God. We are at this day called *reformed Chriſtians*. God grant that we may not cheat ourſelves with an empty and inſignificant name; but let us fill up that glorious title, and be reformed in our lives, as well as in our religion; beautifying our holy profeſſion by an holy and becoming converſation; otherwiſe an unbaptized heathen, at the great day, will not change eſtate with many baptized Chriſtans.

27 ¶ And in theſe days came prophets from Jeruſalem unto Antioch. 28 And there ſtood up one of them named Agabus, and ſignified by the Spirit, that there ſhould be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Cæſar. 29 Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: 30 Which alſo they did, and ſent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Note here, 1. That the wiſdom of God, at the firſt planting of the Chriſtian church, did confer upon ſome of its members extraordinary gifts; as the gift of tongues, the gift of miracles, the gift of prophecy, and the like. Accordingly, at this time, certain perſons who had the gift of prophecy, and did foretel things to come, being now at Antioch, by revelation from the Spirit of God, foretold that there would ſhortly be a great famine over all Judea, and ſeveral other parts of the world; which exactly came to paſs in the reign of the emperor Claudius. Where *obſerve*, That as it is God's prerogative to foreknow future things, ſo it is his prerogative to enable others to foretel future things. This famine was here foretold, not by judicial aſtrology, but by divine revelation: That God, who provided for the patriarchs, by means of Joſeph's foreſeeing the famine in Egypt, provided now for the Chriſtians, by Agabus's foretelling the famine which came upon Judea: *Agabus ſtood up and ſignified by the Spirit*, &c. As God's omnipotence is exerted for his church's protection, ſo is his omniſcience employed for its ſuſtentation and preſervation: Yea, all his attributes are engaged for her benefit and advantage. 2. The full proof and evidence which the new converts at Antioch gave of the truth of their converſion to the chriſtian religion: Namely, their charity and alms ſeaſonably ſent to the ſuccour and relief of their fellow-members in Chriſt, which were in Judea. Theſe were become very poor, by reaſon of the extraordinary malice, and long perſecution of the Jews againſt them. And the ſeaſonable ſuccour now ſent them from Antioch, was a ſingular comfort to them, and a ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice unto God. Laſtly, The wiſe regulation of their charity, *every* *man gave according to his ability.* This is the true ſtandard of charity: We are to give alms of ſuch things as we have, and according to what we have. Chriſtian prudence muſt direct us in the exerciſe of chriſtian charity; that muſt direct us in finding out fit and proper objects for our charity, that we may give moſt to them that have moſt need. Prudence muſt alſo direct us in timing of our charity, that we do not put our poor brethren off with frivolous excuſes and tedious delays. And it muſt direct us in the meaſure of our charity, that it doth not exceed the bounds of our eſtates. Few indeed are guilty of erring on that hand; but it is poſſible there may be an error in the exceſs, as well as in the defect, of our chriſtian charity. To prevent both evils, let the practice of theſe primitive chriſtians be a pattern for our imitation: *Who determined every one*, &c.

CHAP. XII.

St. Luke *having related what ſucceſs the apoſtles had at* Antioch; *he now returns to* Judea, *and declares what perſecution the church met with at* Jeruſalem: *Where St.* James *was beheaded, and St.* Peter *impriſoned, as this chapter informs us.*

NOW about that time, Herod the king ſtretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the Church:

Note here, 1. Satan, the grand enemy of the church of God, never wants inſtruments for carrying on his perſecuting deſigns againſt the church; he had many Pharaohs in the Old Teſtament times, bitter oppreſſors of the Jewiſh church; and ſeveral Herods under the New Teſtament; as Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa, who were very warm in the worſt work; namely, that of perſecution. *Herod ſtretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church:* that is, to kill ſome, and to impriſon others. Satan's bloodhounds have ſuch an inſatiable thirſt after the blood of the ſaints, that they can never be ſatiated with it. A tyrannical perſecutor is like an hydropic perſon, the more he drinks, the more he thirſts.

2 And *he* killed James the brother of John with the ſword. 3 And becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter alſo. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

Note here, 1. The perſon ſlain by the ſword of Herod, James the brother of John. We read in the goſpel that he was one of the ſons of Zebedee, that deſired of Chriſt the pre-eminence to ſit at his right hand in his kingdom; and now he is the firſt of the apoſtles that ſuffered martyrdom, who drank of Chriſt's cup, and baptized with his baptiſm. He was called Boanerges, or a ſon of thunder, for his zealous and earneſt preaching: No wonder then that Herod and the enraged Jews hated him, and were ſtirred up by Satan to deſtroy him. For ſuch as are moſt uſeful to, and moſt eminent in the church, are always the objects of Satan's wrath and anger, and of the perſecutor's rage and fury: *He killed James the brother of John with the ſword.* 2. James being ſlain, Peter is to follow; *He proceeded farther to take Peter alſo.* The rage of perſecutors is not eaſily ſatisfied, and the blood which they ſhed, is but oil to feed the flames of their revenge. But mark the over-ruling power and goodneſs of God, though St. James was murdered, St. Peter ſhall be but impriſoned: The huſbandman doth not commit all his corn to the oven, but ſaves ſome for ſeed. Perſecutors cannot do all the miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can.

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in priſon, and delivered him to four quaternions of ſoldiers to keep him; intending after Eaſter to bring him forth to the people.

Peter being impriſoned, *obſerve*, What an exceſs of care and caution Herod takes for ſecuring his priſoner: Sixteen ſoldiers are ſet to guard him; four at a time, and to take their turns at the four watches of the night, to relieve one another. Thence *learn*, That the enemies of the church make the ſureſt work they can, when at any time God permits his ſervants to fall into any of their hands. Thus they dealt with the Head, when they had apprehended him: The watch-word was, *Hold him faſt*, Matt. xxvi. 48. When they crucified him, they nailed him faſt to his croſs: when they buried him, they made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch: And thus they deal with the members; St. Peter has guard upon guard ſet over him, ſome ſoldiers chained to him, and others always ſtanding at the door to obſerve him. But all this care, concern, and caution to ſecure the priſoner, did illuſtrate the glory of the miracle in his wonderful deliverance.

5 Peter therefore was kept in priſon; but prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church unto God for him.

That is, fervent and importunate prayer was put up to God by the church on Peter's behalf: With the united ſtrength of their whole ſouls they ſtormed heaven, and took him by force out of Herod's hand. *Learn*, 1. That when the church is plunged into deep perplexities, the only help ſhe can hope for muſt come unto her in the way of prayer. 2. That when God ſuffers any of the miniſters of the church to fall under the rage of perſecutors, it is the church's duty to wreſtle with God by prayer in an extraordinary manner on their behalf: *Prayer was made without ceaſing of the church.* 3. That when God intends to beſtow any extraordinary mercy upon his church, he ſtirs up the hearts of his people to pray for it in a very extraordinary manner.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the ſame night Peter was ſleeping between two ſoldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the priſon.

Note, Peter continued in priſon till the very night before Herod intended to bring him out to the people: And if they deſired it, it is probable he intended to put him to death the next day. *Learn* thence, That God oft-times ſuffers his children to come to the pit's brink, and then delivers them, that they may be the more ſenſible of his mercy, and have the greater cauſe to magnify his power. Peter was now come to his laſt night: the tyrant Herod probably intended his execution the next morning. Now was the time for God to ſtep in: Our extremity is his opportunity. Farther, That notwithſtanding Peter's imminent and impending danger, he ſleeps very ſoundly, reſigning up himſelf into the hands of Chriſt, and reſolving, if he may no longer live Chriſt's ſervant, that he will die his ſacrifice. I queſtion whether Herod that impriſoned him ſlept half ſo ſoundly. Lord! how ſoft and ſecure a pillow is a good conſcience, even in the confines of death, and in the very jaws of danger! Laſtly, God takes moſt care of Peter, when he was leaſt able to take care of himſelf: When he was aſleep, and altogether inſenſible of his danger, God was awake, and acting effectually in order to his deliverance. Happy priſoners! who have God with them in priſon: ſuch are priſoners of hope indeed, and ſhall certainly experience divine help.

7 And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light ſhined in the priſon; and he ſmote Peter on the ſide, and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. 8 And the angel ſaid unto him, Gird thyſelf, and bind on thy ſandals: and ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out and followed him, and wiſt not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he ſaw a viſion. 10 When they were paſt the firſt and ſecond ward, they came unto the iron-gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and paſſed on through one ſtreet: and forthwith the angel departed from him.

Note here, 1. That God hath ſometimes made uſe of the miniſtry of angels to effect deliverance of his people. 2. The ſeveral good offices which the angels now did for Peter, in order for his enlargement. Peter is aſleep, the angel awakes him; he is laid, the angel raiſes him; he is amazed, the angel directs him; he is bound, the angel unties him; he knows not where he is, the angel goes before him, and guides him; he is to paſs through many difficulties, the angel conducts him. Lord! How innumerable are the good offices, which at thy command the holy angels do for us, though they are not ſenſibly in this manner apprehended by us! What love and ſervice do we owe to thee! What honour and reſpect ſhould we pay to them, for their care over us, and attendance upon us! 3. Peter muſt ariſe, gird himſelf, bind on his ſandals, caſt his garment about him, follow the angel, and uſe his own endeavours in order to his own deliverance. God will have him uſe the means, even then when he was about to work a miracle for him. What a tempting of God is it then to neglect the means, when we cannot expect miracles! As to truſt to means, is to neglect God, ſo to neglect the means, is to tempt God. We muſt always ſubſerve the providence of God in the uſe of ſuch means as his wiſdom has appointed and directed us unto. Laſtly, That this deliverance was ſo amazing and ſurpriſing, that Peter thought it a dream only, ver. 9. *He wiſt not that it was true, but thought he ſaw a viſion.* *Learn* thence, that ſometimes the deliverances of the godly from imminent and apparent dangers, are ſo very wonderful, and attended with ſuch a croud of improbabilities, that they have much ado to believe them though they ſee them with their eyes. When God turned the captivity of Peter, he was like unto them that dream, Pſ. cxxvi. 1.

11 And when Peter was come to himſelf, he ſaid, Now I know of a ſurety, that the Lord hath ſent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had conſidered *the thing*, he came to the houſe of Mary the mother of John, whoſe ſurname was Mark; where many were gathered together, praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damſel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when ſhe knew Peter's voice, ſhe opened not the gate for gladneſs, but ran in, and told how Peter ſtood before the gate. 15 And they ſaid unto her, Thou art mad. But ſhe conſtantly affirmed that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed. 17 But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon. And he ſaid, Go ſhew theſe things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Obſerve here, 1. The wiſe and holy courſe which the church took for the apoſtle's enlargement, and that was keeping a day of prayer: A number of chriſtians get together, and importune heaven; the enemies plot, the church prays; they ſhut the priſon doors, the church opens heaven's doors, and God gives Peter in, as an anſwer of prayer, before they roſe off from their knees. O how good is it to draw nigh to God! What a prayer-hearing God is our God! How great is the power and prevalency of the conjoined prayers of good men! God's praying people ever have been, and will be, a prevailing people. Whilſt theſe pious ſouls were in the very act of calling upon God for Peter's releaſe, God gives in Peter releaſed to them. God never wants means for his people's deliverance, when he is once ſet on work by the prayers of his people. 2. St. Peter being delivered, meditates whilſt he was walking in the ſtreets, and going along by himſelf, of the greatneſs of his danger, and the gracious̄neſs of his deliverance: Holy and ſuitable thoughts, pious meditations and ejaculations, do well become us in any place, at all times, and upon all occaſions, but eſpecially after ſignal deliverances from ſignal dangers. We can never enough ruminate upon them, or be ſufficiently thankful for them. 3. The wiſdom and goodneſs of the divine providence in directing Peter in the dead of the night, to the houſe where the ſaints were praying for him. This is the more remarkable, becauſe the angel having done his work which God ſent him upon, after he had delivered Peter, from his chains and impriſonment, he left him to ſhift for himſelf, and to take care of his own ſafety; but though an angel left him, yet the providence of God conducted him to a place where he was both ſafe and welcome. 4. What an ancient opinion it was, that every good man had a guardian angel appointed him by God, to take a ſpecial care of him to his life's end; to direct him in his way, to guard him from dangers, and to deliver him in his diſtreſſes: *They ſay, It is his angel:* For which ſaying there could be no reaſon, had there not been a current opinion among them of guardian-angels. Bleſſed be God, his holy angels are our keepers, our counſellors, our defenders, our loving and friendly aſſociates; and they ſhall never depart from us, till they have ſafely conducted us to our heavenly Father's houſe, where we ſhall be *as the angels of God in heaven.* 5. How Peter gives God, and not the angel, the glory of his deliveranee, ver. 17. *He declared how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon.* The angel was but the inſtrument, God was the principal agent, ver. 11. *The Lord hath ſent his angel,* &c. All deliverances muſt be aſcribed to him, who commands deliverance for his people. 6. The prudential care which St. Peter takes for his future preſervation: *He departed and went to another place.* He could not think himſelf ſafe whilſt Herod was ſo near, no more than a lamb could be ſafe near the lion's den. He knew he ſhould be hunted for, therefore eſcapes for his life. And beſides his own danger, he was not willing to endanger his friends, who did now entertain and harbour him: but both for his own and their preſervation, he departs to another place. *Learn,* That a prudential uſe of all lawful means for our own, and others preſervation, in ſubſerviency to the divine providence, is our duty, our wiſdom and intereſt, both as men and chriſtians.

18 Now as ſoon as it was day, there was no ſmall ſtir among the ſoldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had ſought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* ſhould be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Ceſarea, and *there* abode.

Note here, 1. How wicked perſecutors are mightily enraged, when their bloody purpoſes are diſappointed. Herod having loſt his prize, is ſo incenſed, that he cauſed the keepers firſt to be examined (and poſſibly by tortures) and then to be put to death. 2. The juſtice of God, and the great injuſtice of Herod: It was juſt in God to ſuffer the ſoldiers, who were Herod's inſtruments in perſecution, to die by the bloody hand of Herod, whoſe tools they were. Inſtruments in perſecution God oft-times meets with in this world, and ſometimes they fall by the hands of perſecutors themſelves; yet was it notorious injuſtice in Herod to put to death thoſe innocent ſoldiers, who could not help what was done, and were no ways acceſſary to the priſoner's eſcape.

20 ¶ And Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blaſtus the king's chamberlain their friend, deſired peace; becauſe their country was nouriſhed by the king's *country.*

Obſerve, Herod, upon St. Peter's eſcape out of his hands, leaves Jeruſalem, and goes to dwell at Ceſarea, where, being highly diſpleaſed with the rich citizens of Tyre and Sidon, he deſigns to make war upon them. But they being ſenſible that their cities lying upon the ſea-coaſts and having little land belonging to them, they muſt be beholden to Judea and Galilee, which were under Herod's juriſdiction, for a great part of their proviſions; therefore they prudently compound the matter with him, knowing that to fight with him who fed them, was the ready way to be famiſhed. And opening the breaſt of Blaſtus the king's chamberlain, with a golden key, through that paſſage they made their acceſs to ſatisfy the king. Intereſt leads us to pay homage to them, whom our dependency is upon: Yet though men depend upon God for all, for life, and for the comforts and ſupports of life, which they do enjoy, (our country being nouriſhed by the King of heaven's country;) yet how few by prayer do own their dependance upon him, or by praiſe and thankſgiving do acknowledge the hand that ſupplies them?

21 And upon a ſet day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a ſhout, *ſaying, It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt.

Upon a ſet day, that is, as ſome ſuppoſe, on his own birth-day, he was arrayed in royal apparel, in a cloke made of cloth of ſilver, but dyed with St. James's blood, ver. 2. which being beaten upon by the ſun-beams, did greatly dazzle the eyes of all ſpectators; he made an eloquent oration more gaudy than his apparel, unto the people, who cried out in approbation thereof, *The voice of a God, and not of a man!* Herod, inſtead of repelling this their impious flattery, embraces and hugs their praiſes, as proper to himſelf; and thereupon an angel, and worms, the beſt and the baſeſt of creatures, meet in his puniſhment; the angel ſmiting him, and the worms eating him up: And no wonder that worms quickly devoured him, whom thoſe fleſh-flies had blown up before; no wonder that he is eaten up of worms, who forgot that he was a worm! *Queſt.* But why were not the people puniſhed as well as the prince, ſeeing they were equally guilty of robbing God of his honour? True, Herod was the the receiver, but they were the thieves; why then fell not the puniſhment on the whole multitude? *Anſ.* Becauſe more diſcretion is expected from a prince, than from the rabble: Beſides, what in them was but a blaſphemous compliment, was by his acceptance of it made a reality, and was uſurped by him, and aſſumed to him as due to his deſerts. From the whole, *note,* 1. That flattery, either given or taken, is a very dangerous ſin, a God-provoking, and a wrath-procuring ſin. If we flatter men, God will not flatter us, but deal plainly, yet ſeverely, with us. One of the ancients ſaid, he was afraid of praiſe and commendation as much as of a crack of thunder. When men give much glory to men, it is very hard for men to give their glory back again to God. Herod was ſo pleaſed and tickled with the glory which the people gave him, that he could not part with it; but by keeping that, he loſt his life. 2. That though God bears long with many ſorts of ſinners, yet not with ſinners of this ſort: *Immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him:* Agreeably to that of Job, chap. xxxii. 22. *I know not how to give flattering titles, for in ſo doing my Maker would ſoon take me away.* The great God will admit of no co-rivals; he will not ſuffer his glory to be given to another; he will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the flatterer, as well as againſt the falſe ſwearer, Malachi iii. 5. He can deſtroy both flatterer and flattered with the twinkling of an eye, or with the turning of a hand; and thoſe that are cried up as gods to day, are as dung to-morrow.

24 ¶ But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeruſalem, when they had fulfilled *their* miniſtry, and took with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark.

Note, Herod the tyrant and perſecutor being dead, the goſpel proſpered, and was preached up and down with great ſucceſs. Perſecutors, by their weak endeavours to pull down the church, do build it up the ſtronger. The church in Egypt never grew ſo high, as when Pharaoh laboured moſt to keep it low; the more he moleſted them, the more he multiplied them. Thus here, after Herod's death, and Peter's deliverance, the word of God grew and multiplied; that is, the number of believers increaſed through the preaching of the word, as ſeed is multiplied by the ſcattering of the hand; the word preached is the ſeed ſown in the furrows of the field: The ground was now harrowed by the hand of the perſecutors, and the ſeed grew the better, and the fruits of faith and obedience did by every ſhower of perſecution more and more abound. The truth of God may for a time be oppreſſed, but it ſhall never be fully and finally ſuppreſſed; ſtill *the word of God grew and multiplied.*

CHAP. XIII.

St. Luke *having given us an account how the Chriſtian church was firſt planted among the Jews by St.* Peter*'s miniſtry, in the twelve firſt chapters, now applies his pen in declaring how the goſpel was planted and propagated amongſt the Gentiles by St.* Paul*'s miniſtry, to the end of the book.*

NOW there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Note here, That the city of Antioch being the firſt Gentile city which entertained the goſpel, there were at that time ſeveral prophets and teachers in that city to inſtruct the people, and to lay the foundation of a chriſtian church amongſt them: And amonſt others, there was found one very eminent perſon named Manaen, who was of that high rank and quality, that he was brought up with Herod at court; and as the learned Lightfoot thinks, was converted there by the preaching of St. John the Baptiſt: Yet this man, contemning with Moſes the pleaſures of the court, did think it no diſparagement to him to be a teacher at Antioch. *Learn* thence, That God is pleaſed to manifeſt the freeneſs of his grace, in effectually calling ſome of all ſorts and ranks of men, to the knowledge and obedience of the goſpel, and to a participation of the benefit offered in and by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

2 As they miniſtered to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had faſted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they ſent *them* away.

Obſerve here, How the Holy Ghoſt takes occaſion, when the teachers of the church at Antioch were aſſembled together in God's preſence, and about his work, to give them particular inſtructions and directions concerning his will and their duty. Farther, The ſolemn charge given by the Holy Ghoſt to ſet apart Saul and Barnabas by ſolemn impoſition of hands, for preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles: This was a great work, and not to be undertaken without a ſpecial call from God; therefore ſays the Holy Ghoſt, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them:* Which words prove both the Deity and perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt: He who calls miniſters to the office, and unto whoſe ſervice they are ſeparated, is both God, and a diſtinct perſon in the Godhead; but this the Holy Ghoſt did: *Separate me Barnabas and Saul.* Here *note*, 1. That the work of the miniſtry is a ſeparate work. Miniſters muſt be ſet apart for the work of the miniſtry before they undertake it; a call from God is not ſufficient without a ſeparation by man. *Note*, 2. That this ſeparation ought to be performed by the chief miniſters of the church, who have authority from Chriſt to ſeparate and ſet others apart for the works of the miniſtry. The holy Ghoſt ſaid to the teachers of the church at Antioch, *Separate me.* 3. That this ſolemn act and ordinance ought to be performed in a very ſolemn manner, by faſting, prayer, and impoſition of hands. 4. That when thus performed, it is agreeable to the mind, and according to the inſtitution and appointment of the Holy Ghoſt: *The Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate,* &c. Laſtly, Though the office of the miniſtry be an honourable office, yet withal it is a laborious work. Separate them for the *work* whereunto I have called them. It is a work that requires attendance, and zealous application, both in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon. Praying, preaching, adminiſtring ſacraments; guiding and governing the flock by private admonition and public cenſure: Theſe are weighty works, found ſo now by thoſe that perform them faithfully, and will be found ſo at the great day, by the ſlothful and negligent. How can that be eſteemed by any ſlight and inconſiderable work, unto the faithful performance whereof ſo great a reward is promiſed, and to the omiſſion whereof ſo dreadful a wo is denounced?

If Satan deſtroy men's ſouls, he ſhall anſwer for them as a murderer only, not as an officer intruſted with the care of them; but if the watchman doth not warn, if the ſhepherd doth not feed, if the prophet doth not inſtruct, if the ſteward doth not provide, he ſhall anſwer not only for the ſouls that have miſcarried, but for an office neglected, for a talent hidden, and for a ſtewardſhip unfaithfully adminiſtered. Lord! how unable ſhall we be at the making up of our accounts, to endure the hideous outcries of diſtreſſed ſouls, ſaying, *Parentes ſenſimus parricidas:* Our guides have miſled us, our watchmen have betrayed us, our ſtewards have defrauded us, and the following of their evil example has undone us.

4 ¶ So they being ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they ſailed to Cyprus, 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the ſynagogues of the Jews: and they had alſo John to *their* miniſter. 6 And when they had gone through the iſle unto Paphos, they found a certain ſorcerer, a falſe prophet, a Jew, whoſe name *was* Bar-jeſus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and deſired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymus the ſorcerer, (for ſo is his name by interpretation,) withſtood them, ſeeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who alſo *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him, 10 And ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt and a darkneſs; and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he ſaw what was done, believed, being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. The apoſtles Barnabas and Saul having received their commiſſion, ſet forth for their work to which they were deſigned; and their firſt journey was from Antioch to Cyprus, an iſland of the Gentiles, lewd and wicked; where Venus was worſhipped: And much filthineſs was committed by them in that abominable Pagan worſhip. Yet the free grace of God caſt a look of pity and love upon ſinful Cypruſs: The Holy Ghoſt directs theſe apoſtles thither, to reclaim them from ſin, and reduce them to the obedience of the goſpel. 2. That though Saul and Barnabas were ſent forth to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, yet they made the firſt tender of it to the Jews wherever they came; accordingly here in Cyprus, there being a great number of Jews, the apoſtles went into the Synagogue, and preached to them. Chriſt was the miniſter of circumciſion, who was himſelf *ſent to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*; and accordingly ſent his apoſtles out firſt, to feed and gather theſe poor ſcattered ſheep; theſe were accounted the children of the houſe, and the Gentiles reckoned as dogs; but when thoſe wanton and full-fed children began to waſte their meat, and caſt it under their table, then did the Gentile dogs gather up their leavings; Acts xiii. 46. *It was neceſſary*, both by virtue of Chriſt's command and example alſo, *that the word of God*, &c. 3. What an early oppoſition the devil made againſt the apoſtles in their preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles; he feared the battering down the walls of his kingdom, and therefore ſtirs up his inſtrument Elymus the ſorcerer to withſtand them, and particularly to endeavour to divert Sergius Paulus, who governed that iſland, from the faith. Where *note*, The character given of this vile man by the apoſtle, *O full of all ſubtilty and miſchief: a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteouſneſs: Intimating*, 1. That to be ſubtil to do miſchief, is the genius or diſpoſition of the devil's children. 2. That to be an oppoſer of good, is to be conformable to the devil: It is the heighth of wickedneſs, not only to do evil, but to oppoſe good; to be an enemy to, and oppoſer of goodneſs, is the very character of Satan and his children. So much as any man oppoſes goodneſs, ſo much he has of the devil's diſpoſition in him: *Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs.* 4. The judgment inflicted by God on this wicked inſtrument of the devil, and ſuitableneſs of the judgment inflicted on the ſin committed; he wickedly ſhut the eyes of his underſtanding againſt the light of the goſpel, and God deprives him of his bodily ſight. Thus the wiſdom of God doth oft-times ſo ſuit his judgments to the ſins committed, that a perſon may even read his ſin in his puniſhment: Yet how did God temper mercy with the judgment, inflicting blindneſs upon this vile wretch, only for a ſeaſon? Even the very judgments of God are medicinal and in mercy: When God puniſhes, it is with a deſign not to ruin, but reform. Laſtly, What ſucceſs St. Paul's miniſtry, together with the ſight of this miracle, had upon Sergius Paulus the governor; he was thereby converted to the faith: *When he ſaw what was done, he believed; being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord.* The word never works more kindly, than when it is received with admiration. Yet doth the word ſometimes work admiration, where it does not produce faith: Many marvelled who never believed; but this governor was aſtoniſhed, and believed alſo.

13 Now when Paul and his company looſed from Paphos, they came to Perga and Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jeruſalem. 14 ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Piſidia, and went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, *Ye* men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on.

Here we have an account of another journey which Paul and Barnabas took to preach, plant, and propagate the goſpel: Namely, to Perga in Pamphylia; and from thence

Antioch in Piſidia, ſo called, to diſtinguiſh it from the other Antioch in Syria, from whence they were ſent forth, ver. 1, 2, 3. where their colleague and companion, John Mark, withdrew from them, and went no farther with them to the work. This Paul took very ill, as he might, if he left them becauſe of the difficulties and dangers which he ſaw did accompany and attend them in the planting and propagating of the goſpel; for he that putteth his hand to that plough, and then draweth back, juſtly deſerveth cenſure and reproof. However, ſuch was the zeal of the two apoſtles, that they travel on to Antioch without their companion, where entering into one of the ſynagogues of the Jews on the ſabbath-day; after the reading ſome ſections in the law and the prophets, as their manner was, the rulers of the ſynagogue deſired a word of exhortation from them. Where *note*, How wonderfully God over-ruled the hearts of theſe rulers of the ſynagogue, not only to ſuffer, but to deſire the apoſtles to preach the goſpel to them. *The rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye men and brethren if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on.* Hereupon the apoſtle St. Paul ſtands up, and makes a moſt excellent ſermon to them in the following verſes. Where *note*, How readily the bleſſed apoſtle embraces an opportunity to preach the goſpel; the rulers had no need to aſk him twice: Little importunity will ſerve to perſuade an holy heart to undertake the work of God. The faithful miniſters of Chriſt are forward for, as well as zealous in, their Maſter's work. No ſooner did the rulers of the ſynagogue requeſt a word of exhortation from the apoſtle, but immediately, though not unpreparedly, he ſtands up, and preaches to the people.

16 Then Paul ſtood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, ſaid, Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Iſrael choſe our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as ſtrangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs. 19 And when he had deſtroyed ſeven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges, about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they deſired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the ſon of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the ſpace of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raiſed up unto them David to be their king. To whom alſo he gave teſtimony, and ſaid, I have found David the *ſon* of Jeſſe, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's ſeed hath God, according to *his* promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour, Jeſus; 24 When John had firſt preached, before his coming, the baptiſm of repentance to all the people of Iſrael. 25 And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, whoſe ſhoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to looſe. 26 Men *and* brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.

This latter part of the chapter containeth an hiſtorical and practical ſermon, preached by St. Paul at the requeſt of the rulers of the ſynagogue. Where *note*, 1. His prologue or preface, in which he craves their careful attention; withal intimating, that none of them would attend but only ſuch as truly feared God: *Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience.* That is the proper character of a right attentive hearer. 2. The narrative which the apoſtle gives of the many divine favours, benefits, and bleſſings, which the Lord beſtowed of old upon Iſrael his people; namely, his free election and chuſing them before all nations; his wonderful deliverance of them out of Egypt; his great indulgence towards them for forty years in the wilderneſs, as a mother bears with a child's frowardneſs and ſtubbornneſs; and his conſtituting a form of government for them under the judges firſt, and kings afterwards, particularly Saul and David; who is deſcribed firſt by his conformity to the nature of God; he was *a man after his own heart.* Secondly, By his conformity to the will of God: *He ſhall fulfil all my will.* Having thus ended the hiſtorical part, he next begins the practical part of his diſcourſe; and lays down this grand propoſition, That Jeſus is the Chriſt and Saviour of the world. This aſſertion he defends and proves, (1.) From his ſtock and family according to the fleſh, foretold by God. (2.) From the teſtimony of John the Baptiſt his forerunner, ver. 23, 24. *Of David's ſeed hath God,* &c. After this he makes a cloſe application of the whole to them: *Men and brethren, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.* *Learn* thence, That the goſpel is the doctrine or word of ſalvation ſent by God unto a loſt world. The goſpel is a meſſage of glad tidings; the glad tidings which the goſpel brings, is ſalvation; and the way and manner how the goſpel brings ſalvation, is threefold: (1.) By way of patefaction and diſcovery; the goſpel makes a diſcovery of ſalvation excluſively to any other way; no angel in heaven could have diſcovered it, if God had not firſt declared it in and by the goſpel. (2.) By way of tender and offer: O this joyful meſſage of ſalvation is ſent to every man's door! free grace falls upon its knees, and begs of every ſinner to accept it. (3.) By way of efficacy and power. The goſpel brings with it a convincing and converting power, to put men into a ſtate of ſalvation; and hath alſo an eſtabliſhing and confirming power, to preſerve them in that eſtate. Bleſſed be God, that to us, even to every one of us, is the word of this ſalvation ſent. What monſters then are they who are enemies to our ſalvation: The only way to heaven is by Chriſt, the only way to Chriſt is by faith, and the only way to faith is by the word. It cometh by hearing.

27 For they that dwelt at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every ſabbath-

day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. 28 And though they found no cauſe of death *in him*, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a ſepulchre. 30 But God raiſed him from the dead: 31 And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, who are his witneſſes unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another *Pſalm*, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee corruption.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle declares the ignominious death. 2. The glorious reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, whom he proves to be the true and promiſed Meſſias. (1.) For his ignominious death, *the Jews hanged him upon a tree.* The Son of God was not only put to death, but to the worſt of deaths, even the death of the croſs, by the wicked Jews: Yet the apoſtle acknowledges, that neither the Jewiſh rulers nor people did underſtand him to be the Meſſias, as they might have done, had they conſidered the predictions of the prophets; and therefore their ignorance would not excuſe them: for the ignorance and heedleſsneſs of men, enjoying the means and opportunities of knowledge, will certainly bring deſtruction upon them. To ſin blindly without knowledge, or to ſin wilfully againſt knowledge, when we have the means of knowledge, is a damnable ſin: *The rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, have fulfilled them in condemning him.* *Note* 2. To take away the ſcandal of the croſs, the apoſtle ſhews, that our Saviour's reſurrection was as glorious as his death was ignominious. God wiped away the reproach of the croſs, by raiſing up Chriſt from the grave, and declared him to be his Son with power, by the reſurrection from the dead: And accordingly the apoſtle applies that prophecy to Chriſt, in Pſal. ii. 7. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:* As if the Father had ſaid, "Now thou haſt again recovered thy glory, and thy reſurrection-day is to thee as a new birth-day." Three ways is Chriſt ſaid to be begotten: (1.) Of the eſſence of the Father before all worlds. (2.) When his body was formed of the ſubſtance of the Virgin's fleſh. (3.) When God raiſed him from the dead; *This day have I begotten thee:* That is, declaratively, for he was the Son of God before, even from all eternity; but whilſt he was in a ſuffering condition, his divinity was veiled: Whereas after his reſurrection, it was more apparent, and he was then declared to be the Son of God; not then made the Son of God, but then made manifeſt to be the Son of God, by the reſurrection from the dead. *Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God, antecedent to his reſurrection, even from all eternity; he was declared and manifeſted, but not made or conſtituted the Son of God by the reſurrection. Then it was that his divinity brake forth as the ſun, after it had been ſhut up under a dark and thick cloud. Chriſt was the eternal Son of God; but his reſurrection was a declaration, and full manifeſtation of it to the world; Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with power*, &c.

36 For David, after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption.

The Holy Ghoſt here gives a compendious account of David's life and death: Of his life, *He ſerved his generation according to the will of God:* Of his death, *He fell aſleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and ſaw corruption.* In the account given of David's life, *note*, 1. His activity and zeal for God, he ſerved as well as reigned: This ſerving implies not a ſingle or individual act, but a ſeries and ſucceſſion of good actions throughout the whole courſe of his life. 2. The publicneſs of his activity; he ſerved not himſelf, but his own generation. 3. The rule of his activity, and that was the will of God; as he ſerved his generation, ſo he ſerved God in his generation faithfully according to his will. All our ſerviceableneſs for God and our generation, muſt be guided and directed by the word and will of God. David ſerved his own generation by the will of God. This is the account of his life. *Note* next, The relation of his death. *He fell aſleep, was gathered to his fathers, and ſaw corruption.* *He fell aſleep*; death to the ſervants of God is as a ſleep, and but a ſleep. As a ſleep, it gives reſt and ceſſation from labour; and as a ſleep, it gives refreſhment after labour; and as they that ſleep ſhall certainly awake, ſo thoſe that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall awake in the morning of the reſurrection, to ſee their glorified Redeemer face to face. 2. No ſerviceableneſs to God in our generation can exempt from death; for David fell aſleep; this is the lot of the faithful, as well as the ſlothful ſervants. 3. It is a bleſſed thing when we fall aſleep with our work in our hands; when death meets us after a life ſpent in the ſervice of Chriſt. David, after he had ſerved his generation, fell aſleep; it follows, he was gathered to his fathers; that is, he was buried amongſt his anceſtors: and ſaw corruption; that is, his body corrupted in the grave like other men's.

37 But he whom God raiſed again, ſaw no corruption.

That is, Jeſus Chriſt, whom God the Father raiſed to life the third day; he ſaw a diſſolution, but no corruption. Sin had no inheritance in him; therefore death could have no dominion over him; but he overcame death in its own territories, the grave. Thus the apoſtle draws the argument home, that the foregoing words could not be meant of David's perſon, but of the Meſſias, whom David typified and repreſented.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you

the forgiveneſs of ſins: 39 And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes. 40 Beware therefore leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the prophets. 41 Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which you ſhall in no wiſe believe though a man declare it unto you.

The apoſtle having proved his point, that Jeſus was the true, the promiſed, and expected Meſſias, by his reſurrection from the dead, he now applies it to his auditory; and tells them, that by the meritorious ſatisfaction and prevailing interceſſion of this Jeſus, remiſſion of ſins is to be obtained, and deliverance from the wrath of God, from which the law of Moſes could not, with all its ceremonial waſhings and ſacrifices, cleanſe and free them. Here *note*, The impoſſibility of our being juſtified by the law, and the certainty of our juſtification by faith in Chriſt: *By him all that believe are juſtified.* Where *obſerve*, The procurer of our juſtification, *Chriſt*; the qualification of the ſubjects juſtified by him, *Them that believe*; and the extent and meaſure of our juſtification; not from ſome, but from all things, *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things.* Next the apoſtle exhorts his hearers to take heed, leſt by their obſtinate rejecting and refuſing this way of ſalvation now preached to them, they bring ſuch a remarkable deſtruction upon themſelves now, as God threatened to bring upon their forefathers of old. The ſenſe is, "If ye reject this Jeſus, and the way to life and ſalvation by him, ye ſhall be deſtroyed by the Romans, as your anceſtors were by the Chaldeans." Sin is as odious to God at one time as another, and in one people as another; particularly the ſin of obſtinate infidelity and unbelief, is a God-provoking, and wrath-procuring ſin: *Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.*

42 ¶ And when the Jews were gone out of the ſynagogue, the Gentiles beſought that theſe words might be preached to them the next ſabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proſelytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who ſpeaking to them, perſuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 ¶ And the next ſabbath-day came almoſt the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews ſaw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and ſaid, It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, *ſaying*, I have ſet thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts. 51 But they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and came unto Iconium.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle having ended his ſermon to the Jews, the Gentile proſelytes deſired to hear more of this ſubject the next Sabbath-day. Such to whom the word of God is ſavoury and ſweet, are not ſoon cloyed with it, but hunger after it. Neither do they loath the heavenly manna, becauſe it is rained down frequently about their tents. 2. The apoſtle readily complies with their deſire; he preaches again the next Sabbath, when almoſt the whole city came together to hear the goſpel. But this angered the devil, and occaſioned great envy and perſecution to the apoſtles. *Learn* thence, That a crowd of hearers, but eſpecially of young converts, is very hurtful to Satan, and doth uſually ſtir up abundance of rage in his ſervants againſt the miniſters of Chriſt. 3. The inſtrument Satan makes uſe of, to carry on this fierce perſecution againſt the apoſtles: *He ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and chief men of the city.* *Learn* thence, 1. That the powerful and ſucceſsful preaching of the goſpel uſually ſtirs up violent perſecution againſt the preachers of the goſpel. 2. That devout women, and great men, nouriſhed up in ignorance, are oftentimes great oppoſers of the truth, and inſtruments of perſecution: *The Jews ſtirred up the devout women*, &c. *Note*, 4. How the apoſtle with great boldneſs and courage acquaints them with their ſin and danger: *Ye judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life.* But how ſo? Not directly and formally, but interpretatively and practically: They thought very well of themſelves, no doubt, and judged themſelves worthy of eternal life, but their practice pronounced them unworthy, and gave ſentence againſt them, whilſt they acquitted themſelves; for this their contempt of the grace of the goſpel, did declare them unworthy of eternal life. 5. The emblematical action performed by the apoſtles, to ſignify God's rejection of this miſerable people: *They ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them.* This ſignified, (1.) That the very earth was polluted where ſuch refuſers of the precious goſpel did inhabit, and was therefore to be ſhaken off as a filthy thing. (2.) That they were a baſe people, vile as the duſt, and that, as ſuch, God had now ſhaken them off. (3.) That the duſt of the apoſtles feet there left, might be as a witneſs againſt them, that the goſpel had been preached to them. This action of ſhaking off the duſk of their feet, was a diſmal ſignification of a forſaken people. 6. With what joy and gladneſs the poor Gentiles entertained the glad tidings of the goſpel: *When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* That is, when the Gentiles heard the good news, and underſtood their own intereſt in it, they rejoiced exceedingly, and as many as were by the holy Spirit of God prepared and diſpoſed to ſeek after eternal life, believed.

52 And the diſciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghoſt.

That is, "The apoſtles and diſciples in this city were nothing diſcouraged with the Jews blaſphemies, oppoſitions and perſecutions, but were filled with ſpiritual joy that they had embraced the goſpel, and went on courageouſly in the profeſſion of it. *Learn* thence, That God's grace, and the church's joy, may and doth increaſe under the greateſt oppoſition and perſecutions of men. Infinite wiſdom and ſovereign power knows how to over-rule the contradiction of ſinners, for glory to himſelf, and good to his church.

CHAP. XIV.

AND it came to paſs in Iconium, that they went both together into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and ſo ſpake that a great multitude both of the Jews and alſo of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected againſt the brethren.

Here we have an account of the fourth journey which Paul and Barnabas undertook in their travels, to plant and propagate the Chriſtian faith, and that was to Iconium. Where *note*, 1. The unity of theſe two great apoſtles, both amongſt themſelves, and in the work of God: *They went both together into the ſynagogue.* O how happy is it for the miniſters of Chriſt to walk and work together in unity! to go hand in hand together in the ſervice of the goſpel, and with united endeavours promote the glory of God, and the intereſt of ſouls! 2. As their unity, ſo their great conſtancy in performing their duty, notwithſtanding all their perſecutors' fury and obſtinacy: Though *the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles againſt the apoſtles*, yet they continue preaching in the ſynagogues. 3. The great ſucceſs with which it pleaſed God to crown the endeavours of the holy apoſtles, *a great multitude of both Jews and Gentiles believed*; and that which doth conſtantly attend great ſucceſs of the miniſtry of the goſpel word, namely, The envy and oppoſition of wicked men: They exaſperated or made the Gentiles minds evil affected againſt the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands.

Note here, 1. The manner of the apoſtles preaching at Iconium; *they ſpake boldly:* that is, openly in the ſynagogues; and there, with great freedom and plainneſs of ſpeech, aſſerted truth, condemned error, reproved ſin, and denounced judgments againſt impenitent ſinners; and this with a wiſe but convincing boldneſs; with a meek, but zealous boldneſs; knowing, that if they had not now been bold for Chriſt, they could not at the laſt day be bold before him. That miniſter that is afraid to ſpeak and plead for Chriſt now, will certainly be aſhamed to look him in the face then. A ſerious thought of this, when we are going to preach, will make us ſhut all baſe fear out of the pulpit. 2. The time of their preaching at Iconium; it was not a ſingle ſermon or two, *in tranſitu*, but *long time they abode ſpeaking boldly in the Lord.* A conſtant courſe of preaching is needful to root that word which one or two ſermons oft leaveth looſe; the end of the miniſtry is to build up, as well as to bring in, and this is done by our conſtancy in preaching, and exemplarineſs in holy living. 3. How God honoured his word in the mouth of his miniſters, confirming their doctrine by miracles: ver. 3. *He gave teſtimony*, &c. The miracles which the apoſtles wrought, were the the convincing cauſe of the credibility of the apoſtles' teſtimony.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apoſtles. 5 And when there was an aſſault made both of the Gentiles and alſo of the Jews, with their rulers, to uſe *them* deſpitefully, and to ſtone them, 6 They were aware of *it*, and fled into Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about. 7 And there they preached the goſpel.

Note here, 1. How upon the preaching of the goſpel, there follow great diviſions: *The multitude was divided.* Not that the goſpel is cauſe of diviſion, but the occaſion only, and that by accident too. The ſacred inſtitutions and ordinances of Chriſt, are not to be quarrelled with, or objected againſt, becauſe, through man's corruption, they breed differences, diſcords and diviſions. 2. How this diviſion was the cauſe of perſecution: *The city was divided, and an attempt was made to uſe the apoſtles deſpitefully, and to ſtone them.* Lord! What ill uſage have thine ambaſſadors met with from the firſt publication of the goſpel! The unkind world has treated them as if they were not fit to live, driving them from place to place, and perſecuting them from city to city. But *note*, 3. The prudential care which the apoſtles uſe for their own preſervation: *They were aware of it, and fled to Lyſtra and Derbe:* According to Chriſt's command, *When they perſecute you in one city, flee unto another.* Chriſt allows his miniſters a liberty of flight in time of perſecution, that they may preſerve their lives for future ſervice. We muſt not expect ſafety by a miracle, when we may have it in the uſe of means: Yet probably it might not be fear, or deſire to ſave their lives, which made the apoſtles flee; but becauſe they were unwilling to loſe time there, when their miniſtry was obſtructed, and when they ſaw the goſpel was rejected. Accordingly they fled to Derbe and Lyſtra, and there preached the goſpel. Thouſands had never heard of Jeſus Chriſt, if perſecution had not driven the miniſters of the goſpel unto them. The wiſdom of God well knows how to order thoſe things which are deſigned for the prejudice, to tend to the furtherance of the goſpel, Phil. i. 12.

8 ¶ And there ſat a certain man at Lyſtra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's

womb, who never had walked. 9 The ſame heard Paul ſpeak: who ſtedfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 11 And when the people ſaw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker.

Here we have an account of the fifth journey which the apoſtles Barnabas and Paul undertook in their travels to plant and propagate the Chriſtian faith; and that was at Lyſtra and Derbe. Here their firſt work was to preach the goſpel; which done, God honoured Paul to work a glorious miracle for the confirmation of what they had preached. Where *note*, 1. The ſubject whom this miraculous cure was wrought upon, a man that was a cripple, not by accident but by nature, *from his mother's womb*, and conſequently *had never walked*. They that are lame by caſualty, may poſſibly be relieved by art and induſtry; but to cure one that is born lame, nothing leſs is required than a divine power: Such defects as are from nature, can only be relieved by the God of nature. 2. What an extraordinary ſpirit of diſcerning was at ſome times, and upon certain occaſions, found with the apoſtles: St. Paul perceived that this poor cripple had faith to be healed; that is, by that extraordinary gift of diſcerning ſpirits, which at this time the apoſtle had. The like had St. Peter alſo upon a ſpecial occaſion; (for this gift of diſcerning ſpirits, was not at all times, found with the apoſtles) he diſcerned the hypocriſy aud falſhood of Ananias and Simon Magus. The gift of working miracles, and the gift of diſcerning of ſpirits, were for a time conferred upon the apoſtles, for confirming their teſtimony, but are long ſince ceaſed in the church; the reaſon of them ceaſing, the goſpel being ſufficiently confirmed and eſtabliſhed. 3. The reality of this miracle; it was not a lying wonder, but a real miracle: The man not only walked, but leaped for joy, to ſhew that he was perfectly cured, and thoroughly recovered. All the works of God, eſpecially his miraculous works, are perfect: Whom God cures, he cures effectually. 4. What influence the ſight of this miracle had upon the minds of the people of Lyſtra; they aſcribe the honour of this glorious miracle to their dunghill-deities, not to the true God: They pay their rent to a wrong landlord. Such was the blind ſuperſtition of theſe poor Pagans, that believing their gods were come down to them in the likeneſs of men, they called Barnabas, Jupiter, who was their chief god; and Paul, Mercurius, whom they accounted their meſſenger and interpreter of the gods. Lord! how blind are the principles of corrupt reaſon in fallen mankind; and how forcible is an evil cuſtom, and a vain converſation received by tradition from our forefathers! And how hard a matter is it to rectify ſuch miſtakes in religion, as time and general conſent have rooted and riveted in the minds of men!

13 Then the prieſt of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done ſacrifice with the people. 14 *Which* when the apoſtles Barnabas and Paul heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? we alſo are men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheleſs, he left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs. 18 And with theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they the people that they had not done ſacrifice unto them.

Note, 1. How far Paganiſh ſuperſtition did tranſport and carry theſe men; they come to the gates of the houſe where the apoſtles had lodged, and bring oxen with them, trimmed with garlands of flowers, according to their heatheniſh rites, verily intending to offer ſacrifice unto them. *Learn*, How forward the devil is to put honour, much honour, yea, over-much honour, upon the miniſters of Chriſt, when it is to contradict their doctrine, and gain advantage to himſelf by it. The devil laughed to ſee the blind ſuperſtitious Lyſtrians adore the apoſtles, and adorn them with the names of their heathen gods, hoping to make advantage thereby to himſelf. 2. With what indignation and diſdain, deteſtation and abhorrence, the apoſtles reject this vile idolatry, telling them they were men of like paſſions, and in the ſame condition of mortality with themſelves, and that their buſineſs was to turn them from their idols, which were mere vanities, and nothing compared with the living and true God, who made them and all the world. *Learn* hence, 1. That the worſhipping of idols is the moſt ſenſeleſs and irrational vanity that ever the devil put into the ſtupified heart of man. 2. That all good men hate idolatry in others, and abhor to be idolized themſelves. *Note* 3. The deſcription which the holy apoſtle gives of the true God, to draw the people off from worſhipping idols: he ſtyles him the living God, that made the glorious fabric of heaven and earth, the ſea, and all things therein. A good God, that giveth rain, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling his creatures hearts with food and gladneſs. Intimating, (1.) That whatſoever concerns the happineſs and felicity of man in this life, is wholly derived from God. (2.) That there is no nation nor perſon under heaven, to whom God exhibits not the evident tokens of his goodneſs. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* 4. The character which the apoſtles give of the former times, in which the heathen world lived: *In times paſt they were ſuffered to walk in their own ways*; that is, of old, God ſuffered all nations, (except the Jewiſh nation) to walk in their own ways. The meaning is, he did not check nor ſtop them in their ſinful ways and courſes, as he did his own people the Jews. Yet we muſt not underſtand

ſtand the apoſtle abſolutely, but comparatively only; there never was any man, much leſs any nation, whom God ſuffered to go on in a courſe of ſin without any ſtop. Every perſon, and every nation, has had the ſtop of the light of nature at leaſt; but every nation has not had the ſtop of the light of the goſpel, the ſtop of ordinances, the preaching of the word, the motions of the holy Spirit; theſe the Jews had; but the Gentiles had not. In this ſenſe God ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways; he did not give them his word, his ſtatutes or his judgments, to ſhew them his ways, or to hinder them in walking in their own ways; and this was a ſore judgment: to ſuffer either nation or perſon to walk without controul or check, from word or rod, from ordinances or providences, in the ways of ſin and wickedneſs, is a very dreadful and tremendous judgment.

19 ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who perſuaded the people, and having ſtoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, ſuppoſing he had been dead. 20 Howbeit, as the diſciples ſtood round about, he roſe up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Note here, 1. The ill requital St. Paul had for his excellent diſcourſe to theſe blaſphemous idolaters; *They ſtoned him to death*, in their own apprehenſion. The ſharpeſt and keeneſt perſecution is uſually turned againſt the miniſters of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the prophets of God. The devil will do his utmoſt to take away their lives, who are continually endeavouring the deſtruction of him and his kingdom. 2. The great inconſtancy and incredible fickleneſs of the common people, who one day would ſacrifice to the apoſtles as gods, and the next day ſtone them to death as malefactors. What wiſe man will value himſelf by the applauſe of the multitude, and live upon the breath of the people, (that contingent judge of good and evil) which rather attend the vain than the virtuous? But thus the common people dealt with Chriſt himſelf, crying one day, *Hoſannah!* and the next day, *Crucify!* 3. The miraculous recovery of the apoſtle, after his perſecutors had ſtoned him, *He roſe up and came into the city:* His recovery ſeems to be miraculous, elſe his ſtoning would have diſabled him from walking. God had farther work for this great apoſtle to do; and therefore neither the wrath of men, nor the rage of the devil, could at that time cut him off.

21 ¶ And when they had preached the goſpel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lyſtra, and *to* Iconium, and *to* Antioch, 22 Confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Obſerve here, The great and good uſe which the apoſtle makes of his miraculous recovery; he is no ſooner upon his legs, but he travels to Derbe, to preach the goſpel: Nothing do the faithful miniſters of Chriſt more fervently deſire, and more diligently endeavour, than to lay out their lives, their ſtrength, their time, their all, for God, in his ſervice, and to his glory. Yet, *note*, farther, That notwithſtanding the apoſtles were perſecuted at Lyſtra, and Iconium, yet they now returned thither again; having planted churches there, they go back to water their own plantations. Perſecutions did not, could not make them forſake the plantations which they had newly made. It is not enough that the ſeed of the word be ſown, it muſt be watered alſo, otherwiſe it will fade and wither, languiſh and die: But what did the apoſtles do, when they returned to viſit their new planted churches? *Anſw.* They confirmed and eſtabliſhed them in the doctrine of the goſpel: they exhorted them to ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance in their holy religion, and armed them againſt the fears of affliction and perſecution, for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion; acquainting them, that they *muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Afflictions, like the waters of Marah, muſt be met with in our way to the heavenly Canaan; there is no coming at the crown but by the croſs; the head having been crowned with thorns, it is unſuitable that the feet ſhould tread on roſes. Chriſtianity is the doctrine of the croſs, which the miniſters of Chriſt ought to let their people underſtand and know, that they might uot *think ſtrange of the fiery trial, as if ſome ſtrange thing had befallen them; but rather rejoice*, &c. 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Here we have two farther inſtances and evidences of the apoſtles care of theſe new planted churches; and the firſt was to ſettle them in church-order, ordaining elders in every church to be guides and teachers of the reſt, and this with faſting and prayer, in regard of the great ſolemnity and importance of the work. Hence *learn*, That ordination of miniſters is a miniſterial act; the officers of the church, and not the people, muſt ſeparate and ſet apart, conſecrate and ordain the perſons who are to attend upon God and his church in holy things: When they, that is, Paul and Barnabas, had ordained them elders in every church. 2. That this ſolemn action ought to be very ſolemnly performed, by faſting and prayer, *They ordained elders in every church, and prayed with faſting.* The ſecond inſtance of this apoſtolical care was, *their commending them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.* That is, they committed them as young converts to the power of Chriſt, to ſtrengthen and confirm them, and they committed them as their treaſure to the care of Chriſt, to preſerve and keep them. The greateſt and beſt thing that the miniſters of God can do, either preſent with, or abſent from their people, is to commit and recommend them to the power and care of Chriſt, *who is able to keep them from falling, and to preſent them faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

24 And after they had paſſed throughout Piſidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence ſailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of

God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearſed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the diſciples.

This laſt paragraph of the chapter acquaints us with the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had ſet out two years before, and where they were, by the prayers of the church, moſt affectionately recommended to the grace and aſſiſtance of God, for carrying on of that great work, to wit, the converſion of the Gentiles; which God had abundantly ſuceeded them in. *Learn* thence, That the beſt proviſion and preparation for any buſineſs, eſpecially any buſineſs of importance, wherein the glory of God is concerned, is fervent prayer: Thus the apoſtles here, being ſent out from Antioch with prayer, they return with praiſe; the Lord granted them both ſafety and ſucceſs: Safety as to their perſons, and ſucceſs as to their labours. *Note*, farther, Being returned to Antioch, they call the church together, and declare the great things which God had done with them, and by them; to the intent, no doubt, that the church might join with them in their praiſes and thankſgivings, who had before aſſiſted them with their prayers and ſupplications. *They rehearſed all that God had done with them*, that he might have the entire praiſe and glory from them. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The ſubject matter of that report which they joyfully made to the church of Antioch; namely, how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles: that is, given them an opportunity to know, and ability to believe the goſpel, which like a door was formerly ſhut to them, but now mercifully opened: And which was the greater mercy yet, Almighty God did not only open the door of the goſpel to them, by bringing his word amongſt them, but he opened the door of their hearts to receive it, and entertain it, when brought. The opening the heart and mind of ſinners, effectually to receive the truths of the goſpel, is the ſpecial work of the Holy Spirit of God. Lord! how inſufficient are all external means, how excellent ſoever in themſelves, to operate ſavingly upon men's minds, unleſs the Holy Spirit opens the underſtanding, as well as his miniſters open the ſcriptures! He that opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, opened the Gentiles hearts to receive the doctrine of faith, and inclined their wills to the obedience of faith. Eternally praiſed be God for the gracious illuminations, the ſanctifying impreſſions, the powerful aſſiſtances, and the quickening influences of the Holy Ghoſt, which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.

CHAP. XV.

This chapter relates the ſecond journey of St. Paul *and* Barnabas *from* Antioch *to* Jeruſalem, *where the firſt and moſt famous general council was held for deciding of this queſtion, Whether the Gentiles converted to Chriſtianity, and living among the Jews, ſhould be compelled to be circumciſed, and obſerve the ceremonial law? Which was determined in the negative.*

AND certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and ſaid*, Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſſenſion and diſputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion.

Obſerve here, 1. How very forward Satan and his inſtruments were to ſow the ſeeds of diſcord and diſſenſion amongſt the converted chriſtians at Antioch: He takes the firſt opportunity to break the church in pieces, before it was well ſettled. O the reſtleſs malice of an envious devil againſt the goſpel and kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt: *Certain men came down from Judea*, no doubt of the devil's ſending, to diſquiet the brethren, and diſtreſs the church. 2. The bone of contention, thrown in by the falſe apoſtles, to diſturb the diſciples of Chriſt, and that was, the urging the neceſſity of circumciſion, and impoſing that part of the Moſaic yoke upon the neck of the converted Gentiles, excluding them from all hopes of ſalvation, unleſs they were circumciſed; although circumciſion was not commanded but only to the poſterity of Abraham; and as to them alſo, had received its aboliſhment at the death of Chriſt. 3. With what warmth of zeal the meek apoſtle, St. Paul, oppoſes this antichriſtian deſign of introducing circumciſion into the chriſtian church: *Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſputation with them.* He that could *become all things to all men*, could not become ſin to any man; he therefore enters the liſts with them, and earneſtly contends for the faith of the goſpel, urging that by the death of Chriſt, we are freed from the whole ceremonial law; and that if circumciſion were retained, for the ſame reaſon, all the other ceremonies ought to be reſtored; for the circumciſed perſon was obliged to obſerve the whole ceremonial law. 4. The prudential courſe which the diſciples at Antioch took for the deciding of this controverſy; they determined to ſend Paul and Barnabas up to Jeruſalem, where, in a full and free ſynod of the apoſtles, the matter is debated, and finally decided. *Learn* hence, That the uſe of ſynods, or general aſſemblies of the biſhops and paſtors of the church, for deciding of controverſies, for determining of matters of faith, and directing to matters of practice, as it has been of ancient authority in the church of Chriſt, ſo it is of ſingular benefit and advantage both to the miniſters and people. Here Paul and Barnabas go up to the firſt ſynod, or general council at Jeruſalem, to conſult *the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion.*

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the converſion of the Gentiles: and they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the

church, and *of* the apoſtles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Here *note*, 1. How that great, but humble apoſtle, St. Paul, who had learned of his Maſter to be meek and lowly in ſpirit, was willing and content to be a ſervant and meſſenger of the church to the apoſtles, though he was nothing inferior to the chiefeſt apoſtles: *Paul and Barnabas went up to the apoſtles that were at Jeruſalem.* The more holineſs a chriſtian has, the more humility he has: Humility is a great part of our holineſs, it is an argument of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion; it is the great deſign of the goſpel to make us humble, and keep us humble. 2. With what great pleaſure and ſatisfaction Paul and Barnabas make report of the ſucceſs of their miniſtry, both at Phenice, Samaria, and Jeruſalem, in the converſion of the poor Gentiles, and with what joy the report was received and entertained; *They declared the converſion of the Gentiles, and it cauſed great joy unto all the brethren.* Thence *learn*, That nothing more rejoices the hearts of believers, than the hearing of ſouls brought home to God by converting grace, and thereby of the increaſing and enlarging of the kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt: The Gentiles converſion was joyful news to the ſaints at Jeruſalem. 3. With what great and due reverence and reſpect, the church at Jeruſalem received and entertained thoſe laborious apoſtles, Paul and Barnabas, who were now ſent unto them by the church at Antioch; *When they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the church:* That is, received with great veneration and regard, for their indefatigable labours, in order to the Gentiles converſion. Thence *learn*, That double honour and reſpect is certainly due and payable to ſuch miniſters of Chriſt as labour in the word and doctrine, and perform their duty to God and their people, with ſuch zeal and application, as becomes perſons of their holy character and profeſſion. O how beautiful ſhould the feet be of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring gladtidings of good things, even the joyful tidings of ſalvation, to the ears of a loſt world!

5 But there roſe up certain of the ſect of the Phariſees which believed, ſaying, That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moſes. 6 ¶ And the apoſtles and elders came together for to conſider of this matter.

That is, ſome Jews of the ſect of the Phariſees converted to Chriſtianity, thought and taught, That circumciſion, and keeping of the law of Moſes, was neceſſary to ſalvation, both to Jew and Gentile chriſtians. Where *obſerve*, 1. How early the ſound doctrine of chriſtianity was corrupted by erring teachers. 2. That the ſpirit of infallibility, with which the apoſtles were at that time certainly endued, did not prevent the riſe of controverſies and diſputes in the firſt ages of the church, nor yet ſilence and put an end to ſuch diſputes when riſen; much leſs can an infallible head of the church, and an unerring judge of controverſies, now do it. 3. That errors and falſe opinions creeping into a church, are not a ſufficient warrant to forſake the communion of that church. We find here, that in the moſt primitive and pureſt churches, even whilſt the apoſtles themſelves were upon the ſpot, dangerous errors crept into the church, and proved of ſuch fatal and pernicions conſequence, that the apoſtle wiſhes *they were even cut off, that thus troubled them.* Gal. iv. 12. Separation then from a church, is not warrantable upon any other grounds, than that which makes a ſeparation between God and that church, which is either the apoſtaſy of that church into groſs idolatry, or, in point of doctrine into damnable hereſy. Rev. ii. we read of Chriſt's walking among the ſeven golden candleſticks; and although ſome of them were ſufficiently beſmeared, yet were they favoured with Chriſt's gracious preſence. Laſtly, The regular and prudential means uſed by the apoſtles for the ſuppreſſing of this error which endangered the church's purity, and for quenching of this ſpark of diſſention which threatened the church's peace; *They gathered together at Jeruſalem to conſider of the matter*; that is, to conſult about it, and debate upon it. Where *note*, 1. That though the apoſtles were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, yet they made uſe of their own reaſon and judgment for the deciſion of this controverſy: God's inſpiration did not make the apoſtles conſultation needleſs either for ſatisfying themſelves, or ſilencing gainſayers.

7 And when there had been much diſputing, Peter roſe up and ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth ſhould hear the word of the goſpel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſs, giving them the Holy Ghoſt, even as *he did* unto us: 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt we ſhall be ſaved even as they.

Obſerve here, 1. The council aſſembled, the firſt and moſt famous council of Jeruſalem, the council of councils: In other councils were holy biſhops; in this, inſpired apoſtles, who could not err in matters of faith. 2. The grand debate, or matter in controverſy; namely, whether faith in Chriſt were not ſufficient to juſtification, unleſs circumciſion, and an obſervation of the ceremonial law, were joined with it? 3. The perſons managing this debate; the three great apoſtles, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. James. The firſt that ſpeaks in the council is Peter: From whence the papiſts would infer, that he, as head of the church, ſpake firſt; and conſequently that the pope, whom they will have to be St. Peter's ſucceſſor, ought to have the firſt and chief voice in all general councils: But all this is but preſumption; for we ſhall find, at ver. 13. St. James, who was then biſhop of Jeruſalem, ſays, *Hearken unto me*; and, at ver. 19. gives the definitive ſentence, ſaying, *My ſentence is*; or thus I judge and determine. Had St. Peter ſaid this, it had been a better proof of his pre-eminency, and made a louder noiſe than *Paſce oves*. 4. St. Peter's argument, to prove that the believing Gentiles might be juſtified and ſaved without circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law. The argument runs thus: "The way of juſtification for all men, both Jew and Gentile is one and the ſame; but Cornelius, a Gentile, with his whole family, by the bleſſing of God upon my miniſtry, was converted and juſtified without being circumciſed; therefore circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law, ought not to be impoſed as neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation." 5. How St. Peter ſtrengthens his argument, by declaring that what was done to Cornelius and his family, was by the ſpecial hand of God; that God gave teſtimony of his approbation of Cornelius as the firſt-fruits of the Gentiles, by ſending down the Holy Ghoſt upon him and his, as well as upon us and ours, by purifying their hearts by faith. Where *note*, 1. That purifying begins at the heart: The head may be purified from falſe principles, the hands from falſe practices, and yet the heart remain unpurified, and continue to be a ſink of pollution and uncleanneſs; therefore we muſt purify our hearts, as well as cleanſe our hands; yea, firſt begin with our hearts; *Having purified their hearts by faith.* 2. That as purifying begins at the heart, but muſt not end there, ſo faith is the inſtrumental cauſe of our purification: The blood of Chriſt cleanſes from all ſin meritoriouſly, the Spirit of Chriſt efficiently; but faith is the inſtrument in the hands of the Spirit, which apprehends and applies the merit of that blood for pardon and purification. *Obſerve*, 6. The character given by St. Peter of the ceremonial law; he calls it a yoke, an intolerable yoke, too heavy to be borne by the Jews themſelves, much more the Gentiles, whoſe neck God never deſigned this yoke for, but for the ſeed of Abraham only. Now the law of ceremonies, impoſed upon the Jews, might well be called a yoke, if we conſider, (1.) Their number and variety: they were a multitude of legal obſervances. (2.) Their burden and difficulty; the ceremonial law was a moſt laborious adminiſtration of a very painful ſervice. (3.) They were coſtly and chargeable; ſo many bullocks, rams, and lambs for ſacrifice, that the miſers of this age would think themſelves undone with the expence. (4.) Their inſufficiency; they were only ſhadows of good things to come, and could not make the obſervers of them perfect. Thus was the ceremonial law in itſelf both a yoke and burden; and the impoſing of it upon the Gentiles is called *a tempting of God*; that is, a dangerous provoking of him, becauſe it never belonged to them, but to the Jews only, which yet were never able to bear it; or ſo to obſerve it, as to be juſtified and ſaved by it. *Learn* thence, That it was never the intent or deſign of God, that his people ſhould be juſtified by their obedience to the ceremonial law; but that being preſſed with the weight, and pinched with the uneaſineſs of the yoke, they ſhould ſeek unto Chriſt for righteouſneſs and life, who alone was the fulfiller of it. There was this difference between the ceremonial and moral law: The ceremonial law was therefore good, becauſe God commanded it; the moral law was therefore commanded becauſe good: Chriſt, by his death, abrogated the former; but, by the obedience of his life, fulfilled the latter.

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept ſilence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

The ſecond ſpeech made in this council, was that of Barnabas and Paul, who declared what miracles God had enabled them to work among the Gentiles, though uncircumciſed, and that he was pleaſed with their adminiſtration among them. Hence they conclude very well, that the miracles wrought among the Gentiles, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon the Gentiles, was God's approving teſtimony in the caſe, that the believing Gentiles, without circumciſion, ſhould find no leſs acceptance with God, than the believing Jews, who were of the circumciſion.

13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James anſwered, ſaying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me. 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the firſt did viſit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophet; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet it up; 17 That the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, ſaith the Lord who doeth all theſe things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my ſentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. 20 But that we write unto them that they abſtain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things ſtrangled, and *from* blood.

Note here, 1. The excellent order in which this grand debate was managed by the apoſtles; they do not break in upon one another, like proud magiſterial talkers, ſo full of themſelves, that they could not hear one another ſpeak; but while one ſpeaks, all the reſt ſilently and attentively hear, no one ſtopping another by rude and uncivil interruption; *After they had held their peace, James anſwered.* 2. The third and laſt ſpeech uttered at this council at Jeruſalem, was by St. James the biſhop, and reſidentiary apoſtle of the place: James ſaid, *Hearken unto me.* Where *obſerve*, 1. He puts the council in mind of the ſpecial favour and grace of God in ſending the goſpel among the Gentiles, which he calls his *viſiting* of them; and the deſign of God in that viſitation, namely, *to take* out of the Gentile world *a people for his name.* Hence *learn*, 1. That when God gives his goſpel to a people, he gives that people a merciful and gracious viſitation. 2. That God's deſign in viſiting a nation with and by the goſpel, is to take out of them, and from amongſt them, a people for his name; that is, a people to call upon his name, a people to be called by his name, and a people to honour and gloriſy, to advance and magnify his holy name. *Note*, 2. With what wiſdom and caution St. James, the preſident of the council, proceeds in the final deciding of this controverſy: He propoſes a mean betwixt the two extremes, between thoſe that would have all the Moſaic rites impoſed, and that thoſe that would have none at all; deſigning by this *medium*, that neither the Jews ſhould be too much offended, nor the Gentiles too heavily burdened; but brotherly love between both be maintained and preſerved. 3. How St. James, in deciding of this controverſy, appeals to ſcripture, ver. 15. *To this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written*; not to the authority of the council: The holy canon of the ſcriptures ought to over-rule all debates; this is the infallible judge, which all the councils are to appeal to, and none muſt preſume to appeal from. Laſtly, That the ſum of the council's determination came to this; That circumciſion ſhould not be impoſed upon the Gentiles, that the Gentiles nevertheleſs ſhould ſo far judaize, or comply with the Jews, as to abſtain from meats offered to idols, from things ſtrangled, and from blood, and from fornication: All which are called indifferent things, becauſe the three firſt were made ſo by the death of Chriſt (after which there was to be no more diſtinction, either of meats or nations) and the fourth, namely fornication, is reckoned amongſt the indifferent things; becauſe the Gentiles, though falſely, did think and ſpeak it to be ſo: *Non eſt flagitium adoleſcentem ſcartari.* To prevent therefore giving offence to the Jews, the Gentiles are required to abſtain from theſe things, till time and fuller acquaintance with the goſpel did better inform them concerning their Chriſtian liberty. From this example *learn*, That whenever differences do ariſe in a church about tolerable matters, and indifferent things, the neareſt courſe to unity, and a charitable compliance, is for both parties to ſtep towards, and meet one another; and what may be left at liberty without apparent prejudice to purity, to be left for peace ſake.

21 For Moſes of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the ſynagogues every ſabbath-day. 22 ¶ Then pleaſed it the apoſtles and elders, with the whole church, to ſend choſen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas ſurnamed Barſabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren, ſend greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. 24 Foraſmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, *Ye muſt* be circumciſed, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *ſuch* commandment: 25 It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 27 We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who ſhall alſo tell *you* the ſame things by mouth. 28 For it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than theſe neceſſary things; 29 That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourſelves, ye ſhall do well. Fare ye well.

Note here, 1. That though the apoſtles were the infallible deciders, yet the elders, and the whole church, were unanimous conſenters; for no contradiction to the determination of this controverſy did ariſe from any hand, but there was an happy acquieſcency in this apoſtolical deciſion; *It pleaſed the elders, and the whole church.* 2. The decrees of this ſynod, and the determination of this council of Jeruſalem, are committed to writing, and diſpatched by unprejudiſed meſſengers of their own to the church of the Gentiles, which was at Antioch. In which decretal epiſtle, (1.) The falſe prophets, who ſtarted this controverſy, are ſharply reproved. (2.) Paul and Barnabas, for their courage, and conſtancy, are highly commended. (3.) Judas and Silas are mentioned, to teſtify, that theſe decrees were not forged nor counterfeited. (4.) That it would conduce much to their advantage to have theſe decrees duly obſerved. *Note*, 3. The divine authority of theſe decrees, they were dictated and directed by the Holy Ghoſt: *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us*; that is, it ſeemed good unto us, being directed and aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe inſpiration and conduct we have followed, not to impoſe unneceſſary things upon you. Where *note*, That the Holy Ghoſt is againſt impoſing unneceſſary things as neceſſary, and making them the terms of church-communion. Here are four things impoſed; namely, abſtaining from meats offered to idols, from blood, from fornication, and from things ſtrangled; but they are called *neceſſary things.* Two of them, to wit, abſtaining from fornication, and from things offered to idols, were of a ſimple and abſolute neceſſity; the other two, namely, abſtaining from things ſtrangled, and from blood, were of an accidental and temporary neceſſity for the preſent time, and to avoid giving ſcandal to the weak Jews, till they ſhould be better informed, and better underſtand their liberty in Chriſt; for afterwards, St. Paul ſheweth that no creature of God is unclean, but that unto the pure all things are pure; 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.

30 So when they were diſmiſſed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epiſtle. 31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the conſolation.

Note here, 1. With what fidelity and care Paul and Barnabas, and Judas and Silas, delivered this decretal epiſtle to the church at Antioch: That is, to the whole body of Chriſtians, believing Jews and Gentiles, then and there aſſembled: *When they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epiſtle:* That is, they called the whole church together, and preſented the epiſtle to them. 2. How this decree was received, namely, with univerſal joy and ſatisfaction. *When they had read*, they rejoiced. Every one in this Chriſtian council was a ſtar devoted by his office to lead men to Chriſt; but now being gathered together, and condenſed into a council, they become a moſt bright and glorious conſtellation, every way prepared, by the emanations of heavenly light, to guide the church in this obſcure affair; and, accordingly, their authority being ſo illuſtrious and commanding, and the decree ſo pious and prudential, their determination was received with univerſal ſatisfaction. *They delivered the epiſtle, which when they had read, they rejoiced..* 3. What was the ſubject matter of their joy, and the ſpecial occaſion of their rejoicing; *They rejoiced for the conſolation:* That is, for the great conſolation which they had, in being freed from the burden of the legal ceremonies, though originally of divine inſtitution, and appointed by God himſelf. From whence we *learn*, That liberty from toilſome ceremonies, though originally of divine inſtitution, much more a freedom from ſuperſtitious ceremonies of human invention, is matter of great joy to the church of Chriſt. Lord! what numerous and burdenſome ceremonies has the church of Rome impoſed upon her blind votaries? When in their worſhip they would be thought truly zealous, they are really ridiculous. They pleaſe themſelves, perhaps, but cannot pleaſe their Maker; all the acceptance they will find with God will be ſignified to them in that chiding queſtion, "Who hath required theſe things at your hands?"

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets alſo themſelves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*. 33 And after they had tarried *there* a ſpace, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apoſtles. 34 Notwithſtanding it pleaſed Silas to abide there ſtill. 35 Paul alſo and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others alſo.

Judas and Silas being prophets; that is, perſons extraordinarily inſpired, and endued with eminent gifts for teaching and interpreting the holy ſcriptures; they employed themſelves at Antioch, confirming and building up their brethren in the faith of Chriſt. And after they had ſtayed at Antioch ſome time, they were of all kindneſs diſmiſſed of the church there; and Judas returned to Jeruſalem, to acquaint the apoſtles with the reception which their letter had met with, and what obedience was readily given to their decrees.

36 ¶ And ſome days after, Paul ſaid unto Barnabas, Let us go again and viſit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and ſee* how they do.

Note here, The pious and prudential care, which Paul, who had planted churches, takes to viſit and inſpect them; that he might ſee and underſtand how they did thrive and grow in the knowledge of Chriſt, and in their ſincere obedience to him. This great apoſtle had been ſowing the good ſeed of the word of God; his next care is, to examine and inquire, whether the envious ones had not ſowed tares in his abſence. A miniſter's work, and an huſbandman's buſineſs, are never at an end, but run round in a circle: *Redit labor actus in orbem*; after ploughing and ſowing, there muſt be weeding and watering, before reaping and ingathering. Accordingly, St. Paul reſolves upon the viſitation here mentioned: Ver. 36. *Let us go again and viſit*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The viſitors, *Paul* and *Barnabas*. 2. The viſited, *our brethren*, both the elders and members of the church. 3. The action performed, *viſiting:* The word imports a ſtrict view, a moſt diligent and ſolicitous ſcrutiny, leſt ſome errors in their abſence might be crept into the doctrine and converſation of theſe new-planted churches. 4. The place where the viſitation is to be held, *in every city where they had preached the word of the Lord:* Where they had planted, they were obliged to water; and where they had begotten any to the chriſtian faith, they thought it their duty to nurture and nouriſh them; and therefore, though there were preſbyters no doubt in every city, yet Paul and Barnabas challenged to themſelves a power of viſitation, where they had perſonally preached. The apoſtles who firſt converted them, had a peculiar right to inſpect and govern them. Converted ſouls, and planted churches, muſt be farther viſited, obſerved, and watered. 5. The end and deſign of the viſitation, *to ſee how they do*, and what they do; to take an account of their faith and practice. From the whole, *obſerve*, 1. A diſeaſe which the churches of the apoſtles own planting were ſuppoſed to be liable and obnoxious to; the pureſt of churches, and beſt of men in this military and mortal ſtate, are apt to fall into diſtempers, witneſs this chapter: Where we find the converted Jews nauſeating the bread of life, and making it their choice to pick and eat the rubbiſh of the partition-wall which Chriſt had demoliſhed; I mean circumciſion, and the legal ceremonies, which though expired at the death of Chriſt, and by this time had an honourable burial, yet they attempt to pull out of their graves, and give a reſurrection to them. Such diſtempers will be in the pureſt churches, if we conſider the hereditary corruption which is in all by nature; the remains of it in thoſe who are renewed by grace, and the endeavours of Satan to ſolicit theſe remains, and invite them forth into act and exerciſe. 2. The remedy reſolved upon for preventing and healing of this diſeaſe; namely, apoſtolical viſitation, and epiſcopal inſpection, as the word ſignifies: The conſtitution of the church is ſuch, that it cannot continue long in repair, without inſpection and government. For though the univerſal church is ſecure, being built upon a rock; yet particular churches are liable to dilapidations: And accordingly, it is the duty of the governors of the church, frequently to inſpect the authority of thoſe who preach, to examine their doctrines, to inquire into their lives, to give rules for preſerving order, and to cenſure thoſe who neglect thoſe rules, and diſturb that order. In fine, we ſee the church of Chriſt muſt be governed; in that government there muſt be a ſuperiority in ſome, and a ſubordination in others; ſuperiors muſt frequently viſit, and narrowly inſpect the doctrine, the lives and manners, both of the miniſters and members of the church, according to the practice and example of thoſe two great apoſtles, Paul and Barnabas, who ſaid, ver. 36. *Let us go again and viſit*, &c.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was ſo ſharp between them, they departed aſunder

one from the other: and ſo Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus. 40 And Paul choſe Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.

St. Paul having made a motion to Barnabas, in the foregoing verſes, to viſit and inſpect the new-planted churches, Barnabas very readily complied with the motion, but deſired that he might take his nephew John Mark along with him: This Paul conſented not unto; becauſe he left them at Pamphylia, and did not accompany them conſtantly in preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles. St. Paul was in the right; Mark's cowardice in leaving them when they undertook a tedious and hazardous journey to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, was a conſiderable objection againſt his preſent going with them, and weighed more than his conſanguinity or nearneſs of blood to Barnabas. Accordingly, St. Paul inſiſted upon it, that he ſhould not now go along with them; but this occaſioned a very ſharp and unhappy contention between them; inſomuch, that thoſe two great and good men parted aſunder, Barnabas going to Cyprus, and St. Paul to Cilicia; but God over-ruled this evil for good, cauſing their ſeparation to tend to the publication and farther ſpreading of the goſpel. Hence *learn*, 1. How induſtrious, yea, ambitious the devil is to ſow the ſeeds of diſcord and diſſention amongſt the members, but eſpecially amongſt the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; and how ready he is to take all occaſions to divide them. Theſe holy men of God, theſe great apoſtles, whoſe hearts were united in the work of God, and went hand in hand together, to plant and propagate the everlaſting goſpel, divide among themſelves, and are parted by Satan's policy and their own paſſions. 2. That the holieſt and wiſeſt of men are but men; men of like paſſions with other men, and whilſt on this ſide of heaven, not wholly free from paſſionate infirmities. Theſe two great apoſtles verified here by their actions, what they affirmed before in their words, Acts xiv. 15. *We are men of like paſſions with you. Learn*, 3. That natural affections are apt to overſway the wiſeſt and beſt of men. Barnabas's great love to his kinſman here, prevailed contrary to his judgment. 4. That ſuch is the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of God, that he knows how to bring good out of the greateſt evil, and to over-rule ſin itſelf, and make it ſubſervient to his own glory and his church's good. The Lord was pleaſed to over-rule theſe diviſions and diſſentions betwixt Paul and Barnabas, for enlarging the kingdom of Chriſt, and for ſpreading the goſpel farther into ſeveral nations. Laſtly, How this reflection upon John Mark's faint-heartedneſs in declining the hardſhips and the hazards of the miniſtry, made him for the future more vigilant and in the cauſe of the goſpel, which occaſioned that kind ſalutation which St. Paul gives him, Col. iv. 10. Though ſin be only evil, abſolutely evil, and infinitely evil: yet the wiſdom and goodneſs of God ſanctifies the miſcarriages of his ſaints, rendering them more humble for the time paſſed, and more watchful and vigilant for time to come. Thus it was with Mark here; he was humbled for his ſin, and afterwards became profitable to St. Paul for the miniſtry, was his fellow-labourer; and the apoſtle gives a ſpecial charge to the Coloſſians to entertain him kindly whenever he ſhould come unto them, Col. iv. 10. *Marcus, ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas, when he comes unto you, receive him.*

CHAP. XVI.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lyſtra: and behold, a certain diſciple was there, named Timotheus, the ſon of a certain woman which was a Jeweſs and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lyſtra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumciſed him, becauſe of the Jews which were in thoſe quarters. For they knew all that his father was a Greek.

The latter end of the foregoing chapter gave us a ſad account of a diſſention and difference ariſing between Paul and Barnabas, upon which they parted; Barnabas ſails for Cyprus, but what ſucceſs he had there, the ſcripture ſays not. St. Paul goes through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, and doing good ſervice in his peregrinations and travels. Here *note*, That St. Paul and Silas, before they ſet forth to their work, were in a ſolemn manner (by prayer) *recommended by the brethren to the grace of God*, chap. xv. 40. And accordingly their labours are ſucceeded and bleſſed. Barnabas and Mark ſet forth for Cyprus; but we read not of any ſolemn recommendation of them by the brethren to the grace of God; nor a word of any ſucceſs they had in their work: Teaching us the great neceſſity of fervent prayer to precede, accompany, and follow the preaching of the goſpel. Let miniſters pray, and people pray, and engage all the prayers they can for the ſucceſs of their miniſtry. Lord, let me ſteep the ſeed I ſow amongſt thy people in tears and prayers before I ſcatter it! O pour out thy Spirit with thy word, that it may be mighty through God for pulling down of ſtrong-holds! Verily there is ſo little efficacy in ordinances, for want of fervent wreſtlings with God in prayer. *Note* next, The places which Paul and Silas in their travels firſt came unto; namely, Derbe and Lyſtra, where he finds young Timothy, whom he takes along with him, and breeds him up for a goſpel miniſter, calls him his fellow-worker, and companion in his travels. Farther, The account here given of Timothy's birth and parentage; his mother Eunice was a believing Jeweſs; his Father was a Greek, a Gentile; for which reaſon Timothy was not circumciſed, becauſe it was not lawful for the mother to have her child circumciſed againſt her huſband's conſent. Now St. Paul intending to take Timothy along with him as his companion in preaching the goſpel, that his miniſtry might be the more acceptable to the Jews, who knew him to be uncircumciſed, becauſe the ſon of an uncircumciſed father, he takes him and circumciſes him; but at the ſame time, Titus, who was a Gentile, both by father and mother, him he would not circumciſe, neither ſuffering the yoke of circumciſion to be laid upon the Gentiles, which God had never impoſed, nor would he ſeem to countenance thoſe who held circumciſion neceſſary to ſalvation. O what an admirable pattern has this great and humble apoſtle left to poſterity! he became all things to all men, and either uſed or refuſed indifferent things according as the uſe or diſuſe of them tended to the church's edification, and men's ſalvation. From whence *learn*, That in things not abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, Chriſtians ought to act prudentially, and either do, or not do, ſome things of leſſer moment, according as it may promote, and beſt conduce to, the church's peace and edification.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem. 5 And ſo were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith, and increaſed in number daily.

The ſenſe is this, that as Paul and Silas paſſed through the cities in Syria and Cilicia, they delivered to the ſeveral churches, as they paſſed along, the decrees to obſerve, which were ordained by the apoſtles and elders met in council at Jeruſalem, whereby thoſe churches were eſtabliſhed in the faith, and many more every day converted unto Chriſt. Here *note*, 1. The meſſengers which delivered theſe decrees, Paul and Silas, with a ſpecial regard unto the church's unity and peace. Behold here an excellent pattern for chriſtians in general, and the miniſters of the goſpel in particular; as to maintain truth, ſo to procure, promote, and preſerve the church's peace. Truth and peace which God has joined together, Zech. viii. 19. let none dare to put aſunder. 2. What it was that St. Paul here made the delivery of, the decrees made by the apoſtles and elders at Jeruſalem; not the decrees made by the whole church, but by the miniſters of the church only. None ſo fit to determine church-differences, as church-officers. 3. To whom theſe decrees were delivered; namely, to the churches as they paſſed along through the ſeveral cities; ſo many cities, ſo many churches: The whole company of Chriſtians within a city, and the adjacent territory, were wont to be framed into a Chriſtian ſociety or church, and ſeveral congregations made but one church. To ſet up churches againſt churches, to ſet up churches in churches, and to gather churches out of churches, has no precedent, no warrant, no countenance from any phraſe of ſcripture, or practice of the apoſtles times. 4. The end for which theſe decrees were delivered; namely, to bring all the churches to unity and uniformity; to unity in judgment, and uniformity in practice, that they might all be of one heart, and one way. *Learn* thence, That unity and uniformity among the churches of Chriſt is a thing to be earneſtly deſired and endeavoured; their unity is their ſtrength and beauty both. Laſtly, The ſucceſs and fruit of the delivery of theſe decrees to the churches, ver. 5. *So were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith, and increaſed in number daily.* Where *obſerve*, A double bleſſing accruing to the churches, the one of confirmation, *So were the churches eſtabliſhed*; the other of augmentation, *They increaſed in number daily.* *Learn*, 1. That as diviſions do ſhake and unſettle, ſo unity and uniformity do eſtabliſh and confirm the church of Chriſt: *So were the churches eſtabliſhed.* 2. That it is a bleſſed thing to hear of the church increaſing, provided it be by way of addition, not diviſion: To hear of churches multiplying, by the number of converts increaſing, is happy; but to multiply churches by breaking churches in pieces, is a ſad multiplication. The Lord keep his churches from ſuch increaſes! and the Lord pardon thoſe who for private intereſt have ſo increaſed churches by gathering churches out of churches, pretendedly for greater purity ſake, but really for worldly advantage ſake! Doctrines crying up purity to the ruin of unity, reject; for the goſpel calls for unity as well as for purity.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghoſt to preach the word in Aſia, 7 After they were come to Myſia, they aſſayed to go into Bithynia: But the Spirit ſuffered them not.

Note here, How the apoſtle and his companions had a deſire and deſign to propagate the goſpel in ſeveral provinces, but were forbidden by a ſecret impulſe of the Holy Spirit. *Learn* thence, That the fruſtrating our attempts, and diſappointing our deſigns to preach the goſpel to particular places, which we were purpoſed to go unto, doth ſometimes ariſe from the Holy Ghoſt. The very journeyings of the apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the goſpel, as well as their divine exerciſes, were all ordered by the wiſdom and will of God; they might neither ſpeak, nor act, nor walk, but acccording to divine directions. Thus Almighty God at pleaſure orders the candle of the goſpel to be removed out of one room into another, ſends it from one place and people to another, and accordingly ought all places and perſons to prize it highly, and improve it faithfully.

8 And they paſſing by Myſia, came down to Troas. 9 And a viſion appeared to Paul in the night: there ſtood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, ſaying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had ſeen the viſion, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, aſſuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the goſpel unto them.

Theſe words are a relation of a meſſage from heaven unto St. Paul to direct him in his preaching and publiſhing of the goſpel, both as to the place where, and as to the perſons to whom he was to deliver it. Where *note*, The manner of it; it was by a viſion, *A viſion appeared.* The time of it, it was in the night; the bringer, a man of Macedonia; the matter of it, help for the Macedonians, interpreted (ver. 10.) to be by the preaching of the goſpel. *Learn* hence, 1. That no men in the world want help like them that want the goſpel: Of all diſtreſſes, want of the goſpel cries loudeſt for relief and help: For by want of the goſpel they want every thing that is worth having; they want Jeſus Chriſt, who is revealed only by the goſpel. They want communion with God; they want the comforts and refreſhments of ordinances; they will at laſt want heaven and ſalvation. But that which is moſt deplorable is this, thoſe that want the goſpel, though they want all theſe things, yet are they not ſenſible that they want any thing. 2. That the ſending of the goſpel to one nation, place or people, and not to another, proceeds from the determinate will and pleaſure of Almighty God, and is the effect of his own free grace and good pleaſure: Stay not in Aſia, go not into Bithynia, but come over into Macedonia: *Even ſo, Father, for thus it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.*

11 Therefore looſing from Troas, we came with a ſtraight courſe to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis: 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony. And we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the ſabbath we went out of the city by a river ſide, where prayer was wont to be made. And we ſat down and ſpake unto the women which reſorted *thither.* 14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a ſeller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worſhipped God, heard *us:* whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul. 15 And when ſhe was baptized, and her houſhold, ſhe beſought *us,* ſaying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come in to my houſe, and abide *there.* And ſhe conſtrained us.

A farther account is here given of St. Paul's travels to preach the goſpel; he departs from Troas to Samothracia, from thence to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia. Here on the ſabbath-day he went out of the city to the river's ſide, where a meeting-place for prayer, ſay ſome, was built, and made uſe of, as being remote from the noiſe and obſervation of the multitude. In this oratory, St. Paul preached to the women, they being both moſt numerous and moſt zealous, and God gives him the ſeal of his miniſtry in the converſion of Lydia. In which famous converſion, obſerve how particular the Holy Ghoſt is in relating the ſeveral circumſtances belonging to it: She is deſcribed by her perſon and ſex, a certain woman; by her name, Lydia; by her calling and employment, a ſeller of purple; by her city, Thyatira; by her pious diſpoſition, ſhe worſhipped God. Her converſion is deſcribed, (1.) By the efficient cauſe of it; the Lord opened her heart. (2.) By the inſtrumental cauſe of it; her attending to the things that were ſpoken of Paul. *Learn,* 1. That the hearts of perſons are naturally ſhut up, and faſt barred againſt Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That the opening of the heart to receive Jeſus Chriſt, is the peculiar effect of the ſovereign power, and omnipotent grace of God. 3. That till God opens the heart of a ſinner, the preaching of the goſpel little affecteth, though never ſo plainly and perſuaſively preached. 4. That when once the heart is opened, the ear will not be ſhut, the perſon is truly attentive to the preaching of the goſpel; *The Lord opened Lydia's heart, and ſhe attended. Obſerve* next, The ſeal of her converſion and ſalvation received by her, *She was baptized, and her whole houſe.* It was the ordinary way of the apoſtles to baptize houſholds; not that they were ſure that they were all believers, or that the family-governors could make them ſo; but it was their duty to devote all in their power to God, and to do their utmoſt to perſuade: And God uſually ſucceeded their endeavours. *Note* here, That the church of God, for near ſeventeen hundred years, never refuſed the baptizing of infants of believing parents, as being taken into covenant with themſelves. Having then for ſo many ages been in the poſſeſſion of this privilege, we may more reaſonably require the anabaptiſts to prove by expreſs ſcripture, that children were not baptized by the apoſtles, (when they baptized whole families, yea, whole nations, according to their commiſſion, Matt. xxviii. 19.) than they can require us to prove that they were. Lydia and her houſe were baptized, ſays the text, that is, ſays the Syriac, Lydia and her children. Lydia, by reaſon of her faith in Chriſt, having a right to baptiſm, all her family, upon her undertaking to bring them up in the knowledge of Chriſt, were admitted to the ordinance with her. *Obſerve,* laſtly, A ſpecial fruit and evidence of Lydia's converſion, ſhe conſtrained the apoſtles with an amicable violence; by fervent intreaties and paſſionate importunities, to receive the civilities of her houſe. Converted perſons have ſo much love to Chriſt's miniſters, who were the inſtruments of their converſion, that they greatly deſire to expreſs it by all acts of poſſible kindneſs; *If ye have judged me faithful, come into my houſe, and abide there; and ſhe conſtrained us.*

16 ¶ And it came to paſs, as we went to prayer, a certain damſel poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of divination, met us, which brought her maſters much gain by ſoothſaying: 17 The ſame followed Paul and us, and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation. 18 And this did ſhe many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and ſaid unto the ſpirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her. And he came out the ſame hour. 19 ¶ And when her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market-place unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to obſerve, being Romans. 22 And the multitude roſe up together againſt them: and the magiſtrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them.* 23 And when they had laid many ſtripes upon them, they caſt *them* into priſon, charging the jailor to keep them ſafely. 24 Who having received ſuch a charge, thruſt them into the inner priſon, and made their feet faſt in the ſtocks.

As we went to prayer, a damſel poſſeſſed met us. That is, as the apoſtles went towards the forementioned place of prayer, a damſel poſſeſſed with the devil, by whoſe inſpiration ſhe foretold future things, and revealed many ſecrets to them that conſulted her, followed them, crying out, *Theſe are the ſervants of the moſt high God, who declare unto us the way of ſalvation.* Where *note*, 1. That the father of lies ſometimes ſpeaks the truth, though never for truth's ſake, but for his own advantage: Here what the devil ſaid was truth, but it was for deviliſh ends; he transforms himſelf now into an angel of light, to draw men on to believe him, the prince of darkneſs. 2. How St. Paul refuſes the devil's teſtimony concerning himſelf, even when he ſpake the truth. The teſtimony of truth from the father of lies, is enough to render truth itſelf ſuſpected. 3. The authority which St. Paul takes upon him in the name of Chriſt to diſpoſſeſs the devil, and caſt him out of the damſel: *Paul ſaid, I command thee in the name of Jeſus to come out of her: And he came out the ſame hour.* Theſe words St. Paul uttered by the motion of the holy Spirit, and relying by faith on the promiſe of Chriſt made by himſelf to his apoſtles, Mark xvi. 17. *That in his name they ſhould caſt out devils*; accordingly he received power from on high to caſt out this darling devil. 4. How Satan ſeeks to be revenged on Paul for diſpoſſeſſing of him; he raiſes up an hot perſecution, and ſoon caſts him into priſon, who had caſt the devil out of the damſel: If we diſturb and trouble Satan, he will be ſure to trouble and diſturb us. Such miniſters as make the greateſt oppoſition againſt Satan, muſt expect to meet with the greateſt oppoſition from him. 5. Who were the inſtruments which Satan ſtirs up to raiſe this perſecution againſt the apoſtles; they were the rulers and the rabble; *The multitude roſe up, and the magiſtrates rent their clothes*, &c. Thus were the holy apoſtles, and innocent ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, impriſoned, and treated as the vileſt malefactors, only for oppoſing Satan, and ſeeking the welfare of mankind. Laſtly, That love of money was the root of all this perſecution: The damſel's maſters perceiving that their gain was gone, and that ſhe could help them to no more money by telling people their fortunes, the devil of diſcontent poſſeſſed them: They ſtir up perſecution againſt the apoſtles, they caſt them into priſon, into the inward priſon, and, to make all ſure, ſet them in the ſtocks.

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and ſang praiſes unto God: and the priſoners heard them. 26 And ſuddenly there was a great earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were looſed. 27 And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon-doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the priſoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Do thyſelf no harm: for we are all here.

The apoſtles are here, by Satan and his inſtruments, caſt into priſon; but *note*, They have their priſon-comforts: (1.) The joy of their hearts runs out at their lips, they ſang praiſes unto God, when their bodies were in priſon, and their feet were in the ſtocks; theſe holy ſervants of God were not only meek and patient, but joyous and chearful under perſecution, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for him who had undergone ſo much indignity and ſhame for them. (2.) They enjoy ſweet communion with God in prayer; *At midnight they prayed, and the priſoners heard them:* No place can be improper, no time unſeaſonable for prayer. No priſon can bolt out God, nor deprive us of our communion with him: Prayer will get up to heaven in ſpite of all the oppoſition, either of hell or earth. *Note*, 2. How ſudden the anſwer, and how ſenſible the return of prayer was which the Lord graciouſly gave his ſuffering ſervants: *Suddenly there was a great earthquake.* This earthquake was an infallible ſign of God's audience; that he heard them, and would ſtand by them. 3. The powerful efficacy of St. Paul's prayer; his prayer ſhook the heavens, the heavens ſhook the earth, the earth ſhook the priſon, even to the very foundations of it: Prayer has a divine kind of omnipotency in it: *Vincit invincibilem & ligat omnipotentem*; "It overcomes God with his own ſtrength." 4. What influence this earthquake had upon the jailor, it occaſioned ſuch an heart-quake in him, that to give himſelf eaſe, ſilly ſoul, he reſolves to murder himſelf. Lord! how miſerable are the conſolations which the carnal and unregenerate world have recourſe and fly unto, when trouble and diſtreſs take hold upon them? They run to an halter, to rid them of their trouble, having no God to go unto, and thereby plunge themſelves into endleſs troubles, yea, eternal torments. Laſtly, How kind the apoſtle was to his cruel keeper; he that hurt the apoſtle's feet in the ſtocks, hears the apoſtle crying to him in the midſt of the earthquake, *Do thyſelf no harm.* Good men ever have been, and are men of tender and compaſſionate diſpoſitions; not ſo ſolicitous for their own liberties, as for others' lives: The apoſtles might have held their peace, and ſuffered the jailor to have ſlain himſelf, and thereby made their own eſcape; but they preferred the jailor's eternal ſalvation, before their own temporal liberty and happineſs. *Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Do thyſelf no harm.*

22 Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; 30 And brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved? 31 And they ſaid, Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe. 32 And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe.

As if the jailor had ſaid, "Sirs, now I ſee and acknowledge that the doctrine taught by you, is the truth of the eternal God; and he hath by this miraculous earthquake teſtified to me, that you are his true and faithful ſervants; tell me therefore I beſeech you, what I muſt do to attain ſalvation?" They anſwer, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c. That is, "If you and your family receive the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and regulate your lives according to it, you ſhall be ſaved." Here *note*, 1. That ſcorners and perſecutors will become tremblers, when once God hath touched their hearts, and wounded their conſciences with remorſe for ſin: The jailor here came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; trembling under a ſenſe of his guiltineſs, and falling down upon his knees to aſk them forgiveneſs. 2. That trembling ſinners are always inquiſitive, yea, very inquiſitive perſons: An awakened conſcience will put a man upon inquiry, upon great and much inquiry, what he ſhould do. 3. That the chief thing which the trembling ſoul inquires after, is the buſineſs of ſalvation; *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* 4. That trembling ſinners, and troubled ſouls, muſt be directed to Jeſus Chriſt, and to faith in him, as the only way to obtain ſalvation by him; *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

33 And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed *their* ſtripes; and was baptized, he and all his ſtraightway.

Behold how ſudden and ſtrange a change was wrought in this jailor! Before his converſion he was cruel, barbarous and hard-hearted: Now he is meek, merciful, and compaſſionate. He that before had beaten, impriſoned, and hurt the holy apoſtles' feet in the ſtocks, now pities them, mourns over them, and waſhes their ſtripes. *Learn* thence, That religion, and the grace of God, ſoftens and molifies the hardeſt hearts, ſweetens the ſoureſt natures, and changes the moſt barbarous and bloody diſpoſitions. Behold this jailor, before his converſion, a ſavage perſecutor, a tyger, and a vulture, like the demoniac in the goſpel, exceeding fierce, but now diſpoſſeſſed of his fury, and by grace turned into a lamb for meekneſs, and a dove for innocency. 2. How the jailor believing, he and his whole houſe were baptized. The apoſtle denied not baptiſm to the jailor's houſhold, upon the jailor's ſincere profeſſion of the chriſtian faith; yet no doubt he promiſed to uſe his utmoſt endeavours to bring them to the knowledge and obedience of Jeſus Chriſt. Laſtly, How improbable it is that the jailor and his houſhold were baptized by dipping: We do uot deny the lawfulneſs of baptizing by immerſion, but we cannot aſſert the abſolute and indiſpenſible neceſſity of it. St. Paul, who was newly waſhed, and his ſores dreſſed, occaſioned by ſtripes, cannot be ſuppoſed either to go out himſelf, or to carry the jailor and all his family in the dead of the night, to the river or a pond to baptize them; neither is it in the leaſt probable, that St. Paul himſelf was baptized by dipping: See Acts ix. 18, 19. *He aroſe and was baptized; and when he had received meat, he was ſtrengthened.* The context may convince us, that he was baptized in his lodgings, being ſick and weak, having faſted three days, and being in a very low condition, partly by his miraculous viſion, and partly by his extraordinary faſting; it was no ways probable that Ananias ſhould carry him out to a river in that condition, to plunge him in cold water. Dipping then, ſurely, cannot be ſo eſſential unto baptiſm, as for want of it to pronounce the baptiſm of all the reformed churches throughout the world, to be null and void, as ſome amongſt us do.

34 And when he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſe.

See here a ſpecial evidence, and ſweet fruit of the jailor's converſion; he brings the apoſtles, who were the inſtruments of his converſion, into his houſe; and having waſhed their ſtripes, refreſhes their bowels; he ſet meat before them. The truth of converſion will manifeſt itſelf in all thankfulneſs, and other tokens of reſpect to thoſe whom God has made the inſtruments of our converſion. True converſion changes men's thoughts of God's miniſters, and cauſes men to love and honour thoſe whom before they did diſdain and ſcorn, perſecute and hate. *Note*, 2. How full of joy and ſpiritual rejoicing this new convert was, *he rejoiced*. O the ſweet fruit of faith in Chriſt! namely, *peace* with God, and *joy* in the Holy Ghoſt. Converſion always puts men into a joyful ſtate: Rejoicing, ſpiritual rejoicing, is the portion, the proper portion, and the peculiar portion of converted perſons, as it is ſometimes their preſent portion: The jailor, upon his *believing in God*, *inſtantly rejoiced.*

35 And when it was day, the magiſtrates ſent the ſerjeants, ſaying, Let thoſe men go. 36 And the keeper of the priſon told this ſaying to Paul, The magiſtrates have ſent to let you go; now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul ſaid unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt us into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay, verily; but let them come themſelves, and fetch us out.

Note here, 1. The willingneſs of the magiſtrates to releaſe thoſe innocent priſoners, the holy apoſtles, and what might be the probable occaſion of it; namely, (1.) The terror of the earthquake which affected them with fear. (2.) The conſciouſneſs of their own guilt from their injurious dealing with the apoſtles, ſcourging them, and caſting them into priſon, only for caſting a devil out of a poſſeſſed ſervant. The conſciences of the vileſt and worſt of men, at one time or other, do make furious reflections upon them for their cruelty and injuſtice towards the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Note*, 2. How the innocent apoſtles refuſed to be thus clandeſtinely releaſed, and privately brought out of priſon: They were unjuſtly laid in priſon, and without any legal trial ſcourged and bound, contrary to the law and privileges of the Romans; and therefore the apoſtles inſiſt upon their privilege, and would not be content with a ſneaking clandeſtine diſmiſſion, after ſuch a public ignominious puniſhment, injuriouſly inflicted on them. *Learn* thence, That it is lawful to plead our right by law againſt unjuſt magiſtrates; and though we muſt not return evil for evil, yet we may uſe all lawful means for redreſſing and removing of our own grievances. Thus did St. Paul here; yet more for the goſpel's ſake than his own, leſt the word of God ſhould be deſpiſed with their perſons.

38 And the ſerjeants told theſe words unto the magiſtrates; and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and beſought them, and brought *them* out, and deſired *them* to depart out of the city. 40 And they went out of the priſon, and entered into *the houſe of* Lydia: and

when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Note here, 1. What an awe God has over the conſciences of men in general, and of magiſtrates in particular: They ſtoop to their priſoners, and beſeech them to come out of priſon, and depart from the city. The ſame can God do for all his ſervants who have been diſgracefully and deſpitefully uſed. He can make their enemies become their benefactors at his pleaſure, and their perſecutors ſhall be their deliverers. 2. That as deſirable as liberty was, thoſe honeſt hearts choſe rather to go without it, than to accept it upon diſhonourable terms, either to the blemiſhing of their innocency, or to the aſperſion of the goſpel. Had they been privately releaſed, they might have been publicly ſlandered, for making their eſcape by compact with the jailor, whom they had now made their own; therefore they ſtay in priſon till publicly diſcharged, and then they go forth; *The magiſtrates beſought them, and brought them forth.* 3. The holy uſe which theſe good men made of their reſtored liberty: They *viſit the brethren, and comfort them,* and confirm them, and ſtrengthen them in the faith of Chriſt. Thus this chapter concludes with an account of what St. Paul did and ſuffered at Philippi, where he laid the foundation of that eminent church, to which he wrote his epiſtle, which bears the title of his *epiſtle to the Philippians*; wherein he mentions many fellow-labourers that he had there, in the work of the goſpel, Phil. iv. 3. *Help thoſe which laboured with me in the goſpel, with Clement, and other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names are in the book of life.* It is an happy encouragement to the miniſters of Chriſt, when they are all found helping and not hindering one another, ſtrengthening each other's hands, and not ſaddening one another's hearts; but, by united endeavours, in public preaching, and private inſpection, promoting the grand deſign of the goſpel; namely, to fear God, honour their ſuperiors, love one another. So be it.

CHAP. XVII.

NOW when they had paſſed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where was a ſynagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three ſabbath-days reaſoned with them out of the ſcriptures. 3 Opening and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead; and that this Jeſus, whom I preach unto you, is Chriſt.

The foregoing chapter acquaints us with the travels of St. Paul to Lyſtra and Philippi: At Lyſtra he cured a cripple, and was ſtoned for it; at Philippi he caſt out a devil, and was ſcourged and impriſoned for it. This chapter begins with St. Paul's travels to Theſſalonica, the chief city of Macedonia, where this apoſtle gathered a famous church, unto which he wrote two excellent epiſtles. Coming to Theſſalonica at this time, he went, (as his manner was) into the ſynagogue, not into a private houſe. As Chriſt taught daily in the temple, ſo did his apoſtles teach in the ſynagogues; it was the falſe apoſtles that crept into houſes, and led captive ſilly women, as St. Paul complains, 2 Tim. iii. 6. Truth ſeeks no corners, but rejoices to be publicly ſeen: Beſides, the goſpel was firſt to be preached to the Jews, and, upon their rejection, to the Gentiles. Accordingly the apoſtle takes the advantage of the ſynagogue, where all the Jews were gathered together, and preaches to them Jeſus and the reſurrection. Where *note,* The firſt grand point which the apoſtle inſiſted, was to demonſtrate that Jeſus, whom he preached, was the long-expected Meſſias. Now to prove this, he produces the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and compares them with what was done and ſuffered by Chriſt, making all things as plain and obvious to the eye of their underſtandings, as if they had ſeen with their bodily eyes, ſatisfactorily demonſtrating to their judgments, that Jeſus is the Chriſt. Laſtly, How the goſpel is like the ſea, what is loſt in one place, is gained in another; St. Paul is ſent away from Philippi, but by that means the goſpel was preached at Theſſalonica. God over-rules the motions of his miniſters, and the madneſs and malice of their perſecutors, for the furtherance and ſpreading of the goſpel.

4 And ſome of them believed, and comforted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company, and ſet all the city on an uproar, and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon, and ſought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jaſon and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo; 7 Whom Jaſon hath received: and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Cæſar, ſaying, That there is another king, *one* Jeſus. 8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard theſe things. 9 And when they had taken ſecurity of Jaſon and of the other, they let them go.

The foregoing verſes acquaint us with St. Paul's preaching at Theſſalonica in the Jewiſh ſynagogue, as alſo with the argument he inſiſted upon; namely, that the Meſſiah, according to the ſcriptures, was to die, and riſe again from the dead; and that Jeſus whom he preached, was the Meſſiah. Now the verſes before us acquaint us with the different ſucceſs which this ſermon had upon the hearers: Some believed, others were blinded; ſome were converted, others enraged. O the different and contrary effects which the word has upon its hearers! opening the eyes of others; to ſome it is a ſavour of life unto life, to others the ſavour of death. Thoſe to whom the cleareſt light is afforded, who ſinfully ſhut their eyes againſt it, and ſay they will not ſee, how juſt is it with God to cloſe their eyes judicially, and ſay they ſhall not ſee! 2. How the apoſtle ſpecifies, and particularly declares the ſucceſs which the preaching of the goſpel had upon the people of Theſſalonica, both good and bad. The good ſucceſs in the fourth verſe; ſome (though few) of the Jews were converted, but many proſelytes, and not a few of the Gentiles, and a conſiderable number of the devout women, and honourable matrons of the city. The bad event and ſucceſs is recorded, ver. 5. The unbelieving Jews called the lewd fellows of the city together into a confederacy with them, and raiſed a perſecution againſt the apoſtles. Thence *note*, 1. That the progreſs and proſperous ſucceſs of the goſpel ever was, is and will be a grievous eye ſore to the devil and his inſtruments. 2. That the worſt enemies which the goſpel ever met with in the world, are the unbelieving Jews. Here, *the Jews which believed not*, engaged the rabble on their ſide, who are the fitteſt tools to raiſe perſecution againſt the miniſters of Chriſt: *The Jews which believed not, took certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and aſſaulted*, &c. 3. That the devil's old method for raiſing perſecution againſt the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt, has been, and ſtill is, to lay the moſt grievous crimes, falſely, to the Chriſtians charge. Here the apoſtles are charged with innovation and ſedition, with *turning the world upſide down*. Thus afterwards, in the primitive times, whatever calamities came upon the ſtate and kingdom, whatever commotions or tumults did ariſe in nations, preſently Chriſtianity was blamed, and inſtantly the Chriſtians were caſt to the lions; whereas it is not the goſpel, but men's corruption, which breeds diſturbance; as it is not the ſea, but the foulneſs of the ſtomach, that makes the men ſea-ſick. 4. How mercifully and marvellouſly the Lord delivered the apoſtles, Paul and Silas, at this time, out of the hands of their perſecutors: *They ſought them in the houſe of Jaſon, but found them not*. The devil now miſſed of his prey, for the Lord hid the apoſtles here, as he did the prophets before, Jeremy and Baruch, Jer. xxxvi. 26. having more work, and farther ſervice for them to do. The wiſe huſbandman doth not commit all his corn to the oven, but reſerves ſome for ſeed. Laſtly, That as the panther, when it cannot come at the perſon, will fly upon and tear the picture in pieces; ſo theſe enraged perſecutors, finding that the apoſtles were eſcaped their hands, fall foul upon Jaſon, who had entertained them, and drag him before the rulers and magiſtrates, charging him as an abetter of treaſon: Yet *obſerve*, How God over-ruled the hearts of theſe rulers, that they did offer no violence to Jaſon, but only took ſecurity of him, for his own and others appearance before them, when called for. Thus *the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of tribulation, and to make a way for eſcape*.

10 ¶ And the brethren immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the ſynagogue of the Jews. 11 Theſe were more noble than thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. 12 Therefore many of them believed; alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Theſſalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the people.

Note here, 1. The pious and prudential care which the brethren took of the holy apoſtles, and the means which they uſed for their preſervation: *They preſently ſent them away unto Berea*. The devil ſeeks nothing ſo induſtriouſly, as the lives of the miniſters of the goſpel (they making the greateſt oppoſition to him and his kingdom); but God finds out ways and means for their preſervation, to reſerve them for farther work and future ſervice: *The apoſtles came by night unto Berea*. 2. St. Paul makes again the Jews ſynagogue his preaching-place, here at Berea, as he had done before at Theſſalonica, ver. 2. and did afterwards at Athens, ver. 17. O how cloſe did the apoſtle keep to his commiſſion, to preach Jeſus Chriſt! firſt to the Jews, and to wait upon them with the repeated tender of the goſpel, till they put it far from them, and judged themſelves unworthy of eternal life, before he turned to the Gentiles. 3. The honourable character which the Holy Ghoſt here gives of theſe Bereans; *They were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica*: That is, of a more ingenuous, mild, and pliable temper of mind; they were not ſo poſſeſſed with prejudice and obſtinacy againſt the goſpel; they did not meet it with rage, but thought it worthy their ſearch and ſerious inquiry; for which they are ſtyled *more noble*. Thence *learn*, That to be of a teachable temper, and tractable towards the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, is the beſt ſort of gentility and nobleneſs. The Bereans were better bred, and better deſcended than the Theſſalonians, yet not by civil human dignity, but by ſpiritual and divine dignation; God gave them this preparation of their heart, and made them to differ from their neighbours: *Theſe were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica*. 4. What it is theſe Bereans are ſo highly commended for; namely, for *ſearching the ſcriptures*. Where *note*, 1. That the ſcriptures then were in the vulgar tongue. 2. That, as they were in their own tongue, ſo the laity had them in their own hands. 3. That the common people did read them, and heard them read, ſearched, and examined them; and yet were ſo far from cenſure and blame, that they met with commendation for it from God himſelf. From the whole, *note*, That a diligent reading of, and daily ſearching into the holy ſcriptures, is a duty incumbent upon all thoſe in whoſe hands the ſcriptures are, or may be found. Theſe Chriſtians at Berea ſearching the ſcriptures, were a noble pattern for all ſucceeding Chriſtians to imitate and follow. Laſtly, How the inveterate malice of the unbelieving Jews at Theſſalonica purſues the apoſtle as far as Berea, ver. 13. *When the Jews at Theſſalonica had knowledge*, &c. As Chriſt ſends his miniſters, ſo the devil ſends his meſſengers from place to place: And as the miniſters of Chriſt are never weary of his ſervice for the good of ſouls; ſo perſecutors are reſtleſs, they will compaſs ſea and land to harraſs and drive the faithful ambaſſadors of Chriſt from city to city, and, if it were in their power, to baniſh them out of the world. Lord, help all thy faithful miniſters to execute this piece of holy revenge upon Satan, that we may be even with him for all his malice and ſpite againſt us. O let us endeavour to do all the poſſible ſervice, and the utmoſt good we can, wherever we come.

14 And then immediately the brethren ſent away
Paul to go as it were to the ſea: but Silas and Timotheus
abode there ſtill. 15 And they that conducted
Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving
a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for
to come to him with all ſpeed, they departed. 16 ¶
Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his
ſpirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city wholly
given to idolatry. 17 Therefore diſputed he in the
ſynagogue with the Jews, and with the devout perſons,
and in the market daily with them that met
with him. 18 Then certain philoſophers of the Epicureans
and of the Stoics encountered him. And
ſome ſaid, What will this babbler ſay? other ſome,
He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods: becauſe
he preached unto them Jeſus and the reſurrection.
19 And they took him, and brought him
unto Areopagus, ſaying, May we know what this
new doctrine whereof thou ſpeakeſt *is?* 20 For
thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things to our ears: we
would know therefore what theſe things mean. 21
For all the Athenians and ſtrangers which were
there, ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to
tell or to hear ſome new thing.

The prudential care which the believing brethren took of the holy apoſtle, was obſerved before, ver. 10. His life being in danger at Theſſalonica, they ſend him to Berea; being purſued to Berea, they ſend him to Athens, and detain Silas and Timotheus: Not that St. Paul was more fearful than the other two, but more uſeful, and conſequently more hateful to the unbelieving Jews, and his life more ſought after. To preſerve which, his friends uſe an innocent policy; they make as if they ſent him away to ſea; but really he goes on foot to Athens: *Immediately the brethren ſent away Paul to go as it were to the ſea.* Hence *learn*, That human policy and prudence may lawfully be made uſe of, in ſubſerviency to divine Providence. It was good policy and great providence in the apoſtle and his friends, to look one way and go another; to look towards the ſea, and to go to Athens by land. There is a wiſe and holy ſubtlety in foreſeeing the evil, and hiding ourſelves: A ſerpent's eye is a ſingular ornament in a dove's head: Piety without policy is too ſimple to be ſafe, and policy without piety is too ſubtle to be good: The ſagacity of the ſerpent, and the innocency of the dove, both may and ought to go together. 2. The place which the apoſtle comes to, Athens, a ſovereign city, a famous univerſity; the eye of Greece, as Greece was reputed the eye of the world: Yet, notwithſtanding all their ſcholarſhip they were ignorant of God in Chriſt; all their learning could not teach them to attain any ſaving knowledge, but both city and univerſity are wholly given to idolatry. *Learn* hence, That human learning alone can never teach any place or people the divine truths of Chriſt and his goſpel. It is a good handmaid, but a bad miſtreſs; it is good in itſelf, but when corrupted by a buſy devil, and a baſe heart, it degenerates into the worſt inſtrument in the world: For *corruptio optimi eſt peſſima*; "The ſweeteſt wine makes the ſoureſt vinegar." 3. The temper of the men of Athens deſcribed to us: They were great and greedy newſmongers, they ſpent their time in telling and hearing news of any ſort. All which was the effect of an itching curioſity; a diſeaſe which has deſcended from age to age, from place to place, from perſon to perſon, occaſioning a ſinful expence of time, which can never be recalled; the neglect of our neceſſary affairs, which can never be redeemed; ſpreading falſe ſtories of others, and provoking diſpleaſure againſt ourſelves. O how wiſe and happy were it, if we enquired after news, not as Athenians, but as Chriſtians! that we might know the better how to manage our prayers and praiſes for the church and nation. 4. How the wickedneſs and idolatry of this place did vehemently affect this great apoſtle; *His ſpirit was ſtirred*, when he ſaw the city full of idols, and *wholly given to idolatry*. Their idolatry put him into a *paroxiſm*, as the word ſignifies; his mind was in a concuſſion by contrary paſſions: He was affected, firſt with ſorrow and grief, that a city ſhould be ſo learned, and yet ſo blind; next with indignation and anger, at the ſuperabounding idolatry of that knowing people; and laſtly, with fervent zeal, and an ardent deſire to undeceive them, and better inform them. In order to which, he takes all opportunities, both in the city, in the ſynagogue, and in the market-place, to preach to the people, to diſpute with the philoſophers, particularly the Epicureans, who denied the providence of God, and the immortality of the ſoul; who placed all their happineſs in pleaſure, and held nothing to be deſirable but what delighted their ſenſes: A doctrine which made them rather ſwine than men. And alſo with the Stoics, who placed all happineſs in want of paſſion, denied all freedom of will, and aſcribed all events to an abſent and irrevocable *fate*; and having diſputed with them, he preaches Chriſt crucified, riſen, and glorified to them; but he ſeemeth a babbler to them, and a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods. Whence *learn*, That Chriſt and his doctrine, the goſpel, was the grand ſtumbling-block both to Jew and Gentile, learned and unlearned. St. Paul took moſt pains to convert Athens, yet here his ſucceſs was leaſt, though it was a learned univerſity, where, no doubt, were many men of excellent natural accompliſhments. Hence we may infer, that if moral diſpoſitions, and improvement of natural abilities, had fitted men for grace, we might have expected the greateſt number of converts at Athens, where many were mocking, but very few believing. Surely the apoſtle's plantations there were different, not ſo much from the nature of the ſoil, as from the different influences of the Spirit. 4. How wonderfully the overruling providence of God concerning itſelf for the apoſtle's preſervation here at Athens; they hauled him away to their high court of judicature, which ſat upon Mars-hill (ſo called, becauſe the temple of Mars ſtood upon it) where the moſt learned men aſſembled, to hear and determine what new God was to be worſhipped. Here *note*, 1. How the providence of God brought St. Paul to a public place to preach in, Mars-hill, where was a confluence of all the people, and a congregation of the moſt learned Gentile philoſophers: This gave the apoſtle a mighty opportunity for the ſervice of preaching. And, 2. How tenderly the apoſtle was treated in this cruel court; although this court had condemned Diagoras, Protagoras, and Socrates himſelf, for undervaluing their gods, and bringing in new deities; yet the apoſtle's life is not only ſpared by theſe judges, but they ſpeak candidly and kindly to the apoſtle, and court him to gratify their curioſity, by informing them of this novelty, which they were ſo inquiſitive after, and deſired to hear more of his divine diſcourſe. Thus the Lord eminently ſhews, how the hearts of men are in his hand, and that without his permiſſion all the bitter enemies of his church ſhall not move a tongue, nor lift up a finger againſt any of his miniſters and members.

22 Then Paul ſtood in the midſt of Mars-hill, and ſaid, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious. 23 For as I paſſed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Ye men of Athens have a great number of gods, whom ye ignorantly worſhip: The God therefore whom ye acknowledge not to know, and yet profeſs to worſhip, is he that I preach unto you: For as I paſſed up and down in your city, beholding your altars and images, I found an altar with this inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Here *note*, 1. The light of nature diſcovered: The altar is inſcribed, TO A GOD. The true God of the Jews was an unknown and uncertain God to the wiſeſt of the Gentiles. *Learn*, That ſome diſcoveries of God may be made, even by the light of nature: Theſe Heathens, who had nothing but the dim light of nature to guide and direct them, do yet own a God, and acknowledge a worſhip due unto him, by the erection of an altar. *Note*, 2. The darkneſs of nature diſcovered; the altar, though erected to a God, yet it is to a God unknown. Thence *learn*, That natural light, in its moſt elevated and raiſed improvements, can make no full and ſaving diſcoveries of God: The true God was but an unknown God, even to the wiſeſt of the Heathens, the men of Athens, who were the moſt famous, in their day, for the ſevereſt wiſdom and gravity.

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, 25 Neither is worſhipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, For we are alſo his offspring.

Here begins St. Paul's famous ſermon to the men of Athens; in which the firſt thing that occurs to our obſervation is, how the preacher doth adapt and accommodate his diſcourſe to the capacity of his hearers, as alſo to their ſentiments and opinions. His auditory conſiſted of philoſophers, particularly of Epicureans and Stoics: The former, inſtead of a God and a wiſe providence to make and govern the world, brought in *fortune* or blind *chance*, to bear all the ſway. The latter, though they acknowledged a God, yet introduced a rigid fatality, as ſuperior to the Deity, denying to man all freedom and liberty of choice. Accordingly, St. Paul addreſſes himſelf, firſt, to prove a God and a providence, to the excluſion both of *fate* and *fortune*: And then, ſecondly, from the very nature and notion of God, he infers the folly and abſurdity of their Pagan ſuperſtition. *Obſerve*, next, The apoſtle's arguments to prove the being of a God, and a providence: (1.) From the works of creation; *He made the world and all things therein, he giveth life and breath, and all things.* The whole univerſe is his work, and he planted the earth, and repleniſhed it with inhabitants. The inviſible God is made viſible in his creatures, and the being of God demonſtrated from the formation of a world of creatures; from the formation of man in particular, *In whom we live and move*, &c. Here are three great benefits enjoyed by human nature; life, motion, and being, all derived from God, and demonſtrating the being of God. (1.) Life: This is valuable above all bleſſings. (2.) Motion: A great mercy, but little conſidered: How uncomfortable would life be without it? Were we ſtaked down to the earth, as trees; or did we move by a conſtant law of nature, as the ſun and moon do move, it had been a favour beyond our deſert; but to move as we do at pleaſure, with choice and eaſe, to help ourſelves, and to aſſiſt others, is at once a demonſtration of God's being, and an evidence of his bounty. (3.) Being: This is eſſential and neceſſary to none but God. To us it is an act of divine favour; and this being is a mercy; then being what we are, is a double mercy, that we do not creep and crawl upon the earth, as worms and toads, but are built high upon the earth, with wonderful wiſdom and care; and that a ſoul, which is an immortal and an eternal being, inhabits within us; a being which ſhall continue when heaven and earth ſhall be conſumed. Next, *obſerve*, The apoſtle having proved the being of a God, next demonſtrates the certainty of a divine providence; *He hath determined the times that are fore appointed, and the bounds of their habitations.* That is, God has, as it were, chalked out, and drawn a line, where the bounds and habitations, whither the dominions of men ſhould be extended, and where they ſhall be confined. The common bleſſings of God are not diſpenſed without a ſpecial providence; and the ſpecial providence of God, in upholding, diſpoſing, and governing the world, doth as much prove the being of a God, as the general creation of it: Every hour's preſervation is virtually a new creation, and both of them ſufficient demonſtrations of the divine being and bounty. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The duty which the apoſtle infers on man's part, from all the goodneſs and bounty demonſtrated on God's part: *That they ſhall ſeek the Lord, and find him, who is not far from every one of us.* It is the duty of all men to follow after God; that God hath made man ſhould draw man after God; inaſmuch as we are his offspring, (ver. 29.) our hearts ſhould ſpring and riſe up to him in love and thankfulneſs: As the rivers, becauſe they come from the ſea, go back thither; ſo we, being the offspring of God, and derived from him, ſhould be always returning to him. And if it be the duty of all men to follow after God, becauſe they have natural life, breath, and motion from him; how much more ſhould the new creature, who has a ſpiritual life breathed into him, and beſtowed upon him, follow hard after God, in the enjoyment of whom his preſent happineſs and future felicity doth conſiſt? To follow God in his way, and to propoſe God as our end, contains the ſum of all duty.

29 Foraſmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold or ſilver or ſtone, graven by art and man's device.

Note here, 1. How our apoſtle quotes one of the Heathen poets in this his divine diſcourſe. This poet was Aratus; what he attributes to Jupiter, St. Paul applies to the true God; *We are his offspring*. Where *note*, For the honour of human learning, and the lawfulneſs of making uſe of it in our ſermons, the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed three ſeveral times in the New Teſtament to make mention of the Heathen poets; of Aratus, Acts xvii. 28. of Menander, 1 Cor. xv. 33. of Epimenides, Tit. i. 12. Truth is God's, wherever it is found; as a mine of gold is the king's, in whoſe ground ſoever it is diſcovered. 2. The force of the apoſtle's argument, ſeeing we are God's offſpring; that is, ſeeing God is our Creator, we cannot ſuppoſe him to be the workmanſhip of our hands, as an image of gold, ſilver, or ſtone is; and conſequently, how irrational it is for a man to adore an image made by his own hands, for, and inſtead of God. *Learn*, That there is a ſtrong propenſity and inclination in the heart of man to the ſin of idolatry. Secondly, That the ſin of idolatry is not only a very great ſin, but a very unreaſonable and abſurd ſin; it is not only ſacrilegious, but ſilly, for a man to worſhip his own workmanſhip, and to fall down upon his knees to the work of his own hands.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all *men* every where to repent.

That is, "Though God of his infinite patience hath long borne with the world lying in darkneſs and ignorance; yet now by cauſing his goſpel to be preached to all nations, he calls and invites them to repentance, to forſake their idols, and ſerve the true God." Here *obſerve*, 1. The cenſure of the paſt times, they were times of ignorance, *and God winked at them*, or overlooked them; not that God did allow or approve of their idolatry, though he did not deſtroy and cut them off for the ſame; nor afford them ſuch helps and means as he now did, having brought his goſpel among them. 2. The duty of the preſent time declared, *to repent:* This is a commanded duty, and an univerſally commanded duty; *Now he commands all men every where to repent*. From the whole *note*, 1. That times of Paganiſm were times of ignorance. 2. That it is an unſpeakable miſery to be born and brought up in ſuch times. 3. That to live impatiently in times of knowledge, is a ſin that God will by no means wink at. 4. That the great purpoſe and deſign of the goſpel, whereſoever it is ſent and preached, is to invite men to repentance; *Now he commandeth all men every where to repent.*

31 Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by *that* man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

Theſe words are an argument or motive to enforce the fore-going duty of repentance; God requires every man, every where, and that now immediately, to forſake their idols and ſinful ways; becauſe he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by his Son Chriſt Jeſus, of which he hath already given aſſurance by raiſing him from the dead. Where *note*, 1. A judgment to come aſſerted: He (that is, God) will judge the world; he that hath now an obſerving eye, will hereafter have an rewarding hand. 2. That there not only is a judgment to come, but the day or time of it is determined and fixed; *He hath appointed a day*. As the preciſe time of Chriſt's firſt time was fixed by an unalterable, though an unknown decree, ſo is alſo the time of his ſecond coming: that not knowing the hour, we may be upon our watch every hour. 3. That as the day of judgment is determined, ſo the perſon of the Judge is alſo conſtituted and ordained. *He will judge the world whom he hath ordained*. This is an act of juſtice to our Saviour, that he, having humbled himſelf to take our nature, ſhould, as the reward of his humiliation, judge that world which he died to ſave. And an act of kindneſs towards us, that he ſhould be our Judge, who took upon him our nature, and had ſo much love to us as die for us. Had we leave to chuſe our own judge, what choice could we make better for ourſelves, than that man whom God hath ordained? 4. The aſſurance which God has given us of having Chriſt for our Judge; namely, his raiſing him from the dead: But how doth that aſſure us of Chriſt being our judge? *Anſ*. Our bleſſed Saviour, when he was in the world, often declared that he was appointed by God to judge the quick and the dead, and appealed to his reſurrection as the great proof of what he had ſaid. Now when Almighty God did accordingly raiſe him in ſuch a wonderful manner (as we know he did) what is it leſs than God's ſetting his ſeal to his commiſſion, and openly proclaiming him to be the Judge of all the world? 5. The manner of this judgment, or the meaſures which this Judge will proceed by at the great day; and that is, according to righteouſneſs; *He will judge the world in righteouſneſs:* Not in rigour and ſeverity, taking all the advantages that power can give him; nor yet arbitrarily and upon prerogative, but according to known laws; nor yet partially, with reſpect of perſons, but every man's doom ſhall depend upon the holineſs or unholineſs of his heart and life. Farther, our Judge will candidly interpret men's actions, and make the very beſt of things that the caſe will bear; principally looking at the truth and ſincerity of men's intentions, and making all favourable allowances for their failings and infirmities that can conſiſt with juſtice; and will diſtribute his rewards of happineſs and glory to good men in the other world, in proportion to the meaſures of their difficulties and ſufferings which they meet with here in this world. Now, having this high and full aſſurance of a judgment to come, let us ſeriouſly believe it, daily expect it, and duly prepare for it; let neither profit tempt us, nor pleaſure allure us, nor power embolden us, nor privacy encourage us to do that thing which we cannot anſwer at the great tribunal. When St. Paul preached of judgment, Felix, though a Pagan, trembled at the ſermon: Lord! what ſhall we ſay to thoſe worſe than Pagan infidels amongſt ourſelves, who ridicule a judgment to come, and cry beforehand, God judge me! yea, God damn me! Alas! unhappy men! he will judge you ſure enough, and damn you ſoon enough, if a ſerious repentance prevent it not.

32 And when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked: and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 ¶ Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionyſius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Here we have the ſucceſs of St. Paul's ſermon declared; it was various and different, ſome of his hearers derided, others doubted, and a few believed: Thoſe that derided and mocked, it is very probable, were the Epicureans, who denied that the world was either created or governed by God; as alſo that there were any rewards or puniſhments for men after death; therefore they ridiculed St. Paul's doctrine of the dead. The ſublimeſt doctrines, and moſt comfortable truths of the goſpel, are matter of deriſion and mockery to ſenſual minds. Thoſe that doubted, probably were the Stoics, who did own the reſurrection and a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments in another world; and therefore, for obtaining better ſatisfaction to their doubts, deſired to *hear* the apoſtle *again* diſcourſing farther *of that matter*. Thoſe that believed are few indeed, if no more than are here mentioned, which are Dionyſius and Damaris, with ſome others: Dionyſius was a famous perſon, one of the great council, mentioned ver. 19. whoſe converſion probably might afterwards have a great influence upon many others; and it was no ſmall honour and advantage to the goſpel, to be owned by ſuch an honourable perſon as this Dionyſius was; not many wiſe, not many noble were called: Bleſſed be God that any were, that any are, that any of the great ones of the world ſtoop to the ſceptre of Jeſus Chriſt, and pay homage and ſubjection to him.——Thus ends the apoſtle's divine ſermon at the famous univerſity of Athens, which yielded few, very few converts to St. Paul: For we read of no church founded here, as we did before at Philippi (and in the next chapter at Corinth): What reaſon can be aſſigned but this, That theſe grave philoſophers, profound ſcholars, venerable ſenators and citizens, who had a name for wiſdom throughout the world, were too wiſe to be ſaved by the fooliſhneſs of preaching? As the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs with God, ſo the wiſdom of God in the goſpel is accounted fooliſhneſs by the wiſe men of the word; according to that of the apoſtle, 1 Cor. i. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. *When the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed,* &c.

CHAP. XVIII.

AFTER theſe things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

The foregoing chapter acquainted us with the ſmall ſucceſs which St. Paul found of his miniſtry at Athens; upon his preaching Jeſus and the reſurrection there, the philoſophers and wiſe men mocked and derided him. If natural diſpoſitions and abilities had fitted men for grace, we might have expected the greateſt number of converts at Athens, where many were mockers, but very few believers: Hereupon St. Paul leaves Athens, and goes to Corinth, a famous city in Achaia; where he meets with more encouragement aud better ſucceſs; for here he gathers a famous church, unto which he wrote two epiſtles, under the title of the firſt and ſecond epiſtles to the Corinthians.

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priſcilla, (becauſe that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. 3 And, becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.

The apoſtle being now come to Corinth, where he was altogether a ſtranger, and wanting money for his ſubſiſtance, the providence of God directed him to the houſe of Aquila and Priſcilla; who being of the ſame trade with himſelf, (*tent-makers*) he works with his own hands to maintain himſelf, that he might not be burdenſome to others. Here *note*, 1. The occaſion of Aquila's and Priſcilla's coming to Corinth, with whom St. Paul lodged. The Roman emperor Claudius had baniſhed them from Italy and Rome, ver. 2. *Claudius commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.* Thence *note*, That a wicked world is ſoon weary of the ſaints of God, and longs to worm them out of their cities and ſocieties, never conſidering that their own preſervation from ruin is for the ſaints ſake: As the alleys in a garden are watered for the ſake of the flowers, which otherwiſe would lie dry. 2. That the apoſtle had learned a trade, tent-making, before he was called to the miniſtry, and he wrought upon it occaſionally after he was a miniſter. The moſt learned among the Jews did always learn ſome handicraft trade, it being a tradition amongſt them, "That he that does not learn his child a trade, teaches him to be thief." So that although their children where deſigned for ſtudents, yet they did learn ſome trade. Accordingly St. Paul having learned to make tents (much uſed in thoſe hot countries, by ſoldiers and others, to keep off the violence of the weather) he works at Corinth upon his trade for his own ſubſiſtance. Men ſeparated to the miniſtry of the goſpel, may, upon an exigency, labour for their living; not but that the apoſtle had power and ſufficient warrant to challenge maintenance for his preaching, as he often intimates in his epiſtles, but there was not yet any church at Corinth to maintain him; and when there was, they were moſtly of the poorer and meaner ſort of people, and he would give them a convincing demonſtration, that he ſought not theirs, but them; he demands therefore no maintenance, leſt it ſhould hinder the ſucceſs of his miniſtry; but being of the ſame trade with Aquila and Priſcilla, he takes up his lodging with them at Corinth, and works at their trade.

4 And he reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath, and perſuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews that Jeſus was Chriſt. 6 And when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, he ſhook *his* raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Note here, How vehemently deſirous the holy apoſtle was to plant a Chriſtian church at Corinth, and to bring the Jews of Corinth to embrace the goſpel; *He was preſſed in ſpirit and teſtified*; that is, reaſoned with them, with great vehemency and earneſtneſs of affection, as well as with great judgment, concerning the Meſſias. 2. That the Jewiſh ſynagogue at Corinth was the preaching-place that St. Paul made choice of, hoping to gather the beginnings of his Chriſtian church out of the converted Jews: *He reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath-day.* Still the apoſtle kept to his commiſſion, to preach the goſpel, firſt to the Jews, and afterwards, upon their rejection to the Gentiles. 3. The blaſphemous oppoſition which the Jews made to the doctrine of the goſpel; *They oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed*; that is, they oppoſed his doctrine, reviled his perſon, and blaſphemed Chriſt, whom that apoſtle preached. 4. How the holy apoſtle clears himſelf of the blood of thoſe Jews, whom he had now preached the goſpel unto; he ſaid, *Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.* The faithful miniſters of Chriſt ſhall never have the blood of a periſhing people laid to their charge; they having warned them of their damnable ſtate, and diſcovered the way of life and ſalvation to them, deliver their own ſouls; whilſt the people which they preached to, die in their ſins, and for their ſins.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* houſe named Juſtus, one that worſhipped God, whoſe houſe joined hard to the ſynagogue. 8 And Criſpus the chief ruler of the ſynagogue believed on the Lord, with all his houſe: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. 9 ¶ Then ſpake the Lord to Paul in the night by a viſion, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued *there* a year and ſix months, teaching the word of God among them.

Note here, 1. That the oppoſition which St. Paul met with, while he lodged in the houſe of Aquila and Priſcilla, moved him to change his quarters, and betake himſelf to a new lodging; he goes into the houſe of Juſtus, by birth a Gentile, but a Jewiſh proſelyte, whoſe houſe joined nigh to the ſynagogue where St. Paul's preaching work lay, to ſuch as would be willing to hear him. 2. The good ſucceſs which the apoſtle had in his preaching at Corinth; Criſpus, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and his houſhold, were brought to believe, and were baptized: After whoſe example, many of the people in Corinth believed alſo. Rulers and great men are like looking-glaſſes in the places where they live, by which many dreſs themſelves. 3. That notwithſtanding this good ſucceſs which St. Paul had at Corinth, he ſeems, through human frailty, to be poſſeſſed with fear, and under an apprehenſion of danger from the Jews, and accordingly had thoughts of leaving the city; againſt which fears God antidotes him with a gracious promiſe of his preſence with him: *Be not afraid, for I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee.* Hence *learn*, 1. That the beſt and holieſt of God's ſaints and ſervants are ſometimes under ſad and ſlaviſh fears, and prone to be diſcouraged, when they meet with difficulties in the way of their duty. 2. That the promiſe and aſſurance of God's gracious preſence with them, will raiſe them up above all fears, and be a ſufficient encouragement to them, for their abiding in any place, and amongſt any people, let the difficulty or danger be what it will: *Be not afraid, for I am with thee, and none ſhall hurt thee.* 4. A farther encouragement given by God to the apoſtle, to continue his miniſtry ſtill at Corinth; *I have much people in this city:* That is, Here are many ſouls whom I deſign effectually to call and bring home by thy miniſtry: Accordingly the apoſtle continued his miniſtry among them a year and ſix months. *Learn* hence, That although the ingratitude and perverſeneſs of a people ſo ſadly diſcourage their miniſters, and tempt them to remove from them, yet God encourages them to their duty; that for the malice of ſome, the ſalvation of others may not be neglected. 2. That no oppoſition muſt diſcourage the miniſters of God in the way of their duty; God's ſervants muſt not ſuffer themſelves to be outdone by the devil's ſlaves, but bear down all oppoſition made againſt them with patience and joyfulneſs: And notwithſtanding all the malicious oppoſition made by the Jews againſt the apoſtle, yet did he continue a year and ſix months to preach at Corinth: Chriſt had a great harveſt a-ripening in that city, to be reaped by the apoſtle's miniſtry; and being encouraged with the promiſe of his protecting preſence, he committed himſelf to the divine care, and the Lord both preſerved and ſucceeded him.

12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection, with one accord, againſt Paul, and brought him to the judgment-ſeat, 13 Saying, This *fellow* perſuadeth men to worſhip God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you:

15 But if it be a queſtion of words and names, and
of your law, look ye *to it:* for I will be no judge
of ſuch matters. 16 And he drave them from
the judgment-ſeat. 17 Then all the Greeks took
Soſthenes, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat
him before the judgment-ſeat. And Gallio cared
for none of thoſe things.

Note here, 1. How St. Paul taking heart from the foregoing promiſe made by God unto him, goes on courageouſly in the work of his miniſtry at Corinth; but the unbelieving Jews were ſo enraged againſt him, that they combined together as one man, and, *with one accord, made inſurrection againſt Paul.* Where *note,* What great unity and unanimity there is amongſt wicked men, the devil's friends; he well knows, that his kingdom could not long ſtand if it were divided. The unity of all ſocieties is their ſtrength. 2. They accuſe the apoſtle before Gallio the deputy, for perſuading men to worſhip God contrary to the law of Moſes. Who would not think but that theſe men were truly pious, virtuous, and good, who were ſo zealous for the worſhip of God according to the law? And yet were they wicked men, and fiery perſecutors. There is a noiſy religion in the world; ſome men think, by crying, The church, The church, and by pleading loud for the worſhip of God, as eſtabliſhed by law, to atone for all their immoralities: Praying is good, hearing and receiving the ſacrament are good, if they be joined with holy walking; but if otherwiſe, the howling of wolves is as acceptable to Almighty God, as the prayers of thoſe men who call Chriſt Maſter, and the church Mother, but do not the things which they have commanded; yea, the very dogs which follow them to the public aſſemblies, ſhall as ſoon find acceptance as themſelves, if they do not obey him whom they pretend to adore. It is no matter what church a wicked man is of, for it is certain he can be ſaved in none. 3. What low and mean thoughts Gallio had, and all perſons prejudiſed againſt religion and the power of godlineſs have, of ſincere chriſtianity: *If it be a queſtion of words and names,* ſays Gallio. As if he had ſaid, "Do not trouble me about the niceties of your religion, decide ſuch queſtions among yourſelves; for I will be no judge in ſuch matters." The great men of the world little care to trouble their heads about the matters of religion; they look upon it only as a matter of notion and ſpeculation: Whereas it is not a *ſpeculative ſcience,* but a *practical art of holy living.* And accordingly, like Gallio, they care for none of theſe things. Laſtly, That although this Gallio had no kindneſs for Chriſtianity; yet God made uſe of him as an inſtrument, at this time, to preſerve and ſcreen St. Paul from the rage of his enemies, inſomuch, that *he drove* his accuſers *from the judgment-ſeat:* Thus God performed his promiſe to Paul, *ſuffering no man to hurt him;* but cauſing Gallio the governor to defend him, who his enemies were in hopes would have deſtroyed him. Lord, how happy and wiſe is it for thy ſervants to *commit the care of themſelves to thee in well doing!* If we, with a purity of intention, concern ourſelves for thy glory, thou wilt certainly take care of our ſafety; or if any danger ſhould come, danger itſelf ſhall do us no harm.

18 And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good
while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and
ſailed thence into Syria: and with him Priſcilla and
Aquila; having ſhorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he
had a vow. 19 And he came to Epheſus, and left
them there; but he himſelf entered into the ſynagogue,
and reaſoned with the Jews. 20 When they
deſired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he conſented
not: 21 But bade them farewel, ſaying, I
muſt by all means keep this feaſt that cometh in
Jeruſalem: but I will return again unto you, if God
will. And he ſailed from Epheſus. 22 And when
he had landed at Ceſarea, and gone up and ſaluted
the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And
after he had ſpent ſome time *there,* he departed, and
went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in
order, ſtrengthening all the diſciples.

A farther account is here given of the laborious travels of the great apoſtle St. Paul; namely, from Corinth to Epheſus, from Epheſus to Ceſarea, from Ceſarea to Antioch, &c. Where *note,* 1. That St. Paul having continued a year and a half at Corinth, and planted a church there, which yet ſoon after ſadly degenerated; he determines now to ſail to Epheſus; and accordingly at Cenchrea, a haven near to that city, *he ſhaved his head for he had a vow*; that is, the vow of a Nazarite, which he, (that is, Aquila ſay ſome, St. Paul, ſay others,) had before taken upon him for a time, whereby he was obliged to abſtain from wine, and ſhaving his head, and touching of the dead. But having now accompliſhed his vow, he ſhore his head, and returned to the common way of living; where the wiſdom and moderation of this great apoſtle, in complying in indifferent things, is to be noted and imitated; *To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews:* He willingly complied with their weakneſs, to ſhew that he was no contemner of their law; for which reaſon he cauſed Timothy to be circumciſed, and purified himſelf in the temple at Jeruſalem. And behold the ſucceſs of this his compliance; for, by gratifying the Jews in this condeſcenſion to the preſcription of the law, he brought over very many of them to the faith of Chriſt. Let not any ſuſpect this for a ſinful compliance with the Jews, in obſerving a ceremony which the goſpel had aboliſhed, nor cenſure it for a low and mean ſtoop in ſo great a man, to the humour of the people: for though the ceremonial rites died with Chriſt, yet they were a long time in burying, and the Jews were indulged in the obſervation of them, till they came to a clearer ſight of their Chriſtian liberty: Accordingly, the apoſtle yielded to them for the preſent in indifferent things, without diſſimulation or blame. 2. The apoſtle being now come to Epheſus, he taught in the ſynagogue of the Jews, and reaſoned with them: Where we may *note,* Both how cloſe the apoſtle kept his commiſſion, in firſt preaching the word of life to the Jews, and alſo the fervent love which he bare to his own countrymen, whom, though he had ſuffered all manner of indignities from, yet doth he give them precept upon precept, line upon line; and with an unwearied diſpenſes the word of life and ſalvation to them. 3. Our apoſtle ſtays not long at Epheſus, but haſtens to Jeruſalem to keep the feaſt there; namely, the feaſt of the paſſover; not that he thought himſelf obliged to obſerve the feaſts, or any of the antiquated ceremonies; but becauſe of the vaſt concourſe which he knew would be at Jeruſalem at the time of the feaſt from all quarters, and which would give him an opportunity to make Chriſt known to a great multitude. The miniſters of the goſpel, without the imputation of vain-glory, or ſeeking popular applauſe, may warrantably deſire, and occaſionally lay hold upon an opportunity of diſpenſing the word to a numerous auditory, in hope that caſting the net among many, they may incloſe ſome. Laſtly, The inceſſant care, indefatigable diligence, and unwearied pains of this great apoſtle, in travelling from place to place, and at ſuch great diſtance, to preach the everlaſting goſpel to loſt ſinners: From Epheſus he ſails to Ceſarea, from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem, from Jeruſalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Galatia and Phrygia. See how the *care of all the churches was upon him, and how he laboured more abundantly than they all.* Lord, what a pattern is here of miniſterial diligence and faithfulneſs! What pains did St. Paul take, what hazards did he run, in planting and propagating the goſpel of Chriſt! In labours more abundant, in ſufferings above meaſure! Well might he ſay, *I am able to do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* And bleſſed be God, the ſame power that aſſiſted him, ſtands ready to ſuccour us; and if ever he calls us to an extraordinary ſervice, he will come in with more than an ordinary ſtrength.

24 ¶ And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus. 25 This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the Spirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John. 26 And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue: Whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him; who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, ſhewing by the ſcriptures that Jeſus was Chriſt.

The firſt thing here obſervable, is, How the wiſdom of God provided for the ſeveral churches, that in the abſence of one powerful preacher, they were ſupplied with another; when the providence of God called St. Paul from Epheſus and Corinth, it brought Apollos thither; ſo that what Paul planted, Apollos watered. The judicious Calvin, upon the place, piouſly admires the providence of God over his church, in not ſuffering it to be without a ſettled miniſter; but upon the removal of one, to raiſe up another. 2. How admirably qualified Apollos was for the work of the goſpel, and excellently fitted and furniſhed for the places he was called to, Epheſus and Corinth, famous for philoſophers and orators; accordingly he is a man of raviſhing eloquence, who, by his profound knowledge in the ſacred ſcriptures, was both apt to teach the truth, and able to maintain it. Hence *learn*, That ſcripture-knowledge is the choiceſt qualification, and higheſt commendation of a goſpel-miniſter; *Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures:* Without this, he can never truly and ſavingly make known and diſcover Jeſus Chriſt; without this, he can never rightly divide the word of truth; without this, he can never convince gain-ſayers, either gain-ſayers in opinion, or gain-ſayers in practice; without this, he can never inſtruct the people fully in their duty, nor declare to them the whole counſel of God. *Obſerve*, 3. The great humility of Apollos; altho' he was an eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures, yet he did not diſdain farther inſtruction. Thoſe that are moſt knowing, if humble, are moſt ſenſible of their ignorance. The knowledge of the beſt, while they are on this ſide heaven, is capable of improvements. Apollos knew much, yet Aquila and Priſcilla farther enlightened him, ſo that he knew more. An humble man will be content to learn of the meaneſt woman. Theſe poor tent-makers, Aquila and his wife Priſcilla, catechize the great Apollos, and add ſomething to the treaſure of his knowledge. 4. The place where Apollos preached; in the Jewiſh ſynagogue, ver. 26. *He began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue.* It was a cuſtom among the Jews to allow a liberty for learned men, though no prieſts, to teach in their ſynagogues. Thus Paul, though of the tribe of Benjamin, and not of the tribe of Levi, was permitted to preach in their ſynagogues; as we read throughout this book of the Acts. In like manner we find Apollos here preaching in the ſynagogue; *Non ut habens authoritatem ſed ſcientiam*, ſays Eſtius: Taking the advantage of that indulgence which the Jews gave him in their ſynagogues, to preach, and ſpread the doctrine of Chriſt. *Note*, laſtly, That this Apollos afterwards became an eminent authorized preacher in the church of Corinth, and is called St. Paul's helper and brother; and when he came to Corinth, was ſo eminent, that he proved the head of a ſect or faction; *One ſaith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos:* And here at Epheſus he mightily convinced the Jews, ſhewing by the ſcriptures, that Jeſus was the Chriſt.

C H A P. XIX.

AND it came to paſs, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, came to Epheſus; and finding certain diſciples, 2 He ſaid unto them, Have received the Holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid unto him, We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm. 4 Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt

Jeſus. 5 When they heard *this,* they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghoſt came on them, and they ſpake with tongues, and propheſied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

The latter end of the foregoing chapter informed us how Apollos was employed at Corinth: The beginning of this acquaints us how St. Paul ſpent his time at Epheſus. He finds there twelve diſciples, he catechizes them, lays his hands upon them, and God confers the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. Here *note,* 1. The queſtion put by St. Paul to the twelve diſciples; *Have ye received the Holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed?* He doth not mean in its ſanctifying operations, but in its miraculous gifts; as ſpeaking with tongues, the gift of prophecy, and the gift of healing. 2. The diſciples anſwer, *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt;* not that they were ignorant of the eſſence or perſon of the Holy Ghoſt, but had not heard of the effuſion of the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; for it was a received opinion among the Jews, that, after the death of Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghoſt, or the Spirit of prophecy, departed from Iſrael; and they never heard that he was returned, or of his being given a-new with his miraculous gifts. 3. How the apoſtle ſets them right: They tell him they were baptized unto John's baptiſm: The apoſtle tells them that John's baptiſm and Chriſt's were the ſame for ſubſtance, and had both the ſame end, though they differed in ſome circumſtances. The diſciples of John believed in Chriſt to come, the diſciples of Jeſus believed in Chriſt as already come, and were baptized in that faith; and the ordinance ſealed unto both the remiſſion of ſins: Yet it being eſſential to Chriſtian baptiſm, to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, thereby profeſſing ourſelves to be buried and riſen with Chriſt; and John's baptiſm having not this, when the diſciples heard that, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus; that is, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, which is of the eſſence of Chriſtian baptiſm. 4. How the apoſtle lays his hands upon theſe diſciples, to confirm them in the faith they were baptized into; whereupon the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were immediately conferred on them, and they ſpake divers tongues, which before they underſtood not, and were endued with the gift of propheſying; that is, of declaring things to come, and interpreting the writings of the prophets, that they might be fit to teach and inſtruct others. Hence *learn,* That, at the firſt planting and propagating of the goſpel, the wiſdom of God thought fit to furniſh the preachers and diſpenſers of it with extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, to qualify them for, and to give them aſſurance of the ſucceſs of their miniſtry; and alſo to aſſure thoſe, whom they preached unto, that their doctrine was from heaven, Almighty God never ſetting the ſeal of his omnipotency to a lie. Such miraculous gifts are long ſince ceaſed in the church, the cauſe of them, and occaſion for them, being long ſince ceaſed.

8 And he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia, heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul; 12 So that from his body were brought unto the ſick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

St. Paul being now come to Epheſus with a deſign to ſtay there for ſome conſiderable time, as his manner was, he enters into the ſynagogue, and preaches the goſpel firſt to the Jews, and this for the ſpace of three months; but when, inſtead of embracing the goſpel, they oppoſed it, blaſpheming Chriſt the author, and the apoſtle the diſpenſer of it, and vehemently contending with him for preaching the goſpel, (which ſome conceive he calls his *fighting with beaſts at Epheſus,* 1 Cor. xv. 32.) he left the Jews and their ſynagogue, ſeparating the Chriſtians which were at Epheſus from them, whom he daily inſtructed in a certain place, called *The ſchool of Tyrannus.* Here *note,* 1. The vehemency of St. Paul's affection to his own countrymen the people of the Jews, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition they made againſt his doctrine, and the virulent reproaches which they caſt upon his perſon; he continues to preach in their ſynagogue at Epheſus for three months without ceaſing, thereby keeping cloſe to his commiſſion, which was to preach the goſpel to the Jews, and, upon their rejection of it, to tender the word of *life* unto the Gentiles. 2. As great an apoſtle, and as faithful a miniſter as St. Paul was, yet he wanted to ſee the ſucceſs of his labours: Many of his hearers at Epheſus believed not his word, but were hardened under it. The ſame ſun that ſoftens the wax, hardens the clay: The ſame doctrine of the goſpel becomes the ſavour of death unto ſome, which is the ſavour of life unto others. Wo be unto that people, who, by their habitual hardneſs, through their actual reſiſting the impreſſions of God's word, do provoke the Almighty to ſuperadd judicial hardneſs of heart unto them, making their ſin to become their puniſhment. 3. How, upon this oppoſition, which St. Paul met with in the Jewiſh ſynagogue, he leaves it, and retires to a more private place, the ſchool of Tyrannus, where he had more freedom and leſs oppoſition. *Learn* hence, That ſuch places of public worſhip, where nothing but contradiction to the pure chriſtian doctrine can be met with, may be lawfully withdrawn from. The apoſtle ſeparates himſelf and the diſciples from the Jews ſynagogue, where he had preached three months, meeting only with contradiction to his doctrine, and blaſphemy againſt his dear Redeemer. 4. How it pleaſed God to confirm St. Pual's miniſtry at Epheſus by his working miracles; and the miracles he wrought were *ſpecial*, that is, very extraordinary, inſomuch that even handkerchiefs or aprons having but touched St. Paul's body, and being brought unto the diſeaſed, became a miraculous means both to cure diſeaſes, and caſt out devils. Thus, according to our Saviour's promiſe, his apoſtles did greater miracles than himſelf, John xiv. 12. not greater in regard of the manner, but in regard of the matter of them: Chriſt wrought miracles in his own name, and by his own power; but the apoſtles wrought theirs in the name, and by the power of Chriſt; yet it ought to be obſerved and conſidered, that although it pleaſed God, at the firſt plantation of the goſpel by the apoſtles, to confirm Chriſtianity by many ſpecial miracles, (as new-ſet plants are well watered, till they have taken faſt rooting) yet that church which wants miracles may be a true church: Becauſe, (1.) There is no promiſe made in the ſcriptures to the church for her perpetual enjoying the gift of miracles. That promiſe, Mark xvi. 17. *Theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe*, &c. was only a temporary promiſe. (2.) We are forbidden to expect miracles, John iv. 48. and forbidden to truſt to miracles without ſcripture, or to regard ſuch miracles as are wrought to confirm any doctrine that is contrary to ſcripture, Deut. xiii. 3. becauſe the miracles of the laſt times are declared to be the ſigns of Antichriſt, 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10. From all which, it follows, that miracles are no infallible note of the true church, as the papiſts would make it; who alſo produce St. Paul's handkerchief here, and St. Peter's ſhadow, Acts v. 15. as a warrant for their ſuperſtitious relics; but the text aſſures us, it was God that wrought the ſpecial miracles, not St. Paul, nor his handkerchiefs, but God by his hand. The miracles in the church of Rome, pretended to be wrought by the relics of ſaints and martyrs, are no better than lying wonders.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorciſts, took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, We adjure you by Jeſus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were ſeven ſons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the prieſts, which did ſo. 15 And the evil ſpirit anſwered and ſaid, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed againſt them, ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks alſo dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds. 19 Many alſo of them which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all *men:* and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand *pieces* of ſilver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

Here *obſerve*, 1. That we read not of any in the Old Teſtament, that were bodily poſſeſſed with devils and evil ſpirits; but, in the New Teſtament, we meet with many, both in our Saviour's time, and alſo in the apoſtles, to the intent that the power of Chriſt might more ſignally appear in their ejection and caſting out. 2. How ſome of the Jewiſh exorciſts (like our jugglers) who made it their trade to wander up and down, to get a livelihood by pretending to cure diſeaſes, and caſt out devils, ſeeing what great miracles Paul had wrought in the name of Jeſus, attempted to caſt a devil out of a poſſeſſed man, by uſing the ſame name, though in Jeſus they believed not. But Satan was ſo far from obeying them, that he made the poſſeſſed man fall violently upon them, and wound them. Thence *learn*, 1. That Satan ſcorns all human attempts, as weak and impotent, and that he is conquered only by a divine power. *Jeſus I know, but who are ye? Learn*, 2. That the devil would gladly be God's ape: The Jewiſh jugglers would by all means imitate the apoſtles in caſting out devils; accordingly they uſe the name of Jeſus as a charm; but ſaying the ſame words with the apoſtles, ſignified nothing without exerciſing the ſame faith and grace. Theſe exorciſts ſoon found that words without faith would not work to caſt out devils, and that Chriſt would not give power to his name, when uſed as a charm. 3. That the devil, by God's permiſſion, has power over thoſe who profane the name of Chriſt: Satan here was too hard for theſe conjurers, he ruſhes upon them and maſters them, tears their clothes, wounds their bodies, and had not God reſtrained him, had unavoidably deſtroyed them. Satan's malice is infinite, but his power is limited and bounded. Lord, abate his power, ſince his malice cannot be abated! Laſtly, How this execution of divine vengeance wrought wonderfully for the conviction and converſion both of Jews and Greek, ver. 18. *Many believed, and came and confeſſed their ſinful deeds.* And, as an evidence of their deteſtation of their former faults and follies, they make a bonfire of all their magical books; burning ſo many of them, as, the learned ſay, the price amounted to eight hundred pounds. Thus theſe conjurors evidenced themſelves to be real converts, by plucking out their right eye, and cutting off their right hand; that is, ſacrificing their boſom and beſt beloved luſt and corruption. Thence *learn*, That there is no better evidence of the truth of a perſon's converſion, than chearfully to part with a very profitable and pleaſing luſt.

21 After theſe things were ended, Paul purpoſed in the ſpirit, when he had paſſed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, I muſt alſo ſee Rome. 22 So he ſent into Macedonia, two of them that miniſtered unto him, Timotheus and Eraſtus; *but* he himſelf ſtayed in Aſia for a ſeaſon. 23 And the ſame time there aroſe no ſmall ſtir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a ſilver-ſmith, which made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, brought no ſmall gain unto the craftſmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and ſaid, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: 26 Moreover, ye ſee and hear that not alone at Epheſus,

but almoſt throughout all Aſia, this Paul hath perſuaded and turned away much people, ſaying, That they be no gods which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought, but alſo that the temple of the great goddeſs Diana ſhould be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſhould be deſtroyed, whom all Aſia and the world worſhippeth. 28 And when they heard *theſe ſayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, ſaying, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confuſion: and having caught Gaius and Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they ruſhed with one accord into the theatre.

Obſerve here, 1. How angry the devil grows at the ſucceſs of the goſpel, mentioned in the foregoing verſes; there we read how the whole college of diabolical conjurers were brought over, by the apoſtle's preaching at Epheſus, to burn their books, and leave their wicked courſe of life. Hereupon the devil beſtirs him, and raiſes a perſecution againſt the apoſtle. Thoſe that will diſturb Satan in the quiet and peaceable poſſeſſion of his kingdom, ſhall be ſure to meet with trouble and diſquiet from him. Let not any of the ſaints of God in general, nor any of the faithful and zealous miniſters of Chriſt in particular, expect any long continuance of their outward tranquility and peace in this world, where they are every day up in arms againſt Satan, and meditating the ruin of him and his kingdom; for which he will certainly ſeek revenge. 2. The inſtruments which the devil employs to raiſe the ſtorm of perſecution againſt the apoſtle, namely, Demetrius, the ſilver-ſmith, and his craftſmen; they looking upon St. Paul as one that impaired their profit, and ſpoiled their trade of making ſilver ſhrines for Diana's temple, by his crying down the worſhip of idols. "But what were theſe ſilver ſhrines made for Diana's temple?" The temple of Diana was at that time one of the ſeven famous ſtructures of the world; and the ſilver ſhrines made by theſe ſilver-ſmiths, were certain models or images of this temple, wherein their idol goddeſs Diana was ſet forth; which ſhrines or portable temples, all the people of Aſia carried about with them, to ſtir up their own devotions towards this idol: So that this ſhrine making muſt needs be a very gainful trade, when all Aſia was addicted to this ſuperſtition. No wonder then that Demetrius, upon the ſight of the loſs of his gain, made an horrible outcry, and ſet the city in an uproar: For carnal men, whoſe gain is their god and their godlineſs, account themſelves undone when their god Mammon is in danger: If you take away their gods, what have they more? *Learn* hence, That gain-getting, and maintaining of men's livelihood, are mighty temptations to carnal men, to uſe impious means for ſupporting ſuperſtition and idolatry. *Obſerve*, 3. The arguments which Demetrius uſed to ſtir up the people againſt the apoſtle; and they are three: (1.) The plea of profit, *By this craft we get our gain:* If this man's doctrine obtain, our trade will quickly fall under diſgrace, and die. This was the moſt cogent, the moſt pungent argument that could be uſed; for, though an argument drawn from our own intereſt is not the moſt weighty, yet it is the moſt perſuaſive. (2.) The pretence of piety; not only are we like to loſe our livelihood, but our religion too: *Our Goddeſs Diana* will be deſpiſed, her temple profaned, and her worſhippers ſcorned. This eaſily heated the blood of the rabble, put the multitude into a ferment, and cauſed an hideous outcry for two hours together, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians.* (3.) The plea of the antiquity and univerſality, and the common conſent of all worſhippers; *Diana, whom all Aſia and the world worſhipped.* As if Demetrius had ſaid, "What! ſhall we ſuffer the temple of Diana to be ſet at naught by the preachments of this babbler Paul; a place ſo magnificent for ſtructure, being, ſome ſay one hundred, others two hundred and twenty years a-building; ſo renowned for the oracles of the gods, ſo magnified for the image which fell down from Jupiter, ſo honoured by the oblations of the Aſiatic potentates, and crouded devotions of the Epheſians, and admired throughout the whole world?" Lord! what danger was the life of the grea tapoſtle now in! how did this popular tumult threaten the preſent deſtruction of him and his companions, Gaius and Ariſtarchus! Now is ſuppoſed to be the time when the apoſtle ſays, *That after the manner of men he had fought with beaſts at Epheſus*; and this is probably the deliverance which he gratefully commemorates in 2 Cor. i. 10. *Who hath delivered us from ſo great a death*, &c.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the diſciples ſuffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Aſia, which were his friends, ſent unto him, deſiring *him*, that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and ſome another; for the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part new not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the ſpace of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians.

Note here, 1. The undaunted courage of St. Paul in the cauſe of Chriſt; he reſolves to adventure his life, by going into the theatre, there to make an apology for himſelf and his companions, and in defence of the chriſtian religion: He did not account his life dear unto him, but was willing not only to be bound, but to die for the name of Jeſus. 2. How the divine providence is to be admired, and awfully adored, in directing to ways and means for the apoſtle's preſervation in this time of imminent danger. God now made uſe of the advice, not only of the apoſtle's faſt friends, *the diſciples*, but of his foes, that is, certain of the people of Aſia, who were now become his friends, to diſſuade him from going into the theatre, leſt he ſhould have been torn in pieces by an outrageous rabble of inſolent idolaters, in this unaccountable uproar. It is all one with God to ſave by many or by few, by friends or by foes;

for he can make enemies become benefactors at his pleaſure, and command deliverance for his people, ſometimes without means, ſometimes by weak and contemptible means, ſometimes by improbable and unlikely means, ſometimes by oppoſite and contrary means: Lord, who would not truſt in thee in a time of imminent or impending danger, who haſt all created nature at thy beck, the hearts of all in thy hands, the tongues and hands of the moſt unruly and outrageous in thy power; and wilt deliver thine in ſix troubles, and in ſeven, and there ſhall no evil touch them? Thou canſt and wilt deliver as often as thy children need deliverance, and ſave them from evil, even when they are in the midſt of trouble. 3. How the rabble at Epheſus treated Alexander, being in the theatre; the place where they judged offenders, and caſt them to the wild beaſts: They would not ſuffer him to make any defence for himſelf, or the people of the Jews. This Alexander is ſuppoſed by many to be that Alexander, who St. Paul afterwards told Timothy did him much evil; if ſo, we find here, he was firſt a proſelyte, then a profeſſor, next a confeſſor, almoſt a martyr; yet, after all, an apoſtate, making ſhipwreck of the faith; for which he was excommunicated by the apoſtle, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan.* This excommunication of the apoſtle probably was the provocation that occaſioned him to do ſo much miſchief to the apoſtle, of which he complains, 2 Tim. iv. 14. *Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil; of whom be thou aware alſo. Learn* thence, 1. That it was poſſible for a glorious profeſſor to turn a furious perſecutor. This Alexander did not only withſtand the apoſtle's perſon, but his doctrine alſo; for which being excommunicated, he ſought revenge. 2. That excommunication not only angers but enrages wicked and impenitent men; ſo that inſtead of being reformed, they ſeek revenge: Yet muſt the cenſures of the church be executed and inflicted, without either fear or favour.

35 And when the town-clerk had appeaſed the people, he ſaid, *Ye* men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing raſhly, 37 For ye have brought hither theſe men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter againſt any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in queſtion for this day's uproar, there being no cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe. 41 And when he had thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

Note here, 1. The inſtrument which God ſtirs up to ſtem the tide, and ſtop the ſtream of this hair-brained aſſembly; and that is, *the town-clerk*; who was always preſent at their public meetings, and regiſtered all their city acts. His preſence and eloquence God made uſe of, to appeaſe this tumult, to preſerve the apoſtle, and to diſmiſs the aſſembly. 2. The town-clerk's oration was full of craft and policy, fraud and fallacy; for he tells the multitude, that St. Paul and his friends are againſt images only that are made with hands; whereas theirs was not ſuch, but one that fell down from Jupiter. It was his duty, by office, to appeaſe the rabble's rage, with reaſon and authority; he ought not to have done it fallaciouſly. But we muſt conſider he was a Pagan, and his deſign was only to ſtill the people; accordingly, he encourages the credulous multitude to believe, what the crafty prieſts inſinuated into them, that the image which they worſhipped was not made with hands, but fell immediately down from heaven; hoping thereby to gain more veneration to their idols, and get more pounds into their own purſes. Thus God made uſe of the wordly and (ſomewhat) wicked eloquence of this heathen to preſerve St. Paul. 3. How God opens the mouth of this man to vindicate the apoſtle's innocency, and his companions alſo. *Theſe men*, ſaith he, *are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs.* It is very likely, that the apoſtles and the chriſtians in Epheſus had in wiſdom aſſerted Chriſtianity, without ſaying much againſt Diana, which would but have enraged the multitude: much leſs did they offer any violence, either to her temple or her image. Here *note*, That although the apoſtles were great enemies to theſe men's idolatry, yet did they offer no outward violence to their idol-temples, neither to demoliſh them, or deface any image in them: They well knew that ſuch a work of public reformation was not their buſineſs, but the magiſtrates; therefore they endeavoured by preaching to caſt idols out of the people's hearts, but not by violence to throw them out of the temple. Thus ends this chapter, with the account of St. Paul's marvellous if not miraculous preſervation at the city of Epheſus; where being ſurrounded with difficulties and dangers on all hands, yet being found in the way of his duty, and in the work of his Maſter, he eſcapes all perils. Safety evermore accompanies duty: When we are in God's way, we are under God's wing; preſervation and protection we ſhall have, if God may thereby be more glorified; but ſometimes danger is better than ſafety; a ſtorm more uſeful than a calm: And bleſſed be God for the aſſurance of his promiſe, that all things, be they mercies or afflictions, comforts or corrections, dangers or deliverances, life or death, all ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are found ſtedfaſt in their obedience to him, Rom. viii. 28.

CHAP. XX.

AND after the uproar was ceaſed, Paul called unto him the diſciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over thoſe parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him as he was about to ſail into Syria, he purpoſed to return through Macedonia. 4 And there accompanied him into Aſia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Theſſalonians, Ariſtarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 Theſe going before tarried for us at Troas.

The foregoing chapter acquaints us with a very great and imminent danger, which the apoſtle eſcaped at Epheſus, where he had like to have been torn in pices by thoſe heatheniſh idolaters; which gave him occaſion to ſay, 1 Cor. xv. 31. *That after the manner of men he had fought with beaſts at Epheſus.* In this chapter we find, that the apoſtle yielding to the fury of his perſecutors, prudently withdraws from Epheſus into Macedonia; yet not ſo much for his own ſafety (for he was willing to die Chriſt's ſacrifice, if he might live no longer Chriſt's ſervant) as for the church's future advantage, that the diſciples in Epheſus might be no farther perſecuted upon his account. Hence *learn*, That the miniſters of the goſpel may depart from a place and people, where their miniſtry has been very ſucceſsful when driven from thence by the fury of perſecution: Thus St. Paul here obeyed the command of Chriſt elſewhere: *When they perſecute you in one city flee to another*, Matt. x. 23. *Note*, 2. Though St. Paul withdrew from Epheſus, to allay the fury of perſecution there; yet he left Timothy behind, to confirm and comfort the diſciples, as his ſubſtitute, and to ſtrengthen them in the faith of the goſpel, 1 Tim. i. 3. *I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus*, &c. 3. The apoſtle no ſooner eſcapes the fury of the heathens at Epheſus, but he is in danger of his life at Macedonia, by his own countrymen the Jews, ver. 3. *The Jews laid wait for him:* Well might the apoſtle ſay, he was in *deaths often*, *in perils of robbers*, *in perils in the city*, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 26. The wicked Jews when they could not prevail againſt St. Paul by open force, contrive his ruin by ſecret treachery; but God gave him knowledge of their deſigns, and he avoideth them, by turning another way. Thence *learn*, That it is high preſumption, and a bold tempting of God, to run headlong upon evident and imminent dangers; and not to improve all lawful means we can to prevent and decline them: To truſt to means, is to neglect God; but to neglect the means for our own preſervation, is to tempt God. *Note*, St. Paul would not tempt God by running into any probable dangers, though his cauſe was never ſo good. 4. The perſons are mentioned by name, who accompanied the apoſtle, and adminiſtered unto him; *to wit*, Sopater, Ariſtarchus, and Secundus, Gaius and Timotheus, Tychicus and Trophimus; theſe accompanied the apoſtle, not out of ſtate, but for neceſſary ſervice: To which may be added St. Luke; but, being the penman of this book, he declines mentioning of himſelf by name, though his praiſe will be for ever in the goſpel, and eccleſiaſtical ſtory.

6 ¶ And we ſailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode ſeven days. 7 And upon the firſt *day* of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his ſpeech until midnight. 8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together. 9 And there ſat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep ſleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he ſunk down with ſleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*, ſaid, Trouble not yourſelves: for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, ſo he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

The next journey of Paul is from Macedonia in Greece, to Troas in Aſia, where he abode ſeven days. During his ſtay here, ſeveral things are to be remarked and obſerved. *Note* here, 1. How this great apoſtle became all things to all men, though he would not become ſin to any man; *To the Jews he became as a Jew*, for he ſtayed his journey all the ſeven days of the Jewiſh paſſover's ſolemnity, and would not ſet forth to travel that time, becauſe he would not offend the weak Jews; accordingly he ſailed not from Philippi till after *the days of unleavened bread.* Thus St. Paul did comply with the Jewiſh rites, which, though dead by the death of Chriſt, yet were not buried; and therefore his compliance was not ſinful, but managed with deſign to gain the Jews. 2. That the change of the ſabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt day of the week, was of apoſtolical obſervation now, as it was before of Chriſt's inſtitution. On this day the Lord aroſe; on this day the diſciples met, *and Chriſt honoured them with his preſence*, John xx. *on this day the collection for the poor ſaints was made*, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Now, this neceſſarily infers the abrogation of the Saturday ſabbath: For ſix days they were commanded to labour; and if they reſted the ſeventh day and firſt day too, they violated the law of God, which we cannot ſuppoſe they did: And conſequently the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians obſerved the firſt day of the week in remembrance of the work of redemption, as the Jews of old obſerved the ſeventh day of the week in remembrance of the work of creation. *Obſerve* 3. The fervent zeal and unwearied diligence of the great apoſtle for the ſouls of men; and alſo the patience and complacency with which his auditors attended upon his ſermon at this time; *Paul preached till midnight*, ver. 7. A very long ſermon upon a particular occaſion is neither unſcriptural, nor unapoſtolical. We do not find that either the apoſtle was weary, or the auditory drowſy at the dead time of the night; their wakefulneſs at midnight under a ſermon condemns our ſleepineſs at mid-day. 4. The pious and prudential care which the apoſtle and his hearers took, that their night-meeting ſhould not fall under any calumny, or their ſelves reproached, for doing any thing indecently in the dead of the night; to prevent this the eighth verſe informs us, that *there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together*; expoſing themſelves, and what they did, to the view of all. Religious meetings in the night ſeaſon are not only lawful in times of perſecution, but neceſſary: Yet a ſpecial care ought to be taken to avoid all occaſion of calumny, that the leaſt ſuſpicion may not ariſe concerning the honeſty and holineſs of thoſe that do aſſemble at ſuch unſeaſonable times. 5. What a warning the Holy Ghoſt here leaves upon record, for ſuch as ſleep under the preaching of the word; Eutychus, when aſleep under St. Paul's long ſermon, falls down from the third loft, and is taken up dead. Here *note*, The time when he was overtaken with ſleep; not at noon-day, but at midnight; and it was not a ſermon of an hour long, that he fell aſleep under; but after St. Paul had preached ſeveral hours: This is not the caſe of our common ſermon-ſleepers, who at noon-day ſleep under the word; nay, ſettle and compoſe themſelves to ſleep, and do what they can to invite ſleep to them. What if, with Eutychus, any of them fall down dead? Here is no Paul to raiſe them up; or, what if this wretched contempt of the word provoke God to ſay, *Sleep on*, and be ſo ſtupified, that no ordinances ſhall awake you; *Sleep on*, till hell flames awake you? 6. Eutychus is raiſed to life by a miraculous power communicated to St. Paul, which was matter of great conſolation to the ſpirits, and great confirmation to the faith of the diſciples, ver. 12. *They brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted*; not only for the young man's ſake, but eſpecially for their own ſakes; for hereby God gave a convincing teſtimony to the word of his grace; God did bear witneſs to it, and many were confirmed in the belief of it.

13 And we went before to ſhip, and ſailed unto Aſſos, there intending to take in Paul: for ſo had he appointed, minding himſelf to go a-foot. 14 And when he met with us at Aſſos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15 And we ſailed thence, and came the next *day* over-againſt Chios. And the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium. And the next *day* we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had determined to ſail by Epheſus, becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia; for he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt.

Here an account is given of ſeveral travels of the apoſtle, namely, from Troas to Aſſos, from thence to Mitylene, next day to Samos, then to Trogyllium, and the day following to Miletus, paſſing by, and not touching at Epheſus; for the apoſtle having an earneſt deſire to be at Jeruſalem at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, ſo that he might in that concourſe have a larger opportunity of ſpreading the goſpel, he would not now call at Epheſus, leſt he ſhould be detained too long by the brethren there. From the whole, *note*, 1. The indefatigable diligence of this great apoſtle, and his unwearied induſtry in the ſervice of the goſpel; how he travels from place to place, and here from Troas to Aſſos, on foot all alone by land: He did not affect to ride with a pompous train and retinue, but he goes on foot, expecting to meet with more opportunity of ſowing the ſeed of the goſpel as he paſſed through towns and villages by land, among thoſe he converſed with: So intent was this holy man upon the work of winning ſouls; whereas, had he travelled by ſea, this opportunity had been loſt. An happy example for all the miniſters of Chriſt, to prefer an opportunity of doing good to the ſouls of others, before their own eaſe or profit. 2. The true reaſon why St. Paul was ſo very deſirous to be at Jeruſalem at the feaſt of Pentecoſt; not that he placed any religion in obſerving this abrogated feaſt, but becauſe that vaſt concourſe of people at ſuch times would give him a fairer opportunity to glorify Chriſt, and to propagate the goſpel: This made him ſo deſirous to get to Jeruſalem by the feaſt of Pentecoſt. *Learn* thence, That the miniſters of Chriſt, without the imputation of vain-glory, or ſeeking popular applauſe, may warrantably deſire, and occaſionally lay hold upon, an opportunity of diſperſing the word to a numerous auditory, in hopes that, caſting the net of the goſpel among a many, they may incloſe ſome.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he ſaid unto them, Ye know, from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto* you, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from houſe to houſe: 21 Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The foregoing verſes acquainted us, how very intent St. Paul was upon his journey to Jeruſalem, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, he hoping then and there to have a precious opportunity for preaching Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, to his countrymen the Jews: Now leſt he ſhould be hindered in his expedition, he determines to ſlip by Epheſus, without touching there; but could not ſatisfy himſelf without ſeeing of, and ſpeaking to, the miniſters of Epheſus, whom for that purpoſe he ſends for to Miletus, and there, in a grave and pious diſcourſe, which warmed their hearts, and melted them into tears, he takes his farewel of them. Here *note*, 1. That St. Paul ſpeaks much in his own vindication, but nothing by way of oſtentation: A miniſter, when he is leaving a people, may modeſtly enough ſay ſomething in his own vindication; for there are enough, as ſoon as his back is turned, will ſay more than is true by way of accuſation. 2. That when the apoſtle here ſpeaks much that looks like ſelf-commendation, it is rather to propound himſelf as a mirror for goſpel-miniſters, and a pattern for all pious paſtors, that whenever they leave their people, they may go off with a clear conſcience, and be able to appeal to the conſciences of their people, as touching their carriage and converſation among them. 3. The ſeveral particular inſtances of his miniſterial faithfulneſs: 1. He inſtances in his own humility; though he was lofty in his miniſtry, yet was he lowly in his mind: *He ſerved the Lord with all humility of mind.* The better any man is, the lower thoughts he has of himſelf. Almighty God renders that man moſt honourable, that miniſter moſt ſerviceable, whom he finds moſt humble. 2. In his affectionateneſs in preaching the goſpel: he mingles tears with his exhortation, *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears.* 3. In his conſtancy in preaching and private inſpection, *publicly* in the ſynagogues, and *privately from houſe to houſe*, like a good ſhepherd, labouring to underſtand the ſtate of his whole flock, and of every lamb in it, that no ſoul might miſcarry through his neglect, for which the great and good Shepherd died. 4. He acquaints them, not only with the manner, but alſo with the matter of his preaching; namely, *Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Which two graces comprehend the ſum of a chriſtian's duty. Miniſters muſt join theſe two together in their preaching, and our hearers muſt not ſeparate them in their practice. They who repent without believing, or believe without repenting, do indeed do neither.

22 And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem, not knowing the things that ſhall befal me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God. 25 And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men.* 27 For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.

Here the apoſtle proceeds not to boaſt of himſelf, but to clear himſelf of any charge or ſurmiſe of miniſterial miſcarriages, and alſo to propound himſelf as a pattern of miniſterial faithfulneſs to the elders of the church at Epheſus: And here again, (1.) Our apoſtle inſtances in his holy and heroic reſolution and activity for God: *I know that bonds and afflictions abide me: nevertheleſs, I go bound in the Spirit to Jeruſalem, and nothing moves me.* As if he had ſaid, "I am fully reſolved, by the grace of God enabling, that nothing ſhall divert me from my duty, neither deterring fear, nor deluding favour of men, ſhall ever affect me; but I will go out, and go on in the ſtrength of Chriſt, running my race with patience, and finiſhing my courſe with joy." Hence *learn*, 1. That the apprehenſion of ſufferings muſt not ſhake the reſolution of a Chriſtian, much leſs daunt the courage of a goſpel-miniſter, ver. 24. *None of theſe things move me.* True miniſterial courage delights in the air of that danger where duty dwells, and will neither be beaten off from doing an incumbent duty, nor be beaten on to a compliance with any known ſin. 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould endeavour, not only to finiſh their miniſtry and courſe of chriſtianity with faithfulneſs, but with joy; and, that they may do ſo, let them ſee that they give up themſelves wholly to the ſervice of Chriſt, without reſtriction or reſerve, and live daily by faith on the mediation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Here was ſuch a maſculince ſpirit in our apoſtle, as bid defiance to death and danger; and the argument that excited him was, that he might finiſh his courſe with joy. Next, the apoſtle declares his impartiality in preaching the goſpel, ver. 27. *I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.* Where *note*, He doth not ſay he had declared the whole counſel of God, for who but God himſelf can do that? But he had not ſhunned to declare the whole counſel of God; that is, he had not concealed from them any truth neceſſary to ſalvation; and this freed him from the blood of ſouls; if any periſhed, it was not long of him, but their blood was upon themſelves. *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* It is happy when the miniſters of God can appeal to the conſciences of their people, and ſummon them in as witneſſes to bear record for them at the bar of Chriſt. Laſtly, the apoſtle tells them, they were never like *to ſee his face again*; a cutting, killing word! How would it fire the zeal of miniſters, and inflame the affections of a people, did they remember that in a ſhort time they muſt ſee the faces, and hear the voices of each other upon earth no more? Lord, what fervent prayer for, what yearning of bowels toward periſhing ſinners would be found with us! what zeal for their converſion, what endeavours for their ſalvation, did we believe that the grave was making ready to receive us! how ſhould we louden our cry to God, and how fulfil our truſt to man, did we conſider our grave and coffin are at hand! Our glaſs has but a little ſand; now we are preaching, but anon it will be ſaid of us, we are gone; *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching, ſhall ſee my face no more.*

28 Take heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing, ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. 30 Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that by the ſpace of three years I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The bleſſed apoſtle having, in the former part of his farewel ſermon to the elders of Epheſus, vindicated his own ſincerity among them, both as to his doctrine and practice, and cleared himſelf by cloſe addreſſes and ſmart appeals to their conſciences: He now urges them in a rouzing and heart-melting exhortation to the utmoſt care and diligence in the exerciſe of their paſtoral charge; and to take heed to themſelves and the flock, to the whole flock which

Chriſt had purchaſed with his blood, and the Holy Ghoſt had committed to their care; ver. 28. *Take heed to yourſelves, and to all the flock*, &c. Here *note*, A twofold duty, and a threefold motive to inforce that duty: The firſt duty is to take heed to themſelves: the ſecond is to take heed to all the flock. The firſt part of a miniſter's duty is to take heed to himſelf: *Committe animam diligentibus ſuam*, ſays St. Bernard: He that neglects his own ſoul, will never take a faithful care of the ſouls of others. We muſt firſt look to ourſelves, that our judgments be ſound, our hearts holy, and our lives exemplary: We muſt take heed to ourſelves, that we be fit for the employment which we undertake; this is not a burden for a child's ſhoulder; he that is himſelf a babe in knowledge, is altogether unfit to teach men the myſteries of ſalvation. Take we heed that our example doth not contradict our doctrine, that our practice doth not give our profeſſion the lie: That we *do* as well as *teach:* Not preach angelical ſermons, and lead diabolical lives; but ſecuring that grace to ourſelves which we offer unto others, and ſhunning that ſin ourſelves which we condemn in others: And this, becauſe we have a depraved nature, and vicious inclinations in us, as well as others; becauſe we have heaven to win, and a ſoul to be ſaved as well as others; yea when others have only their own ſouls to account for, we have not only our own, but others too; becauſe *our* ſins do more diſhonour God, diſcredit religion, more gratify the devil, more harden ſinners, and have more of wilfulneſs in them, more perfidiouſneſs in them, and more hypocriſy in them, than other men's: And we ſhall certainly be adjudged by God to a double damnation for them. Well therefore might the apoſtle ſay to the Epheſian elders, *Take heed unto yourſelves*; next he adds, *and to all the flock*. That is, with a conſtant care and laborious diligence acquaint them with their duty, inform them of their danger, ſhew them where their happineſs lies, and the way and means for attaining of it: And, in order to this, *all the flock* muſt be *known*, that it may be *heeded*, and we muſt labour to be acquainted with the ſtate of all our people as fully as we can; we muſt, as the apoſtle did before us, viſit our people from houſe to houſe, that we may know their perſons, know their inclinations, and know the manner of their converſation; what ſins they are moſt in danger of, what temptations moſt liable to, and what duties they neglect, either for the matter or manner of them; and give them the beſt encouragement, directions, and aſſiſtance we are able: This is the ſum of the apoſtle's exhortation to the elders of Epheſus; *Take heed unto yourſelves, and unto all the flock*. The motives to inforce the duty, follow: and they are, 1. Drawn from their office, they are *overſeers* of the flock; that is, officers appointed by ſolemn ordination to teach, to guide, to govern the churches committed to their care, and under their charge. 2. From the authority and excellency of him that called them to their office, *the Holy Ghoſt*. We read of ſome that were nominated by the ſpecial and immediate inſtinct of the Holy Ghoſt, as Acts i. 24. and xiii. 2. Others were ordained by the apoſtles, who were guided by the Holy Ghoſt then; and whoever is ſet apart to that office now, according to the rule of God's word, may truly be ſaid to be made an *overſeer* by the Holy Ghoſt; Almighty God concurring to own and bleſs his own inſtitution. 3. From the dear purchaſe which Chriſt paid for, and the tender regard he bears to, this his flock: *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his blood*. Where *obſerve*, The divinity of Chriſt, he is expreſsly called God, in oppoſition to the Arians, and their unhappy ſpawn the Socinians, who will allow him to be only man: but then his blood could never have purchaſed the church, which it is here ſaid to do; being God and man in one perſon; man, that he might have blood to ſhed; and God, that his blood might be of infinite value, and ineſtimable preciouſneſs when ſhed. *Note* alſo, the force of the apoſtle's argument; "If the church be thus dear to Chriſt, the Chief Shepherd, ſhe ought to be very dear to all under ſhepherds: If Chriſt judged her ſalvation worth his blood, well may his miniſters judge it worth their ſweat." 4. From the danger which the church is in by ſeducers and falſe teachers, ver. 29. Grievous wolves will enter, not ſparing the flock; and even from among yourſelves ſhall ariſe heretics, who will vent their unſound doctrines to debauch men, firſt in their principles, and then in their practices: Therefore *take heed to all the flock*. Now from the whole, *note*, 1. The church is Chriſt's flock, conſiſting of ſheep and lambs; Chriſt himſelf is the great and good Shepherd; his miniſters under ſhepherds and over-ſeers; bloody perſecutors, heretical ſeducers, and falſe teachers, are wolves which worry and divide the flock. 2. That every flock ſhould have its own paſtor, and every paſtor his own flock. 3. That the flock ſhould be no greater ordinarily, than the overſeers are capable of taking heed of. 4. That every overſeer of Chriſt's flock ought to take great heed, both to himſelf and the whole flock, in all the parts of his paſtoral work, particularly, public preaching, and private inſpection.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.

Here the apoſtle takes a very ſolemn farewel of the elders of the church at Epheſus, commending them to the guidance and protection of the grace of God, which was able to build them up in holineſs here, and bring them to heaven hereafter. Where *note*, 1. His courteous compellation, and therein his great condeſcenſion. Although he was an apoſtle of the higheſt eminency, yet he diſdains not to call theſe elders, who were both in office, and alſo in gifts and graces much inferior to him, by the name of *brethren*. *And now, brethren*, ſays the apoſtle to the elders of Epheſus: But probably together with the elders of Epheſus, here were ſome of the church and people of Epheſus, who came to take their laſt leave of their departing apoſtle; and then we may remark, that there is a near relation, even that of brethren, between miniſters and people, as well as between the miniſters themſelves, and this founded upon the account of religion and grace. 2. The apoſtle being now to take his laſt leave and farewel of the miniſters and people at Epheſus, he commends them to God. It well becomes the faithful miniſters of Chriſt at all times, when they are with their people, but eſpecially then when they are about to leave their people, to commit and commend them unto God; that is, to recommend them to God's care and keeping, and to commit them to his conduct and guidance; and this as a teſtimony of our faithfulneſs to God, whoſe our people are, and for whom we muſt become accountable to him; and alſo as a teſtimony of our love to our people, and of our fervent deſires for their ſalvation. 3. As the apoſtle commends them to God, ſo likewiſe to the word of his grace: To God as the efficient cauſe, and to the word of his grace, as the inſtrumental cauſe of their building up; *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.* Here *note*, 1. That the goſpel is the word of God's grace, ſo called, becauſe it is the effect, the fruit, and product of rich mercy and free grace; becauſe it reveals the free grace of God in Chriſt to poor ſinners; becauſe it carrieth on, and perfecteth the work of grace unto glory. 2. That believers, who are in a ſtate of grace, have need of the *word of God* for their edification and building up. 3. That the word of God is able to *build up* believers; it is able to preſerve and keep them from decaying in grace and holineſs, and it is able to further their growth in grace, and to bring it to perfection. Well, and wiſely therefore doth the apoſtle ſay, *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace*; he doth not ſay, I commend you to God and the impulſe of his Spirit; or, I commend you to God, and to the light within; or, I commend you to God, and to the traditions of the church; but *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.* 4. A ſuperadded commendation, which is here given of the word of God's grace; it is not only able to build us up, but to give us an inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified; that is, The word of God, if we follow the dictates and directions of it, will infallibly bring us to the glorious inheritance which God hath provided for all his ſaints, or ſanctified ones. Here *note*, 1. That heaven is an inheritance, not like an inheritance on earth; but it is the moſt ſure, the moſt ſatisfying, the moſt durable, and the moſt delightful inheritance, *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* 2. That heaven is the inheritance *of ſaints*, of all ſanctified and holy perſons, and only of ſuch; it is purchaſed for them, it is promiſed to them, it is taken up in their names, and poſſeſſion of it kept for them by their forerunner. In a word, heaven is prepared for them, and they are daily preparing for it; and it ſhall be adjudged to them at the great day. 3. That this inheritance of heaven is a gift, and free gift. Luke xii. 32. *It is your Father's pleaſure to give you the kingdom.* This inheritance is all of grace, our right and title to it is of grace, our fitting and preparing for it is of grace; all of grace, nothing of merit; all of God, nothing of ourſelves; nothing in a way of meritorious caſuality, but only in the way of miniſterial endeavour. Laſtly, God gives this inheritance by his word. *To the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance.* The word reveals to us the notice and knowleege of this inheritance; the word makes an offer of this inheritance to every one of us, yea, it calls us to the acceptation, and invites us to the participation of it. Finally, God by his word begets his people to a lively hope of this inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. And alſo prepares and fits them by the word, for the participation and poſſeſſion of it, Col. i. 12. *Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to to be partakers of, &c.* And how doth the Father make us meet for this inheritance in glory, but by the word of his grace? *I commend you therefore, brethren,* ſays the apoſtle, *to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to give you an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.*

33 I have coveted no man's ſilver or gold or apparel. 34 Yea, you yourſelves know, that theſe hands have miniſtered unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

In the concluſion of St. Paul's diſcourſe to the elders of the church at Epheſus, he vindicates himſelf from the ſordid ſin of covetouſneſs, affirming, that he had coveted no man's ſilver or gold; but by the labour of his hands, had maintained himſelf, and them that were with him. Where *note*, That it is not ſimply unlawful for a miniſter of the goſpel to labour with his hands, for his own and his family's ſupport, when the poverty of the members of the church is ſuch, that they cannot maintain him without it. Farther, He directs theſe elders to labour as he did, if the caſe required it with them, as it did with him, that they might, by labouring as he, be in a capacity to ſupport the weak, and relieve the poor. Yet *note*, He doth not propoſe this his practice as a precept or precedent, or rule to all miniſters; for though St. Paul laboured with his hands in a caſe of neceſſity, and becauſe falſe teachers were watching all advantages againſt him; yet he often declares a right and privilege which he had to be maintained by the church, without labouring with his hands for his own livelihood and ſubſiſtance; nay, aſſerts it to be the ordination and appointment of God himſelf, that *they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.* Laſtly, A remarkable ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, not recorded by the Evangeliſts, and undoubtedly ſpoken by him; namely, *That it is more bleſſed to give than to receive:* That is, the condition of the giver is more deſirable than that of the receiver, and giving is more commendable than receiving. 1. The condition of the giver is more deſirable than that of the receiver: becauſe, (1.) Giving is a ſign of ſufficiency and power; he that gives to another, is ſuppoſed to be well provided himſelf; he that gives, looks like a full being, and like a ſwelling river; whereas receiving implies want and weakneſs, emptineſs, and unſatisfied deſires. (2.) Becauſe giving includes choice; for what a man parts with to another, he has a freedom to keep himſelf; but the receiver is not to be his own carver, but muſt depend upon the courteſy of his neighbours. 3. Becauſe the condition of the giver implies an honourable truſt committed to him by God Almighty. Givers are God's almoners and ſtewards, the poor's guardians and patrons. An honourable truſt this is, by which the lives and livelihood of the poor are in a manner committed to us. By all which it appears, that the condition of the giver is more deſirable than that of the receiver. 4. That giving is more commendable than receiving; it is a clearer evidence of a noble and virtuous diſpoſition of mind: For, (1.) It is a ſign of our victory over the world, and that our converſation is in heaven; that we have worthy apprehenſions of God, and honourable thoughts of his providence; and that we can truſt him, and give him a part of his own whenever he calls for it. (2.) Giving is better than receiving, becauſe there is a more laſting pleaſure in giving than in receiving: An alms taken is ſoon ſpent and forgotten, and the pleaſure of it is over in two or three moments; but the pleaſure of giving bears us company all along in this world, and will keep us company in the next; there is no ſatisfactory pleaſure as in doing good. Let us then often remember, and always put in practice, the words of our Lord Jeſus, which he ſaid, *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

36 ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him, 38 Sorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ſhip.

Note here, 1. What a ſolemn and ſacred farewel St. Paul and the elders of Epheſus take of each other: *They kneeled down and prayed* together: Inſtead of a parting cup, here is a parting prayer, and this accompanied with tears: *They all wept ſore.* There is a ſufficient occaſion for ſorrow and weeping, when the church loſes a faithful paſtor; it is a public loſs, and many are concerned in it. 2. How loath, how very loath they were to part with the apoſtle, who had ſo exceedingly endeared himſelf unto them, by his holineſs, humility, and univerſal uſefulneſs: Accordingly, they accompany him unto the ſhip, and when gone off to ſea, ſend a long look after him; being more eſpecially grieved at theſe words, *That they ſhould ſee his face no more.* *Learn* thence, That a faithful miniſter of Chriſt is enjoyed with much love, and finally parted from with much ſorrow, by thoſe who believe and obey the goſpel: Parting work is hard work: How hard is it for huſband and wife, for parents and children to part? and perhaps it is as hard ſometimes for miniſters and people, who have lived in mutual endearments, to the glory of God, and ſingular comfort of each other; when they are pulled one from another alive by cruel perſecutors, or when dying by the king of terrors: The parting is ſad, but bleſſed be God, the next meeting will know no parting. When miniſters and people meet together at the right hand of God in heaven, they ſhall never part more, but ſhall for ever be with the Lord.

CHAP. XXI.

This chapter acquaints us with St. Paul's *dangerous voyage to* Jeruſalem, *the ſeveral places he paſſed through in his journey, and his ſafe arrival at laſt at* Jeruſalem.

AND it came to paſs, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a ſtraight courſe unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara. 2 And finding a ſhip ſailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and ſet forth.

The latter end of the foregoing chapter acquainted us with the ſorrowful and heavy parting of the elders and church of Epheſus from the holy apoſtle: Now the firſt verſe of this chapter informs us, that it was not leſs ſorrowful on the apoſtle's and his companions part: So much the word here imports, *After we were gotten from them,* αποσπασθεντας απ αυτων: "After we were torn from, and pulled as it were limb from limb from each other;" intimating the mutual endearments which were between them whilſt together, and that inexpreſſible ſorrow which was found among them at their parting. Verily there is no ſtronger love, nor more endeared affections betwixt any relations upon the earth, than betwixt the miniſters of Chriſt and ſuch of their people as they have been inſtrumental to bring home to God. Spiritual affections are ſtronger than natural; the removing of a ſpiritual father by death, or otherwiſe, is like tearing limb from limb; yea, like rending the head from the body. Lord, with what great difficulty and deep reluctancy did the holy apoſtle and the church of Epheſus here part from one another! They were pulled and torn one from another, as the word imports.

3 Now when we had diſcovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and ſailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ſhip was to unlade her burden. 4 And finding diſciples, we tarried there ſeven days: who ſaid to Paul through the Spirit, that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem.

The divine Providence is not more ſignally diſcovered in governing the motion of the clouds, than it is in ordering the ſpirits and motions of his miniſters: The motion of the clouds is not ſpontaneous, and from themſelves, but they move as they are moved by the winds; neither can the miniſters of Chriſt chuſe their own ſtations, and govern their own motions, but muſt go when and whither the Spirit and providence of God directs and guides them; as evidently appears by St. Paul's preſent voyage to Jeruſalem; though the journey was full of danger, yet his ſpirit was fully bent and ſet upon it: *I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem.* It was happy for the apoſtle, and his great advantage, that the will of God was ſo plainly revealed to him, touching this his journey to Jeruſalem: For no ſooner did he prepare himſelf to obey the call of God, and undertake the journey, but he is preſently aſſaulted by many ſtrong temptations to decline it. The firſt rub he met with in his way, was from the diſciples at Tyre, *who ſpake by the Spirit,* that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem. But did not the Spirit of God then contradict itſelf, in bidding the apoſtle go, and then ſpeaking to him by thoſe diſciples not to go? Not at all: St. Paul, by extraordinary revelation, was commanded to go up to Jeruſalem: theſe diſciples, by a ſpirit of propheſy, only foretold the difficulties and dangers that would attend him in his journey; and ſo, through kindneſs and human affection, they diſſuaded him from undertaking it. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the prediction of trouble, and the counſel of ſafety: The prediction of trouble; ſo they ſaid through the Spirit, that it would be dangerous for Paul to go to Jeruſalem: The counſel of ſafety proceeded from their private love and affection to him; whereby they diſſuaded him from going to Jeruſalem. *Learn* from hence, 1. That divine precept, and not Providence, is to rule our way to duty. 2. That no diſcouragements or hindrances whatſoever will juſtify our neglect of a commanded duty: Whatever difficulties or diſcouragements lay in the way of the apoſtle's duty, he overcame them all with an heroic and truly chriſtian reſolution, ſaying, ver. 13. *I am ready not only to be bound*, &c.

5 And when we had accompliſhed thoſe days, we
departed, and went our way: and they all brought
us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were*
out of the city: and we kneeled down on the ſhore,
and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave
one of another, we took ſhip; and they returned
home again. 7 And when we had finiſhed *our*
courſe from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and ſaluted
the brethren, and abode with them one day. 8 And
the next *day* we that were of Paul's company de-
parted, and came unto Ceſarea; and we entered into
the houſe of Philip the evangeliſt, which was *one* of
the ſeven, and abode with him. 9 And the ſame
man had four daughters, virgins, which did propheſy.

Note here, 1. That nothing could divert the apoſtle from his intended journey to Jeruſalem: The report of ſufferings was no diſcouragement to him, nor could the perſuaſive intreaties of his friends prevail with him: Seeing therefore he was reſolved to go on, they all of them, with their wives and children, to teſtify their great reſpect and affection to him, accompany him out of the city; and he and they kneeling down on the ſhore, pray together, and take their farewel of each other. The loving communion of ſaints, and prayer, are the marks of Chriſt's true diſciples. 2. The apoſtle's next remove towards Jeruſalem was from Tyre to Ceſarea, where he lodges with Philip the evangeliſt: that is, one of them who were ſent forth as itinerary preachers, here and there to diſpenſe the goſpel, and to confirm the churches, and one of the ſeven, that is, one of the ſeven deacons, Acts vi. Here *note*, That this Philip, in whoſe houſe St. Paul now lodged, was before driven out of his houſe by Paul's perſecution. See Acts viii. 1, &c. This Philip, who was driven out of his houſe by Paul when a perſecutor, gladly received him into his houſe, being now Paul a convert; and this without any upbraiding, yea, without the leaſt mention of what he had formerly been or done. It is an ill office to rake in the filth which God has covered, and to reproach men with, or for their ſins which God has pardoned: It argues ſome degree of envy at the grace of God, to upbraid them with the ſins committed before converſion. Former miſcarriages and injuries ſhould be forgiven and forgotten upon true repentance, and we ſhould receive them into our embraces, whom Chriſt has taken into his boſom; *Paul went into the houſe of Philip the evangeliſt.*

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came
down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus.
11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's
girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid,
Thus ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, So ſhall the Jews at Je-
ruſalem bind the man that oweth this girdle, and
ſhall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

Note here, 1. That during the apoſtle's ſtay at Ceſarea in Philip's houſe, a certain prophet named Agabus comes thither, and propheſieth of St. Paul's bonds at Jeruſalem: Where *learn*, That though Agabus was a prophet, yet, by what appeareth to him in ſcripture, he was always a prophet of evil things and bad tidings: He foretold the famine before, Acts xi. and Paul's bonds now. Such meſſengers of God as give warnings of judgments to come, ſhould and ought to be accepted, as well as they that bring us hopes of mercy and deliverance; that meſſage may be true, which yet is diſpleaſing. 2. Agabus uſeth a ſign, after the manner of the old prophets, who often propheſied by ſymbols, and ſignificant expreſſions, that they might the better imprint their predictions on the hearts of men. Thus Iſaiah went naked and barefoot, to ſhew what the people of Iſrael ſhould meet with under the king of Aſſyria, Iſa. xx. And *Ezekiel was to pack up his ſtuff, and remove, to ſignify the people's removal into captivity*, Ezek. xii. It pleaſed God to teach his people by viſible ſigns, as well as by word of mouth; that what was received by both ſenſes, ſeeing and hearing, might make the deeper impreſſion upon their minds. In like manner here, Agabus uſes a ſign, he takes St. Paul's girdle, and binds his own hands and feet with it, ſignifying, that after that manner the Jews at Jeruſalem would bind the apoſtle, and deliver him to the Gentiles; firſt to the Roman governor of Judea, and afterwards to Nero, the Roman emperor. From whence we may *remark*, The great goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God, in giving the apoſtle ſo many warnings of his bonds; the Holy Ghoſt firſt made it known to him, Acts xx. *That bonds and afflictions did abide him.* The diſciples at Tyre propheſied the ſame, Acts xxi. 5. and here Agabus, by a ſenſible ſign, makes it known to him; and all this, that he might thoroughly be prepared for a ſuffering condition. God doth not love to take his children unprovided: St. Paul therefore was not ſurprized, but had warning upon warning of his preſent danger. If a ſudden and unexpected flood of miſeries and calamities break in upon us, for afflictions ſeldom go ſingle, it is not becauſe we want warning, but becauſe we are not ſo wiſe as to take warning. When we are well, and at eaſe, we will not think of death and the croſs; and therefore, if we be ſurprized and unprovided, we may thank our own ſecurity: Our apoſtle here being forewarned, was forearmed.

12 And when we heard theſe things, both we and
they of that place beſought him not to go up to
Jeruſalem. 13 Then Paul anſwered, What mean
ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready
not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for
the name of the Lord Jeſus. 14 And when he

would not be perſuaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, The will of the Lord be done.

Note here, 1. The entire affection of the diſciples to the holy apoſtle, *Both we and they of the place beſought him that he would not go up to Jeruſalem.* *Learn*, That the lives and liberties of thoſe who are eminent inſtruments of God's glory, are very dear and precious to the faithful ſervants of God. Who can blame either St. Paul's companions or the diſciples here, for deſiring and endeavouring the preſervation of ſo precious an inſtrument as the apoſtle was? and yet it is not improbable but Satan might have a hand in this matter, and endeavour by the apoſtle's friends perſuaſion to weaken his reſolution; for the devil oft endeavoureth to take us off from our duty by the intreaties of our friends, who mean well in what they ſay. Thus when St. Peter lovingly adviſed our Saviour againſt his ſufferings, *Be it far from thee, Lord, This ſhall not be unto thee:* Matt. xvi. *Get thee behind me, Satan*, ſays Chriſt: It was Peter's tongue, but Satan tuned it: Who would have thought that Chriſt's diſciples ſhould have been Satan's inſtruments? We muſt not meaſure our friends' counſel by their good meaning, but by God's word: We muſt be deaf to all relations, that we may diſcharge our duty to God. Thus we find the apoſtle here, *He would not be perſuaded*, but expoſtulates with them: *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart?* 2. St. Paul's entire affection to God, and his firm reſolution for his duty: *He would not be perſuaded.* But did the apoſtle do well in this, to withſtand all the importunities, and reject the unanimous advice of all his friends? How doth this carriage agree with that character of heavenly wiſdom, Jam. iii. 17. *That it is eaſy to be intreated?* I anſwer, To the practice of our duty, it is praiſe-worthy to be eaſy to be intreated, but not from our duty. St. Paul knew his duty, and underſtood the will of God, and therefore his friends might ſooner break his heart, than break his purpoſe. *Learn* hence, That no perſuaſions of friends, no apprehenſions of dangers, ſhould ever be able to turn us out of the way of our duty. When Peter diſſuaded Chriſt from ſuffering, our Saviour rebuked him with the ſame indignation as he did the devil tempting him to idolatry. 3. How the apoſtle lovingly and gently rebukes their fond and inordinate ſorrow for his departure: *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart?* As if he had ſaid, "What mean theſe paſſionate tears and intreaties? Alas! whether you think it ſo or not, they are but ſo many ſnares and temptations of Satan, to turn my feet out of the way of obedience; you do as much as in you lies to break my heart; but, by the grace of God, nothing ſhall break me off from my purpoſe, nor weaken my courage and reſolution for God." When a ſaint is once ſatisfied in the call and command of God to any duty, he fears neither impending nor approaching dangers in the way of duty. 4. The apoſtle's quieting and calming arguments, with which he labours to charm their unruly paſſions: *I am ready both to be bound, and to die for Chriſt.* *I am ready*, (1.) That is, God hath fitted me for ſuffering-work; fleſh and blood is over-ruled in me by the Spirit of God; I am prepared for whatever God pleaſeth, be it a priſon, be it a ſcaffold, be it life, be it death, I am provided for both: Liberty is dear, and life is dear, but Chriſt is dearer than either; therefore what mean you to work againſt the deſign of God, who hath fitted and prepared my heart for ſuffering-ſervice? *I am ready*, (2.) That is, my will and reſolution ſtands in a full bent, my heart is fixed, my friends, my heart is fixed; do not therefore diſorder and diſcompoſe my ſpirits, by caſting ſuch temptations and ſtumbling blocks in my way; for I am come to a point, nothing ſhall divert me from this noble enterprize for God. *I am ready*, (3.) That is, fully determined to comply with the call and command of God, whatever befals me; I am not ſolicitious about that; my Captain that leads me on, I am ſure, will bring me off ſafe, either dead or alive: Therefore all your tears and intreaties are but caſt away upon me, ye had better be quiet, and chearfully reſign me up to the will of God; for I am ready both to be bound and to die. From whence *learn*, That it is a bleſſed and excellent frame of ſpirit, when the ſervants of God are prepared and ready for the hardeſt ſervices, and ſharpeſt ſufferings, to which the Lord may at any time call them: *I am ready, not only to be bound, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus.* 5. The diſciples' diſcretion: *When he would not be perſuaded, they ceaſed:* that is, they gave over their importunities, and urged him no farther beyond his own inclinations and reſolutions. It is the diſpoſition of humble ſpirits to ſubmit to thoſe that are wiſer than themſelves, and not to be too ſtiff and peremptory in their own opinions and conceits; a leſſon which moſt men have great need to learn. 6. The pious ground of this their diſcretion; namely, acquieſcency in the divine will: *The will of the Lord be done.* They refer the event to God's determination, and ſubmit all to his ſovereign pleaſure. Thence *learn*, That it is the duty and deſire, and ought to be the care and endeavour of all the children of God, to be willing to ſubmit themſelves and theirs to the diſpenſation of God's providence, in whatever befalls either them or theirs. For this we have Chriſt's example, Matt. xxvi. 39. *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The example of David, 2 Sam. xv. 26. *Here am I, let him do what ſeemeth good in his ſight:* The example of Eli, 1 Sam. i. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do whatſoever he pleaſeth.* Such is his juſtice and righteouſneſs, that he can do his children no wrong: and ſuch is his tender mercy and loving kindneſs, that he will do them no harm. The abſolute ſovereignty of God over us, and the ſight of God in all his providential diſpenſations towards us, influences at once our judgments, our wills and our affections, our expreſſions and actions, that we neither dare to think, ſpeak, or act any thing in contradiction to, or in oppoſition againſt the wiſdom and will of God: That which is oft againſt our will, is not always againſt our intereſt; but if we belong to God, all afflictions upon us, are federal diſpenſations and covenant bleſſings to us, and either are good, or ſhall work for good; therefore it is both our duty and intereſt to ſubmit to the wiſdom of providence, and ſay with theſe diſciples, *The will of the Lord be done.*

15 And after thoſe days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jeruſalem. 16 There went with us alſo *certain* of the diſciples of Ceſarea, and brought

with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an old diſciple, with whom we ſhould lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jeruſalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 ¶ And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James: and all the elders were preſent. 19 And when he had ſaluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his miniſtry. 20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord,—

The apoſtle having holily reſolved, that come life, or come death, he would be odedient to the call of God by his Spirit, and that nothing ſhould divert him from his intended journey to Jeruſalem, ſets forward from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem, accompanied with certain diſciples of Ceſarea, who brought him to the houſe of one Mnaſon, an old diſciple, who had long ago received the faith, and now lived at Jeruſalem, in whoſe houſe the apoſtle lodged. Here *note*, What a badge of honour is put upon Mnaſon, even that of being an old diſciple; to be an old man is an honour, but to be an old diſciple is a double honour; it is a reſemblance of him who is the Ancient of Days: Where antiquity and piety, where agedneſs and holineſs do concur, it renders a perſon as like the Divine Majeſty as can be expected on this ſide glory. To be an old diſciple, is a greater honour than to be a king or emperor. *Note* next, The apoſtle being come to Jeruſalem, is kindly received of the church there, he enters the houſe of St. James, the biſhop of Jeruſalem, where the elders that were preſent, congratulate his arrival, and he relates to them what great things God had wrought by his miniſtry, and they all gave praiſe to God for the great and glorious ſucceſs of the goſpel. *Learn* hence, That all Chriſtians in general, but the miniſters of Chriſt in ſpecial, ought to make a particular declaration of the great and marvellous works which the Lord hath wrought for them, and by them. Thus did St. Paul here; he was very particular, no doubt, in relating the mighty works of God in the converſion of the Gentiles by his miniſtry from time to time, and from place to place: And all this, not to extol himſelf, but to exalt God for receiving the Gentiles into the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel.

—And ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law. 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teacheſt all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forſake Moſes, ſaying, that they ought not to circumciſe *their* children, neither to walk after the cuſtoms. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude muſt needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we ſay to thee: we have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyſelf with them, and be at charges with them, that they may ſhave *their* heads: and all may know that thoſe things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but *that* thou thyſelf alſo walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they may obſerve no ſuch thing, ſave only that they keep themſelves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from *things* ſtrangled, and from fornication.

We had St. Paul's report to the church at Jeruſalem, of the ſucceſs which God had given him in his miniſtry amongſt the Gentiles; this is related in the foregoing paragraph of the chapter: In theſe verſes before us, we have the church's reply to the apoſtle's relation, *They glorified God*; Firſt, For the great ſucceſs given to the word of his grace amongſt the Gentiles; and withal they acquaint him with the like ſucceſs, which the preaching of the goſpel had amongſt the Jews: *Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which do believe*; the original runs, *how many tens of thouſands do believe*: which intimates the great and wonderful ſucceſs of the goſpel: Well might our Saviour compare it to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ſeeing it had ſpread itſelf far and near in ſo ſhort a time. If we conſider the ſmallneſs of its beginning, the deſpicableneſs of the inſtruments, the ſhortneſs of the time, the obſtinacy and prejudices of the Jews againſt the goſpel, and yet remark the vaſt number of thouſands and ten thouſands of the Jews that did already believe, embrace and entertain it; we need not wonder that St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 16. reckons it as one of the greateſt myſteries of godlineſs, that Jeſus Chriſt was preached to the Gentiles, and believed on in the world: That is, that ſo many thouſands both of Jews and Gentiles were brought to own him, and ſubmit to him as Lord and Saviour. *Note*, next, The advice given by the church at Jeruſalem to Paul, concerning the Jews which did believe in that place. It ſeems the Jews, though they had received the goſpel, yet thought that the ceremonial law muſt ſtill be obſerved; therefore, in condeſcenſion to their weakneſs, and to prevent their taking offence, they adviſe the apoſtle not as a thing neceſſary in itſelf, but as an expediency in reference to their weakneſs, to conform himſelf to ſome of the Jewiſh ceremonies and purifications; for though they were not then needful, yet were they not then unlawful; they might then be uſed, when the uſe of them would any ways conduce to the gaining and bringing over the Jews to a love of chriſtianity. The ſynagogue was not haſtily to be caſt out of the church like the heatheniſh ſuperſtitions; but to die by degrees, and be decently interred. Here *note*, That the law of Moſes, as to its moral part, Chriſt continued as his law: The ceremonial part, as to the uſe of the types and ceremonies ſignifying him that was to come, this was abrogated at Chriſt's coming: and the political part ceaſed, when the Jewiſh polity was diſſolved; but the abrogation of the whole was not fully made known at the firſt, but by degrees; and the exerciſe of it long tolerated to the Jews. Laſtly, The particular advice which they give the apoſtle, to go into the temple, and perform the legal ceremony of purification; *We have four men which have a vow; them take, and purify thyſelf, that all may know that thou walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law*: That is, " Seeing we have four men here which have a Nazarite's vow upon them, the time of which vow is now expired, and they are to ſhave themſelves ceremoniouſly in the temple; go thou with them, and perform the legal ceremony of purification there, that the people may know, that the report of thee is not true; but that thou, being a Jew, doſt thyſelf keep the law." Here we may obſerve the truth of what St. Paul elſewhere declared, that *to the Jew he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; yea, became all things to all men, that he might gain ſome.* A noble pattern for the miniſters of the goſpel to write after, in yielding, ſo far as we may without ſin or ſcandal, to the weakneſs of others, in order to the furtherance of the great ends of our miniſtry among our people; *To the Jew, I became as a Jew.*

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himſelf with them, entered into the temple, to ſignify the accompliſhment of the days of purification, until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them. 27 And when the ſeven days were almoſt ended, the Jews which were of Aſia, when they ſaw him in the temple, ſtirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help. This is the man that teacheth all *men* every where againſt the people and the law, and this place; and farther, hath brought Greeks alſo into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had ſeen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppoſed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: And they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple. And forthwith the doors were ſhut.

Obſerve here, 1. That at the inſtance and importunity of his friends, St. Paul is perſuaded to purify himſelf in the temple, partly to gain upon the affections of the believing Jews, who were ſtill zealous for the law; and partly to confute the falſe aſperſions of them that reported him to be againſt all ceremonial obſervances. If any had grudged, that, after the coming of the goſpel, ſo much coſt ſhould be beſtowed on the law, and ſay, with murmuring Judas, *To what purpoſe was this waſte?* The law might truly anſwer with our Saviour, and ſay, "He did it for my burial, and for the more ſolemn interment of me." 2. How blind was the zeal, and how furious the rage of the unbelieving Jews againſt the apoſtle! They ſeek, and becauſe they could not find, they take an occaſion to vent their malice upon him; accordingly, they put the whole city of Jeruſalem into an uproar, upon a pretence, that he had brought Trophimus, a Gentile, into the temple, to profane and pollute it; and in their blind rage, they dragged the apoſtle out of the temple, as a profaner of it. Well might the apoſtle ſay, he was in *deaths often*, 2 Cor. xi. 23. He was now in danger to be pulled in pieces by this tumult, and of being made a ſacrifice to the fury of the rabble: But God, who never wants ways and means for the ſeaſonable ſuccour and relief of his faithful ſervants, in an unexpected manner, and by unthought of means, reſcued the apoſtle from the jaws of death and danger, as the next verſes inform us.

31 ¶ And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jeruſalem was in an uproar; 32 Who immediately took ſoldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them. And when they ſaw the chief captain and the ſoldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 34 And ſome cried one thing, and ſome another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the caſtle. 35 And when he came upon the ſtairs, ſo it was that he was borne of the ſoldiers, for the violence of the people. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

Note here, 1. How the great and gracious God provideth ſeaſonable reſcues for his perſecuted and perplexed ſaints and ſervants; *When they went about to kill Paul*, God raiſes him up a deliverer. 2. The unexpected inſtrument of the apoſtle's deliverance, and that was an heathen governor: The Romans never durſt truſt ſuch vaſt multitudes at Jewiſh feſtivals, without a ſtrong garriſon to be a check upon them; accordingly, the governor, having tidings of the tumult, brings down a band of ſoldiers to ſee the peace kept, he reſcues the injured apoſtle out of their hands, commands him to be bound with two chains, as Agabus had foretold, and the ſoldiers bear him up in their arms from the violence of the people. Hence we *learn*, 1. That a bad government, even an heathen government, is better than anarchy. Under a tyrannical government, many may be uneaſy, but under popular rage none can be long at reſt. 2. That heathens are oftentimes the protectors of chriſtians againſt the blind rage of thoſe that profeſs to worſhip the ſame God. St. Paul and theſe unbelieving Jews worſhipped the ſame God, and yet the heathen ſoldiers were fain by force to carry and guard the apoſtle from the fury of the bloody unbelieving Jews. Thus God raiſeth up what inſtruments he pleaſeth to ſubſerve his own gracious ends and deſigns in the preſervation of his people. The barbarous heathen ſoldiers protect St. Paul and keep him from being torn in pieces by the Jews, who worſhipped the ſame God with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the caſtle, he ſaid unto the chief captain, May I ſpeak unto thee? Who ſaid, Canſt thou ſpeak Greek? 38 Art not thou that Egyptian which before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murtherers? 39 But Paul ſaid, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beſeech thee, ſuffer me to ſpeak unto the people. 40 And

when he had given him licence, Paul ſtood on the ſtairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great ſilence, he ſpake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, ſaying,

Obſerve here, 1. The juſtice which the chief captain, though an heathen ſoldier, doth St. Paul: He demands *what he had done* before he puniſhes him; an heathen would hear the cauſe before he condemns the perſon; a piece of juſtice which the law of nature requires and obliges to. 2. The unjuſt ſuſpicion which the chief captain had of St. Paul's being a very bad man. *Art not thou that Egyptian which madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out four thouſand men that were murderers?* Here St. Paul, without cauſe, is ſuſpected for a rebel, a ſeducer, and a murderer, by the chief captain. It is not in the power of the moſt unſpotted innocency to protect from jealouſy and ſuſpicion, from cenſure and calumny, from ſlander and falſe accuſation. The peaceable apoſtle is ſuſpected for a turbulent incendiary; *Are not thou the Egyptian that madeſt an uproar?* 3. The juſt and neceſſary apology Paul makes for himſelf, *I am a Jew of Tarſus, a citizen of no mean city.* Where *note*, 1. He deſcribes his original; I am a Jew, not that wicked Egyptian which you ſuſpected me to be; but a Jew of religious and noble extraction. *Learn*, That to be deſcended from religious and noble anceſtors is a deſirable privilege, and ſingular prerogative. St. Paul was a Jew, deſcended from Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and the holy patriarchs. 2. He deſcribes the country where he was born; he was born in Cilicia, a rich and fruitful country in Aſia. *Learn* thence, That to be born in a rich and fruitful country (if godly and religious) is a very conſiderble favour and privilege; it was not blind chance and fortune, but a wiſe and merciful providence of God, which appointed both the place of our births and determineth the bounds of our habitation. What mercy is it that we were born, not in Spain, not in Turkey, not in a land of darkneſs, but in a valley of viſion! If the Spaniards have the golden mines, we have the golden treaſures of the ſcriptures, *more to be deſired than gold, yea, than much fine gold,* Pſal. xix. 3. He deſcribes not only his country, but his native city, and the dignity of it: *He was born in Tarſus, a citizen of no mean city,* it being the metropolis or chief city of all Cilicia; in this famous city was the apoſtle born. *Learn* thence, That to be born in a noble, free, and famous city, eſpecially if religious, is a deſirable favour and privilege. St. Paul was born in the noble city of Tarſus: But how could he then ſay as he did, Acts xxii. that he was a Roman? *Anſ.* So he was; but not by birth, but by immunity and privilege. Tarſus was inveſted with the Roman privileges, and made free of Rome by M. Antonius: Thus Paul was free born, and declared that they ought not to ſcourge a Roman citizen. *Note*, laſtly, That though the forementioned privileges are conſiderable privileges, namely, To be deſcended from noble anceſtors, to be born in a famous country, and in a free city, paſſages of divine providence not to be overlooked or diſregarded, but very highly valued, and thankfully acknowledged; yet muſt it be remembered, that all theſe are but outward and temporal privileges, common to the worſt, as well as the beſt of men; ſuch privileges as a man may enjoy, and yet be under the wrath of God, and the guilt of eternal damnation. Let us labour to be nobly minded, as well as nobly deſcended: By regeneration born from above, otherwiſe we are low born, mean born, be our parents never ſo high. Thus the chapter concludes with an account of the apoſtle's eminent preſervation in a time of imminent danger; when likely to have been torn in pieces by the riotous rabble, God ſtirs up the chief captain, an heathen, belonging to the bloody trade of war, to reſcue oppreſſed innocency; and the guard of ſoldiers, who had no manner of affection for Paul, God ſets as a life-guard about his perſon, they bear him up in their arms, give him liberty to ſpeak for himſelf; and his apology, or defenſitive plea, we have recorded in the following chapter.

CHAP. XXII.

In the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, we have the apoſtle craving leave of the chief captain to ſpeak unto the people, they having made a violent aſſault upon him, and attempted to take away his life. Liberty of ſpeech being granted him, he ſtands upon the ſtairs, near the gate of the caſtle, in which he was a priſoner, makes a ſign to the people to hold their peace, and when they gave audience, in the Hebrew *tongue, he thus ſpeaks:*

MEN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence
which I make now unto you. 2 (And when
they heard that he ſpake in the Hebrew tongue to
them, they kept the more ſilence; and he ſaith.)
3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in
Tarſus *a city* of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city
at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the
perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was
zealous towards God, as ye all are this day. 4 And
I perſecuted this way unto the death, binding and
delivering into priſons both men and women. 5
As alſo the high prieſts doth bear me witneſs, and
all the eſtate of the elders: from whom alſo I received
letters unto the brethren, and went to Damaſcus,
to bring them which were there bound
unto Jeruſalem, for to be puniſhed.

Here begins the apoſtle's apology, or defenſitive plea, which he makes for himſelf before the people at Jeruſalem, who, in the foregoing chapter, had ſo injuriouſly treated him: In which apologetical narration, we have theſe particulars obſervable. Firſt *obſerve*, With what lenity and mildneſs he beſpeaks his cruel and peſtilent perſecutors, the people of the Jews; he accoſts them with titles of reſpect and honour: *Men, brethren, and fathers*; not with opprobious invectives: he doth not render evil for evil, or railing for reviling; he had not ſo learned Chriſt, he knew how to ſuffer reproach for the goſpel; but to perſecute his perſecutors with hard names and characters of reproach, was a piece of zeal which St. Paul and the holy ſufferers of thoſe times, were little acquainted with. 2. How the apoſtle inſinuates himſelf into his auditors, that ſo he might gain their attention to what was ſpoken; *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye,* I pray, *my defence which I make unto you:* There is a lawful and pious inſinuation for gaining the attention of our auditors, which the miniſters of Chriſt may and ought to make uſe of, as the workman that would drive his nail, dips it in oil. We gain our auditors attention by our courteous and loving compellations; *Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken.* 3. The apology or plea itſelf, in which he ſets before them, (1.) His extraction, *I am a Jew, born in Tarſus:* 2. His education, *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel:* 3. His profeſſion, *he was zealous towards God:* That is, he was one of that ſect among the Jews which were called Zealots, and was very ſtrict and exact in the obſervation of the law, a bitter enemy of Chriſtianity, and a bloody perſecutor of all that owned themſelves the diſciples of Jeſus, as the high prieſt very well knows, ſays he, *from whom I received a commiſſion, That if I found any of this way, whether men or women, I ſhould bring them bound to Jeruſalem. Note,* That Damaſcus was five or ſix days journey from Jeruſalem; yet Paul, when a perſecutor, ſticks not at it; but ſpurs on through fire and water to glut his malice and revenge on the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That perſecutors will ſpare neither purſe nor pains, they will ſtick and ſtop at nothing, though never ſo toilſome and hazardous, ſo they may but ſatisfy their revenge upon the poor diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt: ver. 4. *I perſecuted this way unto the death,* &c.

6 And it came to paſs, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damaſcus about noon, ſuddenly there ſhone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice ſaying unto me, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 8 And I anſwered, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid unto me, I am Jeſus of Nazareth, whom thou perſecuteſt. 9 And they that were with me ſaw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that ſpake to me.

Our apoſtle having related what he was before his converſion, in the foregoing verſes, in theſe and the following verſes he declares the manner of his converſion; namely, That, when he was travelling to Damaſcus to purſue his perſecuting deſign, a great light ſhined round about him, upon which he fell to the ground, and heard theſe words articulately ſpoken to him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Where *obſerve,* That Chriſt takes the oppoſition made againſt his goſpel, and the perſecution carried on againſt his members, as done unto himſelf, it being againſt his friends, his cauſe and intereſt: As the honour done unto the head, redounds unto the members, ſo the wrongs and injuries offered unto the members, are reſented by the head: Chriſt ſaid not thus, (when upon earth) unto his murderers, *Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why ſcourge ye me, and crucify me?* But now when his members ſuffered, he cries out from heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord, thou art more tender of thy body myſtical, than thou waſt of thy body natural; more ſenſible of thy members ſufferings, than of thy own. *Obſerve* next, How ready the apoſtle was to underſtand and know, and how deſirous to execute and do the will of God. *Who art thou, Lord? and what wilt thou have me to do?* We may ſooner find fire without heat, than a true convert without operative grace. Farther, Chriſt's anſwer to Paul's inquiry. *Who art thou, Lord?* ſays Paul: *I am Jeſus of Nazareth, whom thou perſecuteſt,* ſaith Chriſt. Where *note,* That contemned, though not contemptible name, *Jeſus of Nazareth,* is owned by Chriſt from heaven. *Mark,* He ſaid not, I am Jeſus the Son of God, I am Jeſus the heir of the world, and Lord over all; but *Jeſus of Nazareth;* he gloried in that reproach which his enemies caſt upon him, *Jeſus of Nazareth;* he owned his name from heaven, to teach his members not to be aſhamed of it when reproached by it here on earth. Laſtly, The witneſſes of Paul's converſion, *The men were with him, who ſaw the light, but heard not the voice.* It is very probable that he had a conſiderable number of officers with him, to bring both men and women that profeſſed chriſtianity bound to Jeruſalem. Theſe ſaw the light ſhining, and heard a confuſed noiſe like thunder, but they heard not the articulate, much leſs the efficacious voice of Chriſt, which ſpake ſo convincingly to his ſoul. Lord, how many are there who come under the preaching of the goſpel, that, with Paul's companions, hear only a confuſed noiſe, an empty ſound? they do not hear the efficacious voice of Chriſt, ſpeaking to their hearts with a ſtrong hand, and ſo remain ſhut up under the power of unbelief.

10 And I ſaid, What ſhall I do Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto me, Ariſe, and go into Damaſcus; and there it ſhall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not ſee for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damaſcus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there,* 13 Came unto me, and ſtood, and ſaid unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy ſight. And the ſame hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he ſaid, The God of our fathers hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that juſt One, and ſhouldſt hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men of what thou haſt ſeen and heard. 16 And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Here *note,* 1. That although Chriſt converted Paul himſelf, yet Ananias as his miniſter muſt inſtruct him; by Chriſt is grace infuſed, but by his miniſters increaſed. Such an honour doth Chriſt put upon the miniſters of the goſpel, that he makes uſe of their endeavours (ordinarily) both for the production and augmentation of grace in the hearts of his people. O the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of a ſtanding miniſtry! It is a ſingular favour to have the mind of God made known to us by men like unto ourſelves: And behold the honour which God puts upon his miniſters, in uſing them as conduit-pipes for conveying the water of life unto us, which is not ordinarily communicated immediately from himſelf nor immediately received by us! 2. The title given by Ananias to Saul, *Brother Saul.* They were now brethren by faith and profeſſion, owning the ſame God, united to the ſame Saviour, animated by the ſame ſpirit, encouraged by the ſame promiſes, partakers of the ſame hope, and heirs of the ſame glory: As the ſcripture ſpeaks of a brotherhood betwixt Chriſt and believers, *He is not aſhamed to call them brethren*; ſo it ſpeaks of a brotherhood betwixt believers themſelves, *Love the brotherhood*; that is, the whole fraternity of chriſtians, who are *Sanguine Chriſti conglutinati:* Cemented by the blood of Chriſt, and united by the bond of love. 3. Ananias acquaints Saul with the ſpecial favours which God intended for him; *The God of our fathers hath choſen thee*, or taken thee by the hand, as the word ſignifies, that thou ſhouldſt *know his will*, and ſee *that juſt One*, (ſo he calls the bleſſed Jeſus) to convince them of their ſin in putting him to death: *And be a witneſs unto all men of what thou haſt ſeen and heard.* The work of the miniſters of the goſpel is now to witneſs for, hereafter to witneſs againſt; now they witneſs for God and his truth, and perſuade ſinners to believe it; hereafter they will witneſs againſt ſinners for not believing and obeying the truth of God. Lord, what a ſad conſideration is this, that the miniſters of Chriſt muſt be brought in as witneſſes againſt the ſouls of their neighbours and friends, and be forced to teſtify to their faces for their condemnation! Ah, Lord, with what an heart muſt a poor miniſter ſtudy, when he conſidereth, that every ſermon that he preaches muſt be brought in for a witneſs againſt many, if not moſt of his hearers? Doubtleſs this ſad reflection makes very faithful miniſters of Chriſt ſtudy hard, pray hard, intreat hard, be earneſt and inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, that they may not be contemners of their people's ſouls. 4. The advice which Ananias gave to this new convert to take upon him the badge of chriſtianity, to wit, baptiſm; *Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins.* Here *note*, That ſacraments are not empty, inſignificant ſigns; but God by his grace and bleſſing renders his own ordinances effectual for thoſe great ends for which his wiſdom has appointed them; *be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins:* As water cleanſeth the body, ſo the blood of Chriſt, ſignified by water, waſhes away the guilt of the ſoul. Where true faith is, together with the profeſſion of it by baptiſm, there is ſalvation promiſed, Mark xvi. 6. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.*

17 And it came to paſs, that when I was come again to Jeruſalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance: 18 And ſaw him ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem: for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me. 19 And I ſaid, Lord, they know that I impriſoned and beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee. 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him. 21 And he ſaid unto me, Depart: for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

St. Paul, having thus declared to the Jews his wonderful manner of converſion, proceeds next to acquaint them how deſirous he was to have preached to the Jews rather than to the Gentiles, if the will of God had ſeen fit; but it proved otherwiſe; for, as he was praying in the temple he had a viſion, in which he was commanded to haſten out of the city; becauſe his former zeal in oppoſing the goſpel would hinder his preſent preaching of it from being ſucceſsful: Againſt this he humbly argued, that his former zeal againſt chriſtianity might, he hoped be an argument to perſuade the Jews his countrymen to embrace chriſtianity. But this argument did not prevail for his ſtaying at Jeruſalem; but he was commanded to depart from thence to preach the goſpel to the deſpiſed Gentiles, who had not ſuch ſtrong exceptions againſt him, but would with more readineſs embrace his doctrine. *Learn* hence, 1. That carnal reaſonings are very apt to ariſe in the hearts of God's own ſervants, and cauſe them to object ſomething againſt their obedience to the divine commands: Here the apoſtle objects, that according to his reaſon he ſaw greater probability of doing good by his miniſtry among the Jews, than he could hope for among the Gentiles, who would be afraid of him, as Ananias was; but Chriſt repeats his command, *Depart, and get thee hence, for I will ſend thee to the Gentiles.* And now the apoſtle doth no longer diſpute but diſpatch. This teaches us, 2. To lay by all our carnal reaſonings and vain pretences, when once the call and command of God is clear, and no longer cavil, but comply; no longer object, but inſtantly obey. We may ſafely follow God blindfold, when once we have aſſurance that he goes before us, and obey every command without heſitation or limitation.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and ſaid, Away with ſuch a *fellow* from the earth; for it is not fit that he ſhould live. 23 And as they cried out, and caſt off *their* clothes, and threw duſt into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the caſtle, and bade that he ſhould be examined by ſcourging; that he might know wherefore they cried ſo againſt him. 25 ¶ And as they bound him with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that ſtood by, Is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, ſaying, Take heed what thou doeſt: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and ſaid unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He ſaid, Yea. 28 And the chief captain anſwered, With a great ſum obtained I this freedom. And Paul ſaid, But I was *free* born. 29 Then ſtraightway they departed from him which ſhould have examined him: and the chief captain alſo was afraid after he

knew that he was a Roman, and becauſe he had bound him: 30 On the morrow, becauſe he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accuſed of the Jews, he looſed him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief prieſts and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and ſet him before them.

Note here, 1. With what patience the Jews heard the apoſtle's diſcourſe, until he made mention of the Gentiles, and that he was appointed to preach to them; Upon which they brake forth into fury and paſſion, and expreſſed their fury by throwing duſt into the air, and caſting off their clothes, as if they would preſently ſtone him, whom they looked upon as the worſt of villains, and unworthy to live: Where we may remark at once, both what a vile opinion the Jews had of the Gentiles, whom they called and accounted dogs; and what an high eſteem they had of themſelves, and a proud conceit of their own deſervings, as if the favours of heaven belonged to none but themſelves, who yet trampled upon them, when they were tendered to them. 2. What a vile eſteem theſe wicked Jews had of the holy and innocent apoſtle, who deſired above all things to preach the glad tidings of the goſpel to them, and longed moſt affectionately for the converſion and ſalvation of them: They account him the greateſt villain upon earth, and unworthy to live upon it: But the good man had learnt (and let all the faithful miniſters of Chriſt learn it after him) to take pleaſure in reproaches, in perſecutions, in neceſſities and diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: *Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, it is not meet that he ſhould live.* 3. The pious prudence and innocent policy which the apoſtle uſes for his own preſervation; when they were about to bind him to a poſt, in order to the ſcourging of him, the apoſtle declares himſelf a free denizen of Rome, by being born in one of the cities which the Roman emperor had made free; accordingly St. Paul pleads for himſelf the privilege of a Roman citizen, who neither ought to be bound nor beaten. Though we may not render evil for evil, yet we may right ourſelves by all lawful means. Chriſt allows as much of the ſerpent as the dove, in his ſervants, provided the ſubtlety of the one doth not deſtroy the ſimplicity of the other: The head of the ſerpent, and the heart of the dove, do beſt together; for as policy without piety is too ſubtle to be good, ſo piety without policy is too ſimple to be ſafe. 4. How the chief captain fearing he had done more than he could anſwer, becauſe it was death for any one in authority to violate the Roman privileges; therefore more out of fear than love, or more out of love to himſelf than the apoſtle, he looſes St. Paul's bonds. Thence *note*, That when at any time the perſecutors of the ſaints do deſiſt from their bloody purpoſes, it is not out of love to them, but love to themſelves. Laſtly, The ſaints deliverances from affliction and perſecution whilſt on this ſide heaven, are not total or final, but momentary and partial. The apoſtle was delivered from his chains, not from his confinement; though unbound, not ſet at liberty: Next day we find him before the great council or ſanhedrim, and freſh bonds and afflictions abide him. Little reſt is to be expected by the members, and leſs reſt by the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt in this world. Bleſſed be God for the believing hopes of an eternal reſt; where the fury of the perſecutor, the injuries of the oppreſſor, ſhall ceaſe for ever; where no ſin ſhall affect us, no ſorrow afflict us, no danger affright us; but we ſhall be perfectly like unto God, as well in purity as immortality. In the mean time, may we, the miniſters of God, who are ſet for the defence of the goſpel, bear the burden and heat of the day, with patience and courage, reſolution and conſtancy; may we gird up the loins of our minds, not accounting either our labours or our lives dear unto us, ſo we may finiſh our courſe with joy, and fulfil the miniſtry which we have received of the Lord, glorying in our reproaches for well doing; yea, though we be accounted the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things: For when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, we ſhall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

CHAP. XXIII.

In this chapter we find St. Paul *before the ſanhedrim, or great council at Jeruſalem, profeſſing his own innocency; but inſtead of ſetting him at liberty the Jews conſpire his deſtruction, but the providence of God interpoſes for his deliverance, as this chapter fully informs us.*

AND Paul earneſtly beholding the council, ſaid Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day. 2 And the high prieſt Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him to ſmite him on the mouth. 3 Then ſaid Paul unto him, God ſhall ſmite thee, *thou* whited wall: for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law?

Here we have obſervable the apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous profeſſion and proteſtation, Ananias's inſolent and injurious injunction, St. Paul's zealous anſwer and conteſtation. *Note*, 1. The apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous profeſſion and proteſtation, ver. 1. *I have lived in all good conſcience unto this day*; that is, during his continuance in the Jewiſh religion, and ſince his converſion to the Chriſtian religion, he had walked uprightly, and according to his knowledge, and the light of his conſcience. But had Paul a good conſcience, when he perſecuted the Chriſtians? *Anſw.* He went according to his conſcience when he perſecuted; he verily thought he did God ſervice in ſo doing, and it was not any ſelfiſh or ſiniſter end he propoſed to himſelf, but zeal for his religion provoked him to perſecution, Phil. iii. 6. *Concerning zeal perſecuting the church*: It is certainly a man's duty to follow his conſcience; but then, it is as much his duty to inform his conſcience, as it is to follow it; *I have lived in all good conſcience until this day.* Here *note*, The apoſtle ſets forth the goodneſs of his conſcience theſe four ways: (1.) From the goodneſs of his converſation; *I have lived*; A good converſation is the beſt evidence of a good conſcience. God doth not meaſure men's ſincerity by the tides of their affections, but by the conſtant bent of their reſolutions, and the general courſe and tenor of their converſations. Every man's conſcience is as his life is. (2.) From the generality of his care and obedience; *I have lived in all good conſcience*; if it be not a conſcience all good, it is no good conſcience at all. Herod had *ſome* good conſcience, *he did many things*; but the apoſtle went farther, he lived not in ſome, but *in all good conſcience*. (3.) The apoſtle ſets forth the goodneſs of his conſcience from the integrity of it towards God; *I have lived in all good conſcience before God:* Many a man's conſcience paſſeth for a good conſcience before men, and perhaps before himſelf, which yet are not good *before* God, the judge of conſcience. (4.) From his continuance and conſtancy, *Until this day:* It is not ſufficient to begin a good life, and to have a good conſcience; but we muſt keep it too, and that all our days, even to our laſt day. Happy man! that can truly ſay at his dying day, I have lived in all good conſcience until this day. 2. As the apoſtle's ſolemn proteſtation, ſo the high prieſt's injurious injunction: *Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him to ſmite him on the mouth.* Here *note*, What is the reward of a good conſcience from the world; to be ſmitten, either on the mouth, or with the mouth; either with the fiſt, or with the tongue. There is nothing ſo enrages men of wicked conſciences, as the profeſſion and practice of a good conſcience doth: But better ten blows on the face, than one on the heart; better a thouſand blows for a good conſcience, than one from it. 3. St. Paul's zealous anſwer and conteſtation, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall.* Where *note*, 1. That although the apoſtle doth not ſmite again as he was ſmitten, though he did not ſmite Ananias on the cheek, as he ſmote him on the mouth, yet he gives him a check and ſharp reproof for his violence and injuſtice. Thence *learn*, That chriſtian patience, though it binds a man's hands, yet it doth not always bind his tongue; though it lays a law upon a man to forbear violence, yet it lays not a law upon him to enjoin him to ſilence. St. Paul, though he did not ſtrike, yet he durſt ſpeak; though he held his hands, yet he did not hold his peace: Though religion pinions a man's arms from ſtriking, yet it doth not ſeal up a man's lips from ſpeaking; but we may declare both our own innocency, and others injuſtice. 2. St. Paul doth not ſay, God ſhall judge thee, or God ſhall plague thee; but God ſhall ſmite thee: denoting, That as there is always equity, ſo ſometimes a retaliation in the executions of divine juſtice, or a recompenſing like for like: God ſometimes returns ſmiting for ſmiting, ſo that the ſinner is forced to cry out, *As I have done, ſo God hath requited me.* God puniſhes ſometimes in the ſame kind, ſometimes in the ſame manner, ſometimes in the ſame place; that ſinners are forced to cry out, Righteous art thou, Lord! and juſt are thy judgments.

4 And they that ſtood by, ſaid, Revileſt thou God's high prieſt?

Obſerve here, That Ananias the high prieſt having commanded the apoſtle, unheard and uncondemned, to be ſmitten, the apoſtle denounces the juſt judgments of God upon him for the ſame; yet not in a way of imprecation, but prediction; not in a way of revenge, or recompenſing evil for evil; but in a way of miniſterial reproof, which the ſtanders by called reviling, *Revileſt thou God's high prieſt?* Thence *learn*, That profane ſinners look upon the faithful reproofs, which the miniſters of God give them for their lewdneſs, to be no better than revilings; they think we revile them, if we do but rebuke them; whereas, though we chaſten ſinners with the rod of reproof, we dare not ſting them with the ſcorpion of reproach.

5 Then ſaid Paul, I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt. For it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Several interpretations are given by expoſitors of theſe words, *I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt.* 1. Some think that St. Paul did not really know the high prieſt, having been gone ſo long from Jeruſalem; and the high prieſt being made yearly. Others ſay, 2. That there being a great throng about him, the apoſtle could not diſtinctly hear who it was that ſpake to him. 3. Some underſtand it of abſolute denial, that any ſuch office as that of high prieſt ought then to be in being. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I do not own any man to be a lawful high prieſt now, that function being aboliſhed and diſanulled at the coming of the Meſſias." Again, 4. Others underſtand the words, as if the apoſtle denied him to be the lawful high prieſt, one of God's appointing, he being one of man's making, having purchaſed the place with money; for the power and covetouſneſs of the Romans put a new high prieſt every year to officiate; accordingly St. Paul knowing this man to be none of the poſterity of Aaron, but brought in by ſordid gain, might juſtly diſown him to be the high prieſt. Laſtly, there are who affirm, That the apoſtle did certainly ſee and know the high prieſt; and that his meaning is, "That having received ſuch unjuſt uſage in the court, as to be openly ſmitten in the time of hearing, he did not know, that is, he did not conſider who it was that ſpake to him, and therefore ſpake haſtily and unadviſedly." The ſcripture will not bear us out to uſe ill words to magiſtrates, ſhould we be, as St. Paul here was, ill uſed by them: yet are magiſtrates no more to be flattered than they are to be reproached: The greateſt may be reproved, and with a gracious ſeverity told of their faults; and St. Paul did no more. It is no ſin to tell the judgments of God, which will certainly come upon injurious and unjuſt oppreſſors.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee: of the hope and reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion.

Obſerve here, The innocent policy which the apoſtle uſes for his own preſervation: He perceiving that the council before whom he ſtood, were not all of a piece, but patched up of Phariſees and Sadducees, he publicly profeſſes himſelf a Phariſee by education, and of that perſuaſion now in point of the reſurrection. Thus at once he caſt in a bone of contention between the Sadducees who denied the reſurrection, and the Phariſees who owned it; and obliged the Phariſees, at leaſt as to that opinion, to take his part, and ſo by pious prudence he turned their oppoſition againſt him upon one another; that by ſetting them at variance he might the better eſcape. *Learn* hence, That an innocent and prudent policy may warrantably be made uſe of by the members and miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, without any blemiſh to their holy profeſſion; in order to our preſervation from the hands of perſecutors, a ſerpentine ſubtlety may be made uſe of, together with a dove-like innocency. Thus did St. Paul here, when *he perceived that one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out*, &c.

7 ¶ And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſention between the Phariſees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees ſay that there is no reſurrection, neither angel nor ſpirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both. 9 And there aroſe a great cry. And the ſcribes *that were* of the Phariſees part, aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, We find no evil in this man: but if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt God.

Obſerve here, 1. How ſad a ſtate, and how bad a condition was the Jewiſh church now in, when in the ſanhedrim, or great council, men had power and authority, who believed no life but this; and what hypocrites were the Phariſees, who could thus incorporate and embody with damnable heretics, the Sadducees; and yet at the ſame time hated and perſecuted the Chriſtians. The Sadducees were ſo far from believing that there was any ſpirit, that they blaſphemouſly maintained, that God himſelf was no ſpiritual, but only a corporeal Being. When men ſin with obſtinacy againſt ſupernatural light, God juſtly withdraws from them even natural light, and ſuffers them to fall from one degree of error to another. 2. How partiality will change men's judgments, according to the intereſt of a party or faction. The Phariſees were bitter enemies to the apoſtle; but, becauſe he owned himſelf of their ſect, they inſtantly take part with him, and cry, *We find no fault with him*. The feuds about religion are commonly the ſharpeſt feuds; men are more fond of the notions of their brains, than they are of the iſſue of their bodies: *Odia religioſorum ſunt acerbiſſima*; "Religious hates are hotteſt." 3. How the diſſentions of God's adviſers oft-times become the deliverance of God's ſervants. Thus here, the Phariſees and Sadducees quarrel about the reſurrection: The Phariſees juſtify St. Paul, and tell them that oppoſe him, "They are in danger of fighting againſt God." Thus God, when he pleaſeth, can find or make patrons of his people, and raiſe up friends from among his very enemies, to defend his cauſe.

10 And when there aroſe a great diſſention, the chief captain, fearing leſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the ſoldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the caſtle. 11 And the night following, the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.

St. Paul was now in the midſt of difficulty and danger; but obſerve how ſeaſonably God ſteps in for his ſuccour and deliverance: Firſt, he ſtirs up that heathen tribune, the chief captain Lyſias, who was preſent at the trial, to ſee his priſoner fair play; the Lord ſtirs up this man to reſcue the apoſtle from the hands of violence, by which he was in danger of being pulled in pieces, and he is returned ſafe into the caſtle again. O how do God's encouragements evermore accompany his commands! His faithful ſervants, when they ſuffer for him, ſhall certainly be delivered by him, either in trouble or out of trouble. Secondly, God comforts the ſuffering apoſtle with his own preſence, and with the gracious manifeſtations of his ſpecial favour, *The Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer, Paul.* Where *note*, That if the Lord ſtand by, and be graciouſly preſent with, his ſervants, in a ſuffering hour, it is no matter how mighty they be that do withſtand them, and appear againſt them. No doubt, theſe words, *Be of good cheer, Paul*, turned the apoſtle's priſon into a palace, yea, into a paradiſe, and enabled him to bid a bold defiance to all the deviliſh deſigns of the Jews in Jeruſalem againſt him; having got ſuch good ſecurity for his ſafety, even from God himſelf, in the faith of which our apoſtle holily triumphs, ſaying, *If God be for us, who can be againſt us!* Rom. viii. 31. That is, None can be againſt us, either ſafely or ſucceſsfully. The preſence of God with his ſuffering ſervants outweighs all their diſcouragements.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themſelves under a curſe, ſaying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conſpiracy. 14 And they came to the chief prieſts and elders, and ſaid, We have bound ourſelves under a great curſe, that we will eat nothing until we have ſlain Paul. 15 Now, therefore, ye with the council ſignify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

Obſerve here, 1. A barbarous and bloody plot, a curſed combination and conſpiracy againſt the life of the innocent and uſeful apoſtle: No ſooner was it day-light, but the wicked Jews bind themſelves by an oath, never to eat or drink more, until they eat the apoſtle's fleſh, and drink his blood. Thus *the wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth*, Pſalm xxxvii. 12. 2. The numbers which were engaged in conſpiracy, more than forty, they all agreed as one man. Lord, how numerous, how unanimous, how reſolute and outrageous are the enemies of thy holy religion, to carry on their curſed contrivances for the extirpation of it! Thus was it here, theſe enemies were numerous, *more than forty*. The devil's deſigns never miſcarry for want of fit inſtruments; he has a party ever ready to oppoſe the goſpel in every place. And as they were unanimous, as well as numerous, they combined together in one curſed bond: Here was unity, but not an unity in the truth, but a conſpiracy againſt it: Here was the agreement and friendſhip, but it was like that of Herod and Pilate againſt Chriſt, and not for him: And they were reſolute and outrageous, *They bound themſelves under a curſe*, under a bloody vow, to purſue their purpoſe of murdering the apoſtle. It has been the old policy of the enemies of the church to oblige and bind themſelves by oaths and execrations, by leagues and aſſociations, to carry on their wicked and bloody deſigns againſt the church: *They were more than forty, which made this conſpiracy.* 3. The quality of the perſons which were engaged in this bloody purpoſe; they were the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the ſoul, and a life after death. And they apply themſelves to the high prieſt, and ſanhedrim or great council, not doubting of his and their readineſs to join with them. O what a low ebb was the Jewiſh religion now at! What an high prieſt and prieſthood was there that muſt head a confederacy of murdering Sadducees! How great was the degeneracy of the Jewiſh church, when their chief prieſts were thus ready to comply with, and contribute their beſt aſſiſtance to ſuch a cruel crew of cut-throats and bloody aſſaſſins! But they had almoſt filled up the meaſure of their ſins, and their final deſtruction was near approaching. Laſtly, What craft and cruelty, what fraud and force are here found combined together in the church's enemies. The council muſt court the captain, that he bring down his priſoner, *as though they would inquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him.* Thus was the plot againſt the apoſtle's life laid craftily as well as cruelly; under a pretence of having the priſoner re-examined, they contrive to have him brought down from the caſtle, and in his way to the council, they combined together for his deſtruction. Lord, abate the power of the church's enemies, ſince their malice cannot be abated.

16 And when Paul's ſiſter's ſon heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the caſtle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and ſaid, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him and brought him to the chief captain, and ſaid, Paul the priſoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ſomething to ſay unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aſide privately, and aſked *him*, What is it that thou haſt to tell me? 20 And he ſaid, The Jews have agreed to deſire thee that thou wouldeſt bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire ſomewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themſelves with an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready looking for a promiſe from thee.

Note here, 1. That no conſpiracies are or can be kept ſecret from God, who can both detect them, and defeat them at his pleaſure, 2. The remarkable providence of God in bringing this conſpiracy to the knowledge of St. Paul's ſiſter's ſon: He was perhaps by, when the conſpirators were contriving the miſchief, and over heard them. It is happy for the innocent, that the malicious cannot keep their own counſel. God oftentimes cauſeth the tongues of his people's enemies to fall upon themſelves, and they diſcover the wicked purpoſes of their hearts, which none but themſelves were privy to. 3. How the hearts of all men are in the hand of the Lord, and how he turneth them as he pleaſeth. This is evident from the chief captain's great humanity towards St. Paul, and his courteous humility towards his ſiſter's ſon, taking the youth by the hand, and as readily giving him both audience and diſpatch; ſuch a ſovereignty and dominion has God over the hearts of men, that he can inſtantly incline them as he pleaſeth, and make very enemies become benefactors at his pleaſure.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou haſt ſhewed theſe things to me. 23 ¶ And he called unto him two centurions, ſaying, Make ready two hundred ſoldiers to go to Ceſarea, and horſemen threeſcore and ten, and ſpearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night. 24 And provide *them* beaſts, that they may ſet Paul on, and bring him *ſafe* unto Felix the governor.

Obſerve here, 1. How wonderfully God over ruled the heart of the chief captain, in that he took care both of St. Paul, and the young man alſo; he bids the young man depart; for had it been known that he had diſcovered the conſpiracy, they had conſpired againſt his life; and had not the chief captain conveyed away the apoſtle, his enemies who had been diſappointed in this, would have made further attempts againſt his life. Thus wonderfully doth the good providence of God work for his ſervants preſervation. 2. What a ſtrong guard does God raiſe and ſet round the apoſtle for his defence and ſafety, even a guard of heathen ſoldiers, to ſecure him from the Jewiſh rage; two hundred ſoldiers, three ſcore and ten horſemen, and ſpearmen two hundred. What a royal life guard was here raiſed for the apoſtle's ſafe conduct to Ceſarea! None of all theſe ſoldiers intended him any good; but God made uſe of them as effectually, as if they had had the greateſt good will for him. God can make bad perſons ſhew kindneſs to his good ſervants, and do his will by them, who know nothing of his mind and will. When God has work to do, he will find inſtruments to do it by. And though we ſee them not, yet are they never the farther off.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner; 26 Claudius Lyſias, unto the moſt excellent governor Felix, *ſendeth* greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and reſcued him, having underſtood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cauſe wherefore they accuſed him, I brought him forth into their council; 29 Whom I perceived to be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge

worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was told me *how* that the Jews laid wait for the man, I ſent ſtraightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what *they had* againſt him. Farewel.

The chief captain Lyſias having ſent Paul under a ſtrong guard to Ceſarea by night, where Felix the Roman governor reſided, he writes a letter to acquaint Felix with the accuſation laid to the priſoner's charge. In which letter, *note*, 1. The title given to the Roman governor, *Moſt excellent: Claudius Lyſias to the moſt excellent governor Felix ſendeth greeting*, Titles of civil honour and reſpect given to perſons in place and power are agreeable to the mind and will of God. There is an honour which belongs to men, with reſpect to their external degree and place, when none is due to them with reſpect to their internal qualifications. He that is very honourable as to his place, may not deſerve any honour as to his worth; yet ought he to be honoured ſo far as his place requireth. 2. How God over ruled the heart and pen of this captain Lyſias, to do the apoſtle right, in repreſenting his caſe fairly and indifferently: That he found nothing brought againſt him that was puniſhable, either with deaths or bonds, by the Roman law. 3. How triflingly he ſpeaks of the great things in queſtion concerning our bleſſed Redeemer's death and reſurrection, as alſo of the whole goſpel; he calls them, undervaluingly, *Queſtions of their law.* As the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs with God, ſo the manifold wiſdom of God is accounted and eſteemed folly by the ignorant and blind world. Yet, 4. How God over ruled his very ſlighting of theſe controverſies in diſpute, for the apoſtle's advantage; he being by that means preſerved from the rage of the Jews; ver. 27. *When this man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould*, &c. Behold how God accompliſhes his own deſigns for the preſervation of his ſervants, by the hand of thoſe from whom deſtruction could rather have been expected. Thus here, God made uſe of an heathen captain to reſcue and defend the apoſtle from the enraged Jews, who ſends him under a ſtrong guard with a friendly letter in favour of him, to Felix the governor at Ceſarea, where he gives notice to his accuſers to implead him face to face. Bleſſed be God, that our times are in his hands, not in our enemies hands, nor yet in our own; until we have finiſhed the work, which God deſigned us, neither men nor devils can take us off.

31 Then the ſoldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. 32 On the morrow they left the horſemen to go with him, and returned to the caſtle. 33 Who when they came to Ceſarea, and delivered the epiſtle to the governor, preſented Paul alſo before him. 34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he aſked of what province he was? And when he underſtood that he was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

The apoſtle being brought before Felix the Roman governor, although he was an heathen, yet he ſhewed the apoſtle far more favour than his own countrymen the Jews: For, *obſerve*, 1. His affability to St. Paul *in aſking him of his country*. 2. His juſtice, he would not judge him till he had his accuſers face to face: *I will hear thee when thine accuſers are come.* If it be enough to accuſe, who can be innocent? And if it be ſufficient to deny, who would be found guilty? Magiſtrates muſt know a cauſe, before they give ſentence or judgment about it; otherwiſe, though they pronounce a right ſentence, it is not in judgment, but by accident. Magiſtrates muſt be ſtars, as well as miniſters; they muſt do nothing blindfold, or blindly. 3. His great favour towards the apoſtle, in committing him a priſoner, not to the common goal, but to Herod's palace: A fair priſon, if a place of confinement may be ſo called. The ſanhedrim at Jeruſalem, though of his own country, and of his own religion, yet were not ſo kind to him as Felix the heathen governor. —— Thus the chapter concludes with an account of the apoſtle's wonderful deliverance from the Jews at Jeruſalem, who conſpired his deſtruction; together with the inſtrumental means and manner of it. In the next chapter we find him brought to Ceſarea, tried before Felix, making a defence for himſelf, and ſo reaſoning that Felix trembled: Behold a priſoner at liberty, and his judge in bonds.

CHAP. XXIV.

In the beginning of this chapter we find St. Paul *brought to his trial before* Felix *the Roman governor; a famous trial, at which the plaintiff was* Ananias *the high prieſt, and ſeveral members of the ſanhedrim; the defendant, St.* Paul; *the judge,* Felix; *the emperor's attorney-general,* Tertullus; *and the indictment drawn up againſt the priſoner,* hereſy *and* ſedition: *From which imputation the apoſtle clears himſelf; and in the end of the chapter makes a declaration of his faith, and gives an account of the holineſs and innocency of his life.*

AND after five days, Ananias the high prieſt deſcended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor againſt Paul.

Note here, How Ananias the high prieſt, with the elders or heads of the Jewiſh council at Jeruſalem, travel from thence to Ceſarea, a great many miles, to inform the government againſt St. Paul; *after five days Ananias deſcended*, &c. The devil's drudges ſtick at no pains, ſpare for no coſt, in doing his drudgery. A perſecuting ſpirit claps wings to a perſon, it makes him ſwift in his motion, and zealous in his application and endeavours. 2. How the high prieſt carrieth with him one of their moſt eminent and eloquent advocates to implead the innocent apoſtle. Satan never miſcarries in any of his enterprizes and wicked deſigns, for want of fit tools to carry them on. He hath his Tertullus, an eloquent orator, ready, who could tune his tongue any way for a large fee.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuſe *him*, ſaying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs. 4 Notwithſtanding, that I be not farther tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy clemency a few words.

Note here, St. Paul the priſoner being called forth, Tertullus the orator began to ſhew his art by a flattering inſinuation, which mightily prevails with men of mean and corrupt minds. There is no cauſe ſo foul and bad, but ſome will be found to plead it; yea, to juſtify and defend it. And if ſo, judges had need be wiſe, as the angels of God, diſcerning between truth and falſhood. Farther, How Tertullus ſeeks to gain the judge's favour by flattery and falſhood: To win judges by flattery, hath ever by falſe accuſers been taken for the ſureſt way of ſucceſs; but after all, flattery is a very provoking and wrath-procuring ſin: and it is hard to ſay, which is moſt dangerous, to receive flattery, or to give it. When men give much glory to man, it is hard for man to give that glory back again to God. It is hell and death to flatter ſinners, or ſuffer ourſelves to be flattered by them. Laſtly, That bad government is better than no government; tyranny itſelf is better than anarchy. The Jews were not now their own maſters, but tributaries to the Romans. Yet Tertullus acknowledges, *Many worthy deeds were done unto their nation by the prudence of the Roman governor:* ver. 2, 3. *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs*, &c.

5 For we have found this man a peſtilent *fellow*, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7 But the chief capain Lyſias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accuſers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyſelf mayeſt take knowledge of all theſe things whereof we accuſe him. 9 And the Jews alſo aſſented, ſaying, That theſe things were ſo.

Tertullus having prepared the judge, preſently falls upon the matter, and charges St. Paul with being a peſtilent fellow, a ſeditious perſon, a diſturber of the nation, a profaner of the temple, a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes. And adds, That out of mere zeal to the Jewiſh religion, they had themſelves before now diſpatched him out of the way, but that he was violently reſcued out of their hands by Lyſias the chief captain, and brought thither to be tried. Concluding, That theſe things which he had ſpoken, were the ſenſe of all thoſe that came down with him as witneſſes. Ver. 9. *The Jews alſo aſſented, and ſaid that theſe things were ſo.* Here *note*, 1. What an heavy load of reproaches and falſe accuſations, our innocent apoſtle laboured under; he is accounted, and called, a walking-peſtilence. Thus the holy and faithful ſervants of God are eſteemed by the world, the plague and bane of the nation where they live; although it is really for their ſakes that God ſtaves off plagues and judgments from falling upon the world: *We have found this man a peſtilent fellow.* It is not the greateſt holineſs towards God, nor righteouſneſs towards men, that can ſufficiently ſhield and defend a ſaint from cenſure and ſlander, from calumny and falſe accuſation. 2. Beſides the general charge, that the apoſtle was the very peſt and plague of mankind; we have a threefold accuſation brought againſt him, That he was a mover of ſedition, a profaner of the temple, and a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes. Lord, how ſhould thy faithful miniſters and ambaſſadors prepare themſelves for, and comfort themſelves under, the moſt helliſh reproaches, when we find the great apoſtle (whom St. Chryſoſtom honours with his character, "*That the earth never bare a better man ſince it bare our Redeemer*;") yet thus miſcalled and accounted a peſt, a plague, the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things! O why ſhould ſuch worthleſs worms as we, murmur, when we meet with much leſs reproaches! Lord, help us, in imitation of thy example, for the joy that is ſet before us, to deſpiſe the ſhame, as well as to endure the croſs. The beſt men that ever the world had, have fallen under the laſhes of invenomed tongues. What foul aſperſions hath malice caſt upon innocency itſelf? Our bleſſed Saviour in the cleareſt act of innocency, his caſting out of devils, ſuffered the moſt horrid imputation, even of *caſting out devils through Beelzebub the prince of devils*, Matt. ix. 34. Now the ſervant muſt not expect to be above his maſter; if Chriſt thus ſuffered, needs muſt Chriſtianity, needs muſt Chriſtians, needs muſt miniſters and ambaſſadors.

10 ¶ Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to ſpeak, anſwered, Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for myſelf: 11 Becauſe that thou mayeſt underſtand that there are yet but twelve days ſince I went up to Jeruſalem for to worſhip. 12 And they neither found me in the temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in the ſynagogues, nor in the city: 13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.

Our apoſtle, being accuſed of three notorious crimes, namely, *ſedition*, *hereſy*, and *profanation* of the temple, anſwers diſtinctly to every one of them. Where *note*, 1. How undaunted innocency is in a good perſon, and in a good cauſe; St. Paul was ſo far from being daunted by the greatneſs of his enemies, or by the vehemency of their accuſation, that he tells the governor, he did *with all chearfulneſs* undertake his defence. 2. How the apoſtle anſwers diſtinctly to the particulars of his accuſation. And, firſt, As to the crime of ſedition charged upon his perſon. Secondly, As to the crime of hereſy, charged upon his religion. As to the former, the crime of ſedition, this is a very infamous charge: What ſchiſm is in matters eccleſiaſtical, this is ſedition in matters temporal and civil. As the one violates the peace of the church, ſo doth the other the commonwealth. Sedition is committed three ways: by the head, by the tongue, and by the hand. A ſeditious head plots and contrives miſchief, a ſeditious tongue vents it, and a ſeditious hand executes it. None of theſe ways was the apoſtle guilty of ſedition: He never employed his head to contrive, nor his tongue to utter, nor his hand to practiſe any thing that tended that way; yet he is charged with it; *We have found this fellow a mover of ſedition. Learn* thence, It is no new ſtratagem, to repreſent the faithful ſervants of God, as enemies to ſtates and kingdoms, as diſturbers of the peace, as troublers of Iſrael, as trumpets of rebellion, as movers of ſedition, on purpoſe to bring them into hatred with princes, that they may fall under the ſword of the magiſtrate as malefactors, and be looked upon as perſons unworthy to live. But how does St. Paul free himſelf from the charge and imputation of ſedition? Thus, 1. By demonſtrating the improbability of it; how unlikely it was, that he who came up to the temple to worſhip God, and to bring alms to the poor, and was in Jeruſalem but a very few days, and did not ſo much as diſpute either in the temple, or in the ſynagogues, ſhould yet ſtir up the people to ſedition. 2. He puts his adverſaries upon proof of their articles, ver. 13. *Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.* From the apoſtle's practice in clearing his own innocency, we *learn*, That it is a piece of juſtice which every man owes to himſelf, to vindicate and clear his reputation from all guilt falſely imputed to him, and eſpecially from that of ſedition.

14 But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

Here the apoſtle anſwers the ſecond part of the charge brought againſt him; namely, the charge of hereſy, and being the ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes. Where *note*, That although the apoſtle would not, out of his great modeſty, take upon himſelf to be one of the heads or chiefs among them, a ringleader, as they ſtyled him; yet as to the owning of that way, notwithſtanding all the imputations they had caſt upon it, he doth it with the greateſt freedom and courage, in the preſence of his judge and accuſers; *This I confeſs, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The falſe imputation which chriſtianity ſuffered under, in its firſt appearance; *After the way which they call hereſy.* It is no new thing to nickname the worſhippers of the true God, to call them heretics, and their way of worſhip hereſy. 2. The way taken by St. Paul to remove this falſe imputation; namely, by an appeal to ſcripture and antiquity; *So worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing*, &c. Where *obſerve*, How he appeals to ſcripture as the ground and rule of his faith, the law and the prophets; and then he appeals to the beſt and pureſt antiquity for the object of his worſhip; *So worſhip I the God of my fathers. Note*, 3. The freedom and courage of the apoſtle in owning his religion, notwithſtanding theſe falſe imputations, even in the preſence of his greateſt enemies, and when they were in hopes to deſtroy him for it; *This I confeſs unto thee.* The apoſtle abhorred that mean and baſe-ſpirited principle, which makes it lawful for men to deny their religion, when it brings them into danger: No, he valued his above, and preferred it before, his perſonal ſafety. God Almighty inſpire us with the ſame courage and holy reſolution, that when our adverſaries of the church of Rome pronounce us heretics, and call our religion hereſy, we may anſwer them as our apoſtle anſwered their forefathers, the ſubtle Phariſees, *After the way which ye call hereſy, ſo worſhip we the God of our fathers*, &c.

15 And I have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt. 16 And herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God and *toward* men.

Our apoſtle had made a free and open profeſſion of his religion in the foregoing verſe, *After the way called hereſy do I worſhip the God of my fathers*; here, at the 15th verſe, he aſſerts the doctrine of the reſurrection, which was a principal article both of the Jewiſh and the Chriſtian religion; *I have hope towards God, that there ſhall be a reſurrection both of the juſt and unjuſt.* And having made a declaration of his faith, ver. 14, 15. he next gives an account of his life, at ver. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf*, &c. *Obſerve* here, 1. What is the principle and guide of a good man's actions, and that is conſcience. The word and law of God is the rule of our actions, but conſcience is the immediate guide and director of them. 2. The extent of a good man's pious practice, *To keep a conſcience void of offence toward God and man:* To exerciſe a faithful care in performing the duties of both tables, is both an argument of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion. 3. The apoſtle's conſtancy and perſeverance in this courſe, *To have always a conſcience void of offence.* We muſt not make conſcience of our duty by fits and ſtarts, but in the whole courſe and tenor of our lives and actions. Religion ſhould be a conſtant frame and temper of mind. 4. The apoſtle's earneſt care and endeavour to this purpoſe, *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf:* The original word is of an intenſe ſignification, and denotes the apoſtle's applying his mind in good earneſt, to be thoroughly inſtructed in all the parts and points of his duty, and his being very careful and conſcientious in the diſcharge and performance of it. 5. What was the apoſtle's great motive and encouragement to do all this; namely, the belief of the reſurrection, and the future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments conſequent upon it; Becauſe *I hope for a reſurrection both of the juſt and unjuſt*, therefore *do I exerciſe myſelf, to have always a conſcience void of offence.* If we believe the reſurrection of the dead, and the judgment to come, we ſhall be very careful to diſcharge a good conſcience now, in order to the rendering a good account of ourſelves then. Happy man, who, when he goes into another world, carries with him thither a conſcience clear of all guilt, either by innocency or by repentance! For verily, at the hour of death, to be free from ſtings and upbraidings, from the terrors and tortures, from the confuſion and amazement of a guilty conſcience, is a happineſs ſo deſirable, that it is well worth the care and beſt endeavours of our whole life. May the apoſtle's exerciſe be our daily practice, namely, *To keep a conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward all men!*

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Aſia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object if they had ought againſt me. 20 Or elſe let theſe ſame *here* ſay if they have found any evil doing in me, while I ſtood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried ſtanding among them, Touching the reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion by you this day.

The apoſtle had vindicated himſelf from the charge and imputation of ſedition and hereſy before, he comes now to clear himſelf of the third charge, namely, the profanation of the temple; in order whereunto, he declares that he had not been a long time at Jeruſalem before this journey, and that he now came to bring alms to the poor Jews that were converted to chriſtianity: He acknowledges, that at this time he went indeed into the temple, yet not to profane it, but to perform thoſe rites in it, which the law of Jews required of ſuch as had the vow of Nazarites upon them. Thus the apoſtle cleared himſelf of all that was objected againſt him, and made it evidently appear to the face of his enemies, that all the accuſations brought againſt him were falſe and clamorous. *Learn* thence, That generally the accuſations laid by the malicious to the charge of the innocent, are nothing but empty noiſe and clamour. Having thus vindicated himſelf to their faces, he next makes an appeal to the conſciences of his accuſers, whether there was any thing of moment charged upon him more than this, That he profeſſed and believed the reſurrection of the dead. Thus bravely did the apoſtle plead his own cauſe here, or rather the Spirit of God that ſpake in him, though Satan had got the high-prieſt Ananias, and his eloquent orator Tertullus, to implead and impeach St. Paul; Yet behold with what a flood of truth and eloquence doth the apoſtle vindicate his own innocence. *Magna eſt veritas, et prævalebit*; "Great is the truth, and will finally prevail."

22 And when Felix heard theſe things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and ſaid, When Lyſias the chief captain ſhall come down, I will know the uttermoſt of your matter. 23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he ſhould forbid none of his acquaintance to miniſter, or come unto him.

The ſenſe of this is: "When Felix underſtood and diſcerned how things went, he would not paſs ſentence in the caſe at preſent; but put them off, ſaying, *When I have got a more perfect knowledge of this way of Chriſtianity*; and when I have ſpoken with Lyſias, and underſtand the truth concerning the tumult, I will then determine the difference between you: In the mean-time, the captain of the guard ſhall have the priſoner in cuſtody, to gratify the Jews." Where *obſerve*, both the equity and clemency of Felix the judge: His equity, in that he would not pronounce ſentence, before he had thoroughly and fully underſtood the matter of fact: His clemency, in ſuffering the apoſtle to be priſoner at large, and allowing his friends and acquaintance liberty to come and viſit him. Behold the former rigour towards the apoſtle mercifully relaxed; he is no more confined to a cloſe dungeon, but goes abroad with a chain and a keeper, and none of his friends are forbidden either to viſit him, or relieve him. Thus God, in an unexpected hour, caſts ſuch outward comforts to his ſuffering ſaints and ſervants, as he ſees will do them moſt good; yea, and can cauſe his and their enemies to become contributors thereunto.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Druſilla, which was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt. 25 And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and anſwered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.

This chapter now concludes with the apoſtle's famous ſermon before Felix his judge, in which we have conſiderable, the preacher, the hearers, the text or ſubject preached upon, and the ſucceſsful effect of the ſermon. *Obſerve*, 1. The preacher, St. Paul, *As Paul reaſoned:* The apoſtle now was in bonds, yet had liberty to preach, and he preached with liberty, with great boldneſs and freedom of ſpeech, though under great diſadvantages; his perſon impriſoned, his reputation blotted and defamed, loaded with calumnies and odious imputations; yet under all theſe diſadvantages the apoſtle preaches. 2. His hearers, Felix and his wife Druſilla; Felix, a bad man, guilty of bribery, &c. Druſilla, a vile woman, left her own huſband, and lived in adultery with Felix, as Joſephus ſays: Here were a pair of hopeful hearers; yet St. Paul boggles not to preach to them, as bad as they were, hoping to make them better. *Learn* thence, That the goſpel muſt be preached by us, when we are lawfully called thereunto, whatever the perſons be that make up the auditory; we know not what perſons, or in what hour God may call. *Obſerve*, 3. The text or ſubject-matter preached upon, righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come; where the wiſdom of the preacher appears by the ſuitableneſs of the ſubject; the apoſtle choſe a very proper ſubject for them both. Felix was guilty of bribery, or at leaſt was ready to commit it; the next verſe tells us, He hoped to have money given him by Paul, to releaſe him; therefore to him he preached of righteouſneſs. Druſilla was guilty of incontinency and adultery, to her he preaches of temperance, and to both of a judgment to come: Happy were it, if great offenders had ſuch wiſe admoniſhers near them; but too often they meet with flattering paraſites inſtead of faithful preachers. 4. The ſucceſs or effect of the ſermon, *Felix trembled:* He trembled, but not believed; he trembled at the guilt of ſin, and at the apprehenſions of the wrath of God due unto ſin; but his trembling did not ariſe from a holy dread and reverence of the Majeſty of God ſpeaking to him in and by his word: The word of God can make the proudeſt and ſtouteſt ſinner in the world to quake and tremble. Laſtly, How Felix's trembling fit or ſick qualm of conſcience ſoon went over; he diſmiſſes the preacher for that time, and tells him he will call for him at a more convenient ſeaſon. But we never read of any ſuch opportunity taken afterwards for that purpoſe; ſo dangerous is it to ſtop our ear at the preſent call and command of God; if to-day we will not, to-morrow, God may ſay, you ſhall not hear my voice.

26 He hoped alſo that money ſhould have been given him of Paul that he might looſe him: wherefore he ſent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 ¶ But after two years Porcius Feſtus came into Felix's room: and Felix willing to ſhew the Jews a pleaſure, left Paul bound.

Obſerve here, What ſmall ſucceſs the apoſtle's preaching had, it found and left Felix a bad man; covetouſneſs and bribery were his ſins before, and they are ſo ſtill: *He hoped that money ſhould be given him of Paul.* That is, he expected a bribe for ſetting the apoſtle at liberty, contrary to the law both of God and man. To this covetouſneſs he added cruelty; for though he had nothing to charge Paul with, yet to gratify the Jews, *he left Paul bound*; minding the pleaſing of men more than the diſpleaſing of God. An hypocrite can become all things to all men, that he may gain by all; but behold the hand of God upon Felix; he that had ſo unjuſtly kept Paul bound for two years, and cruelly left him bound at laſt, to pleaſe and gratify the Jews, is ſent a priſoner in bonds himſelf to Rome, to anſwer before Nero, for his miſdemeanors in the managing of his government. A juſt reward for him who regards the pleaſing of men more than the diſpleaſure of God.

CHAP. XXV.

In this chapter we find St. Paul, *brought upon his trial before* Feſtus, *who ſucceeded* Felix *in the government. And although* Feſtus *could find the apoſtle guilty of no miſdemeanor, yet he had neither the courage nor honeſty to ſet him at liberty, but ſends him bound from* Ceſarea *to* Rome, *as related in this and the following chapters.*

NOW when Feſtus was come into the province, after three days he aſcended from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem. 2 Then the high prieſt and the chief of the Jews informed him againſt Paul, and beſought him, 3 And deſired favour againſt him, that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Feſtus anſwered, that Paul ſhould be kept at Ceſarea, and that he himſelf would depart ſhortly *thither.* 5 Let them therefore, ſaid he, which among you are able, go down with *me,* and accuſe this man, if there be any wickedneſs in him.

St. Luke here informs us, that Feſtus being come to the government, and going up to Jeruſalem, the high prieſt and rulers of the Jews quickly began to inform him againſt Paul, and beſought him that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, reſolving to lay ſome villains by the way to kill him as he came; but the divine providence ſo over-ruled the matter, that Feſtus would not conſent to it, but ordered his accuſers to come to Ceſarea, and implead him there. Here *note,* 1. How reſtleſs is the rage, and unwearied the malice and enmity, which the perſecutors of the truth have againſt the profeſſors and preachers of it. The high prieſt, and chief of the Sanhedrim or eccleſiaſtical court, continue their murderous deſigns againſt the innocent apoſtle; and are ſorry they could not get an heathen governor as cruel as themſelves, to join with them. Heathens have ſometimes bluſhed at the mention of thoſe crimes, which the profeſſors of religion have committed without either ſhame or remorſe. 2. How deplorably corrupt and degenerate the Jewiſh church at this time was! Lord, what prieſts and church-governors were here, who call it *a favour* to have an opportunity granted them to murder an innocent man in cold blood, contrary to the law of nature and of nations! But behold the juſtice of God upon them; they were now given up to a rebrobate ſenſe, and are hurried headlong by a diabolical ſpirit, a little before their final deſtruction: *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, who killedſt the prophets, and ſtonedſt them that were ſent unto thee.* 3. What an over-ruling providence was here ſeen, in that Feſtus, by no flatteries nor perſuaſions, would be prevailed with to remove the apoſtle from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem: This broke the high prieſt's meaſures, who deſigned to have killed him by the way. "No ſaith Feſtus, the priſoner ſhall not come to you, but you ſhall go to him." This was a marvellous providence for the apoſtle's preſervation. O how eaſy is it for the moſt wiſe God to baffle and blaſt the moſt cunning contrivances of the devil, to befool the enemies of his church and people, by making the counſels of the wicked to be of no effect! God looks and laughs at all the plots of wicked men againſt the righteous: Fruſtration and diſappointment attends all their deſigns, and perdition and deſtruction doth awe their perſons; Pſal. ii. 5. *He that ſitteth in heaven laughs them to ſcorn, the Lord has them in deriſion.*

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Ceſarea; and the next day ſitting in the judgment-ſeat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jeruſalem ſtood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints againſt Paul, which they could not prove; 8 While he anſwered for himſelf, Neither againſt the law of the Jews, neither againſt the temple, nor yet againſt Cæſar, have I offended any thing at all.

Note here, 1. The equity and juſtice of Feſtus, an heathen judge, in his proceedings at St. Paul's trial; he will have the high prieſt and elders that accuſed him ſpeak to his face; he will have the priſoner brought forth, and he will have the matter examined by, and before himſelf. When the malicious bring the innocent upon their trial, God will provide a judge for their turn. 2. The indictment or charge which the Jews brought in againſt the apoſtle, That he had offended againſt the law, profaned the temple, and raiſed ſedition againſt the Roman government. Here we find the devil at his old trade: Namely, ſtirring up the rage and malice of the world againſt the ſaints of God, under pretence of their being enemies to the ſtate, and ſubverters of civil government. 3. That to be loaded with calumnies and reproaches, has been the common lot, and conſtant portion of the faithful friends and ſervants of Chriſt, from the beginning of Chriſtianity; *The Jews laid many and grievous things againſt Paul which they could not prove.* Reproach has been the reward of religion and righteouſneſs; but St. Paul eaſily wipes off the ſeveral reproaches caſt upon him, affirming himſelf to have always been a religious obſerver of the law, that he went into the temple upon a religious account, that he had never taught nor practiſed any rebellion againſt Cæſar. The ſervants of Chriſt are happy in their own innocency, and their adverſaries render themſelves odious by belying them, and laying that to their charge which every one can diſprove.

9 But Feſtus, willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, anſwered Paul, and ſaid, Wilt thou go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe things before me? 10 Then ſaid Paul, I ſtand at Cæſar's judgment-ſeat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to die: but if there be none of theſe things whereof theſe accuſe me, no man may deliver me unto them, I appeal unto Cæſar. 12 Then Feſtus, when he had conferred with the council, anſwered, Haſt thou appealed unto Cæſar? unto Cæſar ſhalt thou go.

Obſerve here, How Feſtus, being willing to gratify the Jews, aſks St. Paul if he would go to Jeruſalem, and be tried there, in the Jewiſh court, about thoſe matters? The apoſtle replied, That he was his priſoner, and that he was proper judge under the Roman emperor, and not the Jews; and that being a Roman, he might claim the privilege of a Roman, which accordingly he did by appealing unto Cæſar. Feſtus hearing that, not only admitted his appeal, but was glad of it, to get rid of him without peril on the one hand, or ill-will on the other. Here we *remark*, 1. That carnal politicians do not ſo much conſider what is juſt and right in its own nature, as what is of uſe and advantage to themſelves, be it right or wrong. The apoſtle had cleared himſelf from all ſlanderous accuſations; and yet, *Feſtus, willing to do the Jews a pleaſure,* would not ſet him at liberty. It is too often the practice of corrupt judges, that they may pleaſe the people, to deliver up truth to be injuriouſly crucified; conſidering more their own intereſt, than the priſoner's innocency. 2. How the apoſtle appeals from Jeruſalem to Rome, from his own countrymen to Heathens; from the high prieſt to the emperor Nero; expecting to find more juſtice at the hands of infidels, than from the Jewiſh ſanhedrim: And to this the apoſtle was in ſome ſort divinely admoniſhed by Chriſt himſelf, to make his appeal to Rome, Acts xxiii. 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul, thou ſhalt bear witneſs to me at Rome.* Doubtleſs, this was a mighty ſupport and ſtrong conſolation to him, to know that he appealed and deſired to go to Rome, where God had appointed to have him go.

13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Ceſarea to ſalute Feſtus. 14 And when they had been there many days, Feſtus declared Paul's cauſe unto the king, ſaying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15 About whom, when I was at Jeruſalem, the chief prieſts and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, deſiring *to have* judgment againſt him. 16 To whom I anſwered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accuſed have the accuſers face to face, and have licence to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid againſt him. 17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I ſat on the judgment-ſeat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth: 18 Againſt whom, when the accuſers ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch things as I ſuppoſed: 29 But had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of queſtions, I aſked *him* whether he would go to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe matters. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be reſerved unto the hearing of Auguſtus, I commanded him to be kept till I might ſend him to Cæſar.

Note here, 1. How God will not be wanting to his ſervants in their greateſt ſtraits and ſufferings, but will providentially diſpoſe of all matters in order to their deliverance, when it may moſt conduce to his own glory and their good. Thus here, king Agrippa comes to congratulate Feſtus; Feſtus declares the cauſe of God's oppreſſed ſervant to the king, and God makes uſe of both Feſtus and Agrippa to ſcreen the apoſtle from the violence of his enemies. *In the mount will the Lord be ſeen,* his people's extremities are the ſeaſons of his ſuccour. 2. How the very light of nature in and among the Heathens condemns it as an act of manifeſt and notorious injuſtice in a judge to paſs ſentence upon a perſon unheard, and unallowed to make his defence. This baſeneſs was below the Roman gallantry whilſt Pagans; Feſtus demands the accuſers and the accuſed to appear face to face; and yet ſuch a diabolical ſpirit of malice had ſo blinded the Jews, that contrary to the law of nature, and the law of all nations, they would have had St. Paul here condemned, without knowing the cauſe or hearing his defence. 3. What baſe and vile, what low and undervaluing thoughts and apprehenſions have carnal men of the high and holy things of God. Feſtus here calls the religion and worſhip, which was of God's own inſtitution, moſt profanely and contemptuouſly by the name of ſuperſtition; *They had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition:* And how ſlightly doth he alſo ſpeak of our glorified Redeemer, ſtyling him *one Jeſus!* But no wonder that the dung-hill cocks of the world know not the worth of the pearl of price.

22 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Feſtus, I would alſo hear the man myſelf. To-morrow, ſaid he, thou ſhalt hear him. 23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Feſtus's commandment Paul was brought forth. 24 And Feſtus ſaid, King Agrippa, and all men which are here preſent with us, ye ſee this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me both at Jeruſalem and alſo here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himſelf hath appealed to Auguſtus, I have determined to ſend him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and eſpecially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have ſomewhat to write. 27 For it ſeemeth to me unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and notwithal to ſignify the crimes *laid* againſt him.

Obſerve here, 1. King Agrippa's curioſity to ſee and hear St. Paul, he was born and bred up amongſt the Jews, and probably underſtood ſomething of the chriſtian religion; poſſibly had heard much of Paul, and therefore deſired to ſee him, as Herod deſired to ſee Chriſt, and to hear John the Baptiſt, only to gratify his curioſity, not to be advantaged by his miniſtry. 2. How contemptuouſly the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks of all the pomp, retinue and ſtate, which Feſtus, Agrippa, and Bernice appeared in, at the time and place of hearing; he calls it *fancy*, ſo the original word ſignifies, intimating, That all the pomp, gaiety, and glory of the world, is nothing but fancy, a dream and a ſhadow, having no real exiſtence, but a being in imagination only. *Obſerve*, 3. That truth and innocency ſhine forth the more ſplendidly by the greater oppoſition that is raiſed againſt them. The more malicious the Jews were in accuſing Paul, the more did his innocency appear; and the more was he acquitted and diſcharged by his judges. Thus we ſee the providence of God wrought all matters for Paul's juſtification, and for the Jews reprehenſion: Feſtus had nothing to write to Cæſar, no crime to inform him of againſt the apoſtle. Thence *learn*, That although God ſometimes permits his ſervants to be loaden with ſlanders and reproaches, yet he will find a time to clear their innocency, and cauſe their very judges, if not their accuſers, to proclaim them guiltleſs. *I find*, ſaith Feſtus, *that he hath committed nothing worthy of death.* It is no ſmall mercy, to have our innocency vindicated, for God to clear up our righteouſneſs as the light, and our juſt dealings as the noon-day, and to free our reputation from thoſe blemiſhes which the uncharitable ſuſpicions, or raſh cenſures of men have caſt upon us. There is no ſpot ſo unbeautiful, as that upon our credit, ſaving only upon our conſciences. God made the apoſtle's enemies here do him right, and his name was clothed with honour in the eſtimation of his very adverſaries.

CHAP. XXVI.

This chapter brings St. Paul *to his third trial, namely, before King* Agrippa: *In it we have the apoſtle's apology or defenſitive plea, which he makes for himſelf againſt thoſe blind Jews, who did ſo maliciouſly perſecute him.*

THEN Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thyſelf: Then Paul ſtretched forth the hand, and anſwered for himſelf: 2 I think myſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for myſelf this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews: 3 Eſpecially, becauſe I know thee to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews. Wherefore, I beſeech thee to hear me patiently.

Note here, 1. The perſon whom the apoſtle makes his defence before, Agrippa, Agrippa a king, of whom he begs the favour patiently to hear him: It is a great favour for great men ſo much as to hear an innocent good man plead for himſelf: Agrippa, who, by reaſon of his birth and breeding among the Jews, was acquainted with the ſcriptures, the law and the prophets. 2. How the providence of God wonderfully procures St. Paul a liberty to ſpeak for himſelf: Hereby he had an opportunity at once, to make known his caſe, and to publiſh the goſpel. But *note*, farther, That as the providence of God procured him liberty, ſo the good Spirit of God gave him ability to ſpeak ſo efficaciouſly and effectually, with ſuch evidences and demonſtration, that he not only took the ears, but captivated the conſciences of the whole court, and almoſt perſuaded the king himſelf to turn chriſtian.

4 My manner of life, from my youth, which was at the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the Jews, 5 Which knew me from the beginning (if they would teſtify) that after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee.

Here the apoſtle begins his defence, with a relation of the innocency and ſtrictneſs of his life before his converſion; he did and could appeal to all that knew him, concerning the unblameableneſs of his converſation. Thence *note*, That an innocent and blameleſs life, from our youth upwards, is a ſingular ſupport and encouragement to us in a ſuffering hour, eſpecially when we are called forth to ſuffer for religion and righteouſneſs ſake. Farther, The inſtance which the apoſtle gives of his ſtrictneſs in religion, *After the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion I lived a Phariſee.* Of all the ſects among the Jews, there was none that took up ſuch an extraordinary ſtrict way of religion as the Phariſees; of this ſect was St. Paul, before converted to Chriſtianity, and in this he reſted for ſalvation. Thence *learn*, 1. That an extraordinary ſtrict way taken up in religion, is thought by many a ſure and ſufficient foundation for their eternal ſalvation. 2. That many may reſt upon a ſtrict way of religion, which yet cometh not up to, but is oft-times beſides, the appointment of the word of God: The Phariſees, for their unuſual and ſupererogating way of exactneſs, concluded that they ſhould certainly go to heaven, if any did; when, alas! many things which they practiſed with extraordinary zeal and ſtrictneſs, were never required by God at their hands.

6 And now I ſtand and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our fathers: 7 Unto which *promiſe* our twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving *God* day and night hope to come. For which hope's ſake, king Agrippa, I am accuſed of the Jews.

Our apoſtle had vindicated his life before, his doctrine now: He tells Agrippa, That for believing, expecting, and preaching the doctrine of the reſurrection, he was queſtioned of the Jews: This he calls the *hope of the promiſe made of God unto the fathers:* Others underſtand it of the promiſe of the Meſſias, which was made unto the fathers, and was generally depended upon by the moſt pious among the twelve tribes ſcattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth; and in the faith and expectation whereof, they fervently ſerved God night and day. *Learn* thence, 1. That the pious and godly among the Jews, lived in hopes of the Meſſia's appearing, of a glorious reſurrection by him, and of an eternal life and ſalvation with him. 2. That their hope of this promiſed mercy, did cauſe them to ſerve God inſtantly day and night. Hope is the great exciter of induſtry and endeavour; expectation puts it upon action; hope of obtaining, is the motive to every undertaking; the Chriſtian's hope, or thing hoped for, is great and excellent in his eſteem, namely, eternal life; and where the eſteem is high, the endeavour will be ſtrong, That Chriſtian who has well grounded belief and hope of a life to come, will ſerve God with an unwearied diligence and induſtry; if by any means he may attain the fruition and enjoyment of it, ver. 7. *Unto which promiſe our twelve tribes*, &c.

8 Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The great point in controverſy between me and you is this, Whether the dead in general ſhall ariſe? and whether Chriſt in particular be riſen from the dead? Now, why ſhould either ſeem incredible to you? Is it too hard for God, who made the world, and upholds the world, and gives life to all living; is it too hard or difficult for him to raiſe the dead? If not, Why ſhould it be thought incredible or impoſſible?"—*Learn* hence, That the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt, is neither incredible nor impoſſible, neither againſt right reaſon or true faith.

9 I verily thought with myſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from the chief prieſts; and, when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt *them*. 11 And I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled *them* to blaſpheme: and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted *them* even unto ſtrange cities.

Here the apoſtle frankly declares, that he was once as ſharp and bitter an enemy to Chriſt, and to all that believed in him, as any one whatever; and thought himſelf bound in conſcience to perſecute all that owned him; and, with threatnings and tortures compelled them to deny Chriſt, and, being exceedingly fierce, he forced them to fly to heathen cities to eſcape his fury. Where *note*, 1. That we ought to be upon very good and ſure grounds, before we oppoſe and perſecute any. 2. That ſome perſecute others, and at the ſame time think they do well in ſo doing; *I verily thought*, ſays the apoſtle, *that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus*. He ſpake as if his conſcience would have troubled him, unleſs he had troubled others, for that which was indeed their conſcience. 3. That Paul, being a blaſphemer himſelf, compelled the profeſſors of the goſpel to blaſpheme. This he probably did two ways. Firſt, by his example, they imitated him in blaſpheming, or ſpeaking evil of the ways of Chriſt. Or, ſecondly, by his cruelty; vexing them ſo in the profeſſion of Chriſt, that ſome who were unſettled, probably fell away, and blaſphemed the name of Chriſt, which they had profeſſed. *He compelled them to blaſpheme:* There is a compelling power and conſtraining force in example, eſpecially in the example of perſons in power and authority. Men ſin with a kind of authority: Paul's blaſphemous example compelled others to blaſpheme.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damaſcus, with authority and commiſſion from the chief prieſts, 13 At mid-day, O king, I ſaw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice ſpeaking unto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? *It* is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 15 And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.

Our apoſtle having declared his manner of life before converſion, proceeds next to declare the extraordinary manner of his converſion: He tells Agrippa, that as he went with a perſecuting purpoſe towards Damaſcus, at mid-day, mid-day, a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhined round about him, and when they were all fallen proſtrate on the earth, he heard a voice ſpeaking to him in the Hebrew tongue, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* &c. Here *note*, 1. How reſtleſs and unwearied perſecutors are in the execution of their bloody deſigns and purpoſes; Paul, as he thought, had ſwept and cleanſed Jeruſalem of ſaints before: After which, he reſolves to ranſack Damaſcus, and undertakes a long journey, of five or ſix days, in order to that end: The worſt journey that ever he intended, but the beſt that ever he undertook; a journey moſt maliciouſly purpoſed by him, but moſt mercifully diſpoſed by God; and accordingly, he is met with in the way: Chriſt appears to him, a ſudden beam of light ſhines round about him, and a voice is heard by him, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* that is, *Me* in *my members*. Such as perſecute ſaints for their ſanctity, perſecute Chriſt himſelf, and he can no more endure to ſee them wronged than himſelf; as the honour of the head redounds to the members, ſo the ſorrows of the members are reſented by the head: Chriſt ſaid not thus to his murderers on earth, "Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why ſcourge ye and crucify me?" But here, when his members ſuffer, he cries out from heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord, thou art more tender of thy body myſtical, than thou wert of thy body natural; more ſenſible of thy members ſufferings than of thine own!

16 But riſe and ſtand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of theſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I ſend thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me.

St. Paul had given king Agrippa an account of his miraculous converſion in the former verſes; in theſe he declares to him his extraordinary commiſſion to preach the goſpel; that Chriſt, who appeared to him from heaven, choſe him to be a preacher, as well as a profeſſor of the goſpel; aſſuring him that he would ſtand by him, and deliver him from the perſecutions both of Jews and Gentiles, to whom he ſhould ſend him, and would bleſs his endeavours, to the opening the eyes of their underſtanding, and to the turning of them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive, by faith in Chriſt, remiſſion of ſins, and a portion of the heavenly inheritance among ſuch as are regenerated by his Holy Spirit. Here *note*, 1. The honour which God is pleaſed to put upon the miniſtry of the word, his own ordinance: The apoſtle, who was only the inſtrument, is ſaid to open the eyes of the blind, and turn ſinners from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; all which is properly and principally the work of the Spirit of Chriſt; yet he is pleaſed to put this honour upon his inſtruments the miniſters, by whom he worketh all this, and for which reaſon they are called co-workers, or workers together with Chriſt. 2. The apoſtle's miſſion, *I ſend thee.* Great is the dignity of goſpel-miniſters, they are God's meſſengers; their commiſſion is ſealed by the whole Trinity, and intimates both their dignity and duty: To intimate their holineſs, they are called men of God; for their vigilancy, watchmen; for their courage, they are called ſoldiers; for their painfulneſs, harveſt labourers; for their care of the flock, ſhepherds; for their wiſdom, overſeers; for their induſtry, huſbandmen; for their patience, fiſhermen; for their tenderneſs, nurſes; for their affectionateneſs, fathers and mothers; for their faithfulneſs, ſtewards. A very high and honourable calling; the Son of God deſpiſed it not. 3. St. Paul's commiſſion in the ſeveral branches of it. Firſt, *To open their eyes:* that is, to enlighten their underſtandings, that they may know God and their duty to him. In order to which there is required, (1.) Ability in the preachers: How can they open the eyes of others who are blind and ignorant themſelves? Ought not they that undertake to be guides and leaders, very well to know the way themſelves? (2.) Perſpicuity in the ſermon: What hope can there be of opening men's underſtanding, when the matter delivered is cloſed up from them? It was St. Paul's aim to ſpeak words eaſy to be underſtood, and it ſhould be ours; it is the ſame thing to preach in an unknown tongue as in an unknown ſtyle, above the reach of our hearers. Painted glaſs is more coſtly, but the plainer glaſs is the clearer and more uſeful. But we muſt take care, that, though we come in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of ſpeech. The ſecond part of St. Paul's commiſſion, was to turn men from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; in order to which, he was turned from theſe himſelf. He has little reaſon to expect, that God will honour his miniſtry for the converſion of others from ſin and Satan, who is under the dominion of both himſelf. The miniſter's life is the people's looking-glaſs, by which they uſually dreſs themſelves. 4. The happy fruit of St. Paul's miſſion and commiſſion both, *That they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.* Whereſoever true repentance is wrought by the miniſtry of the word, there is forgiveneſs attained, and a title to the inheritance of heaven attained with it. Laſtly, a threefold metaphorical deſcription of the ſinful ſtate of nature before converſion, and the like of a ſtate of grace after converſion. The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of blindneſs, *To open their eyes:* A ſtate of darkneſs, *To turn them from darkneſs to light:* A ſtate of ſlavery, *And from the power of Satan unto God.* The ſtate of grace after converſion is ſet forth by ſight, light, and liberty. All this is Chriſt's work originally, but his miniſter's work inſtrumentally: *I have ſent thee to open their eyes, to turn them from darkneſs to light*, &c.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion: 20 But ſhewed firſt unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God,

and do works meet for repentance. 21 For theſe cauſes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come; 23 That Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, *and* that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Note here, 1. How obedient the apoſtle was to the call of Chriſt; having had ſo glorious a viſion, he did not, he durſt not rebel againſt the light of it; but immediately went forth and preached, firſt at Damaſcus, then at Jeruſalem, then throughout all Judea, and at laſt amongſt the Gentiles, the doctrine of repentance, and the neceſſity of good works. 2. The ill requital which the good man met with for his diligence and faithfulneſs in preaching the glad tidings of the goſpel; for this he had like to have been killed by the Jews in the temple: *Evangelium prædicare eſt furorem mundi in ſe derivare*; "To preach the goſpel is the ready way to bring the wrath and fury of the world upon ourſelves." 3. With what thankfulneſs the apoſtle owns and acknowledges the merciful providence of God in preſerving him both from the fraud and force of his enemies, *Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.* And how did the ſenſe of divine goodneſs upon his ſoul, provoke him to go on with his work, declaring no other thing concerning Chriſt, but what Moſes and the prophets did of old foretel of him; namely, That he ſhould be put to death, and ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe again by his own power, and be the author of our reſurrection. *Note* here, That the ſufferings of Chriſt were taught by Moſes, in all the commands given about ſacrifices; and not by Moſes only, but by the prophets alſo, particularly the prophet Iſaiah, chap. liii. the evangelical prophet, and prophetical evangeliſt, who wrote as clearly of Chriſt's coming, as if he had then been come: From whence the apoſtle argues, how black the wickedneſs of the Jews was, who went abroad to kill him for preaching the ſame doctrine which Moſes and the prophets had taught before him.

24 And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beſide thyſelf; much learning doth make thee mad. 25 But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs. 26 For the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom alſo I ſpeak freely. For I am perſuaded, that none of theſe things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner.

Hitherto Feſtus had heard the apoſtle with great patience, but now he interrupts him, and tells him, he talks like a man that was crazed. Carnal minds paſs very uncharitable cenſures upon ſpiritual perſons and ſpiritual things. Chriſt's kindred ſaid, *He was beſide himſelf*, Mark iii. 21. Feſtus here judged Paul to be mad, thinking that he had overſtudied himſelf; by meddling with matters too high for his capacity, and too deep for his underſtanding, he had brought himſelf into a deep melancholy: *Paul thou art beſide thyſelf, much learning hath made thee mad.* But obſerve with what meekneſs and due terms of reſpect the apoſtle replied to this reviling governor, *I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus.* Here *note*, 1. The title of honour given to Feſtus, not ſo much to his perſon, for that was unworthy, as to his office, which was truly honourable, *Moſt noble Feſtus.* Titles of reſpect and honour given to perſons in place and power, are agreeable to the mind of God, and countenanced by Chriſtianity. 2. What an happy victory and conqueſt the apoſtle had over his own paſſions! he waves the reflections Feſtus had made upon him, and had learned of his Maſter, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. It is an happy attainment for a man to be maſter of himſelf under a provocation, to be regulated by right reaſon, and not hurried by blind paſſion.

27 King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt.

The apoſtle, knowing that Agrippa was educated among the Jews, tells him that he could not but hear of the life, doctrine, miracles, death and reſurrection of Chriſt; all which were done openly, and not in corners; and he could not but believe the prophets, and what they had foretold concerning the Meſſias; and if the power of worldly intereſt did not overcome him, his life and practice would be anſwerable to his faith and belief. Thence *learn*, That a right belief of the holy ſcriptures is of great efficacy and force to conform a perſon's life to the practice of real and univerſal holineſs.

28 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. 29 And Paul ſaid, I would to God that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.

Note here, 1. What an efficacy St. Paul's doctrine had upon Agrippa; though he would not be converted, yet he could not but be convinced; his conſcience was touched, though his heart was not renewed. *Learn* thence, That there is certainly that in religion which carries its own evidence along with it, even to the conſciences of ungodly men. 2. How ſad it is, when perſons have enjoyed the ſcriptures, the preaching of the word, and all means of ſalvation, and yet are but almoſt Chriſtians, and ſhall never enjoy the leaſt ſalvation; they are within ſight of heaven, and yet ſhall never have a ſight of God. 3. That ſuch as will be Chriſtians indeed, muſt not only be almoſt, but altogether Chriſtians: *I would that you, and all that hear me*, ſays the apoſtle, *were altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.* Where *note*, The extraordinary charity and Chriſtian compaſſion of St. Paul: He wiſhed them his graces, not his chains; he did not wiſh them his bonds and impriſonments, but he wiſhed them the ſame liberty and enlargement by Jeſus Chriſt, which he enjoyed; he would keep his ſorrows and outward troubles to himſelf, but wiſhes they were acquainted with his inward con ſolations and comforts. A good man wiſhes others as well as he wiſhes himſelf; and if at any time he wiſhes that which is penally evil to the worſt of his enemies, he doth it with an eye to their ſpiritual and eternal good: A good man dares not wiſh ill to thoſe that have actually done ill to him; but wiſhes, prays, and endeavours the beſt good for them.

30 And when he had thus ſpoken, the king roſe up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that ſat with them. 31 And when they were gone aſide, they talked between themſelves, ſaying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds. 32 Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, This man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæſar.

Note here, How Agrippa, Feſtus, and the whole company, acquit the innocent apoſtle in their judgments and conſciences, yea, with their tongues declare that he deſerved neither death nor bonds; yet at the ſame time that they acquit him, they diſcharged him not, but he is left in his enemies hands, and at laſt put to death by the Gentiles. But how, may it be ſaid, was God's promiſe fulfilled then, verſe 16, 17. *I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs, and will deliver thee*, &c. How did God deliver him from the Gentiles, when he was at laſt delivered into their hands, and put to death by the Gentiles? *Anſ.* As long as the wiſdom of God ſaw it fit and convenient, for the purpoſes of his glory, and as a real mercy conducing to the apoſtle's good; as long as it was a true and beneficial deliverance, ſo long God wrought deliverance for him; nay, rather than fail, in a miraculous manner, no chains could bind him, no iron-gates, nor priſon-walls confine him: But when he had finiſhed his courſe, run his race, fought the good fight of faith, and done the work which God ſet him about, it would not then have been a deliverance, but a real detriment to have been kept longer from his reward: Now might the apoſtle ſay, Give me my robes and my crown. God now made his word good to the apoſtle, to deliver him from the people and the Gentiles, by making death his deliverer and deliverance. Thus faithful is God in his promiſes to his people. He will deliver them in ſix troubles, and in ſeven; in every danger, in every difficulty; but when death is the beſt deliverance, they ſhall have it as a covenant-mercy and bleſſing; for all things are ours, if we be Chriſt's, whether life or death, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

CHAP. XXVII.

This chapter gives us an account of St. Paul*'s voyage by ſea from* Ceſarea *to* Rome: *and though it proved a very dangerous voyage, yet the divine care preſerved him, and all that were with him, for his ſake. A full relation, both of the danger and deliverance, is recorded in this chapter.*

AND when it was determined that we ſhould ſail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other priſoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Auguſtus' band. 2 And entering into a ſhip of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to ſail by the coaſts of Aſia, one Ariſtarchus a Macedonian of Theſſalonica being with us. 3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteouſly entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refreſh himſelf.

The time being now come for the fulfilling of God's purpoſe and determinate counſel concerning Paul, recorded Acts xxiii. 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul, as thou haſt teſtified of me at Jeruſalem, ſo ſhalt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome:* Purſuant to this purpoſe of God, Feſtus the Roman governor delivers the apoſtle and his aſſociates, Luke, Timothy, and Ariſtarchus, to Julius, in order to their ſending, with ſeveral other priſoners, who probably were great malefactors, to the city and court of Rome, where all appeals made to the Roman emperor were heard and determined before himſelf. Now here we have *obſervable*, 1. The perſon whom the apoſtle was delivered to, Julius, a very civil perſon to the apoſtle, who ſuffered him to ſee and receive the civilities of his friends. Thus God raiſes up his people friends in the midſt of their ſufferings, and when perſecutors ſend his ſaints to priſon, he will provide keepers for their turn. Julius, an heathen ſoldier, was kinder to him than his own countrymen the Jews. 2. The villainous company of malefactors and priſoners that the innocent apoſtle was packed with: *They delivered Paul and certain other priſoners to Julius.* Saints and ſinners, good and bad, innocent and nocent, ſhare together in the ſame outward miſeries; but though they be thus jumbled together in this world (where all things come alike to all) yet the righteous Judge will make a difference between them in the other world, according to their works. 3. Though the apoſtle was thus yoked with malefactors and criminals in the ſhip, yet God favoured him with ſome companions which were according to his heart's deſire; namely, his dear aſſociates, St. Luke, Timothy, and Ariſtarchus. It is a great comfort to the afflicted to have good companions in their afflictions, *Optimum ſolatium eſt ſodalitium:* But above all, it was the happineſs of the apoſtle, that he enjoyed the preſence of God with him in ſo comfortable a manner, in and under all his ſufferings, according to his promiſe, chap. xviii. 10. *I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee.* The gracious ſpecial preſence of God with his children and people, is a ſure and ſufficient ſupport unto them in and under all the difficulties and trials which his wiſdom ſees fit to exerciſe and try them with. 4. What an additional favour it was from God, that St. Paul found friends in Sidon, ſuch ſaints as he could comfortably converſe with, and receive refreſhments from, even needful accommodations for his tedious voyage. *Learn* hence, That God's care of, his compaſſion towards, and proviſion for, his children and people, is univerſal and perpetual, at all times, and in all places.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we ſailed under Cyprus, becauſe the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had ſailed over the ſea of Cilicia

and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. 6 And there the centurion found a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing unto Italy; and he put us therein. 7 And when we had ſailed ſlowly many days, and ſcarce were come over againſt Cnidus, the wind not ſuffering us, we ſailed under Crete, over-againſt Salmone: And hardly paſſing it, came unto a place which is called, The fair haven; nigh whereunto was the city *of* Laſea. 9 Now when much time was ſpent, and when ſailing was now dangerous, becauſe the faſt was now already paſt, Paul admoniſhed *them*, 10 And ſaid unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of our lives. 11 Nevertheleſs, the centurion believed the maſter and the owner of the ſhip more than thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul.

An account is here given of the very hazardous voyage which the apoſtle had from Ceſarea towards Rome. He ſails from Ceſarea to Cyprus; from Cyprus to Cilicia; from Cilicia to Crete: And having been long at ſea, and the ſummer wearing away, and the great faſt being paſt; that is, the anniverſary faſt of expiation, which was on the tenth day of September; after which the ſea growing tempeſtuous, the ancients left off ſailing until March, becauſe of the ſhortneſs of the days; St. Paul, foreſeeing the danger of the ſeaſon, and being alſo inſpired by the Spirit of God, admoniſhed them of the great hazard of the voyage, both to the ſhip and alſo to the lives of thoſe that were in it, and adviſed them to venture no further till the ſea was calmer; but the owner and governor of the ſhip (who was ſuppoſed to be better ſkilled in his own art) adviſing otherwiſe, the captain of the guard prefers his judgment before Paul, and ſo ſets forward, but with great *hazard* and greater *loſs*, as the *event* declared. From the whole we gather, That the fitteſt ſeaſons ought to be obſerved and taken for every enterprize both ſacred and ſecular: Winter journies by land, or voyages by ſea, are unſafe, as well as uncomfortable. A ſeaſon is beautiful for all things, and has a luſtre upon it above all other parts of time. This winter voyage, about our October, was very hazardous and unſeaſonable, for the winds were boiſterous and contrary, the days were ſhort, the light little, the night long, the clouds thick, the weather dark, the ſtorms raging; therefore, the apoſtle adviſed to winter in the Fair haven, knowing that the ſeaſon for ſailing was now paſt.

12 And becauſe the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part adviſed to depart thence alſo, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the ſouth-weſt and north-weſt. 13 And when the ſouth-wind blew ſoftly, ſuppoſing that they had obtained *their* purpoſe, looſing *thence* they ſailed cloſe by Crete. 14 But not long after, there aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15 And when the ſhip was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive. 16 And running under a certain iſland which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat; 17 Which when they had taken up, they uſed helps, undergirding the ſhip; and fearing leſt they ſhould fall into the quick-ſands, ſtrake ſail, and ſo were driven. 18 And we being exceedingly toſſed with a tempeſt, the next *day* they lightened the ſhip; 19 And the third *day* we caſt out with our own hands, the tackling of the ſhip.

The farther difficulties and dangers which the apoſtle met with, in this winter voyage, are here deſcribed and declared, and the propereſt leſſons of inſtruction which can, I think, be gathered from them, will be by way of alluſion: Thus, 1. The ſhip in which he ſailed is an emblem of the church, in her militant ſtate here on earth; ſhe is afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and in danger of being ſhipwrecked every moment; many tempeſtuous Euroclydons ariſe ſuddenly, and threaten her fatally; but her wiſe Pilot ſits at the helm, ſteers her with a fixed eye and ſteady hand between rocks and ſhelves, under-girding her by his everlaſting arms of power and love which are underneath her; and when in our apprehenſions, ſhe is brought to a hopeleſs and helpleſs ſtate, without the light of ſun or ſtars to comfort her; then doth the Lord enlighten her darkneſs, and at midnight there ſhall be light. Again, 2. This voyage neglected in the ſummer, and undertaken in the winter ſeaſon, to the peril of the paſſengers, and loſs of the ſhip, lively repreſents unto us both the folly and danger of perſons who ſuffer the ſpring of youth and the ſummer of ripe-age to ſlip and ſlide away from them; and when the winter of old age comes upon them, then they think of launching forth towards the fair haven of eternal happineſs, and not before. Set we forth never ſo ſoon, the winds will be contrary, the weather tempeſtuous, the rocks many, the difficulties great: And yet, Lord! how is our precious time ſpent and ſpilt? When age comes upon us, we complain we want time, whereas we fooliſhly waſte it; how are miſerable ſouls that ſet out late for heaven (when they can ſerve ſin no longer) benighted, bewildered, ſhipwrecked, eternally and irrecoverably loſt? Behold, now only is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation.

20 And when neither ſun nor ſtars in many days appeared, and no ſmall tempeſt lay on *us*, all hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away. 21 But after long abſtinence, Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Sirs, ye ſhould have hearkened unto me, and not have looſed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loſs. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there ſhall be no loſs of *any man's* life among you, but of the ſhip. 23 For there ſtood by me this night the angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul: Thou muſt be brought

before Cæſar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee. 25 Wherefore, ſirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we muſt be caſt upon a certain iſland.

Note here, 1. The hopeleſs, helpleſs, comfortleſs ſtate, which St. Paul, and thoſe in the ſhip with him, were now reduced to; neither ſun nor ſtars appeared, and the weather proved very tempeſtuous; and when they utterly deſpaired of life, then God gives Paul, and he the reſt, a comfortable aſſurance, that nothing ſhould be loſt, but the veſſel only. O how does God delight to deliver thoſe that are forſaken of their hopes? what a preſent help is he to the helpleſs? He reſerves his holy hand for a dead lift; our extremities are the ſeaſons of his ſuccour. 2. The great and ſpecial favour with which God indulged the holy apoſtle, even to ſend an angel to him to comfort him: *The angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, ſaid, Fear not.* O what an encouragement is it to us, to enter upon, and be faithful in the ſervice of God, when he cauſes his holy angels, upon all occaſions, to ſerve us? when viſible dangers are before us, God has inviſible ſervants round about us, both to ſuccour and ſecure us. Lord, help me in ſincerity to ſay, *Thine I am, and thee I ſerve*: let me be found faithful in all the inſtances of my duty to thee, and then I ſhall find (as the apoſtle here) that ſafety evermore accompanies duty. 3. How God was pleaſed, for St. Paul's ſake, to ſave all that were with him in the ſhip; ſinners are ſpared and ſaved for the ſaints' ſake, whom yet they hate and ſeek to deſtroy. The wicked are oft-times delivered from temporal deſtruction, for the ſake of the godly who live among them, and intercede with God for them; there were two hundred threeſcore and ſixteen perſons, all heathens, except three or four, ſaved for Paul's ſake, who no doubt begged their lives of God. Lord, what fools and madmen are the wicked, who ſeek the deſtruction of thoſe for whoſe ſake it is that they are not themſelves deſtroyed? The breaches which wicked men make by ſinning, they make up by praying. 4. How ſteady and ſtedfaſt the apoſtle was in the faith and belief of God's promiſe and providence, for his own and the company's preſervation. *I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me.* We honour God exceedingly, when we depend upon his promiſe, rely upon his power, believe his word, though what he ſays be very improbable, and unlikely to come to paſs.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight, the ſhipmen deemed that they drew near to ſome country; 28 And ſounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they ſounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29 Then fearing leſt we ſhould have fallen upon rocks, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, and wiſhed for the day. 30 And as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, when they had let down the boat into the ſea, under colour, as though they would have caſt anchors out of the foreſhip, 31 Paul ſaid to the centurion and to the ſoldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved. 32 Then the ſoldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

A farther account is here given, both of the apoſtle's imminent danger and extraordinary deliverance; for fourteen days together, the ſhip was continually toſſed in the ſea; at laſt, the mariners caſt four anchors out of the ſhip, and by the help of a boat, intended to make their eſcape, leaving the paſſengers to ſhift for themſelves: St. Paul perceiving this, told the centurion and the ſoldiers, that though Almighty God had promiſed to preſerve them, yet they muſt not expect it without uſing the means for their own preſervation, which was to ſtay the mariners in the ſhip; whoſe help and diligence, direction and care, would be eſpecially needful to them on ſuch an occaſion. Hereupon the ſoldiers, to prevent the mariners' deſign, cut the ropes of the boat and let it fall into the ſea. *Learn* hence, That the end and the means are always joined together in the purpoſe and decree of God. The ſame God that ordained the end, ordained the means in order to that end: therefore, as to truſt to means, is to neglect God; ſo to neglect the means is to tempt God. *As here,* That God who decreed that they ſhould not periſh with the ſhip, decreed that the ſkilful ſeamen ſhould abide in the ſhip. Almighty God likes not to be tied to means himſelf; but it is his pleaſure to tie us: Sometimes, to ſhew his ſovereignty, he is pleaſed to work without means; ſometimes, to ſhew his omnipotency, he works againſt means. The fire ſhall not burn, the water ſhall not drown, the iron ſhall ſwim, the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, nay, go ſeveral degrees backward: The Firſt Cauſe can ſuſpend the power and operation of ſecond cauſes, when he pleaſes. But as the care of the end belongs to God, ſo the care of the means belongs to us, and muſt be uſed when they may, and where they can be uſed. Accordingly here, the mariners, in order to their own and others preſervation, ſtay in the ſhip, lighten the ſhip, undergird her, caſt out their anchors, hoiſt up the main-ſail, looſe the rudder-bands, and do every thing to their preſervation which was needful. The purpoſe of God to prolong our lives, muſt not leſſen our care for the preſervation of our lives: When God has ordained and appointed means, we cannot expect to find ſafety in the neglect of that means.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul beſought them all to take meat, ſaying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued faſting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take *ſome* meat; for this is for your health: for there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus ſpoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in preſence of them all; and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they alſo took *ſome* meat. 37 And we were in all in the ſhip, two hundred threeſcore and ſixteen ſouls.

Note here, 1. What honour God put upon the holy apoſtle; although he was a poor priſoner in chains, yet God made him the only counſellor and comforter unto all that were in the ſhip. Firſt he adviſeth them to eat, becauſe that through conſternation of mind, and horror of death, they had made no ſet meal for fourteen days; not that they ſubſiſted miraculouſly without any nouriſhment at all; but eat ſo little, that it was in a manner continual faſting. Next he becomes the chaplain of the ſhip: *He gave thanks to God in the preſence of them all*; that is, he deſired God's bleſſing upon what they eat, and praiſed him for it: Thanks ſhould be returned when benefits are received from the hand of man, much more from the hand of God: What ſhall we think of thoſe that ſit down to a full table as a beaſt to his forage, without taking any notice of the bountiful hand that feeds them! St. Paul having thus refreſhed himſelf, and by his example and words encouraged all the reſt to do the like; an account is taken of the exact number of perſons which were in the ſhip, and it was found to be two hundred three ſcore and ſixteen ſouls: Probably, this was done at the motion of St. Paul, that ſo, after their deliverance, it might appear how exactly his prediction, mentioned ver. 22. *That there ſhall be no loſs of any man's life, nor an hair fall from the head of any*, was verified and fulfilled. Whatever God ſpeaks by the mouth of his holy ſervants, be it by way of prediction or denunciation, ſhall certainly be accompliſhed and come to paſs: God is honoured in his truth, when his promiſes are fulfilled towards his people, and threatnings inflicted on his enemies.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ſhip, and caſt out the wheat into the ſea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they diſcovered a certain creek with a ſhore, into the which they were minded, if it were poſſible, to thruſt in the ſhip. 40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themſelves* unto the ſea, and looſed the rudder-bands, and hoiſted up the main-ſail to the wind, and made towards ſhore. 41 And falling into a place where two ſeas met, they ran the ſhip aground: and the fore part ſtuck faſt and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the ſoldiers counſel was to kill the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out and eſcape. 43 But the centurion, willing to ſave Paul, kept them from *their* purpoſe, and commanded that they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt *themſelves* firſt into the ſea, and get to land; 44 And the reſt, ſome on boards, and ſome on *broken pieces* of the ſhip. And ſo it came to paſs, that they eſcaped all ſafe to land.

Here *note*, 1. How willing men in diſtreſs are to part with all things for the preſervation of life; theſe ſea-faring men are here found three times lightening their ſhip of her lading and burden: Firſt, the merchandize was caſt overboard, ver. 18. next all the ſhip's furniture was heaved over, ver. 19. and now, ver. 38. goes over the very wheat, which they had provided for their daily bread; future proviſion is caſt away, to ſave life at preſent: Life is the moſt precious treaſure, the moſt excellent thing in nature; a man will part with all the comforts and ſupports of life, rather than with life itſelf. 2. What a wonderful work of God was here upon the hearts of theſe poor Pagans, thus to venture their lives, by parting with their food which they had to live upon, barely upon St. Paul's word, that they ſhould want wheat no more in the ſhip. Such an influence has God upon the hearts and minds of men, when he pleaſes to make uſe of it. 3. How God's delivering power is moſt gloriouſly manifeſt in the moſt deplorable extremities of his people. Now, when the ſhip was fallen into a place where two ſeas met, when ſhe ran aground, and was broken with the violence of the waves, this extremity was God's opportunity; and this ſtrait was the ſeaſon of his ſuccour. 4. What horrid and cruel ingratitude was found with theſe wretched ſoldiers towards the apoſtle: they deſign to take away his life, who had taken ſuch care of them, and for whoſe ſake all their lives were preſerved! It is no new thing for an unkind world to return evil for good, and hatred for good-will; but to do good and to ſuffer evil, is the Chriſtian's exerciſe at preſent. *They conſulted* to kill the priſoners (of whom the apoſtle was chief,) leſt any *of them ſhould ſwim out and eſcape*. 5. How God put into the centurion's heart to defeat that barbarity and bloody counſel, and to ſave the apoſtle, for whoſe ſake the centurion and all in the ſhip were ſaved. Many are the wicked devices in the heart of man; but the counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand. 6. How God performed his promiſe to the apoſtle to a very tittle: They were all ſaved, not a man drowned, no, not any one of the bloody ſoldiers who gave counſel to kill Paul. O how good is God to the unthankful and unholy! his tender mercies are over all his works; and how well do ſinners fare ſometimes for the ſaints' ſake! Thus, after a long and dangerous voyage, the providence of God brought St. Paul, with the reſt of the paſſengers, at laſt ſafe to ſhore. O how punctual is God to what he promiſes! What he foretels, he will fulfil. He had foretold by Paul, that they ſhould ſuffer ſhipwreck, and at laſt be caſt upon a certain iſland: and, accordingly, here, they eſcaped to an iſland, called Melita; where, what ſignal inſtances of humanity they received from the hands of barbarous heathens, the following chapter fully informs us.

CHAP. XXVIII.

AND when they were eſcaped, then they knew that the iſland was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people ſhewed us no little kindneſs: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one becauſe of the preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold. 3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and faſtened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians ſaw the venemous beaſt hang on his hand, they ſaid among themſelves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live. 5 And he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he ſhould have ſwollen, or fallen down dead ſuddenly. But after they had looked a great while, and ſaw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and ſaid that he was a god.

After a long and dangerous voyage, recorded in the foregoing chapter, the providence of God brought St. Paul and the reſt of the priſoners to an iſland called Melita, where they were all courteouſly received by the iſlanders; who, finding them wet and cold, made them a fire, to warm and refreſh them; when behold a viper that was in the wood, feeling the heat of the fire, leaped out upon St. Paul, and faſtened on his hand; which the iſlanders ſeeing, inſtantly concluded that the apoſtle was ſome notorious malefactor, whom divine vengeance followed: But the apoſtle (according to our Saviour's promiſe, Mark xvi. 18. *If ye touch any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt you*) ſhaking off the venomous beaſt into the fire, without harm, the people preſently changed their opinion, and took him for a god, that was come to them in the ſhape of a man. Here *note*, 1. How it pleaſed God, by a new miracle, to confirm the apoſtle's authority, and thereby to prepare the hearts of thoſe barbarous people for the receiving of the goſpel. God will honour his goſpel, and the faithful diſpenſers of it, wherever they go, by preparing the hearts of the people to receive and entertain it. 2. That great and manifold dangers and diſtreſſes may, and of-times do, befal gracious perſons. No ſooner is one affliction paſſed over and gone from them, but preſently another comes on with a freſh aſſault. *Thus here*, St. Paul had no ſooner eſcaped the ſhipwreck, and gets to ſhore, but a viper faſtens upon his hand; *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* 3. That the very light of nature ſuggeſts even to the moſt barbarous heathens, that wickedneſs ſhall not go unpuniſhed; *No doubt this man is a murderer, whom vengeance ſuffereth not to live.* 4. That natural agents cannot act or exert their natural powers, without the concourſe and concurrence of ſupernatural providence: This viper, according to its nature, did not, and could not, ſting the apoſtle, being reſtrained by the over-ruling providence and power of God. 5. That the humanity of theſe barbarous heathens towards thoſe that ſuffered ſhipwreck, may juſtly condemn the inhumanity of them that are called Chriſtians, towards thoſe which are ſhipwrecked: How do ſome that live near the ſea-coaſts rejoice at a wreck at ſea, in hopes of enriching themſelves with the ſpoils of others? The barbarous were humane here, but the humane are now barbarous. 6. How prone and ready men are to draw ſinful inferences from ſorrowful premiſes; to conclude, that ſuch a man, or ſuch a people are wicked, becauſe they are wretched; great ſinners, becauſe they are great ſufferers. This was the barbarous logic of theſe iſlanders: It had been well that it had been confined to that iſland; *When the barbarians ſaw the venomous beaſt on the apoſtle's hand, they ſaid, No doubt this man is a murderer.* 7. How mutable is the mind of man, and how inconſtant are men in their eſteem and opinions of men; the apoſtle had no ſooner ſhook off the viper into the fire, but the barbarians change their opinions into another extreme; he whom they accounted a murderer before, they called a god now: *They changed their minds, and ſaid that he was a god.* They are light and laviſh in their applauding, as before they were raſh and ſevere in cenſuring. Thus, upon changes of providence, many change their opinions of men, ſometimes for the better, but commonly for the worſe. Lord, help me to eſteem myſelf only by the eſteem which I have with thee. Let me never be lifted up with the applaudings, nor caſt down by the deſpiſings of men; neither praiſe nor reproach are much to be accounted of, whilſt we are innocent, and make thee our friend. *Queſt.* But why did not St. Paul, that ſhook off the viper from his hand, ſhake off the chain from his arm, and ſet himſelf at liberty? *Anſ.* St. Paul was not the author, but a miniſter or inſtrument in this miracle; it was not St. Paul himſelf, but God by him, that wrought this miracle, Acts xix. 12. *God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hand of Paul.* Now, when the deliverance of the apoſtle from his bonds made moſt for the glory of God, he was delivered; but, when his bonds would more advance the goſpel, God kept him in bonds.

7 In the ſame quarters were poſſeſſions of the chief man of the iſland, whoſe name was Publius: who received us, and lodged us three days courteouſly. 8 ¶ And it came to paſs, that the father of Publius lay ſick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others alſo which had diſeaſes in the iſland came, and were healed: 10 Who alſo honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with ſuch things as were neceſſary.

Obſerve here, How God goes on ſtill to honour the perſon and miniſtry of St. Paul, in the eyes and hearts of this barbarous people, by enabling him further to work miracles in this iſland; Firſt, on Publius the governor's father, and then on others that were diſeaſed in the iſland. Here *note*, 1. How great the civility of the governor of the iſland was towards St. Paul, entertaining him and all the company with him, even more than two hundred perſons, at his own charge. And, 2. How well the governor was rewarded for his hoſpitable charity; his father lying ſick of a fever and bloody flux, is miraculouſly cured by God. As there is no duty more certainly rewarded in another world than that of charity; ſo is it frequently rewarded in this world; Publius was well paid by his father's recovery, for what he did for St. Paul and his company. 3. The means which the apoſtle uſed for the recovery of the ſick perſon, prayer and impoſition of hands, verſe 8. *Paul prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.* Now hereby the apoſtle ſhewed that he could do nothing of himſelf; accordingly he applies by prayer to that God who killeth and maketh alive, and the Lord heard him. St. Paul had honoured God, and now God honours him: How grieved was the holy apoſtle when God's honour was ſacrilegiouſly given to him? I doubt not but it grieved the good man more, when they called him a god, than when they accounted him a murderer: Here, therefore, he returns the honour to God by prayer, aſcribing all to him: And God honours him by making him the inſtrument of the miraculous cure. 4. How the infinitely-wiſe God made all things work together for his own glory; that the apoſtle ſhould ſuffer ſhipwreck; that he ſhould be caſt upon an iſland; that he ſhould be caſt upon a barbarous iſland, where the name of God was not known; that a viper ſhould faſten upon him, and not hurt him; that the governor of the iſland's father, and other inhabitants of the iſland, ſhould at this time be ſick, and miraculouſly cured by St. Paul: All theſe tended towards the promoting of God's glory, by opening an effectual door for the converſion of many ſouls; for, during the three months that the apoſtle ſtayed there, he planted a chriſtian church in the iſland, which became famous for its ſtedfaſtneſs in the truth. 5. The proof and evidence which the iſlanders gave of the truth of their converſion by the apoſtle's miniſtry among them; namely, that thoſe new converts loaded St. Paul's ſhip with neceſſaries for their voyage when he went away from them: This was a real fruit of their effectual faith, as alſo their honouring him with many honours. The beſt evidence of ſincere faith, is an holy fruitfulneſs in good works, in works of piety towards God, and works of charity towards man; *They honoured us with many honours*, &c.

11 ¶ And after three months, we departed in a ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſle, whoſe ſign was Caſtor and Pollux. 12 And landing at Syracuſe, we tarried *there* three days. 13 And from thence we fetched a compaſs, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the ſouth wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found brethren, and were deſired to tarry with them ſeven days. And ſo we went toward Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us, as far as Appii-forum and the Three taverns: whom when Paul ſaw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. Paul, at the command of God, though ſhipwrecked before, yet puts forth to ſea again. A clear call from God will carry on a chriſtian chearfully to grapple with all imaginable difficulties and dangers, without either diſpute or delay. Thus did the apoſtle here; he enters a ſhip of Alexandria, ſails from Malta to Syracuſe in Sicily, from thence to Rhegium in Italy, from thence to Puteoli; where they found ſome chriſtians, with whom they abode ſeven days. Here *note*, How wonderfully the chriſtian religion was ſpread abroad in the Italian country; yea, in and about Rome, before St. Paul's coming thither. From Puteoli the apoſtle paſſes to Rome, the chief city in Italy, the empreſs of the world, the ſeat of the Roman emperor: Behold how God bears witneſs to, and puts honour upon his ſuffering ſervant; he paſſes to Rome, more like a conqueror than a priſoner: He is met upon the road by many eminent perſons, as conquerors uſed to be, to congratulate their great victories; even by chriſtians, who are called *brethren*, ver. 15. who are not aſhamed of St. Paul's chain, but left their houſes, and came forth to meet him, ſome fifty miles, others thirty, ſome one day's journey, others two, to congratulate his coming, and pay their reſpects unto him; for which favour the apoſtle *thanks God, and took courage:* That is, he owned it as an encouragement ſent from God unto him, and was greatly refreſhed by their company. But how came chriſtians, ſo early to be found at Rome? Who converted them? St. Paul had never been there till now, and we read not of St. Peter's or any of the apoſtles having been there thus early; yet St. Paul finds many chriſtians at and about Rome? *Anſwer*, Theſe brethren are thought to be converted by ſuch as were preſent at Jeruſalem, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, Acts ii. 10. where it is expreſly ſaid, There were *ſtrangers of Rome then preſent*, when thoſe mighty miracles were wrought there; and we may ſuppoſe that they, becoming true converts at that time, did propagate the goſpel in and about Rome, according to their ability; and the bleſſing of God ſo accompanied and ſucceeded their endeavours, that the apoſtle now found ſome ſaints even in Nero's houſe. *Thus mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the priſoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was ſuffered to dwell by himſelf, with a ſoldier that kept him. 17 And it came to paſs, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were come together, he ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing againſt the people, or cuſtoms of our fathers, yet was I delivered priſoner from Jeruſalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, becauſe there was no cauſe of death in me. 19 But when the Jews ſpake againſt *it*, I was conſtrained to appeal unto Cæſar; not that I had ought to accuſe my nation of. 20 For this cauſe therefore have I called for you, to ſee *you*, and to ſpeak with *you:* becauſe that for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain.

Now is the great apoſtle landed and lodged a priſoner at Rome, according to the divine prediction, Acts xxiii. 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul*, &c. Yet *obſerve*, 1. The favour which God gave him in the ſight of his enemies; he is not clapped up in the common gaol, but a ſort of priſoner at large; he dwells by himſelf in his own hired houſe, with his keeper with him: This liberty was highly valued by the apoſtle, we may believe; not ſo much for his own comfort, as for the benefit and advantage of the goſpel; for by this means he had an opportunity of going abroad and preaching the word of God in every place, as the providence of God gave him opportunity. 2. St. Paul is no ſooner come to Rome with deſire and deſign, no doubt, to preach the goſpel there to his countrymen the Jews, in the firſt place; but he ſends for the Jews to come to him, ſtates his caſe to them, and endeavours to remove all prejudice from their minds, which they might have taken up againſt him, and ſo have miſſed of the benefit of his miniſtry. From whence *learn*, That it is the great duty of the miniſters of the goſpel, prudently to prevent, if poſſible, or preſently to remove all prejudices, which may be taken up by their people againſt their perſons, knowing that, if they have a prejudice againſt their perſons, they will never reliſh their doctrine, nor be benefited by their miniſtry. Thus did the great apoſtle here endeavour to ſet himſelf right with his auditors the Jews, before he began to preach to them. 3. How the apoſtle was not aſhamed of, but rather glories in, the cauſe for which he ſuffered, *For the hope of Iſrael, I am bound with this chain:* As if he had ſaid, "For preaching that Meſſiah, who hath long been hoped and prayed for, I am come hither a priſoner; or for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, whom all true Iſraelites long expected and hoped for, who is now come in the fleſh, to be their Redeemer, and in whom all the true Iſrael of God repoſe all their hope of ſalvation, and by whom they expect a joyful reſurrection; *I am bound with this chain.*" Here *note*, 1. The hard uſage which the bleſſed apoſtle meets with from the hands of a wicked world; a chain is clapped upon him as if he were ſome rogue or thief: Paul the lamb, was now a priſoner to Nero the lion. The beſt of men may, and oft do ſuffer under the notion of the moſt vile and wicked perſons. 2. The true cauſe of St. Paul's ſufferings, *For the hope of Iſrael I am bound.* That is, for the object of Iſrael's hope, or the Meſſiah which they ſo long expected, and ſo much hoped for. 3. The publication which St. Paul makes of his ſufferings here at Rome; he tells all the world, for whom, and in whoſe cauſe, he now ſuffered. Thence *learn*, That ſufferings for Chriſt and the goſpel are no matter of ſhame, but glory: The apoſtle doth not bluſh to ſay, *For the hope of Iſrael* I wear *this chain:* the ſhame belonged to them that clapped on the chain, not to him that wore it. 4. The end why the apoſtle makes known his ſufferings; namely, That all the Jews now at Rome might know the true cauſe wherefore he ſuffered. St. Paul's enemies had laid heavy things to his charge, which poſſibly might fly to Rome; now although he little regarded what the wicked world ſaid of him, yet he deſired to ſtand right in the thoughts of the Jews here at Rome; and therefore, as ſoon as he was come thither, he ſends for them to acquaint them with the cauſe of his impriſonment. When good men are in a ſuffering condition, the devil is very induſtrious to defame them, and the world very ready to miſrepreſent them; therefore it is a duty which is owing to themſelves, to vindicate their own innocency, and to ſet forth the cauſe of their ſufferings, in a clear and true light. It is verily *for the hope of Iſrael, that I am bound with this chain.*

21 And they ſaid unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came, ſhewed or ſpake any harm of thee. 22 But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt: for as concerning this ſect, we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt. 23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging: to whom he expounded and teſtified the kingdom of God, perſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the law of Moſes, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And ſome believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.

Note here, 1. The advantage which the apoſtle had to preach the goſpel to theſe Jews at Rome; they aſſure him that they had entertained no prejudice againſt his perſon; for they had received no letters out of Judea concerning him; neither had any of their brethren that came from Judea ſpoken any evil of him; yea, they aſſure him, it was their deſire to hear him preach, and to underſtand what he had to ſay for the chriſtian religion (which they call a ſect or hereſy) that both Jews and Gentiles did generally oppoſe and ſpeak againſt, and talk hardly of. 2. How readily the apoſtle complies with their requeſt in preaching to them; time and place are appointed, the people aſſembled: The great truth defended and proved was this, That Jeſus of Nazareth was the true and promiſed Meſſiah, in whom all that deſire to be ſaved, ought to believe and truſt. This argument he confirmed by teſtimonies out of the law of Moſes, and out of the prophets, continuing his diſcourſe from morning until night; ſo unwearied was this faithful labourer in his Lord and Maſter's work. 3. The different ſucceſs of the word preached, and the contrary effects which it had upon his hearers; *Some believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.* As the ſame ſun that ſoftens the wax, hardens the clay, ſo has the goſpel different effects upon thoſe it is preached to; there are ſome whom no ſun will tan, no heat will warm, no influence will quicken: To ſome *we* are the ſavour of life unto life, to others the ſavour of death unto death: But, bleſſed be God, if we his miniſters be found faithful, we ſhall be a ſweet ſavour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved.

25 And, when they agreed not among themſelves, they departed, after that Paul had ſpoken one word, Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. 27 For the hearts of this people is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed: leſt they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had ſaid theſe words, the Jews departed, and had great reaſoning among themſelves.

The obſtinate infidelity and unreaſonable unbelief which was found among the Jews under the apoſtle's preaching, was no doubt a great grief of heart unto him; but at their departure, he tells them they would not be perſuaded, that this unbelief of theirs was what the prophet Eſaias had long before punctually foretold, that hearing they will not hear, and ſeeing they will not ſee; having contracted ſuch a wilful hardneſs, blindneſs, and deafneſs, as will not ſuffer them to hearken to any counſel which may tend to their converſion and ſalvation. Here *note*, That though the preſent unbelief of the obſtinate Jews, to whom the apoſtle now preached, was long before foretold by the prophets of God: Yet the prophets' prediction was no cauſe of their unbelief; or that which laid them under an impoſſibility of believing: But the fault lay in their own obſtinate wills; with reſpect to which, by the juſt judgment of God, they were blinded and hardened. When ſinners cloſe their eyes wilfully, and ſay, they will not ſee, it is juſt with God to cloſe their eyes judicially, and ſay, they ſhall not ſee. *Deus non deſerit niſi deſerentem*; the Jews had forſaken God, and now God forſakes them; but the apoſtle tells them, that upon this refuſal of theirs, he was to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, and that they would hear it, and gladly receive it, ver. 29. *The ſalvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.* Where *obſerve*, The epithet or title given to the goſpel, *The ſalvation of God:* 1. It is ſtyled *ſalvation*, becauſe it makes a tender and univerſal offer of life and ſalvation unto loſt ſinners. 2. It is called the *ſalvation of God*, becauſe it is a ſalvation of his providing and contriving, of his revealing and diſcovering: It is his by way of patefaction and diſcovery; his by way of tender and offer; his by way of power and efficacy; *The ſalvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles.*

30 ¶ And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Note here, 1. The ſpecial favour indulged St. Paul, now a priſoner at Rome, with ſo much freedom, and without any moleſtation to preach the goſpel in his own hired houſe for two years together. Where *obſerve*, 1. Who preaches; St. Paul, a priſoner, who ſcarcely had liberty to hear, rarely to preach. 2. Where he preached, even in the proud, powerful, and imperious Rome, and in his own hired houſe there. 3. To whom he preached; *To all that came unto him.* He ſet open the doors of his houſe for all comers, excluding none from the gracious offers of ſalvation by a Redeemer, upon the condition of faith and obedience. 4. How long he continued his miniſtry at Rome; for two whole years at that time; he would neither be allured by flatteries, nor hectored by threatenings, to lay down his miniſtry, or deſiſt from his preaching-work. 5. After what manner he preached; with all confidence, boldneſs, openneſs, and freedom, with ſuch an undaunted courage, as neither love of life, nor fear of death, could overcome. 6. The ſubject matter of his preaching; *The kingdom of God, and things concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; not vain janglings or envious railings; but Jeſus Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him. Laſtly, With what freedom he did all this; *No man forbidding him*; neither emperor, nor ſenate, nor magiſtrate, nor ſoldier, nor prieſt, nor people, though in an Heathen city, devoted to idolatry, in the leaſt hindering, or forbidding him. Where *note*, That Rome Heathen of old, was far leſs cruel and much more courteous to the preachers of the goſpel, than Rome Antichriſtian ſince has been. Then an apoſtle might preach two years together, without moleſtation, in his own hired houſe, to all comers; but now a miniſter of God muſt there have no public or private meeting to worſhip God according to his word and will, without danger of an inquiſition.——To conclude, ſee how impoſſible it was at that day to hinder the progreſs of the goſpel; even as impoſſible as to hinder the ſun from ſhining, or the wind from blowing. That God, who ſhut the mouths of the hungry lions that they hurt not Daniel, did open the mouth of the apoſtle, that neither Nero nor the Jews could ſtop it; yea, after this, *he was delivered from the mouth of the lion*; reſcued out of Nero's hands. And God would have continued to deliver him, had not his death been more for the glory of God, and his own advantage, than his life, which at laſt was offered up as a ſacrifice and a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, acceptable unto God through Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus St. Luke concludes his hiſtory of St. Paul's life, without giving us any particulars of his death. He leaves him at Rome, a priſoner under Nero, where, after two years confinement, the ſcriptures ſeem to hint, that he was ſet at liberty, and that he went about preaching the goſpel, and confirming the churches for ſome years; but an attempt to trace this apoſtle farther, without ſcripture-light, may be the ready way to loſe ourſelves: Let us therefore conclude with prayer,

That Almighty God, who, through the preaching of his bleſſed apoſtle St. Paul, did cauſe the light of the glorious goſpel to ſhine throughout the world, would mercifully grant, that we, having his wonderful converſion and inſtructive example in our remembrance, may ſhew forth our thankfulneſs unto him for the ſame, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, Amen.

THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE
ROMANS.

This epiſtle to the Romans *has always been eſteemed by the church of* GOD *one of the chiefeſt and moſt excellent portions of holy ſcripture: The reaſon why this epiſtle ſtands firſt, is not becauſe it was wrote firſt, (the epiſtles to the* Corinthians, Galatians, *and* Theſſalonians, *being wrote before it;) but either becauſe of the imperial dignity of the city, to wit,* Rome, *unto which it was directed; or elſe becauſe of the ſublimity of the matter, and the excellency of the doctrine contained in it, with reſpect to which, ſome have called it,* The marrow of divinity; The key of the New Teſtament; The Chriſtian church's confeſſion of faith; *and,* The moſt divine epiſtle of the moſt holy apoſtle.

The ſcope and deſign of which, is twofold; Firſt, *To ſhew that neither the* Gentiles *by the* law of nature, *nor the* Jews *by the* law of Moſes, *could ever attain to juſtification and ſalvation, but only by* faith in Jeſus Chriſt; *for the ſake of whoſe merits alone we are accounted righteous in the ſight of* GOD. Secondly, *To ſhew that* faith *is not ſeparated from* good works, *but productive of them; being the parent and principle of obedience, without which, whoſoever liveth, is accounted dead before* GOD.

The ſubject-matter of this epiſtle is twofold, partly doctrinal, *and partly* practical: *In the* doctrinal *part, which makes up the firſt eleven chapters, the apoſtle treats of* juſtification by faith alone, *without the works of the law; of* original corruption *by the fall of* Adam; *of* ſanctification *by the* Spirit of Chriſt; *of the* calling *of the* Gentiles; *that is, of the preſent rejection of the* Jews, *and the future recalling of them when the fulneſs of the* Gentiles *was come in.*

In the applicatory *or* practical *part of this* epiſtle, *which begins at chapter* xii. *we have many uſeful and excellent exhortations, both to general and particular duties reſpecting* GOD, *our neighbour, and ourſelves; and ſeveral encouragements given us to the love and practice of univerſal holineſs.*

CHAP. I.

In this firſt chapter, our apoſtle proceeds to aſſert and prove the grand doctrine of juſtification *by* faith; *that is, by believing and obeying the goſpel of* Chriſt; *and that no perſon, either* Jew *or* Gentile, *could poſſibly be* juſtified *by any works of their own. As to the* Gentiles, *he ſhews, that their works were ſo far from* juſtifying *them before God, that they were an abomination in his ſight; that, for rebelling againſt the light and law of nature, God delivered them up to their* unnatural luſts, *which expoſed them to unutterable and inevitable condemnation, and this as a juſt judgment and righteous puniſhment for their ſins.*

PAUL a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called *to be* an apoſtle, ſeparated unto the goſpel of God.

Obſerve here, The author and penman of this epiſtle deſcribed: 1. By his name, Paul: Before his converſion he was called Saul; Saul the perſecutor: After his converſion, he was Paul the profeſſor, Paul the preacher, and Paul the great doctor of the Gentiles. O wonderful power of the heart-changing grace of God! which is able to turn Sauls into Pauls, perſecutors into profeſſors, faithleſs ſinners into faithful ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. He is deſcribed by his general office; a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt: An higher and more honourable title than that of emperor of the whole earth. *Servire Chriſto eſt regnare:* To ſerve Chriſt, eſpecially in the quality of an ambaſſador, is a greater honour than to have the *monarchs* of the world to ſerve us, and bow the knee before us. 3. He is deſcribed by his particular office; *Called to be an apoſtle*; that is, conſtituted and appointed by Chriſt to that holy function, without any merit or deſert of his own. He did not aſſume the honour of an apoſtle till *called*; and when *called*, it was not any great deſert of his own, but the free and undeſerved grace of God that *called* him. 4. That as he was called to, ſo he is ſaid to be *ſeparated* for the great work of preaching the goſpel; *ſeparated unto the goſpel of God*; that is, ſet apart in the purpoſe and decree of God; *ſeparated from his mother's womb*, Gal. i. 15. Immediately and extraordinarily called by Chriſt himſelf to this great work, Acts ix. 15.

And mediately by the officers of the church, Acts xiii. 2, 3, &c. The work of diſpenſing the myſteries of the everlaſting goſpel is to be undertaken by none but thoſe who are ſolemnly *ſeparated* and ſet apart for it, and regularly called to it: I would to God the herd of lay-preachers at this day would conſider this. Theſe uſurpers of the ſacred function can neither pray in faith for a bleſſing upon what they undertake, becauſe they have no promiſe to bottom their faith upon, nor can the people expect to profit by what they hear from them; for this would be to expect God's bleſſing out of God's way. Read with trembling what God ſays, Jer. xxiii. 32. *I ſent them not, neither commanded them, therefore ſhall they not profit this people at all.* Where *mark*, That the people's not profiting by theſe men, is not charged upon their falſe doctrine, but upon their want of a call and commiſſion: It is not ſaid, that their doctrine is *unſound*, but they preach *unſent*; therefore, they ſhall not profit this people at all: Theſe men contradict the command of God, the univerſal practice of the Chriſtian church; violate the rules of order and right reaſon, and expoſe a moſt awful and tremendous ordinance of God to contempt and ſcorn; yea, lay it open to the bold preſumption of every ignorant and impudent pretender. *Obſerve*, 5. The glorious title given to the goſpel, which St. Paul was called forth to preach; it is here ſtiled the *goſpel of God*, and elſewhere the *goſpel of Chriſt*. It is the goſpel of God, as he was the author and contriver of it; it is the goſpel of Chriſt, as he is the ſubject-matter and ſcope of it: As Jeſus Chriſt was the ſum of the law, ſo is he the ſubſtance of the goſpel. Indeed, St. Paul ſometimes calls it *his goſpel*, Rom. ii. 16. becauſe he was the diſpenſer and promulger of it; it was *depoſitum fidei ſua commiſſum*; "A divine treaſure committed to his care and truſt." And, if the goſpel preached be the goſpel of God, let us entertain it in our judgments, retain it in our memories, embrace it in our affections, hide it in our hearts, confeſs it with our mouths, and practiſe it in our lives.

2 (Which he had promiſed afore by his prophets in the holy ſcriptures,)

That is, Which goſpel God had promiſed before by his holy prophets ſpeaking in the holy ſcriptures. Where *note*, 1. The antiquity of the goſpel, how ancient that doctrine is, even as old as the old prophets themſelves; nay, as old as Adam himſelf. The goſpel, or glad tidings of a Saviour, was firſt preached to Adam by God himſelf, Gen. iii. 15. next to Abraham, Gen. xv. then it was predicted by all the prophets which have been ſince the world began. The goſpel which we preach can by no means fall under the charge and imputation of novelty: It is no new or modern doctrine, but almoſt as old as the world itſelf: *Which goſpel he had promiſed before by his holy prophets.* Behold then a great correſpondency, a ſweet argeement and harmony between the Old and New Teſtament, between the prophets and apoſtles, though great difference in the manner and meaſure of the revelation. For, as one ſays, the Old Teſtament is the *hiding* of the *New*; the New Teſtament is the *opening* of the *Old*. The Old Teſtament is the New Teſtament *veiled*; the New Teſtament is the Old *revealed*. 2. The venerable title given to the ſcriptures; they are called the *holy ſcriptures: Which he had promiſed before by his prophets ſpeaking in the holy ſcriptures.* The ſcriptures are holy in ſeveral reſpects: (1.) In regard of their author and inditer, the Holy Spirit of God. (2.) In regard of the penmen and writers of them, holy men of God. (3.) In regard of the ſubject-matter contained in them, the holy will of God. (4.) In regard of the uſe of them, to make us holy both in heart and life. And, if the word of God be an holy word, then let it be treated by us with all holy deference and regard. Lord, what an impious liberty do ſome men take, in this wanton age, to furniſh out a jeſt in ſcripture attire, and in their jocular humour to make light and irreverent applications of ſcripture phraſes and ſentences! They lay their ſchemes of ridiculous mirth in the *Bible*, and play the buffoons with the moſt ſerious things in the world. Theſe men bring forth the ſcripture as the Philiſtines brought forth Sampſon, only to *make them ſport*; but they ſhall ere long find Almighty God in earneſt, though they were in jeſt: He that has magnified his word above all his *name*, will not brook it, that any man ſhould make it vile and contemptible, by rendering it the theme of his giddy mirth and profane drollery.

3 Concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh, 4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the ſpirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead:

The apoſtle having told us in the foregoing verſes, that he was particularly called to, and by God ſet apart for the preaching of the goſpel; in the verſes before us, he declares that Jeſus Chriſt was the main ſubject of that goſpel which he preached, and deſcribes him by his two-fold nature; by his human nature, ver. 3. by his divine nature, ver. 4. According to his human nature, he was *made of the ſeed of David*; that is, deſcended from David, and one of his poſterity by the mother's ſide, who was of that houſe and line *according to the fleſh*; that is, the weakneſs, frailty, and mortality of his human nature. Where *note*, 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had a being, even an eternal exiſtence, before his incarnation or manifeſtation in our fleſh and nature. He was the Son of God, before he was the ſon of man; hence he is ſaid to be *made* of the ſeed of David, intimating, that he was then *made* what he was not before. In regard of his divine nature, he was *begotten*, not *made*; but, in regard of his human nature, he was *made*, not *begotten*. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, did in the fulneſs of time aſſume the true and perfect nature of man into a perſonal union with his Godhead. The human nature was united to the divine nature miraculouſly and extraordinarily, by the overſhadowing power of the Holy Ghoſt, Luke i. 34, 35. and alſo integrally and completely: That is to ſay, Chriſt took a complete and perfect human ſoul and body, with all the faculties of the one, and all the members of the other, that thereby he might heal the whole nature of that leproſy of ſin, which had ſeized upon, and diffuſed its malignity into every member, and every faculty. Next, we have a demonſtration of Chriſt's divine nature, ver. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with* *power*, &c. As if our apoſtle had ſaid, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, though according to the frailty and weakneſs of his human nature, he was of the ſeed of David; yet, in reſpect of that divine power of the Holy Ghoſt, which manifeſted itſelf in him, eſpecially in his reſurrection from the dead, *He was declared to be the Son of God with power*; that is, mightily and powerfully demonſtrated ſo to be. *Learn* hence, 1. That the reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, by the Holy Ghoſt, is a powerful and convincing demonſtration that he was the Son of God. Chriſt, *as man*, is no where ſaid in ſcripture to be the Son of God, but with relation to the divine power of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom he had life communicated to him from the Father, both at his conception and at his reſurrection. At his conception he was the Son of God, by being conceived by the Holy Ghoſt; but this was ſecret and inviſible, known only to the mother of our Lord: Therefore at his reſurrrection, *by the Spirit of holineſs*, that is, by the immediate power of the Holy Ghoſt, God thought fit to give a a public and viſible demonſtration to the world, that Jeſus was his own Son, the promiſed and true Meſſias, and conſequently did thereby give teſtimony to the truth and divinity of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles. God did now publicly own his Son in the face of the whole world, and freed him from all ſuſpicion of being an impoſtor or deceiver; for it is not ſuppoſable, that God ſhould put forth an almighty power to raiſe him from the grave, if he had by robbery aſſumed that glorious title of the Son of God: Therefore ſaith the Father of him, in the morning of the reſurrection, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; that is, in the words of our apoſtle here, declared, and made thee conſpicuouſly appear to *be the Son of God with power*, &c. Yet *note*, 2. That though Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the power of God's Holy Spirit, yet did he certainly raiſe himſelf by his own power as God, according to his own prediction, John ii. 19. *Deſtroy ye this temple*, of my body, *and in three days I will raiſe it up*; and according to St. Peter's aſſertion, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Being put to death in the fleſh*, that is, in his human nature, *but quickened by the Spirit*; that is, by the power of his Godhead, or divine nature, quickening himſelf: For had he been only raiſed by the power of God, and not by his own power, how could his reſurrection have been a declaration that he was the Son of God? What had more appeared in Chriſt's reſurrection than in other men's? For they were raiſed by the power of God as well as he. But here lies the difference; Chriſt roſe by a ſelf-quickening principle, others are raiſed by a quickening principle derived from Chriſt; with reſpect to which he is called *the reſurrection and the life*, John xi. 25. that is, the principle of quickening life, by which the dead ſaints are raiſed. 3. That the apoſtle doth not ſay, Chriſt was made or conſtituted the Son of God by his reſurrection from the dead, but declared ſo to be: *Multa tunc fieri dicuntur, quando facta eſſe manifeſtantur*, according to the phraſe of ſcripture, "Things are then ſaid to be, when they conſpicuouſly appear." Nothing can be more evident, than that Chriſt was the Son of God before his reſurrection; yea, before his incarnation, being the Father of eternity, Iſa. ix. 6. But the glory of his divinity was much clouded, darkened, and eclipſed, by the frailty of his humanity, by the miſeries of his life, and the ignominy of his death. But by his reſurrection, God rolled away his reproach, and freed him from all the aſperſions and accuſations of his enemies, who charged him with blaſphemy, for affirming that *he was the Son of God*: And thus our Jeſus, in whom we truſt, was *declared to be the Son of God with power*, *according to the Spirit of holineſs*, *by the reſurrection from the dead*.

5 By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name: 6 Among whom are ye alſo the called of Jeſus Chriſt.

Note here, 1. St. Paul declares the perſon from whom he received authority to be an apoſtle, namely, Chriſt himſelf: *By whom he received apoſtleſhip*; that is, by Jeſus Chriſt, mentioned in the foregoing verſe; who called him immediately, and furniſhed him with authority and ability for a goſpel preacher, even then when he had been a furious and fiery perſecutor. 2. He declares how free and undeſerved a favour this was; he acknowledges he had *received grace* to be an apoſtle: Intimating, that to be rightly called to be an apoſtle, or meſſenger of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, is a ſpecial act and inſtance of divine grace and favour; *By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip*. 3. What is the ſpecial office and duty of an apoſtle, and the great end and deſign of that honourable function, namely, to call all perſons to believe and obey the goſpel. *Learn* thence, That the great end of the miniſtry of the word, is to bring ſinners to believe and obey the goſpel of Chriſt, to perſuade them to yield, not a profeſſed ſubjection only, but a real obedience alſo to the goſpel of Chriſt; *By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip for obedience to the faith among all nations*. 4. How the apoſtle puts the Romans in mind of their condition by nature, before the goſpel was revealed to them, and received by them; they were *then* Pagans and heatheniſh idolaters, but *now* Chriſtians, or the *called of Jeſus Chriſt*, *among whom* (that is, among the Gentile nations) *ye are alſo the called of Jeſus Chriſt*. *Learn* thence, That it is a neceſſary duty for miniſters, and a profitable duty for the people, to put, and to be often put in mind of what they were and are by nature; it is profitable, both to increaſe their humiliation, and alſo to excite their gratulation. "You Romans, (as if the apoſtle had ſaid) who are now the *called of Chriſt Jeſus*, were once a far off, even amongſt the vile and accurſed Gentiles: let the remembrance of what you were, keep you continually humble, and the knowledge of what by grace you are, render you for ever thankful."

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* ſaints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Two things are here *obſervable*, 1. The general inſcription of St. Paul's epiſtle; and, 2. The particular ſalutations therein given. In the inſcription, we have the perſons deſcribed to whom the epiſtle is directed: And that, (1.) By their place of abode and habitation; *To all that be at Rome*. Thence *note*, That Rome, though now a grove of idols, a neſt of unclean birds, yet was once an habitation of holineſs; a receptacle for the ſaints and dearly-beloved ones of God. Rome, that is now a lewd and impudent ſtrumpet, was once the chaſte and holy ſpouſe of Chriſt. Behold, the grace and favour of God is not confined to place or perſon! The Lord is with you while you are with him, and no longer. (2.) They are deſcribed by their title; *Beloved of God*, *Saints*, and *Called*. Where *note*, The order of their titles; firſt, *Beloved of God*, then, *Called* and *Sanctified*; intimating, That the love of grace, the favour and free good will of God, are the ſource and ſpring, the root and original cauſes of all bleſſings and benefits; viz. of vocation, ſanctification, and remiſſion, &c. *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us*, 1 John iv. 14. The love of God is the cauſe of our holineſs, and our perſeverance in holineſs will be the preſervation of his love. John xv. 10. *If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love.* *Queſt.* But how could the apoſtle call the whole church of Rome *ſaints*, when doubtleſs there were many hypocrites amonſt them? *Anſ.* (1.) They were all ſaints by external communion and viſible profeſſion. They were called out of the world, that is, ſeparated from the world, and conſecrated to the ſervice of Chriſt, and ſo lay under a neceſſary obligation to be true and real ſaints. (2.) They were denominated ſaints from the better, and we could hope, from the greater part amongſt them. Doubtleſs there were many, very many of them that anſwered their character, who were holy in the habitual frame of their hearts, and in the general courſe of their lives, and from them the whole received the denomination of ſaints, or holy. *Obſerve* 2. After the *inſcription* follows the apoſtle's ſalutation, *Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *note*, 1. The comprehenſiveneſs of the ſalutation: Grace and peace comprehend all bleſſings, ſpiritual and temporal; grace implies and includes, both the ſpring and fountain of divine favour, and likewiſe the ſeveral ſtreams which flow from that fountain, all the effects and fruits of grace. And peace, according to the Hebrew manner of ſpeaking, implies all good things for ſoul and body, for time and eternity. 2. The perſons from whom theſe bleſſings are derived, from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: From God as the ſovereign and fontal cauſe, and from Chriſt as the Mediator of all, without whom we have nothing to do with any of the divine favours; for both grace and peace come by Jeſus Chriſt. And whereas Chriſt is called Lord, and here joined with the Father, and the ſame bleſſings are ſaid to flow from Chriſt as from the Father; we *learn*, That Chriſt is really and undoubtedly God equal with the Father, and bleſſed for evermore. *Queſt.* But why is the Holy Ghoſt here excluded, no mention at all being made of him? *Anſ.* He is not excluded, though he be not named, but neceſſarily implied in the forementioned gifts; becauſe grace and peace are the fruits of the Spirit, they come from God the Father, through the mediation of the Son, and are wrought in us by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt. Beſides, in other ſalutations (though not in this) the Holy Ghoſt is expreſsly mentioned, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 13, 14.

8 Firſt, I thank my God through Jeſus Chriſt for you all, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world.

Note here, 1. The great and wonderful ſucceſs of the goſpel; it had produced faith in the hearts, and obedience in the lives of the Romans, which had made them famous throughout the world, *Your faith*, ſays the apoſtle, *is ſpoken of throughout the whole world*; that is, throughout all the Roman empire, which at that time ruled over a great part of the known world. The entertaining of the goſpel at Rome, made that place more celebrated and famous than all the victories and triumphs of the Roman emperors; faith and holineſs make a place and people more renowned than all outward proſperity and happineſs. 2. That this their renowned faith was the ground, yea, the higheſt and chiefeſt ground of the apoſtle's rejoicing; *Firſt, I thank my God, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world.* *Learn* thence, That it is both the duty and diſpoſition of the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, to be highly thankful, above all things, for the powerful ſucceſs of the goſpel, in bringing ſinners to the faith and obedience of Jeſus Chriſt. This is our rejoicing, nay, this will be our crown of rejoicing, in the day of Chriſt: We value our lives only by their uſefulneſs to the ſouls of our beloved people; we live as we ſee ſome of you ſtand faſt in the Lord; we die as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their ſins.

9 For God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my
ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing
I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10
Making requeſt, if by any means now at length I
might have a proſperous journey by the will of God,
to come unto you.

Here we have *obſervable*, 1. The apoſtle's ſolemn proteſtation of his affectionate love unto, and great care and concern for, theſe Roman converts, whom he was now abſent from, yea, whoſe faces he had never as yet ſeen; *Without ceaſing*, ſays the apoſtle, *I make mention of you always in my prayers*. Behold here, as in a glaſs, the face of every faithful miniſter of Chriſt; he continually bears his people upon his heart, whenever he goes in and out before the Lord; as Aaron bare the names of the children of Iſrael upon his breaſt-plate; he pours out his very ſoul in fervent ſupplications for them, and can ſooner be forgetful of himſelf, than unmindful of them: *Without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers*. 2. That becauſe the apoſtle was yet a ſtranger to them, had never ſeen them, and it was impoſſible for them to know the outgoings of his heart toward them, he ſolemnly appeals to the heart-ſearching God, calls him to witneſs how affectionately he loved them, and how frequently he prayed for them; *God is my witneſs*. The words have the force, if not the form of an oath, and teach us, that it is unqueſtionably lawful in important affairs to ſwear, to appeal to God, and call him to be a witneſs of what we either ſay or do. We find St. Paul did it often, and our Saviour himſelf did not refuſe to anſwer upon oath, when ſolemnly adjured. 3. How the apoſtle ſwears by God, not by the creatures, which is the ſwearing condemned by our Saviour and by St. James, Matt. v. and James v. *Note*, farther, How St. Paul appeals to that God, *whom he ſerved in or with his ſpirit*; that is with the apoſtle's own ſpirit, with his heart unfeignedly. From whence we may *remark*, That no ſervice can be performed acceptably to Almighty God, except the heart and ſpirit of a Chriſtian be engaged in it. True, the body has its part and ſhare in divine worſhip, as well as the ſoul; but the ſervice of the body is never accepted by God, unleſs animated and quickened by an obedient ſoul. O Chriſtian, ſerve thy God with thy ſoul and ſpirit, as well as with thy tongue and knee! and then thy offering will be more acceptable to God, than the moſt adorned temples, the moſt pompous ceremonies, and moſt coſtly devotions whatever, with the want of theſe.

11 For I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end ye may be eſtabliſhed; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

The apoſtle having declared, in the foregoing verſes, how fervently he prayed for them, and how paſſionately he deſired to come unto them; he now acquaints them with the reaſon of that deſire; for the furtherance of his own joy, and their eſtabliſhment; *I long to ſee you, that you may be eſtabliſhed, and I may be comforted.* *Learn* hence, 1. That eſtabliſhment in faith and holineſs, is that which the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians do ſtand in need of. 2. That the preſence of the miniſters of Chriſt with, and among their people, as well as their preaching the doctrine of faith to them, is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to their eſtabliſhment. God has joined the duties of public preaching and private inſpection together, and wo unto us, if by our non-reſidence, and not dwelling among our people, or, if living with them, we haughtily refuſe, or ſlothfully neglect perſonally to converſe with them, we deny them one ſpecial means for their edification and eſtabliſhment. *Note*, laſtly, That the apoſtle deſired to be perſonally preſent with the church and ſaints at Rome, for his own benefit, as well as for their advantage; *That I may be comforted.* *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of Chriſt do certainly improve and benefit themſelves, as well as edify and eſtabliſh their people, by conferring with them; for, as the rubbing of one hand warmeth another, ſo the meaneſt of Chriſt's members may contribute to the advantage of the greateſt apoſtle; God's weak ſervants may ſtrengthen thy ſtrong ſhoulders. Verily, I have ſometimes gained more knowledge by an hour's conference with a private and experienced Chriſtian, than by half a day's ſtudy. Moſt certainly the miniſters of God are great loſers by being ſtrangers to their people.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purpoſed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have ſome fruit among you alſo, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wiſe and to the unwiſe. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo.

Here *obſerve*, How the apoſtle obviates an objection, and prevents a reflection upon himſelf: Some at Rome might be ready to ſay, If Paul had ſuch a longing deſire to ſee us as he expreſſes, why did he not come all this time and preach here, as he has done at Corinth and Epheſus, and elſewhere? He truly tells them, therefore, that it was not for want of inclination and will, but for want of opportunity; he had often intended it, and attempted it alſo, but was providentially hindered. From whence I gather, That the miniſters of God cannot always diſpoſe of themſelves and of their labours according to their own inclinations and deſires, but both their perſons and miniſtry are directed and diſpoſed of by the providence, and according to the pleaſure of Almighty God. 2. The great modeſty and condeſcending humility of our apoſtle, in telling the Romans, that though he deſired and intended to take this long journey to Rome, to preach the goſpel to them, yet this was rather a debt than a gift: He doth not intimate to them, that his coming amongſt them was an arbitrary favour, for which they ſhould be indebted to him, but a bounden duty which he owed to them; *I am a debtor both to Jew and Greek, and ready to preach the goſpel to you at Rome alſo.* Here *note*, That the debt ſpoken of is the preaching of the goſpel: St. Paul contracted this debt, and laid himſelf under an obligation to pay it then (as every miniſter doth now) at his firſt entering upon the office of the miniſtry; by virtue of his miſſion, it was his duty to preach the goſpel to all, both to the learned Greeks and unlearned Barbarians. From whence *learn*, That to preach the goſpel of Chriſt, both far and near, with a laborious diligence, when regularly called thereunto, is a miniſterial debt and duty. We are firſt indebted to God that ſends us forth, we are alſo indebted to the people we are ſent unto. But oh! how many people are there that would willingly forgive their miniſters this debt! but we muſt tender payment at the time and place appointed, or we can never be diſcharged, whether the debt be accepted or not.

16 For I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.

Note here, 1. The glorious deſcription which the apoſtle gives of the goſpel: *It is the power of God unto ſalvation.* That is, the preaching of it is attended by, and accompanied with an almighty power, which renders it effectual to ſalvation, if we do not bolt our ears and hearts againſt it. *Learn*, That the plain and perſuaſive preaching of the goſpel, is the choſen inſtrument in God's hand, which he uſes and honours for the conveyance of ſpiritual life into the ſouls of men, though it be deſpiſed and ridiculed by the men of the world. The goſpel is powerful; it is the power, not of men or angels, but the power of God; not the eſſential, but inſtrumental power of God; it works as an inſtrument, yet not as a natural, but as a moral inſtrument in God's hand; freely, not arbitrarily. The word gives out to us, as God gives in to that; the power of the goſpel is not from the preachers of the goſpel, therefore do not idolize them; but they are the inſtruments in God's hand, their words are the vehicle, or organ, through which the vital power of the Spirit is conveyed; therefore do not vilify and think meanly of them. 2. The ſolemn proteſtation and bold profeſſion which the apoſtle makes of his not being aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: *I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt.* Where *note*, 1. He doth not ſay, I am not afraid to preach the goſpel; but *I am not aſhamed*, becauſe ſhame hinders our readineſs more than fear; a man may be fit and ready to preach the goſpel, and yet be afraid to undertake it; but he that is aſhamed of the work, can never be fit for it. 2. That when the apoſtle ſays, he is not aſhamed of the goſpel, more is intended than expreſſed; I am ſo far from being aſhamed, that I account it my glory; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Verily I eſteem it the higheſt honour that God can confer upon me, to preach the goſpel at Rome, though it ſhould coſt me my life." O how exceeding well doth a bold profeſſion of the goſpel become all the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt! Let all ſay with the apoſtle, We are not aſhamed of the goſpel; none of the miniſters of Chriſt to preach it, none of the members of Chriſt to profeſs and practiſe it.

17 For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: As it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith.

Here the apoſtle produces an argument, to prove that the goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation: *Becauſe by it the righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith*: That is, the righteouſneſs of the Mediator, called the righteouſneſs of God, becauſe it is of his providing, and of his approving and accepting, and for the ſake of which God pardons our unrighteouſneſs, and receives us graciouſly. This righteouſneſs is by the goſpel *revealed* to beget faith in men, even ſuch a faith as goes from faith to faith; that is, groweth and increaſeth from one degree and meaſure to another: And thus the apoſtle falls upon his main propoſition, which is the ſcope and deſign of this epiſtle; namely, that there is no poſſible way for the juſtification of a ſinner, either Jew or Gentile, but by faith in the Mediator. *Learn* hence, That the righteouſneſs whereby we are juſtified in the ſight of God, is diſcovered to us in the goſpel, to be only by faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the appointed Mediator betwixt God and us; *The righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith:* The apoſtle proves this by a citation out of the prophet Habakkuk; *The juſt ſhall live by faith*; that is, As the pious Jews in the time of the Babylonian captivity did live and find comfort in their troubles, by faith and affiance in God; in the like manner the apoſtle ſhews, that he that is evangelically juſt or religious, ſhall live a life of grace on earth, and glory in heaven, by faith in Chriſt; that is, depending upon the merits and righteouſneſs of the Mediator, in the way of holineſs and ſtrict obedience to his commands. *Learn* hence, That a juſtified man lives a more holy, uſeful, and excellent life than other men; his life is from God, is life is with God; yea, he lives the life of God himſelf. 2. That whatever life a juſtified man lives, (in a more excellent manner than other men) he lives that life by virtue of his faith, *The juſt ſhall live by faith.*

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs:

Our apoſtle having aſſerted and laid down a general propoſition, that the juſtification of a ſinner is only to be expected by the righteouſneſs of the Mediator in a way of faith; he now undertakes the proof and demonſtration of it thus: He diſtributes the whole world into Gentiles and Jews; the former ſeeking righteouſneſs by the dim light of nature, or the law written in their hearts; the latter by the works of the law, that is, by their external conformity to what the law of Moſes exacted and required of them. Now his preſent buſineſs is to prove diſtinctly and fully, that neither Gentile nor Jew could ever find what they thus ſought. He begins here with the Gentiles, and ſhews that indeed they had inbred notions of a God imprinted in their minds by nature, and alſo had the book of the creatures before their eyes, in which much, very much of God might be ſeen; yet theſe common notices of God, and of good and evil, they did not obey and put in practice, but rebelled againſt the light and dictates of their natural conſciences; for which cauſe, the wrath of God was revealed from heaven againſt them. Here *note*, 1. A dreadful manifeſtation of divine wrath: *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.* The wrath of God; that is, the indignation or vengeance of God: This the ſinner ſhall feel who doth not fear it; for the fears of an incenſed Deity are no bugbears, nor the effects of ignorance and ſuperſtition, as the Atheiſts fancy. This wrath is ſaid to be *revealed from heaven*; that is, diſcovered and made manifeſt by the God of heaven; partly by the light of nature, their own conſciences giving them notice and warning of it; and partly by the examples of others, in the laſhes of a divine ſeverity on the back of ſinners, by the hand of an incenſed God: *Thus the wrath of God was revealed* to the *Gentiles from heaven.* 2. The object or impulſive cauſe of his revealed and inflicted wrath; namely, *All ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* Ungodlineſs compriſeth all ſins againſt God, or neglect of the duties of the firſt table: Unrighteouſneſs comprehends all ſins againſt our neighbour, or the breaches of the ſecond table. *Note* here, That the abſtract is put for the concrete, the ſins for the ſinners that commit them; the wrath of God is revealed againſt all *ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*; that is, againſt all ungodly and unrighteous perſons; the meaning is, that God will certainly puniſh theſe ſins upon the perſons of the ſinners. 3. The ſpecial aggravation of theſe their ſins, or that which made them ſo very provoking to Almighty God; namely, that they *held the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; that is, their natural convictions were kept down under the dominion and power of their corruptions. Luſt in their wills and affections was too hard for the light in their underſtandings; they entertained the light of truth in their minds, but did not ſuffer it to have its proper effect and influence upon their hearts and lives; thus making that a priſoner which would have made them free. *Learn* 1. That it is a very great aggravation of ſin, for men to offend againſt the light of their own minds, and to rebel againſt the convictions of their own conſciences. 2. That the wrath of God is dreadfully incenſed againſt all thoſe that live in any courſe of ſin, rebelling againſt the dictates and convictions of their own enlightened conſciences. Dread it then, as theu dreadeſt hell itſelf, to ſin againſt knowledge, to rebel againſt the light of thy own mind, to ſlight the whiſpers, to ſtifle the voice of thy own conſcience; but reverence and obey its dictates as the commands of God.

19 Becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them: for God hath ſhewed *it* unto them.

That is, much of the nature and properties of God may be known by the light of nature; his infinite power, wiſdom and goodneſs, are manifeſt in the minds and conſciences of all men; *For God hath ſhewed it unto them*, partly by imprinting theſe notions of himſelf upon the hearts of all men, and partly by the book of the creatures, in which his glorious attributes are written in large and legible characters. *Learn* hence, That all men have a natural knowledge of God, and thoſe great duties which reſult from the knowledge of him. 2. That the natural knowledge which men have of God, if they live contrary to it, is a ſufficient evidence of their holding the truth of God in unrighteouſneſs, and is a God-provoking and wrath-procuring ſin.

20 For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe.

The apoſtle here proceeds in acquainting us with that knowledge of God which the heathens had by the light of nature, which was in their hearts, and augmented and increaſed by what of God they ſaw in the book of the creatures; namely, in the works of creation and providence: *The inviſible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen*, &c. The ſenſe, I conceive, is this, That the wiſe and wonderful frame of the world, which cannot reaſonably be aſcribed to any other cauſe but God, is a ſenſible demonſtration to all mankind, of an eternal and powerful Being, that was the author and contriver of it. The ſtrokes of the Creator's hand are engraven in all parts of the univerſe; the heavens, the earth, and the capacious ſea, with all things contained in them, are evident teſtimonies of the excellency of their original cauſe: And therefore ſuch of the heathens of old as ſhut their eyes, and ſuch of the atheiſts at this day as wink hard, and will not ſee the footſteps of a Deity in the works of creation and providence, are, and will be, everlaſtingly left without excuſe. *Learn* hence, 1. That much of the being and eſſential perfections of God may be known by the light of nature, if attended to; and much more may be underſtood by the book of the creatures, if attentively looked into. *The inviſible things of God are clearly ſeen from the creation*; that is, the creation of the world is a plain demonſtration to men of the being and power of God. 2. That all ſuch perſons will be left for ever without excuſe before God, who either extinguiſh the light of nature, and ſmother the natural notices which they have of God, or do not improve them by due conſideration of the works of God. Without opening the eye of reaſon, the book of creation is of no more uſe to us than to the brute beaſts: They ſee the creatures as well as we, but many of us conſider the creatures, and ſee God in the creation no more than they: And this will leave us without excuſe. 3. How endearing are *our* obligations to Almighty God, for the favour and benefit of divine revelation; that, together with the light of nature, we have the ſuperadded light of ſcripture: the law to convince us of our ſin, the goſpel to diſcover a Saviour. The heathens had only thoſe natural apoſtles, of ſun, moon, and ſtars, to guide them to God, and inſtruct them in their duty to him; but we have the wiſdom of the Father, the incarnate Son of God, and his inſpired apoſtles and miniſters to lead us into all truth, and his Holy Spirit to excite and quicken us in our obedience to him. Therefore, eternally magnified be Omnipotent Love, for the light of the ſcripture, for the benefit of divine revelation. For though there be a natural theology, there is not a natural Chriſtology; there is a natural divinity, but not a natural goſpel, a knowledge of God by the light of nature, but no knowledge of Jeſus the Mediator, without the light of ſcripture. All thanks, eternal thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift! Lord, how will all ſuch as contemn it, be left without excuſe!

21 Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened.

From this verſe to the end of the chapter, we have a large and black catalogue of the ſins which the old heathens or Gentiles were guilty of; ſome of which they voluntarily committed, and others they were judicially delivered up unto (for God, without any impeachment of his holineſs, often puniſhes ſin with ſin.) Their ſins voluntarily committed, are here recited, and the firſt of them is their ſinning againſt light and knowledge. They had ſome natural notices of God implanted and imprinted in their minds, and ſuch an additional knowledge of his being and attributes, as might be gained by an attentive ſtudy in the *book* of the creatures; but they rebelled againſt this light, and thereby contracted an aggravated guilt. *Learn* thence, That to ſin againſt light and knowledge, either in the omiſſion of duty, or commiſſion of ſin, is the higheſt aggravation of ſinfulneſs: As ignorance leſſeneth, ſo knowledge aggravateth the malignity of ſin. The next ſin charged upon them was, they did not glorify that God whom they had the knowledge of: That is, they did not conceive of him, and worſhip him as became his divine perfections and excellencies; they did not eſteem ſo high of him as they ought, and pay that homage and honour to the deity which they ſhould. *Learn* thence, That the knowledge which we have of God and his attributes, if it do not engage us to honour, *glorify*, and worſhip him, ſuitably to his adorable perfections, it is vain and uſeleſs in God's account, and will but expoſe us to a more dreadful condemnation. Another ſin mentioned in this verſe, which the heathens were guilty of, was the ſin of *unthankfulneſs*. They *glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful*: That is, they had not a due ſenſe of the favours and benefits of God conferred upon them; but, aſcribing the bleſſings of heaven to chance and fortune, to fate and deſtiny, to the influence of the ſtars and planets, to their own prudence and providence, they paid their thanks to blind fortune, for a favour which the eye of providence had beſtowed upon them: It is impoſſible that God ſhould receive the tribute of thankfulneſs, if we do not ſee all our mercies flowing from him. Farther, The ſad effects, fruit and conſequence of the forementioned ſins. The heathens which committed them it is ſaid, 1. *That they became vain in their imaginations*; that is, they had various opinions acd vain conceptions of the Godhead. Some of them denied that there was a God, others doubted whether there was a God or no; ſome affirmed there was but one God, others owned a plurality, yea a multiplicity of gods. Some acknowledged God's being, but denied his providence; others owned his providence, but confined it, in its exerciſe, to ſecondary cauſes. Thus vain in their imaginations, thus abſurd in their notions, and thus ſottiſh in their reaſonings, were the heathens concerning God, his nature and worſhip. Well might our apoſtle ſay, *They became vain in their imaginations*. And, 2. *That their fooliſh hearts were darkened:* That is, for rebelling againſt the light received, their minds and underſtandings were more and more darkened; their natural reaſon obſcured, becauſe not improved. Lord, how dangerous is it not to improve our knowledge! how fatal to rebel againſt the light and convictions of our own minds! it provokes thee to deliver us up to the power of ſpiritual darkneſs on earth, and conſign us over to an eternal darkneſs in hell, where is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, as the puniſhment and portion of thoſe that rebel againſt the light, and ſin againſt knowledge.

22 Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools: 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.

The next ſin which the Apoſtle charges upon the Gentiles, is the ſin of idolatry. Such *as profeſſed themſelves to be the moſt wiſe* and knowing men among them, as their celebrated philoſophers, poets, and orators, they debaſed and diſhonoured the all-glorious God, by framing vile images of men and beaſts, of birds and creeping things, to repreſent him by. Theſe idolaters changed the glory of the living, ever-living God, into the likeneſs of lifeleſs things; whereas the Lord is ſo infinitely glorious, that nothing can ſet forth his glory ſufficiently; the moſt excellent creature cannot repreſent his ſuper-excellent perfections; and accordingly, it is as real a debaſing of the Divine Majeſty, to repreſent him by an angel, as by a worm or a fly. All attempted repreſentations of God by any creature whatſoever, are idolatrous provocations.

24 Wherefore God alſo gave them up to uncleanneſs through the luſts of their own hearts, to diſhonour their own bodies between themſelves:

Note here, 1. Another infamous ſin charged upon the heathens; namely, the ſin of uncleanneſs; yea, baſe, unnatural uncleanneſs, and pollutions of the moſt odious kinds. *Learn* thence, That idolatry and uncleanneſs often go together. Solomon's uncleanneſs led him to idolatry, and his idolatry increaſed his uncleanneſs. The city of Rome at this day, which is a grove of idols, the chief ſeat of idolatry, is next to a Sodom for uncleanneſs; witneſs their allowing of ſtews by public authority. 2. That all kinds and degrees of pollutions, both natural and unnatural, are to be deteſted and abhorred, as *diſhonouring the body*. Our bodies are Chriſt's members, the Holy Ghoſt's temples; let us therefore glorify God with our bodies on earth, which ſhall be ſubjects capable of glory with himſelf in heaven. 2. God's judiciary tradition of theſe idolatrous heathens to the ſin of uncleanneſs: *Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanneſs*. Almighty God often doth, and always righteouſly may, puniſh ſin with ſin: God puniſhed the idolatry of the heathens here, by *delivering* them up to *vile affections*, to uncleanneſs, and unnatural luſt. But how is this conſiſtent with God's holineſs and hatred of ſin? Thus, God neither infuſes ſin into their hearts, nor excites to ſin in their lives, but leaves ſinners to themſelves, to act without reſtraint, according to the inclination of their own luſts and corruptions: And alſo, gives them up to Satan, that unclean Spirit, who will not fail to provoke them to ſuch uncleanneſs, as he knows their inclinations ſtand ready to comply with. Lord, keep back thy ſervants from ſinning againſt the light of nature, againſt the light of ſcripture, leſt we be judicially darkened, and given up to *a ſottiſh and injudicious mind*, to hardneſs of heart, and the vileſt of affections.

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cauſe God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the natural uſe into that which is againſt nature: 27 And likewiſe alſo the men, leaving the natural uſe of the women, burned in their luſt one toward another, men with men working that which is unſeemly, and receiving in themſelves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient;

Here our apoſtle proceeds to give a particular and diſtinct account of the abominable idolatry and unnatural filthineſs, which he had charged the heathens with in the foregoing verſes. As to their idolatry, he had told us at the 23d verſe, that they had made falſe and unworthy repreſentations of the ever bleſſed God; worſhipping God in and by the creatures. In this 25th verſe, they are charged with a falſe object of their worſhip, giving divine honour to a creature: *They changed the truth of God unto a lie*; that is, the true God into an idol, called a *lie*, becauſe it deceives men as a lie doth, by ſeeming to be that which indeed it is not: it ſeems in the idolater's fancy, to have ſomething of divinity in it, when, in reality, it is but wood or ſtone. Every image of God is a falſe and lying repreſentation of God. Secondly, As to their uncleanneſs, he ſhews that they were ſo given up to the ravings of luſt for ſinning againſt the light of nature, that they forſook the order of nature, and were more brutiſh than the very brutes. *Learn* hence, That when men provoke God finally to forſake them, and judicially to give them up to their own hearts' luſts, they will not ſtick to commit ſuch monſtrous and unnatural uncleanneſs, as the very brute beaſts abhor. Here men and women burnt in worſe than beaſtly luſt towards thoſe of their own ſex. Lord, if we are not more vile than the vileſt of thy creatures, we owe it all to thy ſanctifying, or, at leaſt, to thy reſtraining grace. As by the grace of God, we are what we are; ſo by his grace it is that we are not what we are not.

29 Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication,
wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs; full of
envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whiſperers,
30 Backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters,
inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents,
31 Without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without
natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.

Here the apoſtle ſums up the ſins which the heathens committed againſt the ſecond table, or againſt their neighbour; not that every particular perſon was guilty of all theſe black crimes, but all were guilty of ſome, and ſome perhaps were guilty of all or moſt of them. *Learn* hence, That the heart of man doth naturally ſwarm and abound with ſtrange and monſtrous luſts and abominations. Lord! what a ſwarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more in the depths of the heart. Whatever abominations were found in the hearts and lives of Heathens and Sodomites, and the moſt profligate wretches under heaven, are radically and ſeminally in our corrupt and degenerate natures, Matt. xv. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,* &c. What are our luſts, but ſo many toads ſpitting of venom and ſpawning of poiſon? O deplorable degradation! 2. How much ſadder is the condition which unregenerate ſouls abide in, who remain in and under the power and dominion, the vaſſalage and ſlavery of theſe imperious luſts which perpetually rage within them, and inceſſantly conteſt and ſcuffle for the throne. 3. To ſtand aſtoniſhed at the heart-changing grace of God, which has delivered thee from ſo diſmal a condition. O! fall down and kiſs the feet of mercy; adore the ſovereignty and freeneſs of divine grace, which ſtept in ſo ſeaſonably to thy reſcue. Lord! what black imaginations, what vile affections, what helliſh deſires, what monſtrous abominations were lodged in my heart and nature, before regeneration wrought a change! O that ever the Holy Ghoſt ſhould ſet his eyes upon any of the ſinful offspring of apoſtate Adam; in whom were legions of unclean luſts, and whoſe nature was become the ſink and ſeed-plot of all ſin. Laſtly, Two particular ſins, which of all others ſeem moſt monſtrous in theſe heathens. (1.) They were *haters of God,* not of his eſſence, being and goodneſs, but haters of his holineſs, juſtice and providence. (2.) They were *without natural affection.* This appeared by ſacrificing their children to their idols; and expoſing themſelves and their deareſt relations to ruin. No ſooner did we fall out with God, but we fell out with ourſelves and one another.

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death, not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.

The apoſtle here cloſes the chapter with the blackeſt character that could be given of the Gentiles ſin, namely, That although by the light of nature, and the dictates of natural conſcience, they knew that their adulteries and unnatural luſts did deſerve death, and expoſe them to the wrath of God, yet they not only committed thoſe ſins themſelves, but took a real pleaſure and delight in thoſe that committed them. Now this was the top and height of their wickedneſs. It is a greater wickedneſs to approve and applaud ſin, than it is to act and commit ſin; to delight in ſin, is worſe than to do ſin. A man may fall into ſin by the policy of the tempter, and the prevalency of temptation, but by conſideration may be brought to a ſenſe of his folly, and repent of it: But when he is arrived to ſuch a pitch of wickedneſs, that he not only approves and applauds, but takes pleaſure and delight in the wickedneſs of others; this demonſtrates ſuch a ſtrong affection to ſin, as brings a man neareſt to the devil in ſinning. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is in God an avenging juſtice, engaging him to puniſh ſin with the eternal death of the ſinner. 2. That there is that evil and malignity in ſin, which deſerves the judgment and ſentence of eternal death. 3. That this deſert of ſin, as alſo the vengeance of God upon the ſinner, is ſufficiently made known to all men; to ſome by the light of nature, to others by the ſuperadded light of ſcripture. 4. That notwithſtanding this diſcovery of ſin's deſert of divine wrath, yet multitudes of ſinners every where do not only commit wickedneſs themſelves, but delight in it, and in them that do it, which lays them under an aggravated guilt, and will both heighten and haſten their condemnation; ver. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God,* &c.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle having in the firſt chapter diſcovered the rueful ſtate of the Gentiles by nature, and their worſe condition by reaſon of ſin, in rebelling againſt the light and law of nature; in this ſecond chapter, he ſpeaks of the Jews, and lays them as low as he did the Gentiles, upon deſign to convince both of the utter impoſſibility of being juſtified before God by any righteouſneſs of their own, but only by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

THEREFORE thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt. For wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt doſt the ſame things.

Leſt the Jews ſhould ſwell and be puft up with pride, by hearing what the apoſtle ſaid in the former chapter, of the deteſtable wickedneſs of the Gentiles, and the heavy diſpleaſure of God againſt them for the ſame; St. Paul in this chapter pronounces the Jews to be guilty of the ſame ſins of which he had accuſed the Gentiles, affirming, that the Jews had offended as much againſt the law of Moſes, as the Gentiles had offended againſt the law of nature; and conſequently, their cenſuring and judging others, when they did the ſame things themſelves, would render them inexcuſable at God's tribunal. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, that judgeſt another, and by doing the ſame things condemneſt thyſelf.* *Learn* hence, 1. That it is too uſual and common a practice to condemn that ſin in another which men practiſe themſelves. 2. That when perſons commit themſelves the ſins which they condemn and cenſure in others, they are totally inexcuſable, and pronounce ſentence againſt themſelves.

2 But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth againſt them which commit ſuch things. 3 And thinkeſt thou this, O man, that judgeſt them which do ſuch things, and doeſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, We that are Jews know, by the light of the ſcripture, what the Gentiles knew imperfectly by the light of nature, that the juſt God judges uprightly, *according to truth*, and not according to appearance. It is equitable that he ſhould, and certain that he will, deal with men according to his word, and toward every man according to his work. Think not then, O Jew! who judgeſt the Gentiles for doing *ſuch things* againſt the law of Moſes, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God, which they have ſo ſeverely felt. *Learn* hence, That ſuch is God's hatred againſt ſin, and ſuch is the impartiality of his juſtice towards ſinners, that no offenders can expect eſcaping the judgment of God for preſumptuous ſinning. *Thinkeſt thou, O man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?* No affection, or nearneſs of relation, can blind God, or put out the eye of his juſtice. If Gentile or Jew ſin together, they ſhall ſuffer together; for there is no reſpect of perſons with God: God will judge men in truth and righteouſneſs, and condemn every ſinner, whatever his knowledge or profeſſion be. 2. That no man's zeal in condemning ſin in others, will juſtify or ſave him, if he lives in ſin himſelf: *Think not, O man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God.*

4 Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs and forbearance and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf, wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Note here, 1. The indulgent carriage of Almighty God towards poor ſinners, diſcovered in the vaſt expence of the riches of his goodneſs and bounty upon them, and in the patient exerciſe of his forbearance and long-ſuffering towards them. 2. The gracious end and deſign of God in his expence of his goodneſs, and in the exerciſe of his patience and forbearance; namely, *To lead ſinners to repentance.* The end of goodneſs is to oblige and engage perſons to love and ſerve their benefactor; this is the moſt natural and unconſtrained conſequence that the mind of man can infer from God's bounty and ſparing mercy; *The goodneſs of God leadeth to repentance.* 3. The unanſwerable and undue returns, which ſinners make to God for the exerciſe of ſo much goodneſs and forbearance towards them: They *deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs and long-ſuffering.* They deſpiſe it by being unthankful for it, by not improving it, and by miſimproving or ſinning againſt it: They melt the miſeries of God into bullets, and ſhoot them at the breaſt of the Almighty. 4. The ſad and fatal conſequence of theſe undue returns made to God by ſinners: Hereby *they treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The more patience God expends upon thee, if perverted and abuſed by thee, the greater wrath is treaſured up for thee; which, the longer it has been treaſured up, will break forth the more fiercely and violently to conſume thee." 5. The deſcription given by the apoſtle of the day of judgment; he calls it, *A revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* The judgment of God is righteous now; but it is not always revealed and openly made manifeſt now; therefore a time ſhall come, when there ſhall be a revelation of his righteous judgment fully. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the goodneſs of God is a natural and genuine motive to repentance. 2. That not to be perſuaded by, is in God's account to deſpiſe, his goodneſs. 3. That this deſpiſing of goodneſs, by delaying our repentance, is a treaſuring up of wrath againſt the day of wrath: As ſinners have treaſures of ſin, ſo God has treaſures of wrath for ſinners. Laſtly, that the day of judgment will be a day of revelation, a day in which the righteouſneſs of God's proceedings ſhall be univerſally manifeſted and magnified; then will all the divine attributes be conſpicuouſly glorified; his wonderful clemency ſweetly diſplayed; his exact juſtice terribly demonſtrated; his perfect wiſdom clearly unfolded; all the knotty intrigues of providence wiſely reſolved; all the myſterious depths of divine counſels fully diſcovered, and the injured honour and glory of Almighty God viſibly cleared and repaired, to the joyful ſatisfaction of all good men, and to the dreadful conſternation and confuſion of the wicked and impenitent world: O how well might the apoſtle call this day, *The revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation and wrath: 9 Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile. 11 For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.

The apoſtle in the foregoing verſe had given a deſcription of the general day of judgment, which he called, *A revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Here he acquaints us with the impartiality and uprightneſs of God in the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments in that day, according to the merits and deſerts of men: *Who will render to every according to his deeds*; that is, according to the kind and quality, and according to the meaſures and degrees of every man's works. Where *note*, he doth not ſay, God will render to every man a reward for his works, but *according* to his works! Works are *regula retributionis, non cauſa mercedis*; "Our works are the rule of God's proceedings, but not the cauſe of his rewards." Having thus deſcribed the impartiality of the Judge, he next declares the univerſality of the perſons that ſhall then be judged; namely, the righteous and the wicked; which ſhall both have their diſtinct rewards aſſigned them, according to the quality of their works. *Note*, 1. The righteous perſons deſcribed, and their reward declared; they are deſcribed by their *well-doing*, by their *continuance* in well-doing, by their *patient continuance* in well doing; they are not weary in well-doing, they can undergo ſufferings for the ſake of well-doing, and they can patiently wait for the reward of well-doing till hereafter, whilſt others ſnatch at their reward here: Yet in the mean time they are ſeeking after, and ſecuring of this their reward: *They ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality*; that is, they ſeek for a portion of glory and immortality in the world to come; they leave the world to the men of the world, and whilſt *they* are ſcrambling for earth, *they* are making ſure of heaven. Next, Their perſons being deſcribed, their reward is declared, *eternal life*; an eternity of glory and happineſs in a future ſtate, ſhall certainly be the reward of well-doers, and of patient continuance in well-doing. 2. The wicked are here characterized, and their reward aſſigned; *They are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs*; that is, They contend with God, and reſiſt the light of his revealed truth; they refuſe the offers of his grace, and kick againſt his word, diſobeying the goſpel of truth, but obeying unrighteouſneſs. God will pour forth upon ſuch, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh. Lord, who knoweth the power of thine anger, or who can bear the weight of thy wrath! It broke the back of angels, how ſhall ſinners ſtand under it? It is ſtyled fire in ſcripture, it is a conſuming fire, and an unquenchable fire: It preys upon the ſinner, but never devours him: It is unquenchable by any thing but the blood of Chriſt. A myſterious fire, whoſe ſtrange property it is always to torment, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume. 3. With what equity, as well as impartiality, this diſtribution of God's indignation and wrath will be made: *Upon every ſoul that doeth evil; but upon the Jew firſt, and then of the Gentile.* The Jew firſt, that is, principally and eſpecially; becauſe the light and mercy which the Jews abuſed and ſinned againſt, was far greater than that beſtowed upon the Gentiles. *Learn* hence, That the light under which men ſin, puts extraordinary aggravations upon their ſins, anſwerable whereunto will be the degrees of their puniſhment. The Gentiles will be condemned for diſobeying the light of nature, the law of God written on their hearts; but much greater wrath is reſerved for the Jews, unto whom were committed the oracles of God: But the greateſt of all is reſerved for Chriſtians, who obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; theſe ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe, 2 Theſſ. i. 9, 10.

12 For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law: And as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.

That is, as many as have ſinned without the *written* law, which is the caſe of the Gentiles or Heathens, ſhall alſo periſh without *that* law, being judged and condemned by the law of *nature* written in their hearts; but as many as have ſinned *in*, or *under* the law of Moſes, which is the caſe of the Jews, ſhall be judged and condemned by that law. *Note* here, 1. A truth plainly implied, and neceſſarily ſuppoſed; namely, That as ſome ſinners periſh, having the written word, and all external means of ſalvation; ſo others periſh, having not the written word or law of God, and the outward and ordinary means of ſalvation: *As many as have ſinned without the law, ſhall periſh without the law.* God, in the diſpenſations of his grace, acteth in a way of ſovereignty, according to his own pleaſure; yet, in his penal diſpenſations, he proceeds according to the meaſures of ſtrict juſtice, upon the previous demerits of ſinners. 2. That all men ſhall not be proceeded againſt in the day of judgment after one and the ſame manner; but every man according to the demerit of his ſin, and according to the capacity and relation in which he ſtood in this life. The Gentiles which had only the law of *nature*, ſhall not be judged by the law of Moſes: The Jews, which have both the law of *nature*, and the law of Moſes, ſhall be judged by both: And conſequently, Chriſtians, which have the law of *nature* unwritten, the Moſaical law written, and the Evangelical law, both written and preached, ſhall lie under greater guilt, and receive a more aggravating condemnation. Chriſt will exactly proportion every man's *hell* hereafter to his *ſin* committed here; the greater light we have quenched, the greater darkneſs will be inflicted, Heb. ii. 3.

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified.

That is, not the *bare hearers* of the law ſhall, upon that account, be juſt before God, but the *doers* of the law ſhall be *juſtified*; that is, accepted of God, as acting ſuitably to their holy profeſſion. It is notoriouſly known, the Jews gloried in, and reſted upon, their outward privileges for ſalvation, becauſe they were Abraham's ſeed, becauſe they were circumciſed, becauſe they were employed in reading and hearing of the law; they concluded this ſufficient to render them acceptable with God; therefore, ſays the apoſtle, not the *hearers*, but *doers* of the law ſhall be juſtified; that is, the perſons whom God will accept and account righteous for the ſake of Chriſt. *Note* here, That the doers of the law or word of God, are the beſt hearers, yea, the only hearers in the account of God. Hearing is good, but it muſt not be reſted in; a great underſtanding may a man have by much reading the word and law of God; but *a good underſtanding* only have they that *do* the *word* and *will* of God; *the praiſe* and fruit *of that endureth for ever.*

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe, having not the law, are a law unto themſelves; 15 Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and *their* thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another.)

The ſenſe is, that the Gentiles, which have not the law of Moſes promulged, are yet not without a law ingrafted in their conſciences; and although they have not a written law; yet have they a *law*, that is a rule of living to themſelves; doing thoſe things which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſciences bearing witneſs to it, and their natural reaſon either accuſing or defending of them from it. *Learn*, 1. That there is a law of nature ingrafted and written by God in the hearts of men, whereby the common notions of good and evil are found with them. 2. That this law of nature ſerveth for the inſtigation and provocation of men to many good actions and duties towards God and man. 3. That to rebel againſt, and not walk in conformity unto this ingrafted law of nature, is a God provoking and a wrath procuring ſin. 4. That although many of the Gentiles gave themſelves over to all manner of uncleanneſs, yet others *ſhewed the works of the law written in their hearts*: They ſhewed it two ways, (1.) By their temperance, righteouſneſs, and moral honeſty; wherein (to our ſhame) they excelled many of us who are called Chriſtians. (2.) In the efficacy of their conſcience; which, as it cleared and comforted them for things well done, ſo it witneſſed againſt them, yea, judged and condemned them for doing evil: And theſe evidences of a law written on the heart, are every where to be found, wherever men are found: *The Gentiles having not a written law, are a law unto themſelves, and ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts.*

16 In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt according to my goſpel.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, If any ſhall aſk, when ſhall rewards and puniſhments be diſtributed to Jew or Gentile? The anſwer is, *In that day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men's hearts by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my goſpel:* That is, as my goſpel teſtifies, he will moſt certainly do. Here *note*, 1. A fundamental doctrine aſſerted, That there will be a day of judgment, in which the ſecrets of all men's hearts ſhall be judged by Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator. All the thoughts, words, and works of all men, that lived from the beginning of the world, or ſhall live to the end of the world, will then be produced in judgment; and if ſo, may we not infer, that the day of judgment muſt certainly and neceſſarily take up a vaſt ſpace of time? For if all records and regiſters now made ſhall then be opened and read, and all the witneſſes for and againſt man, ſhall be then examined and heard, what a vaſt ſpace of time then muſt that great day take up! Some divines are of opinion, that the day of judgment may laſt as long as the world hath laſted: This we may depend upon, that things will not be huddled up, nor ſhuffled over in haſte; but as ſinners have taken their time for ſinning, ſo God will take his time for judging. 2. The proof and confirmation of this doctrine of a future judgment. *According to my goſpel*; that is, as certainly as I have foretold you of it in the doctrine which I have preached, ſo certainly ſhall all men, and the ſecrets of all men's hearts, be judged by Jeſus Chriſt. But was it not a preſumption in St. Paul, to call the goſpel, *his goſpel? Anſ.* He means that he was the publiſher, not the author of it; it was God's in reſpect of authority, St. Paul's in reſpect of miniſtry: It was God's in reſpect of revelation; *his* only in reſpect of diſpenſation.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reſteſt in the law, and makeſt thy boaſt of God, 18 And knoweſt *his* will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the law; 19 And art confident that thou thyſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them *which are* in darkneſs, 20 An inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, which haſt the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.

Here the apoſtle proceeds in his former argument; namely, to prove, That the Jews could no more rationally expect to be juſtified before God by the law of Moſes, than the Gentiles by the law of nature; the apoſtle allows them all their privileges which they ſo much doted upon, boaſted of, and gloried in; but withal aſſures them, that theſe, all theſe, yea, more than theſe, were inſufficient to juſtify them before God. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Thou beareſt thyſelf mightily upon this, that *thou art called a Jew*; that is, a profeſſor of the true religion, and a worſhipper of the true God: *Thou reſteſt in the law:* that is, either in the divineneſs and perfection of it, or in thy external obedience to it, and in the outward performances of it: *Thou makeſt thy boaſt of God*, as a God in covenant with thee above all the nations of the earth; and *thou knoweſt his will*, having his word and law in thy hands, the oracles of God committed to thee, and the writings of Moſes and the prophets *alone* found with thee: And *approveſt things that are moſt excellent, being inſtructed out of the law*; that is, thou thinkeſt that thou haſt ſuch a degree of knowledge of God's word and will, that thou canſt clearly diſcern between ſin and duty, and compare one duty with another, preferring that which is moſt excellent: *And art confident that thou thyſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkneſs*; that is, thou haſt a ſtrong conceit that ſuch are the meaſures of thy knowledge, that thou art able to be a guide to the blind Gentiles, who ſit in darkneſs, and to be a *teacher of babes*; that is, ſuch as have little or no knowledge in the matters of religion, conceiting, *That thou haſt the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law*; that is, ſuch a method and meaſure of divine knowledge, as may enable thee to inſtruct others, whether Gentiles or Jews, which never reached to thy attainment."—Theſe external privileges the preſumptuous Jew reſted upon, and thought them ſufficient to ſalvation, though he lived looſely, and his practice gave his profeſſion the lie. Hence *learn*, 1. That perſons are exceeding prone to be proud of, and puffed up with, church privileges, glorying in the letter of the law, whilſt, neither in heart nor life, they are conformed to the ſpirituality of the law. *Learn* 2. That gifts, duties, and ſuppoſed graces, are the ſtay and ſtaff which hypocrites reſt upon, and repoſe their truſt and confidence in: *Thou art called a Jew and reſteſt in the law*; that is, in the outward profeſſion of the law, or in an external obedience to the law; the apoſtle ſpeaks of this their *reſting in the law*, not barely by way of narration, but by way of reproof, telling us not only what they did, but how ill they did in ſo doing. The duties which Chriſt has appointed, are the truſt and reſt of the hypocrites; but Chriſt himſelf is the reſt and truſt of the upright; they deſire to be ever acting graces, never truſting to them; to be much in duty, and yet much above duty; much in it in point of performance, much above it in regard of dependence.

21 Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? thou that preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? 22 Thou that ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? thou that abhorreſt idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege? 23 Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law, through breaking the law diſhonoureſt thou God? 24 For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written.

The apoſtle proceeds, to the end of this chapter, to convince the Jews, that they were equally in a ſinful and wretched condition with the deſpiſed Gentiles, and therefore ſtood in need of Jeſus Chriſt to juſtify them by his grace, as well as they: And becauſe the Jews were ſo exceeding apt to dote upon, and reſt in, their external privileges, he did, in the foregoing verſes, recount and reckon up the ſeveral privileges which they enjoyed: *Thou art called a Jew, thou makeſt thy boaſt of God*, &c. But now, in the verſes before us, he takes occaſion to aggravate their ſins committed, from their high privileges and prerogatives enjoyed, becauſe they ſinned againſt light and knowledge, againſt the convictions of their own conſciences, and contradicted the dictates of their minds, as the Gentiles did: But beſides all that, rebelled againſt the precepts of the written word, which was all in their hands. The law of Moſes was near in their mouths, but far from their reins; for thus the apoſtle expoſtulates with them, *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf?* Thou that undertakeſt to be a teacher of, and a guide unto the ignorant and blind Gentiles, wilt thou not practiſe thine own inſtructions; but condemn thyſelf out of thine own mouth? "Wilt thou, O Jew! (as if the apoſtle had ſaid) be guilty of theft, adultery, ſacrilege, rapine and murder, ſins which the very heathens condemn, and all this while, call yourſelves the only people of God? Verily, *The name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you Jews*, who pretend to be the favourites of heaven, whilſt you do the works of hell." *Learn* hence, 1. That it is much eaſier to inſtruct and teach others, than to be inſtructed and receive inſtruction ourſelves. 2. That it is both ſinful and ſhameful to teach others the right way, and to go in the wrong ourſelves. It is a double fault in a private perſon, when his actions run croſs to his profeſſion; but it is inexcuſeable, if not an unpardonable fault in a teacher, when the crimes which he condemns in others, may be juſtly charged upon himſelf; *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf?* 3. That the name of God ſuffers much, very much; yea, by none ſo much as thoſe who preach and preſs the duties of Chriſtianity upon others, but practiſe them not themſelves. *The name of the Lord is blaſphemed* by ſuch preachers, the wicked profane world taking occaſion from thence to wound the name of God with the poiſoned arrows and darts of reproach. The ſins of teachers are teaching ſins. True, ſin, ſtrictly ſpeaking, cannot injure the name and glory of God: He is above the reach of any miſchief that ſin can do him: His eſſential glory is perfect, and can neither be increaſed or diminiſhed by the creatures: God can no more be hurt by our ſins, than the ſun can be hurt by throwing ſtones into the air, or the moon hurt by the barking of dogs. But his manifeſtative glory, or the preſent manifeſtations of his glory, theſe are clouded and eclipſed by ſin; and therefore God will deal with knowing ſinners, eſpecially with ſuch as undertake to be *teachers* of others, as with thoſe that have *blaſphemed his name*, wounded his *glory*, trampled upon his honour, and cauſed his holy ways to be evil ſpoken of, by reaſon of their wicked and unholy lives. Lord, let all that adminiſter unto thee in holy things conſider, that they have not only their own ſins to account for, but alſo the ſins of their people, if committed by their profligate example.

25 For circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion. 26 Therefore if the uncircumciſion keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion? 27 And ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law?

It is ſufficiently known what great ſtreſs the Jews laid upon circumciſion; they taught, that this alone was enough to procure the favour of God, and to free them from hell: "God having, as they ſaid, promiſed Abraham, that if his children tranſgreſſed, he would remember the odour of the foreſkins, and deliver them for the merit of circumciſion;" But all this was a falſe and vain-glorious buſtle. Our apoſtle, therefore, in the words before us, aſſures the Jews, that circumciſion without holineſs of converſation, would never free them from condemnation: That a circumciſed Jew, who walks not in obedience to the law of God, is in as bad, or worſe condition, than any uncircumciſed heathen; yea, the *uncircumciſion*, that is, the uncircumciſed perſon that *keeps the law*, ſhall be accepted of God, as well as if he had been circumciſed; and be preferred by God before the circumciſed Jew that tranſgreſſed the law. The ſum is, that the obedient Gentile ſhall condemn the diſobedient Jew, and be ſooner accepted by God, with whom there is no reſpect of perſons, but with reſpect of their qualifications: That no church-privileges, no external prerogatives nor the higheſt profeſſion of piety and holineſs, without an humble, uniform, and ſincere obedience, will be any thing available to ſalvation. And as, then, an uncircumciſed Gentile found better acceptance with God than any circumciſed Jews, even ſo, an unbaptized heathen, at the great day, will not change place with many baptized chriſtians. It is a ſad, but a certain truth, that the caſe of the Pagan world will be much eaſier in the day of judgment, than others that live and die diſobedient under the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. The heathens have but abuſed one talent, *the light of nature*; but we thouſands, even as many thouſands as we have ſlighted the tenders of offered grace: Lord, what a fearful aggravation doth it put upon our ſin and miſery! We muſt certainly be accountable to thee at the great day, not only for all the light we had, but for all that we might have had in the goſpel-day; and eſpecially for that light we have ſinned under, and rebelled againſt.

28 For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumciſion which is outwardly in the fleſh: 29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly: and circumciſion *is that* of the heart, in the ſpirit, *and* not in the letter; whoſe praiſe *is* not of men, but of God.

Here our apoſtle comes cloſe and home to the ſelf-confident Jews, and touches them in the moſt ſenſible part. It was the hardeſt ſaying that could ſound in a Jewiſh ear, to affirm, that *circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh*, profiteth nothing; for they ſo gloried in it, that they accounted it equal to the keeping of all the commandments of God: Now our apoſtle here takes away the very foundation of this their boaſting and glorying, by a plain and true diſtinction. There is, ſaith he, *a Jew outwardly*, that only has the badge of circumciſion in his fleſh. Now he is *not a Jew* in God's account, who is only ſo by outward circumciſion; neither is that circumciſion valuable or available, which is only *outward in the fleſh*; but then there is a *Jew, who is one inwardly*; namely, by the purification of his heart from all filthy luſts, evil affections, and ſinful diſpoſitions, and a *circumciſion of the heart, and in the ſpirit*; that is, a circumciſion wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and not barely by the letter of the law: And the *praiſe of this is not of men*, who cannot diſcern the heart, *but of God*, who is the ſearcher of the heart, and trier of the reins. *Learn* hence, That although men are very prone to reſt upon church-privileges and external performances, as evidences of divine favour, yet they are no teſtimonies or ſigns of the truth of grace. What circumciſion, ſacrifices, and the temple were to the Jews of old, the ſame are baptiſm, the Lord's ſupper, and public aſſemblies to profeſſing Chriſtians at this day. And as the Jews reſted in thoſe externals, without eyeing Chriſt in them, without deſiring to derive holineſs and ſanctification from them: In like manner, multitudes of profeſſors ſet up their reſt in outward duties, and repoſe a fleſhly carnal confidence in ordinances, without either deſiring of, or endeavouring after, any lively communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the exerciſe of faith and love, without any regard to ſpiritual warmth in religious duties, and being by ordinances rendered more like to the God of the ordinances, which are the moſt deſirable things next to heaven itſelf. So that I ſhall conclude the chapter with the ſame application to Chriſtians now, as the apoſtle did to the Jews then: *Circumciſion*, ſaith the apoſtle, *verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion: For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly*, &c. In like manner, ſay I, "Baptiſm verily profiteth, if we perform the conditions of that covenant, which we entered into by baptiſm; but if we do not, baptiſm is no baptiſm: For he is not a Chriſtian, who is one outwardly; nor is that baptiſm, which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Chriſtian, which is one inwardly, and baptiſm is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in water only; and ſuch ſhall have praiſe, if not of men, yet of God."

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle in this chapter proceeds in his grand deſign and purpoſe in writing this epiſtle: He anſwers the objections of the Jews *againſt what he aſſerted in the foregoing chapter; and the firſt objection runs thus:*

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumciſion? 2 Much every way: chiefly, becauſe that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

The ſenſe is this: But you of the Jews will object and ſay, "If outward circumciſion avails nothing, but the inward circumciſion is all in all; and if the uncircumciſed perſon, keeping the law, is to be reckoned as circumciſed, *what advantage then hath the Jew* above the Gentile, or what profit is there of the *circumciſion* above *uncircumciſion?* He anſwers it, ver. 2. ſaying, The advantage *is much every way*; but chiefly, becauſe unto them were *committed the oracles of God:* That is, the holy ſcriptures contained in the Old Teſtament, the ſacraments and ſeals of the covenant, the prophecies and promiſes of the Meſſiah, and the whole revelation of the word and will of God, were then found with them, and in their hands only. Hence *learn*, 1. Great is that people's privilege and mercy, who enjoy the word of God, the audible word in the holy ſcriptures, the viſible word in the holy ſacraments. This enlighteneth the eyes, rejoiceth the heart, quickeneth the ſoul. This is compared to gold for profit, to honey for ſweetneſs, to milk for nouriſhing, to food for ſtrengthening. O how many ſouls are bleſſing God eternally for the benefit and bleſſing of divine revelation! The Jews had this ſpecial favour, *to them were committed the oracles of God:* that is, the writings of Moſes and the prophets. But we Chriſtians have a privilege beyond them, the doctrine of Jeſus delivered to us by evangeliſts and apoſtles; not like the killing letter of the law, but a goſpel bringing life and immortality to light. 2. The title which St. Paul gives to the holy ſcriptures; he calls them *the oracles of God*. St. Stephen calls them *the lively oracles*, Acts vii. 38. partly becauſe delivered by a lively voice from God, partly becauſe they ſhould be to us as *oracles*; that is, conſulted with upon all occaſions, for reſolving all doubts, determining all controverſies. Had the church of Rome conſulted theſe oracles more, and councils, &c. leſs, ſhe had kept the doctrine of faith much freer from corruption than ſhe has done. Laſtly, That the original word, here rendered *oracles*, is the ſame which profane wretches made uſe of for the dark and doubtful oracles of the devil: Nevertheleſs, the Holy Ghoſt doth not diſdain, nor decline, to make uſe of this word, as he alſo doth ſeveral others, though abuſed to heatheniſh ſuperſtition; which may ſerve to rectify their miſtake, who ſcruple to make uſe of ſome words, much more of ſome things which have been abuſed to ſuperſtition. Verily, there may be ſuperſtition in avoiding ſuperſtition; and though we cannot be too circumſpect in our words and actions, yet we may be too nice and preciſe in both. Yet, *note*, That though the ſame word, Λογια, ſignifies God's oracles and Satan's, yet theſe oracles were not delivered in the ſame manner: Satan delivered his oracles ambiguouſly and doubtfully, keeping his dark and blind votaries as much as might be in the dark; what he ſaid might bear ſeveral conſtructions, that ſo, whatever the event or iſſue proved to be, he, the father of lies, might have the reputation of ſpeaking truth: But God's oracles are plain and clear, free from ambiguity and darkneſs; the ſcriptures are not dark, though ſome places are difficult, and that proceeds from the ſublimity of the matter, not from the intention of the writer.

3 For what if ſome did not believe? ſhall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar: as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged.

Here follows a ſecond objection: Some might ſay, "True, the Jews had the oracles of God, but ſome of them never believed them, nor gave any credit to the promiſe of the Meſſias contained in them; therefore, they had no advantage by them." Be it ſo, ſaith the apoſtle: yet ſhall the unbelief of ſome make the faith or fidelity of God in his promiſes, of no effect to others? *God forbid!* that ſuch a thought ſhould enter into our hearts: But on the contrary, let God be acknowledged *true* and faithful to his word, though all men ſhould prove *liars*. *Learn* thence, 1. That man's infidelity cannot ſhake the ſtability of God's word, whether we believe the fidelity of the promiſes, or aſſent to the veracity of God in his threatenings, or not; his *word ſtandeth faſt for ever*. The promiſe ſhall be fulfilled, the threatening executed; only with this difference, we cannot perſonally find the comfort of the promiſe without faith, but we ſhall experimentally feel the terror of the threatening, whether we believe it or no. 2. The wonderful condeſcending grace of God towards thoſe who have any meaſures of true faith, though with great mixtures of unbelief. O how faithful is God to us (if in truth believers) in the midſt of our unfaithfulneſs to him! the unbelief of men ſhall not make the fidelity or *faith of God of no effect*. 3. That as God is a God of truth, ſo all men are falſe and liars, compared with God: As God cannot lie, neither deceive, nor be deceived, ſo every man is fallible and falſe; that is, under a poſſibility of deceiving and being deceived. *Let God be true, but every man a liar*. 4. That a good man under afflictions, is very careful to juſtify and clear God from dealing unjuſtly with him in any of his ſevereſt diſpenſations towards him. The apoſtle here quotes Pſal. li. 4. *That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and clear when thou art judged*. As if David had ſaid, "I know the men of the world, when they ſee me afflicted, will be ready to judge hardly of God for it; therefore, to ſtop their mouths, to clear the juſtice of God, that he may overcome, when he is judged for dealing rigorouſly with me, I do freely confeſs my ſin unto him, with all the aggravating circumſtances of it, that all the world may juſtify him, how great ſoever my ſufferings may be from him." A child of God, under the rod of God, deſires nothing more than to juſtify him in all his ſevereſt dealings with, and diſpenſations towards him.

5 But if our unrighteouſneſs commend the righteouſneſs of God, what we ſhall we ſay? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I ſpeak as a man.) 6 God forbid: for then how ſhall God judge the world?

A third objection here followeth; namely, "That if the unrighteouſneſs of men, that is, both of Jews and Gentiles, tends ſo viſibly to *commend*, that is, to illuſtrate and recommend the righteouſneſs of God, namely, his wiſdom, grace, and favour, in appointing this way of juſtification by faith in Chriſt; how can it be right in God to puniſh them for this unrighteouſneſs, which tends ſo highly to illuſtrate the glory of his goſpel-grace?" The apoſtle tells us, that in making this objection, *he ſpake as a man*, that is, as natural and carnal men are ready to think and ſpeak: But, ſays he, God forbid that we ſhould entertain ſuch a thought, as if God either were, or could be unrighteous; *for then how ſhould God judge the world*, for their unrighteouſneſs? *Learn* hence, 1. That although the unrighteouſneſs and wickedneſs of men be over-ruled by God, to ſubſerve the purpoſes of his glory; yet is God juſt in puniſhing all unrighteouſneſs and wickedneſs whatſoever. God is never intentionally, but is ſometimes accidentally glorified by the ſin of man. There never was ſuch an helliſh wickedneſs committed, as crucifying Chriſt; nothing, by which God ever reaped greater glory, than by the death of his Son: Yet is the wrath of God come upon the Jews to the utmoſt, and that moſt juſtly, for their committing of that wickedneſs. 2. That the righteous God neither doth, nor can do any iniquity or unrighteouſneſs whatſoever: *Is God unrighteous? How then ſhall God judge the world?* God is judge of all the world, and cannot but do right; becauſe the univerſality of his power puts him above all poſſibility of error in the exerciſe of his power. The very reaſon why God cannot exerciſe his power beyond the limits of juſtice, is becauſe his power is altogether unlimited; he can do whatſoever he will do; and whatſoever he will do, is for that reaſon juſt: *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I alſo judged as a ſinner? 8 And not *rather*, as we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay, Let us do evil that good may come? whoſe damnation is juſt.

We muſt by no means underſtand theſe words as ſpoken by the apoſtle himſelf in his own name, as if he had told lies for upholding of the truth; and that the truth of God had abounded to the glory of God through his lies; but he ſpeaks in the perſon of a profane objector. Thus ſome man (as if the apoſtle had ſaid) may poſſibly plead for his ſin: "The truth of God hath gained through my lie; the faithfulneſs of God is made more manifeſt by the unfaithfulneſs of men; therefore, why ſhould I be judged and condemned as a ſinner, when the glory of God will ſhine more bright upon the occaſion of my ſin? The free grace of God diſcovered in the goſpel, will be manifeſted, ſay ſome, and magnified in the pardoning of ſin; let us therefore ſin our fill, that the immeaſurableneſs of divine goodneſs may appear, and the abundance of pardoning mercy may abound." The apoſtle rejects this doctrine and practice, of doing evil that good may come, with the greateſt abhorrency and utmoſt deteſtation, affirming, that their damnation is juſt, who either faſten this doctrine upon the apoſtles, or affirm it themſelves. *Learn* hence, That no perſon muſt adventure to do the leaſt of evils; no, not for the ſake of the greateſt good. True, Almighty God can bring good out of evil, by the ſame word of his power, by which he brought life out of darkneſs, and ſomething out of nothing; but to do readily evil for the ſake of obtaining the greateſt good, is dangerous and damnable. Sin, or that which is ſinful, ought not to be choſen, whatever we chuſe. 2. That nothing is more juſt and righteous than their damnation, who will adventure to do evil that good may come: A good intention will not excuſe, never juſtify a bad action in the ſight of God: He will condemn evil-doers, though they do evil that good may come. 3. That the apoſtle pronounces their damnation juſt, who laid theſe ſlanders to the apoſtle's charge, as if their doctrine did allow of this damnable practice, to do evil that good might come: *Their damnation is juſt, who thus ſlanderouſly report and affirm, that we ſay, Let us do evil that good may come.* Whence *note*, That it is a juſt thing with God, to damn thoſe men that raiſe or ſpread abroad reports of his miniſters doctrine, as giving liberty to licentious practices; Verily, the ſlander of a miniſter's regular doctrine is more than ordinary ſlander. The original word here rendered *ſlander*, ſignifies blaſphemy; the word which God makes uſe of, to ſet forth his own reproaches by. Behold God's reſentment of his miniſter's wrongs! The ſlander and contempt caſt upon our office and doctrine, is eſteemed blaſphemy in God's account: *As we be ſlanderouſly reported* or *blaſphemed*; *and as ſome affirm that we ſay, Let us*, &c.

9 What then? are we better *than they?* No, in no wiſe: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin;

Here the apoſtle ſtarts another objection in the name of the Jews: Some of them might ſay, "Are we not better than the Gentiles? Do we not excel them in outward privileges? Is not the knowledge of the law found with us, and the oracles of God committed to us?" True, ſays the apoſtle, the Jews are better than the Gentiles in reſpect of outward diſpenſations, but not in reſpect of inward qualifications. Jews and Gentiles are alike by natural corruption; alike under ſin by actual tranſgreſſions, and ſo ſtand in need both alike of juſtification by faith; and the goſpel-righteouſneſs is no leſs neceſſary for the one, than for the other. To prove what he had ſaid, namely, That the whole race of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, were under ſin, and void of all true righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and conſequently ſtanding in need equally of juſtification by Chriſt; the apoſtle produces ſeveral texts out of the Old Teſtament, and particularly out of the xivth Pſalm, which ſpeaks fully of the original corruption, and univerſal depravation of all mankind, in the following words:

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: 11 There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open ſepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed deceit; the poiſon of aſps *is* under their lips: 14 Whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs. 15 Their feet *are* ſwift to ſhed blood. 16 Deſtruction and miſery *are* in their ways. 17 And the way of peace have they not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Obſerve here, How the apoſtle proves his aſſertion; namely, That both Jew and Gentile were under the guilt both of original and actual tranſgreſſion, from the teſtimony of David, Pſalm xiv. where the ſtate of corrupt nature is deſcribed, and the natural condition of all men declared, till they are either reſtrained or renewed by the grace of God; *There is none righteous, no not one.* Which words are true in ſeveral reſpects: 1. There is none originally righteous, no not one; none righteous in their firſt plantation in the world, until they are tranſplanted into the body of Chriſt, wrought and faſhioned by his Holy Spirit. 2. There is none efficiently righteous, no not one: None have a righteouſneſs of their own making, but of God's. The righteouſneſs of juſtification and ſanctification both are from Chriſt, not from ourſelves; we are his workmanſhip, not our own. 3. There is none meritoriouſly righteous, no not one; none can deſerve or demand any thing as a due debt at God's hand; but the moſt righteous and holy ſaints are but unprofitable ſervants. 4. There is none perfectly and completely righteous, no not one; but inchoatively only: None righteous in a ſtrict and legal ſenſe, but in a goſpel and qualified ſenſe only: *He that doth righteouſneſs is righteous*, in the account of God; and, as ſuch, ſhall be accepted and rewarded by him. *Obſerve*, 2. How the apoſtle proves the corruption of mankind in general, by an induction of particulars. He ſurveys him in all the principal faculties of his ſoul, and members of his body; his underſtanding, will, and affections; his eye, hand, tongue, and feet, all corrupted and depraved: *Their mouth is full of curſing*, and bitter ſpeeches; *Their throat is an open ſepulchre*, gaping after, and devouring the good name of their neighbours, and belching out filthy, ill-ſcented, and unſavoury words againſt them. *They ſeek not God* in any thing they do, and *there is no fear of God*, no reſpect of

God *before their eyes.* The apoſtle ſhuts up all with this, becauſe want of the fear of God before our eyes, is the fountain from which all other evils do proceed and flow. The fear of God is the bridle and curb which reſtrains from ſin; where that is wanting, all iniquity abounds; where that is preſent and prevalent, it keeps the ſoul cloſe to God, Jer. xxxii. 32. *I will put my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me.* We uſually depart far, yea, run from thoſe we fear; but the true fear of God will make us cleave cloſe unto him, becauſe love is intermixed with it, and renders it a delightful fear.

19 Now we know, that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Note here, Leſt the Jews ſhould think to elude or evade the force of the foregoing teſtimonies concerning man's corruption and depravation, as not belonging to them, but to the Gentiles only; he tells them, that *what the law*, that is, the books of the Old Teſtament, do thus *ſay*, it ſays *to thoſe that are under the law*; that is, to thoſe that are ſubjects of it, and obliged by it; to ſuch as are under the inſtruction and direction of it, as the Jews are known to be; and if ſo, then *every mouth muſt be ſtopped*; Jew and Gentile both muſt own themſelves, before God, obnoxious to his wrath, without being able to ſay any thing for themſelves. *Learn* hence, That the holy law of God brings ſuch plain evidence and conviction with it, that no man can have a word to ſpeak againſt it: When God ſpreads before men the purity of his laws, and the impiety of their own lives, every man muſt ſit down ſilent, and lay his hand upon his mouth, not having one word to object why ſentence ſhould not be executed, becauſe they have all tranſgreſſed.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight. For by the law *is* the knowledge of ſin.

Here we have St. Paul's concluſion drawn from all the foregoing premiſes: "Seeing all mankind, ſince the fall, are diſabled, by their innate corruption, and actual tranſgreſſion, to fulfil the law, either natural or written; it muſt neceſſarily follow, that *by the works of the law can no fleſh*, that is, no perſon, neither Jew or Gentile, *be juſtified before God*; all the efficacy which the law now has, being to diſcover ſin, and condemn for ſinning: *By the law is the knowledge of ſin.* By the law we apprehend our malady, but by the goſpel we underſtand our remedy." *Learn* hence, That no ſon of Adam, ſince the breach of the law, can ſtand juſtified before God by his beſt obedience to the commands of the law: By being juſtified, underſtand that gracious act in God, whereby we are acquitted, and finally diſcharged from the guilt and puniſhment of all our ſins. By the law, and the deeds of the law, we are to underſtand ceremonial and moral law both, eſpecially the latter; for by the moral law, is the knowledge of ſin: It is the moral law that forbids theft, adultery, &c. Beſides, it is evident, that the antitheſis, or oppoſition, runs all along, not between ceremonial works and moral works, but between works in general, and faith: The law of works, and the law of faith, are oppoſed to each other, ver. 27. But why *can no fleſh*, that is, no perſon, *be juſtified by the deeds of the law*. *Anſ.* 1. Becauſe he is fleſh, that is, depraved by original corruption, and obnoxious to the curſe of the law, by actual tranſgreſſion. Now, that which condemns, cannot juſtify: An after obedience to the law, can never atone for a former diſobedience. 2. Becauſe the beſt obedience we can perform to the law, is imperfect. Now, he that mixes but one ſin with a thouſand good works, can never be juſtified by his works. He that would be juſtified by his works, muſt not have one bad work amongſt all his good works; for that one will lay him under the curſe and condemnatory ſentence of the law; Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not*, &c. Nothing that is imperfect can be a ground of a juſtification before God, becauſe the deſign of God is to exalt his juſtice, as well as his mercy, in the juſtification of a ſinner. Again, 3. No fleſh can be juſtified by the works of the law, becauſe all that we do, or can do, is a due debt which we owe to the law: We owe all poſſible obedience to the law as creatures; and by performing our obligation as creatures, we can never pay our debts as tranſgreſſors. But now, our ſurety, Chriſt Jeſus, who has given ſatisfaction for our violation of the law, was under no obligation to the law, but what he voluntarily laid himſelf under upon our account. And if ſo, let us eternally bleſs God with the higheſt elevation of ſoul for the goſpel-revelation, for his ſending his own Son to juſtify and ſave us, by working out a complete and everlaſting righteouſneſs: And let us plead with him inceſſantly for the juſtifying faith, which is as neceſſary in its place as the death of Chriſt. One renders God reconcilable unto poor ſinners, the other actually reconciled.

21 But now the righteouſneſs of God without the law is manifeſted, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteouſneſs of God *which is* by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference. 23 For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God;

Our apoſtle having proved negatively, that by the works of the law righteouſneſs and juſtification is not to be had for any perſon, be he Jew or Gentile: He comes now to prove the affirmative part of his aſſertion; namely, that God hath manifeſted another way of juſtification in the goſpel, to wit, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. "For, ſaith he, now, that is, ſince the coming of Chriſt, ſince the diſpenſation of the goſpel; *the righteouſneſs of God*, that is, the righteouſneſs which God appoints, approves, and accepts for a ſinner's juſtification, *is without the law*, that is, without performing the works of the law, either natural, ceremonial, or moral: and is manifeſted to be the righteouſneſs which is by faith in Chriſt: which all that believe and obey the goſpel, ſhall be admitted to the participation of, both Jew and Gentile: *for there is no difference*; that is, no difference between Jew and Gentile, as to the way and means of their juſtification." And the reaſon aſſigned by the apoſtle, why there is, and can be, no other way of juſtification but this, we have in the next verſe, namely, *becauſe all have ſinned*, the whole race of mankind, not one mere man excepted; and ſo will *fall ſhort* of obtaining *the glory of God* and eternal life, if they ſeek it not in this way. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is no ſtanding or appearing before God for any creature, in a creature's righteouſneſs. There is much unrighteouſneſs in our righteouſneſs, and therefore we cannot ſtand juſtified before God. Beſides, the the wiſdom of God has appointed another righteouſneſs, or the righteouſneſs of another, even the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, to ſtand before him in; *But now the righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted, even the righteouſneſs of God which is by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.* 2. The neceſſity and excellency of faith; *the righteouſneſs of God is unto all, and upon all that believe:* Faith is the bond of union, the inſtrument of our juſtification, the ſpring of our conſolation; *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God*, Rom. v. 1. Render we then unto faith the things which are faith's, as well as unto Chriſt the things which are Chriſt's. 3. That, in reference to, or in reſpect of, our juſtification before God, there is no difference among believers, ver. 22. *For there is no difference*; that is, no difference as to the way of juſtification, between Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free; but all, without the righteouſneſs of faith in Chriſt, muſt die, and be damned to all eternity. There is now a difference amongſt believers, with reſpect to their degrees of ſanctification, and with reſpect to their meaſures of conſolation, and will be hereafter, with reſpect to their degrees of glorification. Some ſaints have more grace and comfort on earth, and ſhall have higher degrees of glory in heaven, than others; but the juſtification of all believers is alike. There is the ſame ſin in all, not for meaſure and degree, but in reſpect of guilt and obligation to puniſhment. There is the ſame price paid, by way of ſatisfaction to divine juſtice, for all; namely, the death of Chriſt: There is the ſame righteouſneſs imputed to all, and the Spirit of holineſs imparted to all, and the ſame manſions of glory deſigned for all; *thus there is no difference.* And there is no difference amongſt believers, in reſpect of truth of grace, but much in reſpect of ſtrength of grace; no difference amongſt them in reſpect of God's promiſes, but much difference with reſpect to their performances; no difference in reſpect of God's covenant, but much difference in reſpect of God's counſels, as alſo, in reſpect of God's diſpenſations; no difference in reſpect of God's acceptation, but much in reſpect of their application; no difference as they are a body, in reſpect of their head, but much difference as they are members of that head. And if there be no difference among believers (as ſuch) before God, why ſhould there be ſo much difference amongſt themſelves, as there is oftentimes here in this world! You are all dear, truly dear to God; why ſhould you not be ſo one to another? Why ſhould not one church and one communion hold you now? Ere long, perhaps, one priſon may, one heaven ſhall certainly hold you all. *For there is no difference.*

24 Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt; 25 Whom God hath ſet forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, *I ſay*, at this time, his righteouſneſs: that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.

Note here, 1. A glorious privilege vouchſafed to believers, which the ſcriptures call *juſtification*, whereby they are judicially acquitted and diſcharged from the guilt and puniſhment of all their ſins, and accounted righteous before God. 2. The efficient cauſe of our juſtification. It is *God that juſtifies:* Who can forgive the crime, but the perſon againſt whom we have done the wrong? 3. The moving or impulſive cauſe, namely, the free grace of God: *Being juſtified freely by his grace.* 4. The meritorious cauſe, the blood-ſhedding and death of Chriſt; *through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. The final cauſe; *to declare his righteouſneſs*, not his clemency and mercy only, but his juſtice and righteouſneſs, eſpecially that attribute which diſpoſes and inclines him to puniſh ſin and ſinners. 6. The inſtrumental cauſe of juſtification, faith; *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood*, &c. Some of the papiſts, eſpecially *Cajetan* and *a Lapide*, do call faith *cauſa applicans* in our juſtification: Verily, an unapplied Chriſt juſtifies none, ſaves none. *Learn* thence, 1. That in order to a ſinner's being ſaved, he muſt be juſtified, that is, diſcharged of, abſolved from, the guilt of all ſin, upon the account of a complete ſatisfaction given to divine juſtice for ſin. 2. That not all and every ſinner, but only repenting and believing ſinners are juſtified by God. 3. That when the Lord juſtifies a believing ſinner, he doth it freely; *being juſtified freely by his grace.* It is an act of mere grace; there is nothing in the creature can merit or deſerve it: then it would be debt, and not grace. 4. That God's free grace and Chriſt's full ſatisfaction were conſiſtent, and both concurring in the believer's juſtification; we are juſtified freely by God's grace; yet, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus; *Him God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation.* The word *propitiation* is an alluſion to the mercy-ſeat, which covered the ark wherein the law was; this typified Chriſt, who fully covers our ſins, the tranſgreſſions of the law, out of God's ſight. When therefore the apoſtle ſaith that God hath ſet forth Chriſt to be a mercy-ſeat to us, *through faith in his blood*; we have reaſon to believe the blood of Chriſt, as our ſin-offering, doth make an atonement for us, and renders God propitious to us. 5. That Almighty God, in the juſtification of a believing ſinner, is not only gracious and merciful, but juſt and righteous, in the moſt exalted degree: *To declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſin.* Where *note*, That the deſign and end of God in exacting ſatisfaction from Chriſt, was to declare his righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſin; but the apoſtle would have us take notice, that our juſtification is an act of juſtice as well as mercy, and that God, as he is a juſt God, cannot condemn the believer, ſince Chriſt has ſatisfied for his ſins. O bleſſed be God! that pardon of ſin is built upon that very attribute, the juſtice of God, which is ſo affrighting and dreadful to the offending ſinner. This attribute, which ſeemed to be the main bar againſt remiſſion, is now become the very ground and reaſon why God remits. Hence ſaith St. John, *God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins:* Faithful with reſpect to his own promiſe, and juſt with reſpect to his Son's ſatisfaction. Who then can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, when juſtice itſelf doth juſtify them? Behold here the ſweet harmony of the divine attributes in juſtifying and pardoning the believer! One attribute is not robbed to pay another; neither is one attribute raiſed upon the ruin of another; but juſtice and mercy both triumph. And well might the juſtice of God triumph, for never was it thus honoured before, to have ſuch a perſon as the Son of God ſtand at its bar, and ſuch a ſum as his Son's blood paid down at once, by way of ſatisfaction, to its due demands. O glorious and all-wiſe contrivance! whereby God made ſufficient proviſion for the reparation of his honour, for the vindication of his holineſs, and for the manifeſtation of his truth and faithfulneſs, and for the preſent conſolation, and eternal ſalvation of all repenting and believing ſinners, to the end of the world.

27 Where *is* boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

The apoſtle having laid down in the foregoing verſes, the nature of juſtification exactly in the ſeveral and reſpective cauſes of it, declares in this verſe, what is the conſequent of this doctrine, namely, the excluding of all ſelf-confidence and boaſting in ourſelves, or in any works done by ourſelves: *Where is boaſting then?* *Learn* thence, That man is naturally a very proud creature, prone to boaſt of, and glory in, any excellency, either real or ſuppoſed, belonging to himſelf. 2. That God has taken care to give a check to this inſolent pride of man, and to cut off all occaſion of boaſting from him, 1 Cor. i. 29. *That no fleſh ſhould glory in his ſight.* Whilſt God intended to give man glory, he took a courſe to cut off all glorying from man. 3. That the courſe which the wiſdom of God has taken to hide pride from man's eyes, and to cut off all occaſion of boaſting from him, is by denying him juſtification by his own works; and ordaining, that the meritorious *cauſe* of juſtification ſhould not lie in himſelf, but in another. Grace muſt have all the glory; not the law of works, but the law of faith juſtifieth and ſaveth all believers.

28 Therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified
by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 *Is he* the
God of the Jews only? *is he* not alſo of the Gentiles?
Yes, of the Gentiles alſo: 30 Seeing *it is*
one God which ſhall juſtify the circumciſion by
faith, and uncircumciſion through faith.

Note here, The concluſion drawn by the apoſtle, from all that he had been diſcourſing of, in the foregoing chapters: namely, that God's way of juſtification of a guilty ſinner is not by works done by him, but by faith in the Mediator, who hath ſatisfied the juſtice of God for him: *Therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law.* *Learn* thence, That juſtification from our paſt ſins is by faith alone, without reſpect to any works of ours, done either before or ſince converſion. 2. How the apoſtle doth extend his propoſition univerſally to all ſorts of perſons, Jews and Gentiles; that is, the whole race of mankind; affirming, that God will juſtify circumciſed believers, and uncircumciſed believers, one and the ſame way, even by the way of grace and faith: ver. 30. *It is one God which juſtifieth,* &c. Where *note,* The argument is drawn from the unity or oneneſs of God, which is not to be underſtood ſo much of the unity of his eſſence and nature, as of his will and purpoſe; yet as God is one and the ſame unchangeable God in his nature, ſo is he as immutable in his will and purpoſe. Having therefore determined and declared *his way* of juſtifying all ſinners to be one and the ſame to all nations, both Jew and Gentile, even by faith alone in his Son Chriſt Jeſus; no other way is to be expected from that God who is unchangable in his purpoſe. *Learn* thence, That God's ways and method of juſtifying all ſinners, both Jews and Gentiles, great and ſmall, is, and ever will be the ſame, namely, by faith alone, without works. What falſe notions ſoever men may entertain in their minds about it, and when the pride of men has arraigned the wiſdom of God never ſo much, the apoſtle's concluſion will remain like a rock unſhaken, ver. 28. *Therefore we conclude, that a man,* &c.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we eſtabliſh the law.

Note here, The wiſe and holy caution which our apoſtle uſes to take away the calumny and reproach caſt upon him by the adverſaries of the doctrine of free juſtification by faith; as if this would render the law of God void and altogether uſeleſs: *Do we then make void the law of God?* As if he had ſaid, "There may be thoſe that will ſay ſo, but untruly; for we eſtabliſh the law; becauſe we acknowledge, that without exact obedience and conformity to the law, both in our natures and in our lives, as a rule of living, there can be no ſalvation." *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, doth not overthrow, but eſtabliſh the law. Here *note,* That it is the moral, not ceremonial law, which the apoſtle ſpeaks of. The ceremonial law is utterly aboliſhed by the goſpel; but the moral law is not aboliſhed, but eſtabliſhed by the goſpel; or, if aboliſhed, it is only as a covenant, not as a rule. Chriſt has relaxed the law in point of danger, but not in point of duty; for the law is holy, and juſt, and good, and is not diſannulled, but eſtabliſhed by the goſpel: Becauſe by the goſpel we obtain grace, in ſome meaſure, to fulfil the law, and yield a ſincere obedience to it; which, for the ſake of Chriſt's perfect and ſpotleſs obedience, ſhall find a gracious acceptance with God. Therefore, with the higheſt elevation of ſoul, let us bleſs God for Jeſus Chriſt, and for the goſpel revelation, which has ſo fully diſcovered, and clearly revealed to us the only way of juſtification by faith in the Son of God, who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. IV.

In the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, our apoſtle laid down a poſitive concluſion, that a man is juſtified by faith without the works of the law. *In this he undertakes* *to confirm the truth of that concluſion, by inſtancing the patriarch* Abraham, *from whoſe juſtification by faith, the apoſtle infers the juſtification of all believers with him.*

WHAT ſhall we then ſay that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the fleſh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were juſtified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "What ſhall we ſay? Shall any one affirm, that Abraham our father found or obtained righteouſneſs by, or according to the fleſh; that is, by being circumciſed in the fleſh, or by any work of righteouſneſs which he had done? Surely no: For if Abraham were juſtified by circumciſion, or any other works of his own, he hath whereof to glory; that is, ground of boaſting in theſe works by which he was thus juſtified. But manifeſt it is, that he had not whereof to boaſt and glory before God; therefore, he was not juſtified by circumciſion, nor any works of his own." *Learn* hence, That no righteouſneſs of our own, no ſervices we can perform, are ſufficient to procure our juſtification in the ſight of God: For if we are juſtified by our works, it muſt be by works either before faith, or after faith. Not before faith; for the corruption of nature, and man's impotent condition thereby, will give check to any ſuch thought. Surely, unrighteouſneſs cannot make us righteous, no more than impurity can makes us clean. Nor do works after faith, juſtify; for then a believer is not juſtified upon his believing, but by his works after his believing; and faith is not the juſtifying grace, but only a preparation to thoſe works which juſtify; which is contrary to the whole ſtrain of the apoſtle throughout the epiſtle, who aſcribes juſtification to faith in the blood of Chriſt without works. In ſhort, no righteouſneſs of man is perfect; therefore, no righteouſneſs of man can be juſtifying: There is nothing that a man doth, but it is defective, and conſequently, has matter of condemnation in it: Now, that which is condemning, cannot be juſtifying; that which falls ſhort of the holineſs of the law, can never free us from the condemnatory ſentence and curſe of the law. Now, all works after faith fall ſhort of that perfection which the law requireth. 2. That the deſign of God was to juſtify us in ſuch a way as to ſtrip us of our own. *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt*, ſays the apoſtle often. We are juſtified by faith, to exclude boaſting, which would not have been excluded by the law of works.

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Obſerve here, 1. The account which the ſcripture gives of Abraham's juſtification; it was by faith alone; *He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteouſneſs:* That is, he firmly believed the promiſe of God, that he would give him a ſon, in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed. And by means of this faith, he was reckoned or eſteemed righteous before God, and not by means of his works. 2. The apoſtle's argument, to prove that Abraham was juſtified by faith, and not by works; had he works of perfect holineſs, then in ſtrict juſtice a reward might have been expected by him as a due debt, and not given him in a way of grace and favour. For *to him that worketh*, that is, with a deſign and intent to obtain juſtification by his works, *is the reward reckoned not of grace, but of debt*; he having performed all that was required, in order to his being righteous before God. *But to him that worketh not*; that is, worketh not to the intent and end forementioned; viz. to procure juſtification by working, but ſeeks that in a way of believing; *his faith is counted for righteouſneſs. To him that worketh not, but believeth*, &c. We muſt not underſtand it abſolutely; for he that believeth, worketh: But *ſecundum quid*, after a ſort, he is ſaid not to work; becauſe he worketh not with a deſign to ſtand righteous before God by his works. Again, by him *that worketh not*, we are not to underſtand an idle, lazy believer, that takes no care of the duties of obedience; no, an idle faith is an ineffectual faith, and can never be a ſaving faith: But the meaning is, he worketh not in a law-ſenſe, to the ends and intentions of the firſt covenant, to make up a righteouſneſs to cover himſelf by his own working: Being convinced of his utter inability to work out his own righteouſneſs by the law, and ſeeing all his endeavours to obey the law, fall ſhort of righteouſneſs; he is therefore ſaid in a law-ſenſe not to work, becauſe he doth not work ſo as to anſwer the purpoſe and end of the law, which accepts of nothing ſhort of perfect and complete obedience. And whereas it is here ſaid, *That God juſtifieth the ungodly*; the meaning is, ſuch as have been ungodly, not ſuch as continue ſo. The apoſtle deſcribes the temper and frame of their hearts and lives before juſtification, and not after it; as it found them, not as it leaves them. True, Chriſt juſtifies the ungodly, yet ſuch as continue ungodly are not juſtified by him: We muſt bring credentials from our ſanctification, to bear witneſs to the truth of our juſtification.

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9 *Cometh* this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion *only*, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? For we ſay, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.

Here the apoſtle moves the queſtion, namely, Whether the forementioned bleſſedneſs of pardon of ſin, and juſtification by faith, belongs to the circumciſed Jews only, or to the uncircumciſed Gentiles alſo? which argument carries with it the force of a ſtrong affirmation, that ſeeing faith was imputed to Abraham for righteouſneſs, many years before he was circumciſed; therefore the uncircumciſed Gentiles, as well as the circumciſed Jews, ſhall by faith be made partakers of the ſame bleſſedneſs, unto which Abraham was intitled before he was circumciſed. *Learn* hence, That God has appointed one and the ſame way and method for the juſtification and ſalvation of all perſons, circumciſed and uncircumciſed, Jew and Gentile, honourable and ignoble; namely, juſtification by faith in the blood of his Son, without which no church privileges, or ſpiritual prerogatives whatſoever, will intitle them to real bleſſedneſs. Abraham believed unto righteouſneſs before he was circumciſed; therefore, the Gentiles by faith ſhall be accounted righteous, though they never be circumciſed.

11 And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which *he had* yet being uncircumciſed: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed, that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo; 12 And the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham which *he had* being *yet* uncircumciſed.

Here the apoſtle declares the reaſon why, and the end for which, Abraham was circumciſed, ſeeing he was juſtified by faith in the promiſed Meſſiah, long before circumciſion. He tells us, that Abraham received circumciſion, *as a ſign and ſeal of the covenant* made with him, and to his ſeed, Gen. xvii. and as an obligation that the righteouſneſs of faith was the true way for a ſinner to become righteous; which righteouſneſs Abraham had obtained whilſt he was uncircumciſed, that ſo he might be the father in a ſpiritual ſenſe of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who imitated him in his faith, and in the holineſs and obedience of his life. *Note* here, 1. The perſon inſtituting the ſacrament of circumciſion: God, and not Abraham: *He received circumciſion*; that is, by the appointment of God he was circumciſed. Sacraments muſt be of divine inſtitution, not of human invention. The church can make no ſacraments; her duty is, with care and caution to adminiſter them. There is a fourfold word requiſite to a ſacrament. A word of inſtitution; a word of command; a word of promiſe; a word of bleſſing. The elements are cyphers: It is the inſtitution makes them figures. Divine inſtitution is as neceſſary to a ſacrament, as the royal inſcription is to current money. 2. The nature of ſacraments in general, and of circumciſion in particular. They are ſigns and ſeals; *He received the ſign of circumciſion*; *a ſeal of the righteouſneſs by faith*. The circumciſion, 1. Was a ſign and token of the covenant which God made with Abraham and the Jews. It was a commemorative ſign of God's covenant with Abraham: A repreſentative ſign of Abraham's faith and obedience towards God: A demonſtrative ſign of original ſin, and the depravity of human nature: A diſcriminating and diſtinguiſhing ſign of the true church and people of God from all the reſt of the world: An intimating ſign, by which all ſtrangers, that were received into the commonwealth of Iſrael, were admitted into the Jewiſh church: And laſtly, It was a prefigurative ſign of baptiſm, which, in the Chriſtian church, was to ſucceed in the room of circumciſion. 2. Circumciſion was not a ſign only, but a ſeal alſo; *A ſeal of the righteouſneſs by faith*; it was a ſeal, both on God's part, and on Abraham's alſo. A ſeal on God's part, to confirm all the promiſes made to Abraham and his ſeed. 3. A ſeal on his and their parts, to bind them to renounce the ſervice of all other gods, and to oblige them to the obſervation of the whole law. *Note*, laſtly, The character and deſcription here given of true believers; they are ſuch as *walk in the ſteps of faithful Abraham.* They have not only Abraham to their father, but they walk in the footſteps of their father's faith. As Abraham readily obeyed the call of God, ſo do they: As Abraham left his idolatrous country and kindred, and though he had opportunity of returning, yet never returned more; ſo do the faithful ſons and daughters of Abraham leave all known ſins, and no temptation can prevail with them to return to the delightful practice of them. Did Abraham break through all impediments, difficulties, and diſcouragements whatſoever? So do and will all thoſe that tread in the faith of their father Abraham, ſurmount all difficulties, bid defiance to all dangers, that they may yield a chearful and perſevering obedience to the commands of the God of Abraham: Few of the children of Abraham's fleſh, but all the children of his faith, do thus walk in the ſteps of their renowned father.

13 For the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his ſeed, through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith.

That is, the great promiſe which God made to Abraham and his ſeed, that they ſhould poſſeſs that rich and pleaſant part of the world, the land of Canaan, under which alſo heaven itſelf was typically promiſed and comprehended, was not made upon condition of their performing perfect obedience to the law, but they were to obtain it by faith; that is, by truſting to, and depending upon the gracious promiſe of a faithful God. *Note* here, The argument couched for juſtification *to confirm the truth of that concluſion, by inſtancing the patriarch* Abraham, *from whoſe juſtification by faith, the apoſtle infers the juſtification of all believers with him.*

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Obſerve here, That to the example of Abraham, the apoſtle ſubjoins the teſtimony of David, Pſal. xxxii. who deſcribes the bleſſedneſs of that man to whom God imputeth righteouſneſs, to wit, the righteouſneſs of the Mediator, without any works brought before God to be juſtified by, ſaying, *Bleſſed is the man whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered, and iniquity not imputed.* Sin, in reſpect of the offence, is remitted; in reſpect of the filth or turpitude of it, is covered; in reſpect of the puniſhment, not imputed. This heap of words, ſerves only to amplify and ſet forth the abundant grace of God in the act of pardoning ſin. *Learn* hence, 1. That to pardon ſin, is God's prerogative; he forgiveth iniquity, and covereth tranſgreſſion. 2. That pardon of ſin is a covering of ſin; not ſuch a covering of ſin, as that God cannot ſee it in a juſtified perſon, to chaſtiſe him for it; but ſo covered, as not to puniſh him with wrath and condemnation for it. 3. That God's act in pardoning and covering ſin, is extenſive and perfect, full and final: Iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin, is forgiven, covered, and not imputed. 4. That tranſcendent is the bleſſedneſs of thoſe whoſe iniquity is pardoned, and their tranſgreſſions covered. *Bleſſedneſſes*, ſaith the original, belong to the man whoſe iniquity is forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute tranſgreſſion.

9 *Cometh* this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion *only*, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? For we ſay, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.

Here the apoſtle moves the queſtion, namely, Whether the forementioned bleſſedneſs of pardon of ſin, and juſtification by faith, belongs to the circumciſed Jews only, or to the uncircumciſed Gentiles alſo? which argument carries with it the force of a ſtrong affirmation, that ſeeing faith was imputed to Abraham for righteouſneſs, many years before he was circumciſed; therefore the uncircumciſed Gentiles, as well as the circumciſed Jews, ſhall by faith be made partakers of the ſame bleſſedneſs, unto which Abraham was intitled before he was circumciſed. *Learn* hence, That God has appointed one and the ſame way and method for the juſtification and ſalvation of all perſons, circumciſed and uncircumciſed, Jew and Gentile, honourable and ignoble; namely, juſtification by faith in the blood of his Son, without which no church privileges, or ſpiritual prerogatives whatſoever, will intitle them to real bleſſedneſs. Abraham believed unto righteouſneſs before he was circumciſed; therefore, the Gentiles by faith ſhall be accounted righteous, though they never be circumciſed.

11 And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which *he had* yet being uncircumciſed: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed, that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo; 12 And the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham which *he had* being *yet* uncircumciſed.

Here the apoſtle declares the reaſon why, and the end for which, Abraham was circumciſed, ſeeing he was juſtified by faith in the promiſed Meſſiah, long before circumciſion. He tells us, that Abraham received circumciſion, *as a ſign and ſeal of the covenant* made with him, and to his ſeed, Gen. xvii. and as an obligation that the righteouſneſs of faith was the true way for a ſinner to become righteous; which righteouſneſs Abraham had obtained whilſt he was uncircumciſed, that ſo he might be the father in a ſpiritual ſenſe of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who imitated him in his faith, and in the holineſs and obedience of his life. *Note* here, 1. The perſon inſtituting the ſacrament of circumciſion: God, and not Abraham: *He received circumciſion*; that is, by the appointment of God he was circumciſed. Sacraments muſt be of divine inſtitution, not of human invention. The church can make no ſacraments; her duty is, with care and caution to adminiſter them. There is a fourfold word requiſite to a ſacrament. A word of inſtitution; a word of command; a word of promiſe; a word of bleſſing. The elements are cyphers: It is the inſtitution makes them figures. Divine inſtitution is as neceſſary to a ſacrament, as the royal inſcription is to current money. 2. The nature of ſacraments in general, and of circumciſion in particular. They are ſigns and ſeals; *He received the ſign of circumciſion*; *a ſeal of the righteouſneſs by faith*. The circumciſion, 1. Was a ſign and token of the covenant which God made with Abraham and the Jews. It was a commemorative ſign of God's covenant with Abraham: A repreſentative ſign of Abraham's faith and obedience towards God: A demonſtrative ſign of original ſin, and the depravity of human nature: A diſcriminating and diſtinguiſhing ſign of the true church and people of God from all the reſt of the world: An intimating ſign, by which all ſtrangers, that were received into the commonwealth of Iſrael, were admitted into the Jewiſh church: And laſtly, It was a prefigurative ſign of baptiſm, which, in the Chriſtian church, was to ſucceed in the room of circumciſion. 2. Circumciſion was not a ſign only, but a ſeal alſo; *A ſeal of the righteouſneſs by faith*; it was a ſeal, both on God's part, and on Abraham's alſo. A ſeal on God's part, to confirm all the promiſes made to Abraham and his ſeed. 3. A ſeal on his and their parts, to bind them to renounce the ſervice of all other gods, and to oblige them to the obſervation of the whole law. *Note*, laſtly, The character and deſcription here given of true believers; they are ſuch as *walk in the ſteps of faithful Abraham*. They have not only Abraham to their father, but they walk in the footſteps of their father's faith. As Abraham readily obeyed the call of God, ſo do they: As Abraham left his idolatrous country and kindred, and though he had opportunity of returning, yet never returned more; ſo do the faithful ſons and daughters of Abraham leave all known ſins, and no temptation can prevail with them to return to the delightful practice of them. Did Abraham break through all impediments, difficulties, and diſcouragements whatſoever? So do and will all thoſe that tread in the faith of their father Abraham, ſurmount all difficulties, bid defiance to all dangers, that they may yield a chearful and perſevering obedience to the commands of the God of Abraham: Few of the children of Abraham's fleſh, but all the children of his faith, do thus walk in the ſteps of their renowned father.

13 For the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his ſeed, through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith.

That is, the great promiſe which God made to Abraham and his ſeed, that they ſhould poſſeſs that rich and pleaſant part of the world, the land of Canaan, under which alſo heaven itſelf was typically promiſed and comprehended, was not made upon condition of their performing perfect obedience to the law, but they were to obtain it by faith; that is, by truſting to, and depending upon the gracious promiſe of a faithful God. *Note* here, The argument couched for juſtification by faith without works, which is the apoſtle's grand ſcope, deſign and drift; it runs thus: "If the promiſe made to the father of the faithful was accompliſhed, not by legal obedience, but by the righteouſneſs of faith; then it follows, that all his children are juſtified by faith, as Abraham their father was. But the promiſe of the earthly inheritance, and under it, of the heavenly one, was accompliſhed not by the law, but by the righteouſneſs of Abraham's faith: Therefore, juſtification is not to be expected by the works of the law, but by faith alone."

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect.

That is, If they which ſeek to be juſtified by the works of the law be heirs of this promiſed inheritance; then *faith*, that is, the way of juſtification by faith, preſcribed by God, is to no purpoſe; for to what end ſhould we by faith ſeek righteouſneſs in another, if by our legal obedience we can find it in ourſelves? Here then lies couched another argument, to confirm the apoſtle's doctrine of juſtification by faith: Thus, that only juſtifies, unto which a gracious promiſe of juſtification is made; but no ſuch promiſe is made to any man for his weak and imperfect keeping of the law, but for his believing there is; therefore, by the law there can be no juſtification, but by faith only.

15 Becauſe the law worketh wrath. For where no law is, *there is* no tranſgreſſion.

Here the apoſtle ſuggeſts another reaſon, why no juſtification can be expected by the law, becauſe it condemns, rather than juſtifies. *The law worketh wrath:* That is, it diſcovers the wrath of God due to our tranſgreſſion, and then pronounces condemnation upon the tranſgreſſor: *for were there no law*, either natural or revealed, *there would be no tranſgreſſion*, and conſequently no condemnation. Here *note*, 1. The uſe of the law; it diſcovers ſin, it convinces of ſin, it condemns for ſin, it denounces the wrath of God due unto ſin. And 2. The apoſtle's argument for the uſe of the law; he infers an utter impoſſibility of being juſtified by the law. That which condemns, cannot juſtify; but the law of God condemns the ſinner for his tranſgreſſion; therefore, it can never be the inſtrument and means of his juſtification.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that it *might be* by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

The apoſtle here aſſigns a double cauſe, why the wiſdom of God has appointed juſtification and ſalvation to be obtained in the way of faith: namely, 1. That it might be of free and undeſerved grace and favour; for to be juſtified by faith, and by grace, are all one with the apoſtle. And 2. *That the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed:* That is, that God's promiſe might ſtand firm and ſure to all the believing ſeed of Abraham, not only to all the children of the fleſh, to whom the law was given, but to all the children of his faith, even Gentiles as well as Jews; he being the father of all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles. *Learn* hence, That if our juſtification and ſalvation did depend upon our performing perfect obedience to the law, it would never be ſure, but always uncertain, becauſe of our impotency and weakneſs to keep and obſerve it. The apoſtle, chap. viii. 3. tells us, That the law is weak through the fleſh; though the truth is, the law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that; the law has the ſame authority for commanding that ever it had, but we have not the ſame ability for obeying. It is our wickedneſs that is the ſole cauſe of the law's weakneſs: Had every man the ſame integrity, the law would have the ſame ability that ever it had, both to juſtify and ſave us.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth thoſe things which be not as though they were.

Our apoſtle, in this and the following verſes, enters upon an high commendation of Abraham's faith, magnifying and extolling the ſame, for and upon account of ſundry excellencies which are found in it. And here, 1. He takes notice how Abraham's faith was ſtrongly acted and exerciſed on the almighty power of God: *He believed in God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth thoſe things which are not, as though they were:* That is, the Lord having promiſed to make Abraham the father of many nations, when he had no ſeed, nor was ever likely to have any; he believed the thing to be both credible and poſſible, becauſe God had ſpoken it, how improbable ſoever. And although, with reſpect to generation, he looked upon Sarah's body, and his own, as good as dead; for ſhe was barren and paſt bearing, and he was an hundred years old, and paſt all hopes of having a child; yet he exerciſed his faith on the promiſe and power of God, *who quickeneth the dead*, that is, his own dead body, and Sarah's barren womb; *and calleth thoſe things which be not*, that is, the Gentiles, which were not then a people, *as if they were*. *Learn* hence, That it is a noble act and exerciſe of faith, to believe God upon his bare word, and to aſſent to truth, though never ſo improbable. As whatever God doth is good, becauſe he doth it; ſo whatever God ſays is true, becauſe he ſpeaks it: And accordingly, faith, which is an aſſent of the underſtanding to what God reveals, depends upon the veracity of God, for making good his own word, and fulfilling his own promiſe. Faith has a threefold excellency; it aſſents to the truths of God, though never ſo improbable; it puts men upon duties, though ſeemingly unreaſonable (witneſs *Abraham's offering up Iſaac*;) and it enables to ſufferings, be they never ſo afflictive. But from believing plain contradictions and impoſſibilities, as the church of Rome would have us in the point of tranſubſtantiation: Faith deſires there to be excuſed. *Note* here, 2. That as Abraham's faith exceedingly honoured God; ſo God highly honours Abraham's faith, making him like himſelf, *a father of many nations*. As God is an univerſal Father, not of one, but of all nations, ſo was Abraham; as God is their ſpiritual father, not by carnal generation, ſo was Abraham: God made faithful Abraham like himſelf, a father, not of this or that nation only, but univerſally of all believers, among all nations, believing after his example. Thus Abraham's faith honours God, and God honours Abraham's faith, ſtyling him the Father of the Faithful throughout all generations.

18 Who againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was ſpoken, So ſhall thy ſeed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb, 20 He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully perſuaded that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform.

Here St. Paul farther expatiates in the commendation of Abraham's faith, telling us, *That againſt hope he believed in hope*; that is, he had a ſtrong hope, a firm faith and truſt in the promiſe and power of God, againſt all natural grounds of hope; namely, that he ſhould certainly have a ſon, and a ſeed like the ſtars of heaven for multitude. He farther adds, *That he conſidered not the deadneſs of his own body, nor the barrenneſs of Sarah's womb*; *neither ſtaggered at the promiſe through unbelief:* That is, he regarded not any difficulties which lay in the way of his faith, he admitted no doubts or queſtions touching the promiſe or power of God; but without all diſputing, depended fully upon God for the performance of his own promiſe, and ſo gave God the glory of his omnipotency and faithfulneſs. *Note* here, 1. What was the ground of Abraham's faith; namely, the ſpecial promiſe, yea, the abſolute promiſe of God, that he ſhould have a ſon. 2. The height and meaſure of his faith: *He was ſtrong in faith, and ſtaggered not through unbelief:* he was *fully perſuaded* of God's all-ſufficiency: it is a metaphor taken from ſhips that come into the harbour with full ſail. Thus was it with Abraham, there was not any ſail of his ſoul but what was filled with the wind of aſſurance. As a ſhip with full gale and ſtrong ſail is carried to the haven againſt winds and waves, ſo Abraham, by the ſtrength of his faith, overcame all waves of doubts and difficulties beating upon his mind. 3. What was the fruit and iſſue, the end and event of Abraham's faith, it brought glory to God: *He was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God.* All faith glories God truly, but ſtrong faith glorifies him abundantly: It gives him the glory of his power and faithfulneſs, goodneſs and truth. *Queſt.* 1. But how could Abraham's body be ſaid to be dead, when he had ſeveral children afterwards by Keturah? even ſix ſons, forty years after Sarah's death. *Anſ.* Abraham's and Sarah's bodies received now a bleſſing, or new generative faculty from God, which rendered them capable of begetting and bearing children, when by nature they were not ſo. *Queſt.* 2. Was Abraham's faith ſo ſtrong as to exclude all doubting? Did not he diſtruſt when he ſaid, *Shall a child be born to Abraham that is an hundred years old*; *and Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?* Gen. xxi. *Anſwer*, Theſe words are not words of doubting, but inquiring; they proceeded from a deſire to be further informed how theſe things could be. But Abraham laughed, and Sarah alſo, at the mention of a ſon? True, they did both laugh, but not alike; Abraham's laughter proceeded from admiration and joy, but Sarah's from diffidence and diſtruſt: And accordingly, we find Sarah reprimanded, but not Abraham reprehended, for laughing: *Abraham ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief, but was ſtrong,* &c.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. 23 Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead.

Our apoſtle having, in the former part of this chapter, declared the manner of our juſtification, from an inſtance of Abraham, which having at laſt purſued, leſt we ſhould think that was Abraham's perſonal privilege, and did not concern us, he applies in the verſes before us Abraham's example unto us, aſſuring us, that as *Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, becauſe he depended upon the almighty power of God in the promiſe, and alſo looked by faith to the Meſſias promiſed, who was to come of his ſeed; ſo, ſays the apoſtle was this written for our ſakes as well as Abraham's, for our comfort and encouragement, to aſſure us, that faith ſhall be imputed to us alſo for righteouſneſs, if we firmly truſt in God, through the merits and mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where *obſerve*, The apoſtle's argument fully overthrows the Socinian doctrine, which teaches, that the godly, under the Old Teſtament, were not juſtified in the ſame way with us under the New; whereas the apoſtle fully proves, that Abraham, and all the children of Abraham, who walk in the ſteps of him their father, are juſtified alike: And accordingly, it was not thus written of him for his ſake alone, that *his faith was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, but for the benefit of us alſo; to whom the like faith ſhall be imputed for juſtification, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of juſtification by faith, through the imputed righteouſneſs of the Mediator, is no new doctrine, but as old as Abraham. Some are much offended at this word *imputed*; but as the pious biſhops, Downham and Davenant, on juſtification, well obſerve, it is no leſs than ten times mentioned, either in the term or in the ſignification of it, in this chapter: Their arguments for, and anſwers to, Bellarmin's objections againſt the imputed righteouſneſs of the Mediator, runs thus: "If Chriſt's righteouſneſs be not imputed, it is not accepted; if it be not accepted, it is not performed, and ſo there will be no redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; without this, we ſhall make Chriſt little, very little, in the juſtifying of ſinners: And why is Chriſt called the Lord our righteouſneſs, and how are we ſaid to be made the righteouſneſs of God in him? And why is faith ſo infinitely pleaſing to God, but becauſe faith brings to God a righteouſneſs, which is highly pleaſing to him, even that of the Mediator? for there is no ſtanding before God for any creature in a creature-righteouſneſs." The popiſh objections run thus:

Objection, 1. If Chriſt's righteouſneſs be imputed to us, then may we be reputed redeemers of the world, as well as he was. *Anſ.* It may as well be ſaid, the debtor may be accounted the ſurety, becauſe the ſurety's payment is accepted for the debtor. *Objection*, 2. If Chriſt's righteouſneſs be imputed to us as our's, then we ought to be accounted as righteous as himſelf. *Anſ.* It may be as well argued and concluded, that the debtor is as rich a man as the ſurety, becauſe the ſurety pays the debtor's debts. *Objection*, 3. If Chriſt's righteouſneſs be properly imputed to us, then our unrighteouſneſs was properly imputed to him, and he may be ſtrictly and truly called a ſinner. *Anſ.* Juſt as if we ſhould ſay, "If the acceptance of the ſurety's payment acquits the debtor, then the ſurety is as bad an huſband, and as much a bankrupt as the debtor himſelf." *Objection*, 4. But if Chriſt's righteouſneſs be our's, no need of any righteouſneſs of our own. *Anſ.* We plead for the meritorious righteouſneſs of Chriſt to anſwer the demands of the law, and for a perſonal righteouſneſs of our own, to anſwer the commands of the goſpel: Let us render to all their due; let us render unto Chriſt the things which are Chriſt's, to faith the things which are faith's, and to good works the things which are their's. Let us awfully adore the wiſdom of God, who has made Chriſt unto us *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification*, and *redemption*. To relieve our ignorance and folly, he is *our wiſdom*; to diſcharge us from guilt, and free us from condemnation, he is *our righteouſneſs*; to relieve us againſt the filth and pollution, the power and dominion of ſin, he is *our ſanctification*; and to reſcue us from our miſerable captivity of Satan, he is *our redemption*. Bleſſed be God for the benefit of imputed righteouſneſs to ſuch as live in the practice and power of inherent holineſs. True, our ſanctification and holineſs, when moſt perfect, cannot juſtify us before God; but it will evidence our juſtification before men, and be a witneſs to our own conſciences, that we are accepted in the Beloved.

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.

In this one verſe, we have an abridgment of the whole goſpel, the death and reſurrection of Chriſt declared, and the benefit and advantages of both aſſigned. (1.) For his death: *he was delivered for our offences.* Here *note*, 1. The perſon delivered: He, that is, Chriſt Jeſus the righteous; the Lord our righteouſneſs. 2. The perſon delivering, not expreſſed, but neceſſarily implied and underſtood. Judas delivered him, the Jews delivered him, God the Father delivered him, and Chriſt himſelf delivered himſelf. All theſe did one and the ſame act, but not for one and the ſame end: Judas delivered him for gain, the Jews for envy, the Father delivered him out of love, and Chriſt delivered himſelf in great compaſſion to a loſt world. 3. Unto what he was delivered, namely, Unto death, even the death of the croſs. This in God was an act of the higheſt juſtice, in Chriſt an act of wonderful obedience, in the Jews an act of the higheſt wickedneſs. 4. For whom, and for what he was delivered: for us and *for our offences:* It notes the vicegerency of his ſufferings, not barely for our good as the final cauſe, and for our ſins as the meritorious cauſe; but for us, in our room, place and ſtead, dying under an imputation of guilt, and dying as the ſacrificed beaſt for the expiation of that guilt: The original word here for *offences*, ſignifies great falls, grievous offences, and heinous crimes. This ſacrificed lamb was delivered and died to expiate the guilt of great ſins, and to make atonement for the greateſt ſinners. 5. It is here ſaid, that Chriſt was *delivered*, rather than died *for our offences*, to lead us to the conſideration of the firſt cauſe of his ſuffering for us; namely, The determinate counſel of God, purſuant to which there was a conceſſion or permiſſion given to wicked inſtruments to ſhed his blood; his own Father delivering him up to death for our offences. *Learn* hence, That our ſins were not only the occaſions, but the moving and impulſive cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings. He died as a ſacrifice to atone an offended Deity: As the ſacrifices of old were brought to the altar, and there ſlain, ſo Chriſt, ſubſtituting himſelf in our room and ſtead, was brought to the altar of his croſs, and there died as a victim or expiatory ſacrifice for our ſins. Thus, *He was delivered for our offences*. *Obſerve* next, Our Lord's reſurrection aſſerted, *He was raiſed again*; and its end aſſigned, *for our juſtification*. Chriſt as our ſurety was under the arreſt of death; but having given ſatisfaction by his ſufferings, our diſcharge was publiſhed to the world by his reſurrection: As by dying in our ſtead, he bare the curſe of the law; ſo by riſing again as a common perſon, we receive our acquittal from the hand of the judge. His death was our payment, his reſurrection our diſcharge: *He was raiſed again for our juſtification*. *Learn* thence, That Chriſt's reſurrection was the cauſe of our juſtification; not the meritorious cauſe, for that was his death and bloodſhed; but the declarative and perfect cauſe of our juſtification. His reſurrection was a declaration of our juſtification, the juſtice of God thereby declaring itſelf ſatisfied, by its priſoner being releaſed. His reſurrection is alſo the perfective cauſe of our juſtification. The work of redemption wrought for us by his death, is perfected, and made effectual by his reſurrection. This makes our redemption complete, which otherwiſe had been partial and imperfect; nay, none at all. It is upon Chriſt, as raiſed, that our faith muſt be ſettled: Had he not been raiſed from the dead, faith in his death had had no foundation, for it had been an unaccountable thing to believe in one that lay under the power of death. By Chriſt's reſurrection, the efficacy of his death was declared to all the world: Therefore, ſays the apoſtle, chap. viii. *Who ſhall condemn us, when Chriſt hath died for us? yea, rather is riſen again.* As our redemption was not in its glory till Chriſt's reſurrection; ſo neither is our faith in its full ſtrength and vigour, till it eyes him, *who was delivered for our offences, and raiſed again for our juſtification.*

CHAP. V.

The apoſtle having in the foregoing chapters, by many arguments demonſtrated the neceſſity of a ſinner's juſtification by faith alone in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in this chapter he declares the ſweet fruits and benefits, which flow from the foregoing privilege, to all ſuch as are in a juſtified condition; namely, Peace with God, perſeverance

perſeverance in grace, patience under affliction, hope of glory, joy in tribulation, &c.

THEREFORE, being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The firſt bleſſed effect and ſweet fruit of our juſtification by faith, is peace and reconciliation with God. Pardon and peace go together, and accompany one another; a ſinner being diſcharged from guilt, and thereby from his obnoxiouſneſs to God's wrath, is inſtantly brought into a ſtate of friendſhip and reconciliation with God; for there is no middle ſtate betwixt his favour and his wrath. *Learn* hence, 1. That peace is proclaimed in heaven betwixt God and every juſtified perſon whatſoever, the enmity betwixt God and ſuch a ſoul being taken away: Peace, I ſay, is proclaimed in the ſinner's conſcience: A perſon may be in a ſtate of peace, and yet want the ſenſe of peace. Again, There is a two-fold peace with God; one which is oppoſite to God's hatred as an enemy; the other oppoſed to God's paternal anger as a father. Now, the apoſtle here ſpeaks of the former. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God*; that is, God has no more hoſtile enmity againſt us, and will not ſatisfy his juſtice upon us, by puniſhing of us; but if we offend him, we ſhall certainly fall under his frowns and chaſtiſements, and feel the effects of his heavy diſpleaſure as an angry father! With this agrees that of the learned and pious biſhop Davenant; *Deus abſolvit juſtificatum ab omni pœna ſatisfactoria, ſed non ab omni pœna medicinali & caſtigatoria. Learn*, 2. That our reconciliation with God is ſettled upon a ſure foundation by Jeſus Chriſt: *We have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus:* that is, through him as a Mediator betwixt God and us; he made peace by the blood of his croſs, Col. i. 20. that is, by his blood ſhed upon the croſs; his meritorious ſatisfaction brought us into a ſtate of peace and reconciliation, and his prevailing interceſſion keeps us in it.

2 By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

A ſecond benefit which flows from juſtification by faith, is our admiſſion to *grace* and favour with God: This is a privilege beyond the former; a traitor may be pardoned by his prince, and yet not admitted into the preſence of his prince; as Abſalom's crime was forgiven, but he muſt not ſee his father's face: But by Chriſt's mediation, every juſtified perſon meets with divine acceptance; yea, he is not only brought into a ſtate of grace and favour, but he ſtands and abides in it. No ſufferings from God, no ſufferings from man for God's ſake, no temptations, no tribulations nor perſecutions, can cauſe God to caſt him out of his grace and favour; having *acceſs by faith into it*, he ſhall ſtand and abide in it. True, he may fall under his Father's rod, but he ſhall never fall from his Father's love: *Through Chriſt we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand.* A third benefit follows, *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.* Here *note*, 1. The happy union and connexion between *grace* and *glory*; grace is glory begun, and glory is grace conſummated; grace is glory in the bud, glory is grace in the fruits; grace is the loweſt degree of glory, and glory the higheſt degree of grace. Happy ſoul, that art partaker of the firſt-fruits of grace! thou ſhalt ere long reap the crop of glory! 2. A juſtified perſon has the hope of future glory, and always may, and ſometimes can, rejoice in the hope: *We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God:* He hopes for the glory of God, and well he may, for it is purchaſed for him; it is promiſed to him, he has it already in the firſt fruits and earneſt of that: It is prepared for him, and he is preparing for that; and he rejoices in the hope of his glory, believing it to be great and glorious, ſure and certain, never decaying, everlaſting.

3 And not only *ſo*, but we glory in tribulations alſo; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.

Here the apoſtle mentioneth a fourth benefit flowing from juſtification by faith; and that is, glorying in their preſent ſufferings. He told us before, that juſtified perſons, being at peace with God, rejoiced in hopes of future glory; but ſays he, this is not all, they glory in their preſent tribulations alſo. Here *note*, 1. What ſort of ſufferings they are which the ſaints glory in; they are tribulations, that is, ſuch trials and perſecutions as did befal them for the profeſſion of the goſpel: In theſe a child of God may rejoice, yea, boaſt and glory, as a ſoldier doth of his marks, wounds and ſcars, received in the wars, but not in thoſe ſufferings, afflictions and trials which we bring upon ourſelves, as puniſhments for our ſins; theſe we have no more reaſon to glory in than a corrected child has to glory in his whipping: *What glory is it when we are buffeted for our faults? Note*, 2. To what a height and heroic pitch the ſpirit of a juſtified believer may be raiſed under ſufferings for Chriſt: *He may glory in tribulation:* It is an high ſtrain of ſpiritualneſs in bearing afflictions, when a Chriſtian can ſay, *I love to bear:* Though I love not that which I ſuffer, and that which I bear, yet I love to bear what I ſuffer. But it is a higher pitch than this, to ſay with the apoſtle, *I rejoice in my ſufferings*, Col. i. 24. For joy is a degree beyond love; yet is it a degree higher ſtill, to take pleaſure in reproaches and diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake, 2 Cor. xii. 10. for pleaſure is a degree beyond joy; but *to glory in tribulations*, is beyond them all; it is more than to love, more than to rejoice, more than to take pleaſure in them. O the power of faith in Chriſt, and love unto him, to ſupport and uphold the ſoul! yea, cauſe it to glory under the ſharpeſt ſufferings and tribulations for him! 3. That it is not in the tribulations themſelves that believers glory, but in the ſweet iſſue, happy fruits, and gracious effects of them; finding that by the ſanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, *tribulation worketh patience*; that, is, exerciſeth and increaſeth patience, and patience begetteth and giveth experience of God's gracious preſence with us, of his aſſiſtance of us, and of his faithfulneſs towards us, in and under all our afflictions: And *experience* of theſe things *worketh in us hope* of reward. Here *note*, How one grace generates and begets another; graces have a generation one from another, though they have all but one generation from the Spirit of Chriſt. *Note* alſo, That it is not tribulation in its own nature, but when ſanctified by the bleſſed Spirit, that by a happy gradation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope: For when affliction is not ſanctified, but meets with a ſtubborn ſpirit, Lord, what dreadful effects doth it produce! Then tribulation excites impatience, impatience cauſeth perplexity, perplexity deſpair, and depair confuſion. 4. The effect and property of the believer's hope, *It maketh not aſhamed*; his hope will not make him aſhamed, neither will he be ever aſhamed of his hope: Fruſtrated hopes fill men with confuſion and ſhame: The juſtified perſon ſhall not find his hopes of glory fruſtrated, but exceeded; and the reaſon is added, why the Chriſtian hope will not deceive or ſhame him, namely, *Becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, the Holy Spirit doth, in time of tribulation, teſtify his love to the hearts of the people, which cauſes them to glory in tribulation. *Learn* hence, That in time of affliction, eſpecially of perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt, good men have a more ſenſible feeling of God's love ſhed abroad in their hearts by the bleſſed Spirit, both to prepare them for trials, and to ſupport them under them. St. Peter calls this a joy unſpeakable; it has the very ſcent and taſte of heaven in it, and there is but a gradual difference betwixt it and the joys of heaven: No ſooner doth the Holy Spirit ſhed forth the love of God into the believer's heart, by clearing up his intereſt in the promiſe, and his title to eternal glory, but the ſoul is prepared to rejoice in affliction, yea, to glory in tribulation; and it will be as impoſſible to hinder it, as it is to hinder a man from ſatisfaction when he is moſt delighted and pleaſed: *We glory in tribulation, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad*, &c.

6 For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.

In this verſe the apoſtle ſets forth the efficacy of Chriſt's love towards us before juſtification: He had a love towards us when we were ſinners, which prevailed with him to die for ſinners: *When we were yet without ſtrength, Chriſt died for the ungodly*. *Note* here, 1. Man's condition by nature deſcribed, a ſtate of enmity, *ungodly*; and a ſtate of impotency, *without ſtrength*. We were without ſtrength, and ſo wanted help; ungodly, and ſo refuſed help. Man is but an impotent and obſtinate creature; without power to reſiſt juſtice, and without affection to deſire mercy: So weak, that he trembles at the appearance of a worm; and yet ſo wicked, that he lifts up his head againſt heaven. The ſtate of unregeneracy is both a ſtate of enmity and a ſtate of impotency. 2. The ways and means found out for our recovery, the death of Chriſt: *when we were yet without ſtrength, Chriſt died for us*. Though he found the whole race of mankind buried in the ruins of their lapſed ſtate, yet he did not leave them ſo, but died for them. 3. The ſeaſonableneſs of the means interpoſed for our recovery: It was *in due time*, that Chriſt died; that is, in the fulneſs of time appointed by God the father, and determined in his decree and purpoſe. Here we may *remark*, That Chriſt came not in the beginning of time, in the infancy and morning of the world, (though it was then promiſed he ſhould come) nor yet did he ſtay till the laſt period and end of time; but came as it were in the middle of time, which is called *the fulneſs of time*, Gal. iv. 4. and here *due time*. Chriſt came not for our recovery as ſoon as ever we were fallen, that mankind might be the more ſenſible of the badneſs of their condition: Had we been inſtantly cured as ſoon as we complained, we ſhould neither have apprehended the danger of our diſeaſe, nor eſteemed the kindneſs of our Phyſician: Neither did he ſtay till the laſt period and end of time before he came, that the faith and expectation of his church might not be put upon too long and ſevere an exerciſe: The patriarchs believed in Chriſt that was to come; the apoſtles in Chriſt then preſent; and Chriſtians now believe in him that long ſince did come, and is gone again: So that the apoſtle might well ſay here, That *in due time Chriſt died*.

7 For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.

Here the apoſtle amplifies, extols, and magnifies the love of Chriſt in dying for us, when we were enemies to him; by comparing his love to us, with our love to one another: He intimates to us, that amongſt men it is very rare and ſeldom known that one man will lay down his life to ſave another's; but if ſo, it muſt be for a very extraordinary friend, for a perſon of uncommon goodneſs, and of eminent worth: *For*, ſays he, *ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die*. As if he had ſaid, Such a thing may be, but it is ſcarcely ever known, that a perſon will lay down his life for another, though he be a very righteous, innocent and truly honeſt man. Perhaps for a good man, that is, for a very kind and bountiful benefactor; for ſome perſon of rare charity, and extraordinary goodneſs; for a man that is a public bleſſing and common good to the whole community; ſome perſon, from a ſenſe of ſtrong obligations, would even dare to die. The ſcope of the apoſtle is this, To ſet forth the tranſcendency of Chriſt's love in dying for the ungodly, to ſhew that it is beyond all human example, and that there can be no reſemblance, much leſs any parallel of it: *He loved us, and gave himſelf for us*. Had he only as an advocate ſpoken and pleaded for us, his condeſcenſion had been admirable, and his love unſpeakable. But to die, yea, to die for us, to be not only our Mediator, but Redeemer; not only our Redeemer, but our Ranſom: Here is love beyond compariſon: Bleſſed Jeſus! was ever love like thine?

8 But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.

Note here, How the ſcripture diſtinctly repreſents the love of God in giving Chriſt to die for us, as well as Chriſt's love in dying for us: *God commended his love*; declared, expreſſed, and made manifeſt his love to us: Chriſt's death is often repreſented in ſcripture, as an inſtance of the great love of the Father towards us; becauſe his wiſdom did contrive this way for our redemption; and he has graciouſly accepted of his Son's ſufferings in our ſtead. Verily, the giving heaven itſelf, with all its joys and glory, is not ſo full and perfect a demonſtration of the love of God, as the giving of his Son to die for us; eſpecially, if we conſider one endearing circumſtance of this love of God, which *he commended towards us*, namely, That it warmed the heart of God from all eternity, and was never interrupted in that vaſt duration. Our ſalvation by Chriſt is the product of God's eternal counſel, Acts ii. 23. that is, the fruit of his everlaſting love; before the world began, we were in the eyes, yea, in and upon the heart of God. In a word, well might the apoſtle ſay, That *God commended his love towards us*, foraſmuch as, in common eſteem, he expreſſed greater love to us, than to Chriſt himſelf: For God, in giving him to die for us, declared to us, that our ſalvation was more dear to him, than the life of his own Son. God repented that he made man, but never that he gave his Son to redeem man. *Learn* hence, That the death of Chriſt for ſinners, is an evident demonſtration of the love of God the Father, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners*, &c.

9 Much more then being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him.
10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "He that loved us when we were enemies, will not damn us now we are his children. He that reconciled us to himſelf by his Son's death, that is, for the ſake of his Son's ſufferings, and ſatisfaction, will certainly ſave us from wrath to come by his life, or for the ſake of his prevailing interceſſion:" *If when enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son.* Here *note*, That this word (*if*) is not a word of doubting, but of argumentation. The apoſtle ſuppoſes it a known truth, or a principle yielded by all Chriſtians, That the death of Chriſt was to reconcile ſinners unto God. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt has reconciled God and us by the ſatisfaction which his death has made to the juſtice of God for our ſins; and, reparation being made, the enmity ceaſes on God's part, if the terms of reconciliation be accepted on our part. Our reconciliation with God, when enemies, was effected, (1.) By the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt, which was the price that purchaſed it: (2.) By the application of that benefit to us through faith: And (3.) By Chriſt's potent and eternal interceſſion, whereby our ſtate of reconciliation is confirmed, and all future breaches prevented: For if any man ſin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Chriſt the righteous, 1 John ii. 1, 2. We dare not ſay, that God could not have reconciled us any other way but this; but we may ſafely ſay, that no way like this was ſo expreſſive of his love to us; it was the moſt obliging and endearing way imaginable, to reconcile us to himſelf by the death of his Son.

11 And not only *ſo*, but we alſo joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "And moreover, we are not only reconciled to, but we glory and rejoice in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have received the atonement or reconciliation." Here *note*, The Chriſtian's great duty to rejoice, the cauſe of that his joy, his reconciliation with God, and the means by which he obtains reconciliation with God: *Through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* that is, through the death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and through faith in his death. Hence *learn*, That our rejoicing, as to reconciliation with God, depends upon our believing; it is none, if our faith be none; little, if our faith be little; great, if our faith be great. No man can rejoice in an unknown good; let us therefore give all diligence to clear up to ourſelves our intereſt in this atonement: Chriſt thought it worth his blood to purchaſe it; ſurely then it is worth our pains to clear it, in order to our rejoicing in it. He that ſeeks not reconciliation with God, is an enemy to his ſoul; and he that rejoices not in that reconciliation, is an enemy to his own comfort.

12 Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

The doctrine of original ſin is not more difficult to be underſtood, than it is neceſſary to be known; the apoſtle here declares the manner how ſin and death entered the world; namely, by the fall of Adam the firſt man: *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin.* *Note*, 1. An unhappy parent; namely, Adam: By him ſin entered into the world. 2. An unhappy poſterity; namely, the whole world, proceeding from and coming out of the loins of Adam, *in whom all have ſinned*. 3. An unhappy portion; ſin and death: Sin entered by Adam, and death entered by ſin. This was the legacy which Adam left to all his poſterity. Now the ſad and mournful truth which the ſcripture contains, is this: "That our firſt parent, by his tranſgreſſion, hath entailed a miſerable inheritance, an unhappy portion of ſin and death upon all his poſterity." Adam's ſin becomes our's, (1.) By meritorious imputation; God treated with him not as a private perſon, but as *caput gentis*, as the root and parent of all mankind. Hence a compariſon is often made between the firſt and ſecond Adam: the grace of the one, with the ſin of the other; the life conveyed by the one, and the death tranſmitted by the other. By Adam we were caſt, by Chriſt we were cleared; curſed in Adam, crowned in Chriſt. Now this compariſon would be wholly inſignificant, if Adam had not been looked upon as the repreſentative of us all. 2. The ſin of Adam is derived to us by way of inheſion: We have received from him a depravity of nature, an evil diſpoſition, a propenſion to all miſchief, an averſion to all good. The ſin of Adam tranſmitted to us, doth not only cauſe guilt upon our perſons, but filth upon our natures; not only lays a charge to us, but throws a ſtain upon us. 3. We make Adam's ſin our own by imitation, by treading in the ſteps of his diſobedience. Every ſin we commit in defiance of the threatenings of God, is a juſtifying of Adam's rebellion againſt God: and accordingly, we die by our own folly, as well as by his fall, our deſtruction is of ourſelves, by our actual rebellions; and we ſhall at the great day charge our ſin and miſery upon ourſelves, not on God, not on Satan, not on inſtruments, not on our firſt parents.

13 For until the law, ſin was in the world: but ſin is not imputed where there is no law.

The apoſtle having aſſerted the doctrine of original ſin in the former verſe, he proſecutes and purſues it in this and the following verſes; aſſerting, That it is evident all have ſinned, becauſe ſin was always in the world; not only after the giving of the law of Moſes, but alſo before, even from the beginning of the world to that time. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, There was certainly a law given before there was a law written; a law given to Adam, before a law written by Moſes; now this law was either the law of nature written in Adam's heart, or the poſitive law of God given to Adam, againſt which law men were capable of offending before the law of Moſes was written; otherwiſe ſin would not have been imputed to them, for ſin is not imputed where there is no law." *Learn* hence, That God having created man a rational creature, capable of moral government, is by immediate reſultancy his King and Governor, and has ruled him from the beginning by a law, yet not barely by a law, but by a covenant, with promiſes and threatenings annexed, rewarding him for his obedience, and puniſhing him for his rebellion.

14 Nevertheleſs, death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion,—

The apoſtle had aſſerted, That ſin was in the world before the written law of Moſes; here he proves it thus: "Death, the wages of ſin, did reign in the world, and had power over all mankind from Adam to Moſes; therefore ſin was in the world from Adam to Moſes." By *them that have not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*, infants are generally underſtood; the guilt of Adam's ſin is imputed to them, elſe death could have no power over them. The argument runs thus: Death is a puniſhment of ſin, but infants die who never ſinned actually, therefore they die for Adam's ſin: Sin brought mortality into their nature, and the wages of ſin is death: They brought a ſinful nature into the world with them, which God gave the Jews of old an imitation of, by appointing the ſacrament of circumciſion, ſignifying that infants brought ſomething into the world with them, which was early to be cut off: he alſo ſignifies the ſame to us Chriſtians, by appointing the ordinance of baptiſm for children, which he calls *the laver of regeneration:* Now, a laver ſuppoſes uncleanneſs; what is pure, needs no laver. *Learn* hence, That infants, as ſoon as they live, have in them the ſeeds of death: Sin is the ſeed of death, the principle of corruption. God doth infants no wrong when they die; their death is of themſelves, for they have the ſeeds of death in themſelves. All death is the wages of ſin, and therefore can be no injuſtice to the ſinner; thus *death reigned from Adam to Moſes*, yea, even to this day; and, like an inſatiable tyrant, will continue to reign and ſlay univerſally, and beyond number, from the infant to the aged, from the dunghill to the throne, ſparing neither age nor ſex, neither great or ſmall, neither ſacred nor profane.

— who is the figure of him that was to come.

From hence to the end of the chapter, the apoſtle enters upon a compariſon betwixt Adam and Chriſt, whom he here calls a figure or reſemblance of him that was to come, that is, of Chriſt. As Adam was the root of ſin and death to all his natural ſeed, ſo Chriſt is the root of holineſs and life to all his ſpiritual ſeed. As by the firſt Adam, ſin, and by ſin death came upon all men; ſo by the ſecond Adam came righteouſneſs, and by righteouſneſs life on all believers. As the firſt Adam merited death, ſo the ſecond Adam life for all his offspring: *Thus, Adam was the figure of him that was to come.*

15 But not as the offence, ſo alſo *is* the free gift: For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as *it was* by one that ſinned, *ſo is* the gift. For the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto juſtification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.

The apoſtle having noted the parity and reſemblance between Chriſt and Adam in the foregoing verſes; here he obſerves the diſparity and difference betwixt them, and that in ſeveral advantageous particulars: (1.) He compares the ſin of Adam with the obedience of Chriſt, and ſhews that the ſin of the one was not ſo pernicious, as the obedience of the other was beneficial; Chriſt's obedience being more powerful to juſtification and ſalvation, than Adam's ſin was to death and condemnation: For if the tranſgreſſion of Adam, who was but a mere man, was able to pull down death and wrath upon all his natural ſeed; then the obedience of Chriſt, who is God as well as man, will be much more available to procure pardon and life to all his ſpiritual ſeed. 2. There is a further obſervable difference betwixt Adam and Chriſt, as in reſpect of their perſons, ſo in reſpect of their acts, and extent of their acts. Thus Adam by one act of ſin brought death, that is, the ſentence of death upon the whole world (all mankind becoming ſubject to mortality for that one *ſin* of his;) but it is many ſins of many men, which Chriſt doth deliver from, in the free gift of our juſtification; abſolving us, not only from that one fault, but from all other faults and offences whatſoever. *Learn* thence, That the obedience of Chriſt extends itſelf not only to the pardon of original *ſin* in Adam, but to all perſonal and actual ſins whatſoever. 3. The apoſtle ſhews the difference betwixt them two, that is, the firſt and ſecond Adam, as in reſpect of the effects and conſequences of their acts; if by means of one man, and by one offence of that man, the whole race of mankind became ſubject to death, then much more ſhall they who are redeemed and juſtified by Jeſus Chriſt, be made partakers of everlaſting life, wherein they ſhall reign with him in glory. From the whole, *note*, The infinite wiſdom, tranſcendent grace, and rich mercy of God to a miſerable world, in providing a ſalve as large as the ſore, a remedy as extenſive as the malady, a ſovereign antidote in the blood of the ſecond Adam, to expel the poiſon and malignity of the ſin of the firſt Adam. O happy they! who having received from the firſt Adam corruption from corruption, have received from the ſecond Adam grace from grace.

18 Therefore, as by the offence of one, *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation, even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto juſtification of life. 19 For as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.

Note here, How the apoſtle informs us of a truth, which all the writings of *philoſophers* never acquainted us with; namely, the meritorious imputation of Adam's ſin to all his poſterity; that all mankind ſinned in Adam, and became obnoxious to death, and all other calamities and miſeries, as a puniſhment for their ſiin. Yea, the writings of Moſes himſelf, though they declare to us the ſin of Adam, and that his ſin was puniſhed with death; yet that, by his diſobedience, all his race and poſterity were involved, and became miſerable, is a truth which we are peculiarly beholden to the goſpel, and particularly to this text and context, for the more full diſcovery of. And the account of that matter ſeems to ſtand thus: The rebellion of the firſt man againſt the great Creator, was a ſin of univerſal efficacy, that derives a guilt and ſtain to mankind in all the ages of the world. And the account which the ſcripture gives of it is grounded on the relation which we have to Adam, as being the natural and moral principal of all mankind: As the whole race of mankind was virtually in Adam's loins, ſo it was preſumed to give virtual conſent to what he did: When he broke, all his poſterity became bankrupts; there being a conſpiracy of all the ſons of Adam in that rebellion, and not one ſubject left in his obedience: Add to this, that Adam is to be conſidered the moral as well as the natural principal of mankind. In the firſt covenant made betwixt God and him, Adam was conſidered, not as as a ſingle perſon, but as a *caput gentis*; and contracted not for himſelf only, but for all his deſcendants, by ordinary generation: His perſon was the root and fountain of their's, and his will the repreſentative of their's: From hence his numerous iſſue became a party in the covenant, and had a title to the benefits contained in it upon his obedience, and was liable to the curſe upon his violation of it: Upon this ground it is, that the apoſtle here in this text and context, inſtitutes a parallel betwixt Adam and Chriſt: *That as by the diſobedience of* the former, *many were made ſinners*; *ſo by the obedience of* the latter *many were made righteous.* As Chriſt in his death did not ſuffer as a private perſon, but as a ſurety and ſponſor repreſenting the whole church; In like manner, Adam in his diſobedience was eſteemed a public perſon, repreſenting the whole race of mankind: And by a juſt law it was not reſtrained to himſelf, but is the ſin of the common nature. But adored, for ever adored, be the wiſdom and goodneſs of Almighty God, in providing a remedy which bears proportion to the cauſe of our ruin, that as we fell in Adam our repreſentative, ſo we are raiſed by Chriſt the head of our recovery, which two perſons are conſidered as cauſes of contrary effects! The effects are *ſin* and *righteouſneſs*, *condemnation* and *juſtification*. For as the diſobedience of the firſt Adam is meritoriouſly imputed to all his natural poſterity, and brings death upon all; ſo the righteouſneſs of the ſecond Adam is meritoriouſly imputed to all his ſpiritual progeny, to obtain life for them. As the carnal Adam, having loſt original righteouſneſs, derives a corrupt nature to all that deſcend from him; ſo the ſpiritual Adam, having, by his obedience, purchaſed grace for us, conveys a vital efficacy unto us. The ſame ſpirit of holineſs which anointed our Saviour and Redeemer, doth quicken all his race, that as they have born the image of the earthly, they may bear the image of the heavenly Adam.

20 Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The law entered that ſin might abound; That is, before the law was written, we became obnoxious to death by one man's diſobedience, without much ſenſe of it; but after the law was given by Moſes, ſin did more clearly and conſpicuouſly appear to be ſin: Its odiouſneſs and uglineſs was more manifeſt to the conſcience of the ſinner. As the ſinner abounded in ſin, in a way of commiſſion, ſo *ſin* by the diſcovery of the law abounds in the ſinner's apprehenſion, in the ſight and ſenſe of it, upon the conſcience of the ſinner. Nevertheleſs, *As ſin abounds*, *grace doth much more abound*. As the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin is manifeſted by the law, ſo the ſuperabounding grace and pardoning mercy of God is rendered glorioſly conſpicuous in and by the goſpel: That as the power of ſin appeared in making us liable to temporal and eternal death, ſo might the power of grace appear in beginning in us a ſpiritual life here, and bringing us to an eternal life in glory hereafter. In ſhort, when the apoſtle ſays, that *the law entered*, *that ſin might abound*, he doth not mean to make it abound, by encouraging the ſinner to the commiſſion of it, but by impreſſing the conviction of it upon the conſcience of the ſinner. A man without the law looks upon himſelf as a ſmall ſinner; but after he has viewed his ſins in the glaſs of the law, he ſees himſelf a great and mountainous ſinner: As a ſtar which a child thinks to be no bigger than a ſpark; but a man that views it through an inſtrument, computes it to be bigger than the globe of the earth. Lord! help us to ſee our ſins in the glaſs of thy law, yea, in the glaſs of thy Son's blood; and then we ſhall be ſenſible what an infinite and immenſe evil ſin is; namely, the *ſtain* and *blemiſh* of our natures, the diſeaſe and deformity of our minds, the higheſt infelicity of the creature, and the boldeſt affront that can be given to the majeſty of the great and glorious God. *Learn* from the whole, That the riches, the abounding riches, the ſuperabounding riches of God's pardoning grace, are manifeſted in the remiſſion of our ſins, and in the juſtification of our perſons: *As ſin abounded, grace doth much more abound.* Now, the ſuperabounding riches of pardoning grace do thus ſhine forth: 1. In the nature of the mercy, which is the richeſt and ſweeteſt of all mercies. No mercy ſweeter than a pardon to a condemned ſinner, no pardon like God's pardon to a ſinner condemned at his bar. 2. In the peculiarity of the mercy. Remiſſion is not a common, but a crowning favour; it never was, never ſhall be extended to fallen angels; and, it is to be feared, that the far greater part of mankind refuſe the terms and conditions upon which pardoning grace and mercy is offered and tendered to them. 3. In the method in which pardoning mercy is diſpenſed; namely, through the blood of Chriſt, that all-ſufficient ſacrifice and ſatisfaction; by which method, God *has more commended his love to us*, than if he had pardoned us without a ſatisfaction; for then he had only diſplayed his mercy, but now he has declared his juſtice, yea, cauſed mercy and juſtice to meet and kiſs each other, to meet and triumph together. 4. The ſuperabounding riches of pardoning mercy appear in the latitude and extent of that act of grace. Lord, who can underſtand his errors! yet the blood of thy Son cleanſeth from all ſin, ſmall and great, ſecret and open, old and new, original and actual; all pardoned, without exception. O how well might the Pſalmiſt ſay, *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption!* Pſal. cxxx. Laſtly, The riches of pardoning grace do ſhine forth, as in the peculiarity, ſo in the perpetuity of remiſſion. As grace pardons all ſin, without exception, ſo the pardons it beſtows are without revocation: The pardoned ſoul ſhall never come into condemnation; *As far as the eaſt is from the weſt, ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us*, Pſal. ciii. 10. As the eaſt and weſt are the two oppoſite points of heaven, which can never come together; ſo neither ſhall the pardoned ſinner and his ſins ever meet any more. God is ſaid *to caſt them behind his back*; that is, he will never behold them more, ſo as to charge them upon the pardoned ſinner, in order to his condemnation. May our faith then, both in life and death, triumph in the aſſurance of this bleſſed truth; *That were ſin abounded, grace did much more abound; and as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo hath grace reigned through righteouſneſs unto eternal life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, who lives for ever in heaven, to apply, by his prevailing interceſſion, what he impetrated and obtained for us here on earth, by his meritorious ſatisfaction. To this Jeſus, who is the faithful witneſs, and firſt begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God; unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

The apoſtle in this chapter ſhews that the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, is ſo far from being a doctrine leading to licentiouſneſs, that it greatly tendeth to promote holineſs, and obligeth all the profeſſors of Chriſtianity to the greateſt ſtrictneſs in converſation.

WHAT ſhall we then ſay? ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How ſhall we, that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?

The apoſtle begins this chapter with an objection, which ſome licentious perſons might be ready to make againſt what he had delivered in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter; viz. that were ſin abounded, pardoning grace and mercy did much more abound. If, ſay they, the riches of grace be thus manifeſted in the pardon of ſin, let us then take the more liberty to ſin, becauſe grace ſo exceedingly abounds in the pardon of it. The apoſtle rejects ſuch an inference with the greateſt deteſtation and abhorrence, ſaying, *God forbid*, &c. As if he had ſaid, "O vile abuſe of the moſt excellent thing in the world! What! did Chriſt ſhed his blood to expiate our guilt? and ſhall we make that a plea to extenuate our guilt? *God forbid!* ſurely there is forgiveneſs with God, that he may be feared, not that he may be the more abuſed." In the words, *obſerve*, 1. An objection ſuppoſed, as if the doctrine of the goſpel did countenance licentiouſneſs, and encourage any to ſin, or to continue in ſin. 2. Obſerve with what abhorrence and indignation ſuch a doctrine and propoſition is rejected by our apoſtle. What! ſhall we continue in ſin, becauſe pardoning mercy doth abound? *God forbid*, that ſuch a direct blaſphemy againſt the holy doctrine of our Saviour ſhould be maintained by any profeſſor. 3. The confutation which he gives of this bold and impudent aſſertion; *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein?* Dead to ſin, that is, by our baptiſmal engagement, vow, and obligation; every Chriſtian, at his firſt entering upon the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, does take upon himſelf a vow of ſolemn obligation to die to ſin, and to live no longer therein. From the whole, *learn*, That to take any encouragement to live in ſin, from the conſideration of God's rich mercy and free grace towards ſinners, is an abſurd, abominable, and blaſphemous impiety, contrary to all ingenuity, gratitude, and love, both to God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt his Son.

3 Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt were baptized into his death?

To be baptized into Chriſt, is by baptiſm to take the name of Chriſt upon us, to be incorporated, ingrafted, and implanted into the church of Chriſt, being made viſible members of his myſtical body by baptiſm: *To be baptized into Chriſt's death*, imports, our being conformed to him in the likeneſs of his death; our being engaged to die unto ſin, as Chriſt died for ſin. *Learn* hence, That the death of Chriſt was a lively repreſentation of the death of ſin; and believers are to imitate his death, in their dying daily unto ſin. Did Chriſt die for us a painful, ſhameful, and accurſed death? ſuch a death muſt ſin die in us. Was his death for ſin free and voluntary? ſo muſt we die to ſin. Was his death an univerſal crucifixion, did no life, ſenſe, or motion remain with him? thus muſt we imitate the likeneſs of his death, by an univerſal mortification of every known ſin, which occaſioned his dying. In a word, did Chriſt die and riſe again, never to die more? ſo muſt we die unto ſin, and walk in newneſs of life. How ſhall we that are dead unto ſin, live any longer therein? Thus it appears the indiſpenſible duty of all Chriſtians, to tranſcribe the copy of Chriſt's death in their hearts and lives.

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.

To urge Chriſtians to farther meaſures and degrees of mortification of ſin, and living unto holineſs, the apoſtle uſes here a double argument, one from our baptiſm, the other from the reſurrection of Chriſt. *Note*, 1. The argument to move us to die unto ſin, drawn from our baptiſm? *We are buried with him by baptiſm into death.* The apoſtle alludes, no doubt, to the ancient manner and way of baptizing perſons in thoſe hot countries, which was by immerſion, or putting them under water for a time, and then raiſing them up again out of the water; which rite had alſo a myſtical ſignification, repreſenting the burial of our old man ſin in us, and our reſurrection to newneſs of life. *Learn* hence, That the ordinance of baptiſm lays every baptized perſon under the ſtrongeſt engagements and higheſt obligations to die unto ſin, and walk in newneſs of life. The metaphors of burying and riſing again, do imply and intimate thus much: Burial implies a continuing under death; thus is mortification a continued act, a daily dying unto ſin; and riſing again, ſuppoſes a perſon never more to be under the power of death. 2. Another forcible argument to encourage us to die to ſin, and walk in newneſs of life, is drawn from the reſurrection of Chriſt; *As he was raiſed from the dead,* &c. *Note*, 1. The propoſal of a pattern and exemplar to us; *Chriſt was raiſed from the dead.* 2. The author and efficient cauſe of Chriſt's reſurrection; *he was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father*; that is, by the glorious power of the Father, yet not without his own power as God: So Chriſt told the Jews, John ii. *Deſtroy this temple* of my body, *and in three days I will raiſe it up again.* 3. The conformity or ſimilitude on our part; as Chriſt aroſe, ſo ſhall we ariſe out of the grave of ſin, and walk in newneſs of life. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's reſurrection is a powerful motive, and lays a Chriſtan under ſtrong obligations and engagements to ariſe from ſin, and walk in newneſs of life. Chriſt's reſurrection is both a pattern and a pledge of our reſurrection; a pattern after which we are to conform in our riſing from the grave of ſin. Did Chriſt riſe early and ſpeedily? ſo ſhould we: He aroſe early in the morning of the day, ſo ſhould we in the morning of our youth: He roſe voluntarily and chearfully, ſo ſhould we, rejoicing at our ſpiritual liberty and freedom from ſin's bondage and thraldom: He roſe with a reſolution never to die more, ſo ſhould we ariſe, with deſires and endeavours, that ſpiritual death may never more have dominion over us. And if Chriſt's reſurrection be thus a pattern of our reſurrection now, it will be a pledge of a bleſſed reſurrection at the laſt day. *Note*, laſtly, The duty which every baptized perſon lies under an obligation to perform, in conformity to Chriſt, into whoſe death they are baptized; and that is, *to walk in newneſs of life.* Where *obſerve*, For our encouragement, the account which the ſcriptures gives of the properties of the new life, which ſuch as are buried and riſen with Chriſt, do aſſuredly live: And here we find it is the moſt noble life, the moſt delectable life, the moſt profitable life, the moſt holy and heavenly life; holy in its principle and motive, holy in its aim and end, holy in its rule and actings. In a word, newneſs of life is a preparation for, and an introduction into, eternal life, and muſt needs be the moſt excellent life; for it is a life from God, it is a life laid out for God, yea, it is the life which God himſelf lives; and none muſt expect to live with him in heaven hereafter, that do not walk in newneſs of life here; but if we have our fruit unto holineſs, our end will be everlaſting life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo *in the likeneſs* of *his* reſurrection:

Note here, 1. A ſuppoſition, *If we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death*; namely, by dying unto *ſin:* If as Chriſt died, we die, he a natural, we a ſpiritual death; he for ſin, and we to ſin; he by way of expiation, ſuffering, and ſatisfying for ſin; we by way of mortification, killing and crucifying of ſin. *Learn* thence, That all baptiſed perſons ought to labour for, and endeavour after, a conformity to the death of Chriſt, in their dying daily unto ſin. As he died a painful and ſhameful death for us, ſuch a death ſhould ſin die in us; living a dying life, and dying a lingering, but a certain death. 2. The apoſtle's inference drawn from the foregoing ſuppoſition: *If we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrectiou:* That is, we are under an obligation to imitate his reſurrection, by riſing from the death of ſin, unto newneſs of life. Did he riſe early out of his natural grave? ſo muſt we out of our ſpiritual. Did he ariſe to a new life? ſo muſt we ariſe and walk in newneſs of life. Did he ariſe never to die more? ſo muſt we that are dead to ſin, live no longer therein. 3. How the power enabling us thus to die unto ſin, and to live unto holineſs, is derived from Chriſt by virtue of our implantation into him by faith: *If we have been planted together,* &c. As the graft liveth, groweth and fructifieth by the juice drawn from the ſtock into which it is planted; ſo Chriſtians being taken out of the old rotten ſtock, degenerate Adam, and planted into the noble ſtock, Chriſt Jeſus, are, by a virtue derived from him, raiſed to newneſs of life, into whom they were ingrafted. *Learn* hence, That we experience the power of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, in enabling us to die to ſin, and live unto God, only by virtue of a real implantation into Chriſt, by an operative and lively faith. *If we have been planted,* &c.

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.

By the old man we are to underſtand our corrupt and depraved nature, ſo called, becauſe it is as old as Adam, and derived from Adam; born and bred with us. This old man, or our corrupt and vicious nature, muſt be crucified, to ſhow our conformity and likeneſs to Chriſt in his crucifixion. The croſs bringeth pain, ſhame, and death; the like muſt ſin undergo in the work of mortification. By the *body of ſin*, we are to underſtand the whole ſtock and maſs of corruption, compacted as it were into one monſtrous body, prepared with all its members to commit actual ſins. Called a *body*, becauſe compoſed of many ſinful paſſions and luſts, as the body is of many members, and alſo becauſe they are executed by the body. And farther, becauſe ſin has as real a ſubſiſtance in us, as if it were a body; not that ſin is a ſubſtance, but the pravity of a ſubſtance. Now this body of ſin muſt *be deſtroyed*, not as to actions only, but as to the affections and inclinations alſo; it is not enough that we ſcratch this old man's face, but we muſt ſtab his heart in deſire, in purpoſe, in endeavours: We muſt ſeek the death and deſtruction of all ſin, *That henceforth we may not ſerve ſin*; that is, that henceforward we ſhould renounce the ſervice of, and all relation to ſin. Where *note*, That before regeneration, we are all ſervants of, yea, ſlaves to ſin; ſo many luſts, ſo many lords reigning in us, and tyrannizing over us. 2. That it is one thing to ſin, and another thing to ſerve ſin: To ſerve ſin, is to yield willing obedience, to indulge ourſelves in any preſumptuous act or courſe of ſin. It is not the preſence, but prevalency of ſin, that deſtroys and damns the ſinner; it is not the fleſh being in us, but our being in the fleſh, that diſpleaſeth God. O! happy for us, if ſin's dominion be taken away, though its life be prolonged for a ſeaſon.

7 For he that is dead is freed from ſin.

He that is dead, that is, ſpiritually dead unto ſin, in conformity to the death of Chriſt, *is freed from ſin:* That is, not only from the guilt, but from the dominion and ſlavery of ſin. *Learn* hence, That freedom from the bondage and tyranny, from the dominion and ſlavery of ſin, is the privilege of all thoſe that are crucified with Chriſt, and dead to ſin. Freedom from ſin conſiſts in two things: 1. In diſpoſſeſſing the ſoul of every evil habit and diſpoſition. 2. In renouncing a ſinful courſe of life and converſation. If ſin be weakened in the heart, the fruit of that will appear in the life: The ſtrength of ſin lies in the love of ſin; if that be broken, the power of ſin is ſhaken.

8 Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſuppoſition, or preſuppoſed condition; the thing ſuppoſed, is the baptized perſons being dead with Chriſt; *If we be dead with him*, that is, by the exerciſe of daily mortification: If we have fellowſhip and communion with him in his death, that as he died for ſin, we daily die unto ſin: Then followeth, 2. The inference or concluſion: *We ſhall alſo live with him*; that is, We that have had fellowſhip with him in his death, ſhall have communion with him in his reſurrection: We ſhall live with him a life of grace and glory, of regeneration and glorification, the one to newneſs of life, the other to everlaſting life. Hence *learn*, That all thoſe that are dead with Chriſt, have no reaſon to doubt but that they ſhall alſo live with him. But who are the perſons that may be ſaid to be dead with Chriſt. *Anſ.* 1. All ſuch as own the obligation which their baptiſmal vow and Chriſtian profeſſion puts upon them, and ſolemnly lays them under; namely, to keep the whole goſpel, even as they who were circumciſed were obliged to keep the whole law. 2. Such as make conſcience of it, daily endeavour to perform it, and obtain the ſucceſs of their endeavours in ſuch a degree, that the rein of ſin is broken, though ſin itſelf be not totally deſtroyed. Theſe may be ſaid to be dead and crucified with Chriſt, having by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, in ſome meaſure, crucified the fleſh with its inordinate affections and luſts; and as they here live like him, ſo they ſhall alſo live with him: *Now if we are dead with Chriſt*, &c.

9 Knowing that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Here the apoſtle declares both the death which Chriſt once died, and the life which he now liveth. *Obſerve*, 1. The death which Chriſt died; *He died unto ſin once*; that is, either, (1.) He died for ſin once, namely, to expiate the guilt of ſin, and to make atonement for ſinners; or elſe, (2.) He died unto ſin; that is, to deſtroy, to conquer, and ſubdue ſin in the hearts and lives of his children and people, by the aids and aſſiſtances of his Holy Spirit. 2. The life which Chriſt now lives after his reſurrection; he liveth unto God, and dieth no more. Here *note*, 1. The perpetuity and immortality of his life; *He dieth no more.* Chriſt has done his work, in taking away the guilt and power of ſin: let us look to it, that we do our's. 2. The perfection and bleſſedneſs of his life; *He liveth unto God*, or liveth for ever with God; by which phraſe is expreſſed that eternal and indiſſoluble union which the Son hath with the Father; he is one with him, and lives for ever in the enjoyment of him. *Learn* hence, That the due conſideration of Chriſt's glorious reſurrection from the dead, will mightily promote the ſpiritual life in us. This it doth theſe three ways: 1. As it evidences the truth and verity of the Chriſtian religion, that Chriſt was no impoſtor or deceiver. In the judgment of the world, Chriſt died as a malefactor; but God juſtified him, acquitted and freed him from that imputation by raiſing him from the dead. 2. Chriſt's reſurrection ſhews the perfection of his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, that nothing more is needful to take away ſin; when the ſurety is let out of priſon, the debtor may be aſſured that his debt is paid. 3. Chriſt's ariſing is a pledge and aſſurance of our reſurrection, and ſo promotes holineſs in us, by obliging us to live as the candidates of heaven, as the children of the reſurrection, as becomes the heirs of ſuch glorious hopes.

11 Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin; but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Here we have the two parts of our ſanctification deſcribed, namely, mortification and vivification, dying unto ſin, and living unto God. 1. Mortification, or dying unto ſin; *Reckon ye yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin*; that is, look upon the death of Chriſt, and your death with Chriſt, as a ſtrong argument againſt the reign and power of ſin; account yourſelves dead unto ſin: Now, deadneſs argues three things, 1. Diſability. Such as are dead, are diſabled for working. Proportionable to the meaſure of our death unto ſin, will be our diſability to fulfil the luſts of it. Sin in a regenerate man is no more able to do all its will, than a crucified man is able to do what he will. 1 John iii. 9. *He that is born of God cannot commit ſin*; not as others do, and as himſelf formerly has done. 2. Deadneſs to ſin argues diſaffection towards ſin, as well as diſability: When we die to ſin, our love to ſin dieth. 3. Deadneſs argues liberty and unſubjection; he that is dead is freed from ſin, as the woman by death is freed from her huſband, and the Chriſtian that is dead with Chriſt unto ſin, *ſtands faſt in that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made him free*. *Obſerve*, 2. The other part of our ſanctification here declared, and that is, living unto God. This likewiſe conſiſts in three things: 1. In having our ſenſitive appetites in ſubjection, and under the ſubjection and dominion of reaſon; when we are governed like men, by reaſon and conſcience; not like beaſts, by ſenſe and ſenſual inclinations. 2. In having reaſon illuminated by faith, guided and directed by divine revelation. And, 3. When this faith inclines and enables us to live unto God, when faith begets in us a reſolution to obey God, and to perſevere in our duty to him. This is to be dead unto ſin, and alive unto God. Laſtly, Chriſtians are ſaid to be dead unto ſin, and alive unto God, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. Which phraſe imports, That Chriſt is the root and principle of our ſpiritual life by faith, in whom we are enabled to live unto God, as the ſcion ingrafted into the ſtock, lives by the juice and nouriſhment it receives from the ſtock: So Chriſtians are alive unto God, in, by, and through Jeſus Chriſt, receiving from him that virtue, whereby their ſpiritual life is begun, carried on, and maintained, and ſhall in due time time be perfected and completed. From whence we *learn*, That Chriſt is not only an head of authority, but an head of influence to his church and members. *He ſtrengthening them, they can do all things*, but without him they can do nothing; that is, without intereſt in him, and influence of grace derived from him.

12 Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.

Obſerve here, The duty which the apoſtle exhorts the Chriſtians to; and that is, to prevent the regency and dominion of ſin; *Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies*. But when is ſin ſaid to reign? *Anſ.* When the bent and tendency of the heart is towards ſin, and all the faculties of the ſoul are on ſin's ſide, and wholly takes its part; when ſin is not oppoſed, but ſlightly oppoſed; when ſin is committed induſtriouſly, and temptations to ſin prevail eaſily; when perſons ſin withont any ſenſe of ſin, with ſmall remorſe and check for ſin; then *ſin* is in its throne, and reigns imperiouſly. But why doth the apoſtle ſay, Let not ſin reign in your body, rather than in your ſoul? *Anſ.* Becauſe ſin and luſts do gratify the body exceedingly; that is, the ſenſual appetite, the brutiſh part of man; and farther, becauſe they are acted and executed by the body or outward man, called therefore *the deeds of the body*. But why doth the apoſtle here call it *a mortal body? Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies*. *Anſ.* 1. To put us in mind that the mortality of our bodies is the fruit and puniſhment of our ſins, that ſin having brought death upon us, our bodies muſt die for ſin. 2. To ſhew the vanity and tranſitorineſs of the delights and pleaſures of ſin, which do gratify a mortal body, which after all its pamperings muſt periſh. 3. The apoſtle may probably call it a mortal body, to ſhew that our conflict with ſin ſhall endure but a little while; ere long this mortal ſhall put on immortality. It may encourage us to be violent in the conflict; ere long we ſhall be victorious in the conqueſt. From the whole, *note*, 1. That ſin is a great and mighty king, which has a regal power over the enſlaved ſinner. Sin has the love of an huſband, the power of a king, and the worſhip of God in the ſinner's heart. Sin, as a raging and commanding king, has the ſinner's heart for its throne, the members of the body for its ſervice, the world, the fleſh, and the devil for its grand council, luſts and temptations for its weapons and armoury; and its chief fortifications are ignorance and ſenſuality, and fleſhly reaſonings. O deplorable degradation! That man, who was created God's ſubject, is, by his ſhameful apoſtacy, become the vaſſal and ſlave of ſin and Satan. 2. That all baptized perſons, who are dead with Chriſt unto ſin, are ſtrongly obliged to take care that ſin reigns not in them, nor gets any dominion over them, by the deſires and intereſts of this mortal body. And the obligations which Chriſtianity lays upon us, not to ſuffer ſin to reign over us, are many and great; namely, the precepts, promiſes, and threatenings of the goſpel, the aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, the ſenſe of baptiſmal and ſacramental engagements. Happy we! if by the help of theſe, ſin is dethroned, its empire diſſolved, and it no longer *reigns in our mortal bodies, that we ſhould obey*, &c.

12 Neither yield ye your members *as* inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin: but yield yourſelves unto God as thoſe that are alive from the dead, and your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “Sin, which has ſuch a kingly and commanding power, will be calling upon you to give up the members of your bodies, and the faculties of your ſouls, as inſtruments or weapons for its ſervice. But yield not your conſent thereunto, turn a deaf ear unto the voice of ſin, and hearken to the call of God, who commands you to yield yourſelves unto him, and your members as inſtruments for his ſervice.” Here *note*, 1. A negative exhortation, *Yield not your members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin*. Let not ſin or Satan have an eye, an ear, a tongue, a foot, a hand, nay, not ſo much as a little finger devoted to their ſervice; how ſtrongly ſoever they may ſolicit and move for it. 2. A poſitive injunction, *but yield your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*. *Learn* hence, That Chriſtians ought not to ſuffer any members of their body to be employed in the ſervice of ſin, but to yield them all up unto God, in obedience to his will. Here are two oppoſite maſters, God and ſin; the one a tyrant and uſurper, the other a rightful Lord and Maſter: Alſo here are two oppoſite employments, unrighteouſneſs, by which is meant all ſin, whereby we deal unrighteouſly with

God, our neighbour, and ourſelves; and righteouſneſs, whereby we give to God, to others, and ourſelves, their reſpective dues. Now the apoſtle calls loudly upon us to render unto God the things that are God's; to yield every member of the body to him, and employ it for him; for the members of the body were all created by him, and redeemed for him, and ſhall be glorified with him. O let us then take heed of abuſing any members of our body; let us not employ ſo much as a little finger or hair of our heads in the ſervice of ſin; for it is the Lord's: And let every one take heed of diſhonouring God with his bodily members, leſt he provoke God to deny him the comfortable uſe of the members of his body. When Jeroboam ſtretched out his hand againſt the prophet of God, he preſently loſt the uſe of his hand. O! how ſuddenly can God wither an hand or arm, that is ſtretched out to do miſchief? it is a righteous thing for God to ſmite an abuſed eye with blindneſs, an abuſed ear with deafneſs, an abuſed foot with lameneſs, a ſwearing or forſwearing tongue with paralytic deadneſs. Lord, how juſtly mayeſt thou recal thy favours, when we fight againſt thee with them? *Yielding the members of our bodies as weapons of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin!*

14 For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Our apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes exhorted them to take care that ſin get not any dominion over them by obeying its motions, yielding to its inclinations, and employing the faculties of the ſoul, and any of the members of the body in the ſervice of ſin; in this verſe he gives them an encouraging promiſe, that though ſin may rebel, yet it ſhall reign no more in a regenerate perſon: And that if they did pray and watch againſt it, ſtrive and contend with it, though it would have a being and exiſtence in them, yet it ſhould not have a regency and dominion over them; becauſe they were not under the law, or covenant of works, which gave the knowledge of ſin, and required exact and perfect obedience, but gave no ſtrength to perform it; but under grace, under a goſpel-covenant, which adminiſters ſtrength to reſiſt ſin, and to overcome it: *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you: for ye are not*, &c. Here *obſerve*, The privilege of every regenerate and gracious perſon; *Sin ſhall not have dominion over him. Learn* hence, That ſin ſhould not, and ſhall not reign over thoſe who are in a ſtate of grace, and under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit of Chriſt: *De jure*, it ſhouldnot; *de facto*, it ſhall not reign. Sin ſhall not reign in us, nor have dominion over us. 1. Becauſe of the miſchievous influences of it, both with reference to God, and in relation to ourſelves; it plucks the ſceptre out of God's hands, and puts it into Satan's. The throne of the heart is never empty, it is the deſign of ſin to dethrone God, and to ſet up itſelf. And no leſs miſchievous is ſin to ourſelves; for its ſervitude is baſe and burdenſome, painful and ſhameful; the devil is a ſure, but ſad paymaſter; he plagues them moſt, who have done him moſt ſervice. 2. Becauſe of the unſuitableneſs of ſin to our renewed ſtate, we are not our own, but Chriſt's; his by purchaſe, his by conqueſt, his by covenant: Now if after ſuch engagements we ſuffer ſin to reign and have dominion over us, we reſcind our baptiſmal vow, ratified by our perſonal conſent. 3. The reaſon of the foregoing privilege, why ſin ſhall not have dominion over us, *becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace. Queſt.* 1. But are not believers now under the law, though they live under the goſpel? *Anſ.* Yes: They are under the rule and direction of the law, but not under the curſe and malediction of the law; they are not under the law as a covenant of life, but they are under it as an eternal rule of living. The law of God now binds the believer to the obſervation of it, as ſtrictly as it did Adam in paradiſe; but upon the unwilling violation of it, he doth not incur the curſe, Chriſt having redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us. *Queſt.* 2. But were not thoſe that lived under the law of old, in a ſort, under grace as well as we? *Anſ.* Yes, they were, but not in the ſame degree; good men then had help and aſſiſtance in the courſe of holineſs and obedience, when they lived under the law; but they had it not by the law, but by the goſpel, which was preached to them as well as unto us, Heb. iv. 2. This adminiſters ſtrength to ſubdue ſin, and power to overcome it. *Learn* hence, That the goſpel is a manifeſtation of the Spirit, and furniſhes believers with ſufficient helps againſt the power of ſin, and well-grounded hopes of obtaining victory over it. The grace of the goſpel gives hopes of victory over ſin ſeveral ways: 1. Becauſe it was the end of Chriſt's death to ſlay ſin. 2. Becauſe of the new nature put into us, which is to help us againſt ſin. 3. By aſſuring us of the Spirit's help, which is to aſſiſt us in the mortifying and ſubduing of ſin; it is through the Spirit's operation that we begin, carry on, and accompliſh the work of mortification. 4. Becauſe the goſpel furniſhes us with promiſes, and thereby gives us aſſurance of ſucceſs: So then, if from all theſe encouragements we bid a confident defiance unto, and make a courageous reſiſtance againſt ſin, it ſhall never have a final and full dominion over us, becauſe *we are not under the law, but under grace.*

15 What then? ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Here the apoſtle ſtarts an objection, which ſome licentious perſons might be ready to make: "If we are not under the law which condemns ſin, but under the covenant of grace, which allows the pardon, and promiſes the forgiveneſs of ſin, why may we not then go on in ſin, and continue in ſin, forbidden by the law, ſeeing we are not under the law?" The apoſtle rejects ſuch a ſuggeſtion with his uſual note of deteſtation, *God forbid*. From hence we may *learn*, That it is an high abuſe of the covenant of grace, to ſuppoſe or imagine, that it countenances any licentiouſneſs, or allows any liberty to ſin. The deſign of the new covenant is to recover from ſin, not to encourage any to continue in ſin. 2. That ſuch doctrines and inferences are to be abhorred, which from the grace of God, in mitigating the law, would infer an abrogation of the law, denying that it hath a directive regulating power over a believer. True, we are delivered from the curſe and condemnatory ſentence of the law, from the ſeverity and rigorous exactions of the law: But to refuſe obedience to the law, under pretence of Chriſtian liberty; to ſin becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace, is a turning the grace of God into wantonneſs, and to uſe our Chriſtian liberty as an occaſion to the fleſh: *What then? ſhall we ſin*, &c.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs.

Two things are here intimated by the apoſtle: 1. That all men really are, and ought to be reputed ſervants to that maſter whoſe works they do, and whoſe commands they obey: *Whom ye obey his ſervants ye are.* *Learn* thence, That we may infallibly know, whoſe ſervants we are, and what maſter we ſerve, Chriſt or Satan, by examining and inquiring whoſe commands they are which we execute and obey. 2. The apoſtle intimates, that every perſon or ſervant ſhall receive a reward ſuitable to the maſter he ſerves, and proportionable to the work he does. If Satan be our maſter, ſin is our work, and death our wages: If we be the ſervants of God, obedience is our work, and eternal life will be our reward: *There is a reward for the righteous*, and wages for the workers of iniquity. The devil's drudges ſhall have full pay, but no content; the wages of ſin is death; there's pay, ſuch as it is, woful pay, a black penny. God's ſervants, though they do not work for wages, yet they ſhall not work for nothing! *Verily there is a reward for the righteous:* a reward of mercy, not of merit; a reward of grace, not of debt: And accordingly, the apoſtle ſays here, *His ſervants ye are whom ye obey, whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs.* But why doth he not ſay of obedience unto life, as well as of ſin unto death? then the antitheſis had been more plain and full. *Anſw.* Becauſe, though ſin be the cauſe of death, yet obedience is not the cauſe of life, but only the way to it.

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the ſervants of ſin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

We muſt not underſtand theſe words, as if the apoſtle bleſſed God becauſe they were once ſlaves to ſin and Satan; but thanks God, that the time of that bondage was paſt and over; as if he had ſaid, "God be thanked, that though formerly ye were the ſervants of ſin, yet, ſince your converſion, you are become obedient to the precepts of Chriſtianity, having obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine, or (according to the original) being caſt into the mould of that doctrine, which was delivered to you. *Learn* hence, That to be turned from the ſervice of ſin, to the ſincere obedience of the goſpel, is a mercy that we can never be ſufficiently ſenſible of, and bleſs God for. God be thanked, that although ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye are no longer ſo. 2. That the doctrine of the goſpel has a divine efficacy attending and accompanying it on the hearts of believers; it has a transforming power to change and faſhion men's minds into the likeneſs of it, as the mould doth the metal that is caſt into it: The doctrine of the goſpel is the mould, and the heart is the metal, which, when melted and caſt into the mould, receives its form and figure. O happy they! who having all their days ſat under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, are able at laſt to ſay, We are transformed and changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

18 Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs. 19 I ſpeak after the manner of men, becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh. For as ye have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even ſo now, yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs, unto holineſs.

Our apoſtle goes on to put the Romans in mind of their paſt ſtate by nature, and of their preſent ſtate by grace; they were once the ſervants of ſin, but now free from ſin, and made by Chriſt ſervants of righteouſneſs: All believers are made free by Chriſt for ſervice, not one freed from ſerving; to be free to ſerve, is infinitely better than to be free from ſervice; ſuch as are by Chriſt freed from ſinful ſervitude, are beſt fitted for, and moſt obliged to ſpiritual ſervice. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are recovered from *ſin* to God, ſhould ſhew the reality of their change, by being as zealous in the ways of holineſs, as before they were earneſt in the ways of ſin. Shall we not do as much for God as for ſin and Satan! Is not he a better maſter, his work better ſervice, and his wages a better reward? Lord, ſhall we not with as much zeal and vigour ſerve thee, as ever we ſerved our luſts, thoſe imperious exactors of our time and ſtrength! Oh, had we the faculties and powers of angels, yet would our ſervice for thee fall infinitely ſhort of our obligations to thee! *Obſerve* next, How the apoſtle doth not barely urge the neceſſity of ſerving Chriſt in our regenerate ſtate, but does enforce the proportion which our ſervice now ought to bear to the diſſervice formerly done in our carnal ſtate: *As ye have yielded your members ſervants*, &c. Laſtly, The great dignation and gracious condeſcenſion of Chriſt, that he ſhould accept thoſe members of our's as inſtruments of his ſervice, which have been employed in the devil's ſervice. "O bleſſed Jeſus! wilt thou come into that vile heart of mine, which was once the ſeat of Satan, where he has ruled, and every unclean luſt has been harboured? O holy Spirit! ſhall that body be thy temple to dwell in now, which has been ſo often defiled with luſt and vomit heretofore? Shall that tongue ever praiſe him in heaven, which has blaſphemed him by oaths and horrid imprecations here on earth!" One would have expected, that Chriſt ſhould rather have ſaid, "Vile wretch! Satan has had the uſe and ſervice of thy body, and all its members, from thy childhood and youth, unto this day; thy will has been his throne, thy memory his ſtorehouſe, and all thy members his tools and inſtruments to ſin againſt me; thou didſt indeed dedicate all theſe to my ſervice and glory in thy baptiſm, but thou haſt employed all theſe in Satan's ſervice for many years paſt: However, if now thou art willing to yield thoſe very members unto righteouſneſs and to holineſs, which formerly were ſervants unto uncleanneſs, I will both accept them, and reward thee for them."

20 For when ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.

That is, you were free *de facto*, not *de jure*; when you were ſin's ſervants, you were void of righteouſneſs, *that* had no part of your ſervice then; therefore ſin ſhould not have one jot of your ſervice now; as righteouſneſs had no part of your ſervice in your carnal ſtate, ſo there is no reaſon why ſin ſhould have any ſervice from you in your gracious ſtate. *Learn*, That ſuch ſinners as are now become ſervants to God, ought to be as free from ſin, as before they were free from righteouſneſs: It will evidently appear ſo, if we conſider the great and good Maſter which we ſerve, the nature of our preſent work, the certainty and tranſcendency of our future reward, the obligations we lie under, as creatures, as new creatures, by the law of creation, by the favour of redemption, by the promiſe and hopes of glorification; all this ſhould engage us to the love and practice of univerſal holineſs.

21 What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things *is* death.

Here the apoſtle puts them in mind of the ſeveral miſchiefs and inconveniences which did attend their former vicious courſe of life; namely, unprofitableneſs, *What fruit had you?* Diſhonourableneſs, *whereof ye are now aſhamed?* Perniciousneſs, *The end of thoſe things is death.* Behold the complexion of ſin's face in this glaſs, it being for the time paſt unprofitable, for the time preſent ſhameful, for the time to come deadly: Moſt men conſult their profit, their honour, their pleaſure, their ſafety; but ſin diſappoints us in them all. *Note*, 1. The unprofitableneſs of ſin in time paſt; *What fruit had ye then?* Are ye any thing the better for it? Verily, not at all; there is no ſolid benefit, no real profit to be got by ſin; thoſe ſins which we think to be advantageous to us, when all accounts are caſt up, will be found to be quite otherwiſe; all the gain of ſin will turn to loſs at laſt. 2. The diſhonourableneſs and diſparagement which ſin brings along with it at preſent, *Whereof ye are now aſhamed. Learn* thence, That ſin is really matter of ſhame and bluſhing, rendering us odious to God, infamous to others, loathſome to ourſelves; it is a diſhonour to our natures, a reproach to our reaſon and underſtanding; it doth therefore debaſe and degrade us, becauſe it pollutes and defiles us, and is a reproach which we voluntarily bring upon ourſelves. 3. The perniciousneſs of ſin, or the fatal conſequence of it; *The end of thoſe things is death*, natural, ſpiritual, and eternal: The latter is principally meant, which conſiſts in lively apprehenſions of the happineſs invaluable which they have loſt, and in a quick ſenſe of the pains intolerable which they lie under, and this accompanied with deſpair of all future relief. Now, when miſery and deſpair meet together, they make a man completely miſerable. Good God! make ſinners, all ſinners, fully ſenſible of the manifeſt inconveniences of a wicked life; that it brings no preſent profit or advantage to them, that it will not bear reflection, but cauſeth ſhame; and that it is fatal in its event and iſſue! O then, let no profit tempt us, no pleaſure entice us, no power embolden us, no privacy encourage us, to enter into any ſinful way, or adventure upon any wicked work; for what fruit can we expect to have of thoſe things whereof we are now aſhamed, the end of which things is death?

22 But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.

As the former verſe repreſented to us the manifold inconveniences of a wicked life, ſo this verſe acquaints us with the manifeſt advantages of a holy and religious courſe of life; and this, firſt, as to the preſent benefit and advantage of it, *Ye have your fruit unto holineſs:* Secondly, In reſpect of the future reward of it, *And the end everlaſting life.* Here *obſerve*, 1. The deſcription which the apoſtle makes of the change from a ſtate of ſin to a ſtate of holineſs: Ye are *made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of God*; intimating, that a ſtate of ſin is a ſtate of ſervitude and ſlavery; and indeed it is the hardeſt ſlavery in the world, it being the ſlavery of the ſoul, which is the beſt and nobleſt part of ourſelves; it is the ſubjection of our reaſon to our ſenſual appetites, and brutiſh paſſions; which is as uncomely a ſight as to ſee beggars ride on horſeback, and princes walk on foot. Farther, It is a voluntary ſlavery, the ſinner chuſeth his ſervitude, and willingly puts his neck under this yoke. Again, the ſinner makes himſelf a ſlave to his own ſervants, to thoſe who were born to be ſubject to him, I mean his own appetites and paſſions, chuſing rather a life of ſenſe, and to gratify his luſts, than to obey his reaſon. 2. The preſent benefit of an holy and religious life; *Ye have your fruit unto holineſs.* What fruit? *Anſ.* Inward peace and contentment of mind at preſent, length of days, health and proſperity in this world, ſolid joy and comfort at the hour of death, a good name and reputation among men after death; and it derives a bleſſing upon our poſterity which we leave behind us. 3. The future reward and recompence of an holy life in the world to come; *The end everlaſting life:* By which the apoſtle expreſſes both the happineſs of our future ſtate, and the ways and means by which we are prepared and made meet to be partakers of it. 1. The happineſs of our future ſtate is expreſſed by the name of everlaſting life, which imports both the excellency of this ſtate, it is a ſtate of life; and the eternity, or endleſs duration of it, it is a ſtate of everlaſting life. 2. The way and means by which we are prepared and made meet to be partakers of this happineſs; and that is, by the conſtant and ſincere endeavours of a holy and good life: Holineſs in this life is the certain way, yea, the only way to happineſs in the life to come. This appears from the will of God, who has connected the end and means together; from the juſtice of God, who will reward every man according to his work; from the indecency and unſuitableneſs to the contrary. Without meetneſs and fitneſs for heaven, there could be no happineſs in heaven; heaven would not be a paradiſe, but a purgatory; not a place of happineſs, but of the greateſt uneaſineſs to a wicked man: therefore let us have *our preſent fruit unto holineſs, that our end may be everlaſting life.*

23 For the wages of ſin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The apoſtle having all along throughout the chapter exhorted us to die daily unto ſin, and to live unto God, concludes with a motive drawn from the different rewards and puniſhments in another world; eternal death will be the puniſhment of ſin and ſinners, and eternal life the reward of holineſs and holy perſons. *Obſerve*, 1. The puniſhment of ſin and ſinners; *The wages of ſin is death*. Where *note*, The offence committed, *ſin*; the puniſhment inflicted, *death*; the juſtice and proportion between the ſin and the puniſhment, it is a ſtipend, or *wages*, a metaphor taken from ſoldiers, who at the end of their ſervice receive their pay and ſtipend. *Learn* hence, That death is the puniſhment of ſin, is *finis operis*, though not *operatins*, the end of the work, though not the end of the worker. *Queſt.* What death is that which is the puniſhment of ſin? *Anſ.* Both temporal and eternal: The former conſiſts in the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body, the latter in an everlaſting ſeparation of ſoul and body from the preſence of God, and in an impriſonment with devils, and damned to all eternity. *Queſt.* What ſin is that which is puniſhed with death? *Anſ.* Conſider ſin in its demerit and deſert, and ſo death is the puniſhment of every ſin; conſider it in its iſſue and event, and ſo it is the puniſhment only of that ſin which is aggravated with impenitency: All ſins are venial with reſpect to the mercy of God, and the repentance of a ſinner; but the wages of every ſin that reigns in us, and is not forſaken by us, is eternal death. *Note*, 2. The reward promiſed to holineſs, and inſured to holy perſons; *The gift of God is eternal life*. Here *mark*, The happineſs of holy perſons: 1. In the Lord and Maſter whom they ſerve, God or Chriſt Jeſus. 2. Happy in the reward of their ſervices, eternal life. 3. Happy in the manner of their reward, it is a *free gift*, not wages; a metaphor taken from kings, who beſtow upon ſuch ſoldiers as have ſignalized themſelves, over and above their ſtipend, coronets and laurels, as badges of their favour; unto which our apoſtle alludes, calling eternal life a donative, a freely diſpenſed favour, which may be conſidered in our eternal deſtination thereunto before all time, in our converſion and ſanctification in time, which we may call the embryo of eternal life; and in our coronation and glorification, when at the end of time full poſſeſſion of eternal life ſhall be given to us: In all which inſtances heaven appears to be a free gift, not procured by any merit of our's, but by the mediation of Chriſt our Lord: *The gift of God is eternal life*, &c.

CHAP. VII.

The apoſtle proceeds in this chapter to declare that all believers are freed from the yoke of the Moſaic law, it being dead to them, and they to it: His argument runs thus: Dead men are not held under the law, but are freed and delivered from it; therefore, as many as truly believe in Chriſt are dead to the law, and are freed and delivered from it.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I ſpeak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "You Jews, who ſtudy the law, and are well acquainted with it, cannot but know that the law of God hath power over a man, to require of him exact, perfect, and perpetual obedience, and to accuſe, condemn, and bind him over to the curſe for the leaſt breach and violation of it; and all this as long as he liveth under the law, and is not freed from the malediction of it by faith in Chriſt." *Learn* hence, 1. That the law of God, in the force and ſtrength of it, and as conſidered in itſelf, is a very hard lord and maſter, exacting perfect, perſonal, and perpetual obedience to its commands, and binding ſinners over to the curſe for the leaſt tranſgreſſion and violation of it. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt has freed all believers from the rigour of the law, from the curſe of the law, and from the irritation of the law; that is, from the power which is in the law, to ſtir them up to ſin through the corruption of their own hearts and natures. Bleſſed be God! we are by Chriſt freed from, and dead to the law, as a covenant of life; but we are under it, and may we all our days ſit under the ſhadow of it with great delight, as an eternal rule of *holy living*.

2 For the woman which hath an huſband is bound by the law to *her* huſband ſo long as he liveth: but if the huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of *her* huſband. 3 So then if while *her* huſband liveth ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs; but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is free from that law; ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye are alſo become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt; that ye ſhould be married to another, *even* to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.

Here the apoſtle doth exemplify and illuſtrate the foregoing aſſertion, namely, That believers are freed from the law, by a ſimilitude taken from the law of marriage: As death freeth huſband and wife from the law which bound them together, and impowereth the ſurvivor to marry another perſon; in like manner, the death of Chriſt was the death of the law, as a covenant of works, holding us under the curſe of it; and ſo his dying gave us a manumiſſion or freedom from that bond, and a capacity of eſpouſal unto Chriſt; that ſo living in conjugal affection and obedience to him, we may be made fruitful by his Spirit, doing ſuch things as are agreeable to the will of God, and tending to the glory of God. *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt:* That is, through the offering up of Chriſt's body upon the croſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That he that is under the law, is as ſtrictly bound to the rigour and curſe of the law, as a married woman is bound to her huſband during his life. 2. That one great end of Chriſt's death was to purchaſe our freedom from the law, that we might be capable of being eſpouſed to himſelf. For whilſt we were under the curſe of the law, we were not in a capacity of being married unto Chriſt. He or ſhe that is a ſlave to another, is not capable to be diſpoſed of in marriage until made free. In like manner we were in bondage to the law, as well as in ſlavery to ſin and Satan; but Chriſt has bought out our liberty, and thereby put us into a capacity of being eſpouſed unto himſelf. Behold what manner of love the Redeemer has ſhewed unto us, that we ſhould be called his ſpouſe, and he our huſband! He loved us, but not for any advantage he could have by us; for we had nothing but ſin and ſhame to preſent him with. Nay, he muſt purchaſe us with his own blood, before he could be united to us. O incomparable love! O fervent deſires! 3. That though believers are free from the curſe of the law by the death of Chriſt, yet have they not an undoubted liberty, but are ſtill under government, under an head and guide. As a wife is under the government of her huſband, ſo are believers under the guidance and government of Jeſus Chriſt, who in a ſpecial manner guideth them by his word and Spirit; and their being ſaid to be dead to the law, ſignifies no more than the law's not having dominion over them, in regard of the curſe and condemnation of it.

5 For when we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not *in* the oldneſs of the letter.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "When we lived under the diſpenſation of the law, and were married to the law, we brought forth fruit ſuitable to that ſtate and condition. But now being freed from the law, and married unto Chriſt, it is meet and right, equal and fit, that we ſhould bring forth fruit ſuitable to our more excellent condition: That now we ſerve God with new hearts and lives by the Spirit of Chriſt, according to the law of grace, and not carnally in the bondage and terror of the old law, called here, *the oldneſs of the letter*." *Learn* hence, 1. That all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians, who are dead to the law, and eſpouſed unto Chriſt, ought to bring forth fruit unto God, ſuitable to their noble eſtate, and moſt honourable condition. Freedom and deliverance from the rigour and curſe of the law ought to bind us the more ſtrongly to God, to love and ſerve him, to glorify and obey him. 2. That all true believers, who are freed from the rigour and curſe of the law, ought to ſerve the Lord in true holineſs both of heart and life, and to yield a new and univerſal obedience to him. This the apoſtle here calls *the newneſs of the Spirit*, to intimate to us, that new obedience is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, as the author of all grace and ſanctification. And whereas the *newneſs of the Spirit* is oppoſed to the *oldneſs of the letter*; that is, the miniſtry of the law, which of itſelf is a dead letter, diſcovering ſin, but not diſcovering how ſin may be either pardoned or ſubdued; we may gather, That the law of God, and indeed the whole word of God, without the Spirit, is but a dead letter, unable to work grace and holineſs in us, or to excite and quicken us unto newneſs of life. Whenever then we place ourſelves under the word, let us pray with David, *Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous things of thy law.*

7 What ſhall we ſay then? *Is* the law ſin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known ſin but by the law: for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.

Note here, 1. The objection (which the apoſtle anſwers) that ſome were ready to make againſt the holineſs of the law. He had affirmed at ver. 5. that *the motions of ſin were ſtirred up by the law.* "If ſo, ſay ſome, then the law may ſeem to be the cauſe of ſin:" *God forbid*, ſays the apoſtle. The thought of ſuch a concluſion ought to be abhorred. Hence *learn*, 1. That the holieſt doctrines and truths of God are ſubject to be perverted and be abuſed, and to have abſurd inferences and concluſions drawn from them. 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt muſt be able and careful, not only to propound the truth ſoundly, but to defend it ſolidly, againſt all cavils, and wicked objections whatſoever, and to declare their utter deteſtation and utmoſt abhorrency of any ſuch opinion that reflects diſhonour upon the holy law of God. *Note*, 2. The apoſtle's argument to confute this wicked notion of the law's being the cauſe of ſin: *I had not known ſin but by the law.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "That which forbids ſin, diſcovers and condemns ſin, cannot be the cauſe of ſin; but ſo doth the holy law of God: It makes ſin manifeſt in and to the conſcience of the ſinner; therefore the law is not ſin, no exciter to it, or cauſe of it." *Learn* hence, That the law of God is ſo far from being the cauſe of ſin, that by it men come to a more clear, full, diſtinct, and effectual knowledge of ſin: *I had not known ſin, but by the law:* that is, not ſo clearly and effectually, ſo as to be duly humbled for it, and turned from it. The light of nature ſhews a difference between good and evil, but the law of God repreſents ſin as the evil of evils. In it, as in a glaſs, we behold the foul face of ſin, and are convinced by it of the monſtrous evil that it is. 3. How the apoſtle produces his own experience in this matter, and gives a particular inſtance in himſelf, that he *had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhall not covet*; that is, he ſhould not have underſtood that the firſt irregular motions of the heart, the firſt inclinations and deſires of the ſoul towards ſin, (though not conſented to by the will) were evil, had he not, by a more attentive conſideration of the tenth commandment, found that they were ſo. *Learn* hence, 1. That luſt or concupiſcence is ſin; that is, original luſt, the firſt motions of corrupt and rebellious nature, whereby our inclinations are towards evil, though our wills do not fully conſent to evil. 2. That ſo holy and ſpiritual is the law of God, that it diſcovers the ſin of nature, and condemns the firſt motions and inclinations of the ſoul to ſin, even to the pit of hell. All the wiſdom of the heathen, yea, of the wiſeſt and moſt learned perſons in the world, was never able to diſcover the firſt motions ariſing from our rebellious natures to be ſin; only the holy law of God makes them known, and diſcovers them to be ſin. Such is the holineſs of the law of God, that it requires not only the purity of our actions, but alſo the integrity of all our faculties.

8 But ſin taking occaſion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence. For without the law ſin *was* dead.

Note here, A conceſſion or grant made by the apoſtle, that although the law was not the formal cauſe of ſin, yet ſin was an accidental event of the law, through the depravity and corruption of our natures; luſt or concupiſcence in us being ſtirred up more ſtrongly, and breaking forth more violently in us, by being prohibited and reſtrained by the law. As things forbidden us are the more deſired by us; the more the law would reſtrain ſin through our corruption, the more it enrages ſin: As the more you would dam up a torrent, the higher it ſwells. Thus *ſin takes occaſion by the commandment to work all manner of concupiſcence in us.* *Learn* hence, That ſuch is the depravity and perverſeneſs of our preſent natures, that there is found within us a propenſity and inclination to all ſin; and although the law of God doth not give the leaſt countenance to ſin, yet ſin takes occaſion, from the reſtraints of the law, to grow more impetuous, and is the more irritated by being prohibited; and conſequently it is not from ourſelves, but from God's reſtraining grace, that thoſe evil inclinations which are in our hearts do not break forth in our lives. The apoſtle adds, *Without the law ſin was dead*; that is, without the knowledge and due conſideration of the law, ſin is comparatively dead; that is, the corruption of nature lies hid, and is not ſo much known to be ſin; nor had it ſo much power to terrify the conſcience, and to ſtir up inordinate affections, as after the law is known and duly conſidered. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as either know not the word and law of God, or do not duly conſider it, have very little ſenſe of inward pollution. But their corruption lies, as it were, dead in them, and they in that without touching the conſcience, or laying the ſoul under ſenſible apprehenſions of its ſin and danger: *Without the law ſin is dead.* Sin in the conſcience is like a lion aſleep in his den; it awakes not, ſtirs not, terrifies and accuſes not, till the law of God rouzes it; and then the ſinner ſees himſelf under the curſe, and liable to perdition.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Formerly, when I lived a Phariſee, and had the law in my hand, but did not conſider in my heart what exactneſs and perfection it required in my life, I contented myſelf with an outward obſervation of it, and concluded my ſtate to be very good and ſafe: But when I came to a right underſtanding of the word and law of God, and to be convinced by it, that the inward luſtings and inordinate deſires of the heart were ſins, then I found myſelf a guilty creature, obnoxious to wrath, and in a ſtate of death." Here *note*, 1. The good opinion the apoſtle had, and all unregenerate men have of themſelves before converſion: *I was alive once.* By life underſtand livelineſs, confidence and aſſurance of his good eſtate and condition; he was full of vain hope, falſe joy, and preſumptuous confidence. *Learn* hence, That natural and unregenerate perſons are uſually very full of groundleſs confidence and cheerfulneſs, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of their bad eſtate and ſad condition: *I was alive without the law once.* *Note*, 2. The apprehenſion and opinion which St. Paul had, and others will have of themſelves, when they come under the regenerating work of the Spirit, by the miniſtry of the word and law of God: *When the commandment came, I died.* *Death* here ſtands oppoſed to *life* before, and denotes the ſorrows, fears and tremblings which ſeized upon his ſoul, when he was convinced of the badneſs of his condition: it ſtabbed all his carnal mirth, joy, and jollity, at the very heart: *I died.* 3. The cauſe and reaſon of this wonderful alteration and change of judgment in the apoſtle; it was the commandment and law of God: *When the commandment came*, that is, cloſe and home to my heart and conſcience with a divine efficacy. The commandment was come before to him by way of promulgation, and he had the literal knowledge of it; but now it came in the convincing power and ſpiritual application of it. Accordingly *ſin revived*, that is, the ſenſe of ſin was more lively imprinted upon his ſoul; and now he died, all his vain hopes gave up the ghoſt now, and his ſin and guilt ſtared in the face of his conſcience. *Learn* hence, That there is a mighty efficacy in the word or law of God to kill vain confidence, and quench carnal mirth in the hearts of men, when God ſets it home upon their conſciences: *I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came*, &c.

10 And the commandment which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

Note here, 1. The natural end and uſe of the commandment or law of God, *It was ordained unto life:* that is, it was given for a rule of life, and promiſed eternal ſalvation to the perfect fulfilling of it. But no man ſince the fall being able perfectly to fulfil the law in his own perſon, can be juſtified by the law in the ſight of God. However, the proper end for which the law was ordained, was to give life to them that ſhould perfectly keep it. 2. The contrary uſe which the apoſtle found the law to be of, with reference unto himſelf. What *was ordained to life, he found to be unto death:* that is, through his own corruption and tranſgreſſion, it became an occaſion of death to him, by binding him over to puniſhment, and rendering him obnoxious to the wrath of God. Thus the word of God, the ſweet and ſaving word of God, that word which God had ordained to bring men to life and ſalvation, is found to ſome the ſavour of death unto death; but the fault is not in the word, but in themſelves.

11 For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "*Sin*, or the corruption of my heart and nature, being ſtirred up by the commandment which forbids luſt, and condemns it, enticed me, and perſuaded me, and prevailed over me, to yield to the luſts of my own heart, and then condemned me, and ſlew me for yielding to them." See here the true and genuine nature of *ſin*; it firſt deceives, and then deſtroys: It deceived me, ſaith the apoſtle, and then ſlew me. Sin doth perfectly beſot the creature, and renders it injudicious; it befools and deceives us, it pollutes and defiles us, it doth debaſe and degrade us, and, without repentance, damns and deſtroys us. God keep us from being hardened in ſinning through the deceitfulneſs of ſin; let no profit tempt us, no pleaſure entice us, no power embolden us, no privacy encourage us, to adventure upon any known ſin; for its embraces are deadly, it leads to death, and ends in death; after it has deceived us, it certainly deſtroys us: *Sin taking occaſion, deceived me, and by it ſlew me.*

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy; and the commandment, holy and juſt and good.

Note here, What care and holy caution the apoſtle uſes to vindicate and clear the holy law of God from all fault and blame, charging his guilt, not upon the commandment, but upon the corruption of his own heart, which took occaſion to be ſtirring in him, and by the commandment ſlew him; affirming nevertheleſs, that the law of God in itſelf, and in its own nature, is holy, juſt, and good. Here *note*, That the apoſtle adorns the law with the moſt excellent eulogy and commendation. It is holy, 1. As it injoins all acts of piety towards God; namely, adoration of his majeſty, imitation of his purity, reſignation to his providence, obedience to his commands. 2. It is juſt, as it directs us in our duty to others in every capacity and relation wherein we ſtand, and obliges us to walk by that rule of equity, to do to others as we would they ſhould do unto us. 3. It is good to the man that keeps it, commanding nothing but what is influential upon his well-being both here and hereafter. Could we ſet aſide the authority of the Law-giver, yet all the precepts of the law, for their moral goodneſs, deſerve our eſteem, and choice, and entire obſervation; nothing being required of us but what is our duty and intereſt as men, and which tends to the perfecting and ennobling of our natures: Well then might our apoſtle determine, that *the law is holy*; *the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.*

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But ſin, that it might appear ſin, worketh death in me by that which is good; that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful.

From what the apoſtle had ſaid in the former verſe, he moves an objection into this verſe; "Seeing the law was holy, and juſt, and good, how comes it to be unto death? *Was that which was good made death unto me?*" To this he replies, by way of negation, *God forbid*; for to find fault with the law, is to find fault with God himſelf; and alſo by way of affirmation, aſſerting, that *ſin* is the true cauſe of death. The commandment indeed condemns, or is death to the ſinner, yet not of itſelf, but becauſe of ſin; as we ſay of a condemned malefactor, it is not the judge, but the law, that condemns him; or, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is not the law, but his own guilt, that condemns him; the judge is but the mouth of the law, to denounce the ſentence that guilt deſerves. And hereby ſin appears to be what really it is, *ſin ſinful*, exceeding ſinful, maſculinely and vigorouſly ſinful, exceſſively and out of meaſure ſinful, extremely and beyond all expreſſion, nay, beyond our comprehenſion, ſinful. *Learn* hence, 1. That the law of God, in whole, and every part thereof, is holy and good, both in itſelf and in its own nature, and relatively in its inſtitution with reſpect to man; for it was ordained, unto life, ver. 10. *Learn* 2. That this good and holy law violated and tranſgreſſed, condemns and kills, and aſſigns a perſon over unto death. 3. That though the law condemns man's ſin, and man for his ſin, yet ſtill the law is good, and not to be blamed; the law is to be juſtified by man, even when it condemns man; as man had no reaſon to break the law, ſo he has no cauſe to find fault with the law, though it binds him over to death for the breaking of it. 4. That it is not the law, but ſin, that worketh man's death and ruin. Sin aims at no leſs, and will end in no leſs; for the wages of ſin is death. Yet, 5. Sin certainly worketh man's death and deſtruction by that which is good, to wit, the law; for when ſin hath uſed man to break the law, it then makes uſe of the law to break man; that is, to undo him by condemnation and death for breaking of it. Laſtly, From hence it follows, that ſin is therefore exceedingly, yea, unmeaſurably ſinful, poiſonous and pernicious, becauſe it kills men, and not only ſo, but it kills men by that which is good, to wit, the law. That which was appointed for life, becomes the occaſion of death; conſequently *ſin* is the moſt villainous, virulent, and deadly thing that ever was in the world. "Ah! ſinful *ſin*, hyperbolically and out of meaſure *ſinful*, thou art a contempt of God's ſovereign authority, a contrariety to his infinite holineſs, a violation of his royal and righteous law, and the higheſt affront that can be offered to the majeſty of the great and glorious God. Thou haſt made man like a beaſt, like the worſt of beaſts; worſe than the worſt of beaſts; yea, ſin is worſe than the devil himſelf, than hell itſelf. Sin made the devil what he is: A devil and hell never had an exiſtence till ſin had one: God was never angry till ſin made him angry. Oh ſin! it is thou that makeſt hell to be hell; and the more ſin, the more hell. Well might the apoſtle then ſay here, *Sin, that it might appear ſin, worketh death in me, and is become*, &c.

14 For we know that the law is ſpiritual:—

Still *note*, How the apoſtle goes on to aſſert the purity and ſpirituality of the law of God: *The law is ſpiritual*; ſpiritual in the author of it, God, who is an Holy Spirit; ſpiritual in the matter of it, requiring ſpiritual obedience to be paid unto it, requiring perfect purity both of heart and life. *Learn* hence, That the moral law of God is in the nature of it purely ſpiritual, perfectly holy, being breathed forth by the Holy Spirit of God, and requireth perfect purity both of heart and life, and perfect conformity to it, both in the inward and outward man. Hence ſome derive the word which we tranſlate *law*, from a word which ſignifies to behold and conſider, to contemplate and look about: Intimating thereby, that the holy and ſpiritual law of God is diligently to be obſerved and conſidered, looked into, and meditated upon; it being ſo perfectly pure and holy, that it requires not only the purity of our actions, but alſo the integrity of our very faculties, our hearts and natures.

—But I am carnal,—

So may, 1. every unregenerate man truly ſay, *I am carnal*, having not only fleſh in me, but prevailing in me, ſin having a regency and dominion over me: he fights under the banner of corrupt nature, acting in a willing, ready, and full ſubjection to ſin, and compliance with it; he is carnal, being under the power and unbroken ſtrength of carnal luſts, and ſenſual propenſions, and following them in the daily courſe of his life. 2. *I am carnal*, may a regenerate perſon truly ſay, (1.) With reſpect to that exact purity and ſpirituality both of heart and life, which the holy law of God requires; the law is ſpiritual, but I, alas! compared with that ſpiritual law, am but a lump of corruption, coming infinitely ſhort, God knows, of that uprightneſs and ſpirituality which the law of God requires. 2. A regenerate perſon may truly ſay he is carnal, that is, in part ſo, having much, too much carnality in his carnal affections found with him, and carnal infirmities cleaving to him: Such as are truly acquainted with the ſpirituality of the word and law of God, and alſo well acquainted with their own hearts, do ſee ſufficient cauſe to complain of carnal corruption abiding in them, and cleaving to them. *I am carnal*, have ſaid, and may ſay, the holieſt of *ſaints*, with reſpect to the perfect meaſure and degrees of holineſs. Thus that holy and bleſſed martyr, Mr. Bradford, complains ſtyling himſelf *the hard-hearted, unbelieving, earthly-minded Bradford*; yet was a man of very tender ſpirit, full of faith, fruitful in good works, and exceedingly mortified to the world. Doſt thou groan under the burden of indwelling corruption? know, that the whole ſpiritual creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain with thee until now: But bleſſed be God for the hopes of a deliverer and a deliverance.

— Sold under ſin.

This phraſe is borrowed from bondmen or captives, ſome of which are ſold, others ſell themſelves into captivity. The unregenerate man, with Ahab, ſells himſelf to work wickedneſs. This denotes wilfulneſs and obſtinacy; ſuch a perſon doth voluntarily proſtitute himſelf to the luſt of Satan: A regenerate perſon doth not, with Ahab, ſell himſelf, but is ſold, like Joſeph by his brethren, and Sampſon by his wife; being rather paſſive than active: He is ſometimes ſin's captive, but never ſin's ſlave; he is never ſin's willing ſervant, but ſometimes its unwilling priſoner. The holieſt and beſt of ſaints, though not held in wilful ſlavery, thraldom and bondage unto ſin, yet corruption holds them too much, though in part unwillingly, under the tyranny of ſin; they do not yield to ſin, as good ſubjects yield to their lawful prince, voluntary obedience; but as captives yield to a tyrant, paying him involuntary ſubjection. His ſoul is betrayed, ſays one, by corruption to temptation, and by temptation to corruption.

15 For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

Theſe words are an argument to prove what the apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing verſe; namely, That he was held under the power of ſin unwillingly, becauſe he did not allow or approve of any evil which he did contrary to the holy law of God, but did hate and abominate it, was diſpleaſed with it, and with himſelf for it. An unregenerate man's judgment and conſcience is ſometimes againſt ſin; which makes him afraid to commit it; but a gracious perſon's will, heart and affections, are all ſet againſt ſin: Indeed, there is a regenerate and an unregenerate part in the Chriſtian's will (he is ſanctified *totus*, but not *totaliter*;) ſo far as the will is renewed, it hates all ſin, and meditates the ruin and deſtruction of it. And *note*, It was not this or that particular evil, but all evil which the apoſtle hated. A wicked man may hate a particular evil, as Abſalom hated Amnon's uncleanneſs; but to hate all ſin, is the character of none but a regenerate perſon. Laſtly, That a good man ſometimes, through the power of corruption, and the prevalency of temptation, doth that evil which is diſallowed and diſapproved by him; yea, which is very odious and hateful to him: He loaths in part what he doth, and afterwards loaths himſelf for the doing of it; and when he doth evil, allows not of the evil that he doth.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law that *it is good.* 17 Now then, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

Note, 1. How readily the apoſtle conſented to the equity and holineſs of God's law; he did love the law of God, which made holineſs his duty: *I conſent*, ſays he, *to the law, that it is good*; he aſſented to it in his judgment, he complied with it in his will, he clave to it in his inward affections. So far as a perſon is regenerate, his heart doth correſpond with God's law: But may not an unregenerate perſon conſent in his judgment to the law of God, own it to be good, approve it to be holy? Did not Herod hear the word with gladneſs, and the ſtony ground receive the word with joy? *Anſ.* They may in their judgments approve, yet not in their hearts like and love the law of God: At the ſame time, that they commend it with their mouths, they caſt it behind their backs. 2. How the apoſtle diſclaims, though not diſowns, the evil done by him: *It is no more I, but ſin that dwelleth in me.* As if he had ſaid, "My corrupt affections ſometimes overpower me, againſt the approbation of my judgment, and the inclination of my will: *But it is not I* (according to my better part, from which I am denominated) *but ſin dwelling in me.*" *Learn* hence, That if we can diſclaim the evil done by us, as being contrary to us, contrary to the habitual frame and diſpoſition of our hearts, contrary to the deliberate purpoſe and ſettled reſolution of our wills, Almighty God will not charge our failings upon us to our condemnation, but mercifully diſtinguiſh between the weakneſs of the fleſh, and the willingneſs of the ſpirit; between us, and ſin that dwelleth in us. Sin will remain and dwell, but it muſt not reign and rule: It is a buſy inmate in a gracious heart, but it is a lordly maſter, yea, an imperious tyrant in a ſinner's heart. Happy he that can in truth and ſincerity ſay, *It is not I, but ſin that dwelleth in me.*

18 For I know that in me, that is, in my fleſh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me; but *how* to perform that which is good, I find not.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's propoſition: *I know that in me, that is, in my fleſh, dwelleth no good thing:* That is, in my corrupt and unregenerate nature, there is nothing truly and ſpiritually good; and this I myſelf am ſenſible of, and privy to, and very well acquainted with. *Learn* thence, That good men are intimately acquainted with themſelves, privy to their own corruptions, ſenſible of the indwelling preſence of *ſin* in themſelves, which calls upon them to be humble, and excites them to be watchful: *I know that in me dwelleth no good thing.* 2. The confirmation of the foregoing propoſition; for *to will is preſent with me*; that is, to will what is good, to purpoſe good, and to deſire that which is good, is preſent with me; but I want ability to perform that good I purpoſe. *Learn* hence, That though to will that which is good is ready and at hand with God's regenerated children, yet through that corruption which ſtill abides in them, they are ſometimes diſabled for doing that good, which they purpoſe, deſign, and deſire to do; and that little good they do, is very brokenly and imperfectly done. A mortal father may as ſoon beget an immortal child, as an imperfect ſaint can perform any thing perfectly good: There can never be more in the effect, than there is in the cauſe: A weak grape cannot make ſtrong wine: Whilſt we are ſaints on earth, though we may and ought to aſpire after, yet we ſhall not be able to attain unto the ſinleſs perfection of the ſaints in heaven: A real Chriſtian is one that is continually labouring after the attainment of that which he knows in this life he ſhall never attain unto; namely, perfection in grace: In heaven we ſhall have no occaſion to complain, that *how to perform that which is good, we find not.*

19 For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

Here the apoſtle repeats what he had before aſſerted; namely, That he did not always do that good which he deſired to do, but ſometimes being overpowered by the fleſh, did what the law prohibits, and what he would not do. And farther adds, That it was no longer himſelf, (chuſing and approving the action in his mind) that did this, but ſin dwelling in him, which ſometimes hurried him to the commiſſion of it, againſt the inclination and law of his mind. Here *note*, 1. That the corruption of nature in the ſoul of man, is a real, but a diſtinct thing from the ſoul itſelf. A dweller in an houſe, is really diſtinguiſhed from the houſe he dwells in. Sin is not a ſubſtance, but the pravity and depravity of our faculties. 2. That the corruption of our own hearts and natures, is the root and cauſe of all evil that is done by us. 3. That the habitual bent, the ſettled purpoſe, and determinate reſolution of a Chriſtian's will, is againſt all *ſin*; and he doth not ſin with the full conſent of his will. Although there are not two diſtinct perſons, yet there are two diſtinct principles in a regenerate man. Sin and he are diſtinguiſhed. In a good man there is a conflict between ſin and grace, but in an unregenerate man there is no combat between the fleſh and Spirit; for he is all fleſh; the fleſh and he are one; the combat is not between grace and ſin, but between one ſin and another, and between one faculty and another: Light in the underſtanding, oppoſes luſt in the will; whereas the conflict in a gracious perſon is not between his judgment and his will, but betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate part in his will. Sin, like a preternatural bias clapped upon the ſoul, ſometimes carries it away from the mark which the Chriſtian aims at: However, though a good man be overcome *in prælio*, yet not *in bello*; though grace is ſometimes foiled in the combat, yet it keeps the field, maintains and recovers its ground. The ſaint will not throw down his weapon till he lays down his life, and grace ſhall at length be finally victorious.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I verily find ſin, having an impelling power and impulſive virtue in it, like a law in my members, thwarting and contradicting the inclinations of my mind, and the reſolutions of my will, that *when I would do good, evil is preſent with me*, to oppoſe and hinder me from the doing of it." *Note* here, A double burden which the apoſtle complained of; 1. Of the preſence of ſin at all times, *Evil is preſent with me.* It follows me, as if he had ſaid, and is as inſeparable from me as my ſhadow. This he calls a law, becauſe of its mighty power and efficacy, and becauſe of its conſtant reſidence in his nature. 2. Of the operation of it, eſpecially at ſome particular and ſpecial times and ſeaſons. *When I would do good*, then *evil is preſent with me.* As if he had ſaid, "When I addreſs myſelf to any holy duty, and heavenly employment, when I deſire and deſign to draw near to God, and would hope for the ſweeteſt fellowſhip and communion with him, then alas! then to my great ſorrow, is *evil preſent with me.* Ah, when I promiſe myſelf moſt comfort and communion in the enjoyment of my God, how do I then find a bad heart in the beſt ſeaſon, a dead and drowſy ſpirit when I would be moſt ſpiritual in the duties I perform!" From whence *learn*, That the holieſt and beſt of ſaints in this their imperfect ſtate, do ſenſibly feel, and ſadly bewail, the working of ſin and corruption in them; and that in the very ſeaſons and opportunities of their communion with God: *When I would do good*, then *evil is preſent with me.*

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

If by the inward man we underſtand the mind and underſtanding of a man only, then the unregenerate perſon may be ſaid to delight in the law of God, with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. with Herod, Mark vi. 20. with the ſtony ground, Matt. xiii. 20. That is, they delight and ſatisfy themſelves with the bare hearing of the word, and with a notional and ſpeculative knowledge of their duty; either the eloquence of the preacher whom they hear, or the pleaſingneſs of ſome truths which they hear, affect them with a ſudden joy: they delight to hear the word, but they take no delight to do it. It is neither a ſpiritual delight, nor an abiding delight, that ſuch men take in the law of God. If by the inward man we underſtand that which St. Peter calls the hidden man of the heart, the new man, or the regenerate part in man, as being ſeated in the inward powers and faculties of the ſoul; then, to delight in the law of God, is to love it for its purity and ſpirituality, becauſe it makes holineſs our duty; to take pleaſure in the knowledge of the law, in meditating upon it, and in practiſing every good duty contained in it, and enjoined by it. Thus David did delight to do the will of God, becauſe the law of God was within his heart. Where there is *lex in corde*, there will be *cor in lege*; where the law of God is in the heart, there the heart will be engaged in that obedience which is by the law required, and by the Chriſtian performed. He delights in the law, and the law is delighted by him.

23 But I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin which is in my members.

Here *note*, That in this and the foregoing verſes, mention is made of four laws contending one againſt another, whereof two are on one ſide, and two on the other; namely, the law of God, and the law of the mind; the law of the members, and the law of ſin. By the law of God is underſtood the word of God; by the law of the mind, is underſtood in the regenerate, grace in the heart; in the unregenerate, light in the conſcience; by the law of the members, underſtand original luſt and concupiſcence; by the law of ſin, thoſe corrupt principles according to which luſt governs. *Learn* hence, That there is a conflict or combat between the law of the mind, and the law of the members, and this both in regenerate and unregenerate perſons. This appears, 1. By the teſtimony of nature ſpeaking in the heathen. Thus *Medea, video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor*; their rational appetite diſplaceth reaſon, and leads it captive. 2. By the teſtimony of ſcripture, and that, (1.) As to the unregenerate, witneſs Herod, Mark vi. 26. who had a conflict between luſt and conſcience; as had alſo Pilate upon the occaſion of our Saviour's death: Conſcience bid him ſpare, popupopularity bid him kill. (2.) As to the regenerate, Gal. v. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh*, &c. (3.) By the teſtimony of experience: Who finds not every day within himſelf a conteſt of contrary motions and inclinations? A Chriſtian's boſom is like Rebecca's womb, it has twins of two contrary natures: A ſmooth Jacob and rough Eſau, fleſh and ſpirit. But wherein conſiſts the difference between that conflict which is found in the natural and ſpiritual, the regenerate and unregenerate man? *Anſ.* 1. The conflict in an unregenerate perſon is not between grace and ſin, but between one luſt and another; the ſtruggle is, which luſt ſhall be in the throne, as rebels in a kingdom, having caſt off the authority of their lawful prince, every one ſnatches at the ſceptre, and would command and rule. Thus every luſt is ambitious of ſuperiority, and uſurps a regency in the ſoul: So that though the ſinner oft changes his maſter, yet not his ſervitude, he is a ſlave ſtill. Now, from this contrariety of luſt rebelling in a carnal heart, he is neceſſitated to oppoſe the luſts which he favours leſs, to gratify another which he favours more. Thus the conflict is between ſin and ſin, not betwixt grace and ſin. *Anſ.* 2. As an unregenerate man's combat with ſin is betwixt one luſt and another, ſo it is only between one faculty and another. Thus light in the underſtanding oppoſes luſt in the will. The judgment and conſcience of a ſinner ſays, "O do not that abominable thing which the ſoul of God hates." But then luſt in the will votes for it, and is angry with conſcience for being ſo bold as to oppoſe it. Whereas, the conflict in a regenerate perſon, is between grace and ſin, not betwixt ſin and ſin; and not betwixt the underſtanding and the will, but betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate part in the ſame will. And although grace be foiled in a particular combat, yet it keeps the field, and the Chriſtian will not throw down his weapon, till he lays down his life.

24 O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?

Theſe words are a ſad and ſorrowful complaint of the preſent and too great prevalency of indwelling ſin and unſubdued corruption; and in them *note*, 1. The perſon complaining, St. Paul. 2. The matter of the complaint, not of affliction, but of ſin; not of a death, but of a body of ſin and death, which he carried about with him. 3. The manner of the complaint, it is with vehemence and affection, it is *vox anhelantis*, the voice of one that pants and breathes after deliverance; not of one that doubted, much leſs deſponded of a deliverer and a deliverance. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "O how am I tired and wearied with continual conflicts and ſtrivings with indwelling ſin? How do the remains of unſubdued ſin, and (as yet) unmortified corruption, affect and afflict me? who will deliver me? and when ſhall deliverance be enjoyed by me?" *Learn* hence, That there are ſad remains of indwelling ſin, and unſubdued corruption, in the very beſt and holieſt of God's children and ſervants in this life, which they ſadly complain of, ſenſibly groan under, daily watch againſt, continually conflict with, and ſhall, in God's time, be fully and finally delivered from.

25 I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.—

Here the apoſtles eſpies a deliverer, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; one that had delivered him from the condemning and reigning power of ſin, and would ere long deliver him from the preſence, as well as prevalency of ſin. And whereas the apoſtle ſtyles Chriſt Jeſus not his Lord, but *our Lord*, that is, the Lord of all believers; it gives us this conſolation and joyful aſſurance, that the happy hour is at hand, when we ſhall be everlaſtingly freed from the indwelling preſence of ſin, from all temptations to ſin, from all inclinations to offend, yea, from all poſſibility of ſinning: When we ſhall obey God with vigour, praiſe him with cheerfulneſs, love him without meaſure, fear him without torment, truſt in him without deſpondency, ſerve him without wearineſs, without interruption or diſtraction, being perfectly like unto God, as well in holineſs as in happineſs, as well in purity as in immortality. Lord ſtrengthen our faith in the belief of this deſirable happineſs (when and where nothing ſhall corrupt our purity, nothing ſhall diſturb our peace) and ſet our ſouls a-longing for the full fruition and final enjoyment of it.

—So then with the mind I myſelf ſerve the law of God; but with the fleſh, the law of ſin.

Here the apoſtle acknowledges two principles in himſelf, grace and ſin, a ſweet and bitter fountain, from whence did flow ſuitable ſtreams. The law of the mind inclined to ſerve *the law of God*; but the law in his members diſpoſed him to obey *the law of ſin*. The habitual bent of a good man's heart is to ſerve the law of God; he loves it, and delights to obey it. Yet ſometimes, contrary to his firmeſt reſolutions, through the power of temptations and indwelling corruption, he is carried aſide contrary to his covenant and his conſcience; but he laments it, it is his grief, his ſhame, the ſorrow of his heart, the burden of his ſoul, that ever he ſhould be ſo falſe and unworthy. In fine, if a good man, at a particular time, does the evil that he hates, he always hates the evil which he does. Bleſſed be God, ſin ſhall never hurt us, if it does not pleaſe us. As God will not finally judge us, ſo we ought not cenſoriouſly to judge one another, or injuriouſly to judge ourſelves by a ſingle act, by a particular action, but by the habitual and conſtant bent of our reſolutions, and the general courſe and tenor of our converſation. Bleſſed be God for the covenant of grace.

CHAP. VIII.

This chapter is a ſummary of evangelical duty, and a magazine of Chriſtian comfort: We cannot wiſh to be more holy than to do what is here enjoined, nor more happy than to poſſeſs what is here promiſed. The whole chapter is conſolatory; there is a vein of heavenly comfort running through the body of it. Let the ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian ſtudy, weigh, digeſt, believe, and apply, what is laid down in this chapter, and let him walk dejectedly if he can.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle doth not ſay, there is no corruption in them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, but there is no condemnation to them. Perfection in holineſs is the ſaint's aim in this life, his attainment only in the next. 2. He doth not ſay there is no correction belongs to them, but no condemnation; corrected they may be, condemned they never ſhall be; yea, they are therefore corrected, that they may never be condemned. 3. The apoſtle doth not ſay, there is nothing that deſerves condemnation, nothing damnable in them, but no actual condemnation belonging to them. 4. He doth not ſay, there is no condemnation to this or that particular believer, to himſelf, and ſuch as had attained to the like meaſures and degrees of grace with himſelf; but he extends the privilege to all believers indefinitely, *There is no condemnation to them*; that is, to any of them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. 5. He ſays not, there *ſhall* be no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, but there is *now* none; he hath everlaſting life, and is already paſſed from death to life. 6. Our apoſtle doth not ſay, there are not many condemnations belonging to them, but not any: ȣ δὲ εν, not one either from law or goſpel; for the goſpel hath its condemnatory ſentence as well as the law; yea, the higheſt and moſt ſoreſt condemnation, is that which the goſpel denounces, John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation*, &c. *Learn* hence, 1. That it it is a great felicity and happineſs, not to be obnoxious to condemnation. 2. That this felicity and happineſs is the portion of all thoſe, and only thoſe, that are in Chriſt Jeſus; not by external federation, and viſible profeſſion only, but by virtue of a perſonal implantation into him by faith. 3. That ſuch as are *thus* in Jeſus Chriſt, obey not the inclinations of corrupt nature, but the holy motions of the bleſſed Spirit of God. 4. That an uniform and conſtant courſe of holy walking in the paths of ſincere obedience, is both the indubitable mark and character, and alſo the indiſpenſible duty and obligation of all ſuch as are freed by Chriſt from condemnation.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.

If by the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus be meant the doctrine of the goſpel, which is called the miniſtration of the Spirit, then the note is, that the goſpel or new covenant is a law, that it is the law of the Spirit in Chriſt Jeſus, and that it ſets the ſincere Chriſtian at liberty from the ſlavery of ſin, and the condemning power of the law. If by the law of the Spirit of life be underſtood a real and vital principle of regenerating grace, working a new and heavenly life in the ſoul with great power and efficacy; thence we *learn*, 1. That the holy and bleſſed Spirit of God is a Spirit of life. (1.) Eſſentially and formally in himſelf; as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo the Spirit hath life in himſelf alſo. And, (2.) Effectively or caſually, with reſpect to us. He is a quickening, or life giving Spirit, being the original ſpring and fontal cauſe of that ſpiritual life, which is in a gracious ſoul. *Learn*, 2. That every perſon, before the Spirit of life takes hold of him, is under the law of ſin and death. 3. That ſuch as are truly regenerate, are made free from the law of ſin and death. 4. That it is by the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, that any ſoul is made free from the law of ſin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh:

That is, when mankind could by no means be freed from ſin and death, God ſent his own and only Son to be a ſacrifice for ſin, that our liberty might be fully accompliſhed. *Note* here, 1. The impotency and weakneſs of the law declared; there is ſomething which the law cannot do, it cannot juſtify, it cannot ſave, becauſe it requires that which the fallen creature can never perform, and cannot make reparation for what the fallen creature has done. *Learn* hence, That the moral law of God, though an holy and excellent law, and deſigned by God for holy and excellent ends; yet having now to do with fallen man, is become weak, and altogether unable to juſtify and ſave. 2. The reaſon of the law's impotency and weakneſs aſſigned: *It is weak through the fleſh*: That is, through our corrupt and depraved natures. Its weakneſs doth not ariſe from itſelf, but from us; the law properly is not weak to us, but we are weak to that. The law retains its authority of commanding, but we have loſt our power of obeying. No mere man, ſince the fall, was able perfectly to obſerve the law of God: None ever could keep the law of God perfectly, but the firſt Adam; none ever could and did keep it perfectly, but the ſecond Adam. 3. The way and means which the wiſdom of God found out for relieving the law's impotency, and for the fallen ſinner's recovery: *He ſent his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh*. *Learn* hence, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt was God's own Son, the Son of himſelf, his natural Son, co-equal, co-eſſential, and co-eternal with the Father, partaking of his Father's eſſence by an eternal and ineffable generation. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt was ſent, and ſent by God the Father; he was ſent, therefore he had a being before his incarnation; for that which was not, could not be ſent; he was ſent by the Father, therefore he was, and is a perſon, and a perſon really diſtinct from the Father; the one ſends, and the other is ſent. But what doth God's ſending Chriſt imply? *Anſ.* His appointing and ordaining of him before all time to the work and office of a Mediator; his qualifying and fitting him in time for that great work and office; and his authoritative injunction of him to take upon him our nature, and in that nature, to make ſatiſfaction for our ſin. 3. That Chriſt, God's own Son, was ſent in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, not in the likeneſs of fleſh; it was real fleſh that Chriſt aſſumed, but like unto ſinful fleſh; he was dealt with and handled, treated and uſed, juſt as guilty and ſinful men are, accuſed of gluttony, wine-bibbing, ſorcery, blaſphemy, and what not? arraigned and condemned, executed for an impoſtor, deceiver, blaſphemer, and breaker of the law. Thus, though no ſinner, yet was he a reputed ſinner, and appeared in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh. 4. That the end for which Chriſt was ſent by God, was through the ſacrifice of his death to condemn ſin, that is, to expiate and take away the guilt of ſin; ſo that it ſhall never be charged upon believers to their eternal condemnation. For ſin, he condemned ſin in the fleſh. Bleſſed be God, condemning ſin is condemned by a condemned Saviour.

4 That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.

Our apoſtle here aſſigns another end and cauſe, for which God ſent his Son into the world; namely, to do what the law commanded, as well as to ſuffer what the law threatened; perfectly to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law for us, which it was impoſſible for us to do for ourſelves; for the ſake of which we are accounted righteous in the ſight of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, being made under the law, fulfilled the law; whatſoever the law did or could demand, is fully ſatisfied and fulfilled by Chriſt. 2. That Chriſt having fulfilled the law on our behalf, whatever can be required of us by way of puniſhment, is diſcharged likewiſe. 3. That though the righteouſneſs of the law be fulfilled for us by Chriſt, yet the goſpel righteouſneſs muſt be performed by us ourſelves. Chriſt has anſwered the demands of the law for us, but will never fulfil the conditions of the goſpel for us. We muſt repent ourſelves, obey ourſelves, or Chriſt's obedience will profit us nothing; none can ſafely or comfortably pretend to an intereſt in Chriſt's obedience, either active or paſſive, but only ſuch who in their courſe are actuated and influenced by the Spirit, and not by the fleſh. *That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not,* &c.

5 For they that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Obſerve here, 1. A difference of perſons mentioned. Thoſe that are after the fleſh, and them that are after the Spirit. 2. A difference of properties belonging to theſe perſons; the one minds the things of the fleſh, the other the things of the Spirit. They mind them; that is, they reliſh and ſavour them, they lay out their thoughts about them, and let out their endeavours after them. *Learn* hence, 1. That there are but two ſorts of men in the world; ſome after the fleſh, and ſome after the Spirit. 2. That theſe two different ſorts of men have two different objects, which they ſavour and reliſh; namely, the things of the fleſh, and the things of the Spirit. 3. That all men diſcover the true temper of their minds, and the complexion and diſpoſition of their ſouls, by the reſpect which they give to either of theſe objects, by minding the things of the fleſh, and the things of the Spirit; that is, by minding them willingly and cheerfully, reſolvedly and conſtantly.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be ſpiritually minded *is* life and peace.

In the former verſe we had a deſcription of thoſe that are carnal, and them that are ſpiritual. In this verſe we have the end of the one, and the iſſue of the other; the end of the one is death, the iſſue of the other is ſpiritual life, joy and peace. *Note,* 1. The end and condition of all carnally-minded perſons, ſo remaining and ſtill continuing, it is death; always demeritoriouſly, that which deſerves death; and ſometimes actually, it procures and haſtens the ſinner's death; but eſpecially it expoſeth to an endleſs and eternal death. 2. The ſweet fruit and joyful iſſue of ſpiritual-mindedneſs, it is *life and peace.* 1. It is life, it is eternal life initially, and it leads to eternal life ultimately. Grace is the firſt degree of glory, and glory but the higheſt degree of grace. 2. It is peace; to be ſpiritually-minded, lays the foundation of peace with God, with conſcience, with the world; the fruit of righteouſneſs is peace, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.

7 Becauſe the carnal mind *is* enmity againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

By the carnal mind are meant the rational powers corrupted by our ſenſitive appetite, or a mind enſlaved by ſenſual luſts. Such a temper of mind is oppoſite to, yea, enmity againſt God and goodneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That carnal perſons are no better than enemies unto God. They are called haters of God: There is a perfect contrariety in their affections, inclinations, and actions, to the will of God; therefore are they haters of God: Not that they hate him as a Creator, but as a lawgiver; they hate his holineſs, not his goodneſs. 2. That whilſt men remain carnally minded, there is no breaking off this enmity between God and them; *the carnal mind,* whilſt ſuch, *is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:* Not that this impotency and inability will excuſe from guilt, becauſe it is not a created, but a ſelf-contracted impotency; not a natural, but a moral impotency; which ariſes from a perverſe diſpoſition of will, is joined with a delight in ſin, and a ſtrong averſion from the holy commands of God. Man muſt thank himſelf, and not God, for his lame hand: That he *cannot be ſubject to the law of God,* is occaſioned by his natural enmity and contracted hardneſs of heart againſt God.

8 So then they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.

To be *in the fleſh*, is not barely to have the fleſh in us, but prevailing in us: to be wholly poſſeſſed by the fleſh, to be drenched and drowned in ſin; inſtead of fighting under Chriſt's banner againſt ſin, to fight under the banner of corrupt nature againſt Chriſt. Such *cannot pleaſe God*; nay they cannot but diſpleaſe him, both in their perſons and in their actions; for none can pleaſe him that are unſuitable and unlike unto him, becauſe all liking is founded in likeneſs, and all complacency in correſpondency. *Learn* hence, That carnal men neither do, nor can pleaſe God, becauſe not renewed by God, nor reconciled to him: *Such as are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.*

9 But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.—

Note, He doth not ſay, the fleſh is not in you, but ye are not in the fleſh, ſo as to be acted and influenced, guided and governed, miſled and carried away by it. Sincere and ſerious Chriſtians, although they live in the fleſh, yet do they not live after the fleſh; *But ye are in the Spirit*, that is, illuminated and enabled by the Spirit to do the will of God: *And the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, as a Spirit of truth to enlighten your underſtandings, as a Spirit of holineſs to renew your will and affections, as a Spirit of love to inſpire the ſoul with divine and unutterable deſires after the favour and grace of God; and the phraſe, *dwelling*, imports preſence and propriety, fellowſhip and intimacy, operation and activity, reſidence and conſtancy of abode.

—Now if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.

Note here, 1. That the Holy Ghoſt is called *the Spirit of Chriſt* paſſively, and by way of reception, as being beſtowed upon him, and received by him; alſo actively, and by way of collation, as being beſtowed by him, and conveyed from him. 2. That all ſincere Chriſtians have the Spirit of Chriſt, they have him for the bleſſing of converſion, they have him for the benefit of communion. He dwells in them by his ſanctifying impreſſions, powerful aſſiſtances, quickening and comforting influences. He pours in both the oil of grace, and alſo the oil of joy and gladneſs into their hearts. 3. There are ſome that have not the Spirit of Chriſt: Such as are carnal and ſenſual have not the Spirit; ſuch as are cenſorious and envious have not the Spirit; ſuch as are malicious and revengeful have not the Spirit; ſuch as are implacable, and of an irreconciliable temper of ſpirit, have not the Spirit of Chriſt. 4. That all ſuch as have not the Spirit of Chriſt, are none of Chriſt's; they have no ſpiritual relation to him, they have no ſpecial intereſt in him, and can expect no preſent conſolation or future happineſs from him: The propoſition is indefinite, and without exception. *If any man*, prince or peaſant, rich or poor, bond or free, *have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of Chriſt's.*

10 And if Chriſt *be* in you, the body *is* dead, becauſe of ſin, but the Spirit *is* life, becauſe of righteouſneſs.

If Chriſt be in you, that is, by his Holy Spirit, *the body is dead*, that is, ſtill ſubject to death, *becauſe of ſin*, which will never ceaſe to be in us till we die; *but the Spirit is life*, that is, will give life to it again, *becauſe of righteouſneſs*, or of that juſtification which is unto life. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt in believers is a ſure pledge and earneſt to them of eternal life, both in body and ſoul; Chriſt is in believers two ways, 1. Objectively, as the object is in the faculty, or the things we think of, love and delight in, are in our hearts and minds; Thus Chriſt is ſaid to dwell in our hearts by faith. 2. Effectively, ſo Chriſt is in believers by his Spirit, whoſe gracious influences produce life in them, and likeneſs unto him. *Learn*, 2. That the bodies of believers, in whom Chriſt dwells, are ſubject to death as well as other men's, and that becauſe of ſin, both original and actual: Sin brought mortality into their natures, death entered the world by ſin, and ſin goes out of the world by death; true, they are by Chriſt delivered from the ſting, but not from the ſtroke of death; *Their bodies are dead becauſe of ſin.* 3. That believers, though mortal, and ſubject to death in regard of their bodies, yet they live, and are in a ſtate of immortality, in regard of their ſouls: *The Spirit is life*; that is, the ſpirit of the believer is immortal, yet not excluſively, but emphatically; not as if other men's ſouls did not live after death, but it is a life worſe than death; it is a ſpecial immortality that the believer is partaker of. 4. *The Spirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs.* If we underſtand it of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, that gives us a right and title to *ſalvation*; if of our own inherent righteouſneſs, that is a qualification to fit and prepare for eternal life and ſalvation; take it in either ſenſe, it teaches us, that without righteouſneſs there can be no hope of eternal life and happineſs; we can be neither fit for the employment of heaven, nor for the enjoyment of heaven, without it, Coloſ. i. 12.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although your body muſt die, yet it ſhall live again in the morning of the reſurrection, and that by virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth in you, and is the bond of union with him your head; others ſhall be raiſed by the power of Chriſt as their judge, but you ſhall be raiſed by virtue of your union with him as your head: They are raiſed *officio judicis*, you *beneficio mediatoris*." *Obſerve*, An happy reſurrection promiſed, and the condition upon which that promiſe is made and inſured. 1. An happy reſurrection promiſed, the ſame Holy Spirit of God that raiſed Chriſt ſhall raiſe you, becauſe the ſame *Spirit* dwelleth in you. *Learn* thence, That the bodies of the ſaints are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, his dwelling-place, living, dying, or dead; if the Holy Spirit dwells in us here, ſanctifying our perſons, the ſame Spirit will not forſake our bodies in the grave, but raiſe them up to glory and happineſs. Death diſſolves all other unions, except that betwixt the believer and the *Spirit of Chriſt*; but the grave itſelf cannot ſeparate them. *Obſerve*, 2. The condition upon which this promiſe is made and inſured, *If the*

Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you. Where *note*, 1. A bleſſed relation; the *Holy Ghoſt* is called the *Spirit* of the Father, becauſe the Father is the fountain and original of the *Deity*, and doth communicate it both to the Son and to the Spirit, to teach us to ſeek unto the Father, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, he being the donor and diſpenſer of it. *Note*, 2. A glorious operation, the *Spirit* raiſed up Jeſus from the dead. Where *obſerve*, That the holy ſcriptures aſcribe *Chriſt's reſurrection* to all the three perſons in the glorious Trinity: The Father raiſed him, Acts x. 40. *Him God raiſed up the third day*; Chriſt raiſed himſelf, John x. 18. *I have power to lay down my life, and to take it up again:* The *Holy Ghoſt* raiſed up Chriſt, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *He was put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the Spirit. Note*, 3. A gracious poſſeſſion, and and ſpecial inhabitation; *He dwelleth in us*, in our hearts by his gifts and graces, in our bodies as his living temples, which proves him to be really God, for none but a God poſſeſſes a temple; and alſo to be a diſtinct perſon, and not an *energy* or *operation*, for none but a perſon can be ſaid to inhabit or dwell; and ſhould teach us to take heed of defiling our bodies by any uncleanneſs, which are or ought to be the *temples of the Holy Ghoſt: for if any man defile the temple of God, him will God deſtroy.*

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh.

That is, ſeeing the Holy Spirit dwelleth in us, quickening our ſouls for the preſent, and raiſing our bodies for time to come, furniſhing the one with grace here, and fitting the other for glory hereafter; therefore we ought to live unto God, and not to the fleſh; we are not debtors to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh. Where *note*, That the word fleſh is not to be taken in a phyſical, but in a moral ſenſe; not in a phyſical ſenſe, for the body of man; every one is *debtor* to his own body, he owes it food and clothing, nouriſhment and proviſion; the beaſt muſt be fed, though not pampered, leſt it kick and throw its rider: But fleſh is here to be taken in a moral ſenſe for ſin, for the unregenerate and unſanctified part in man; and then the ſenſe is, that no man owes any thing to the ſervice and ſatisfaction of his ſinful luſts, and inordinate deſires; none of us owe ſin, Satan, or the world, an hour's ſervice; theſe are not warrantable creditors for any of us to be indebted to. *Learn* hence, That believers are not indebted, or owe any thing to the fleſh, but all to the Spirit; the fleſh is a cheater, an uſurper, an oppreſſor; what it calls for, it has no right to demand; but the Spirit is a juſt creditor, and we are greatly indebted to him, as the author and producer of grace in us, and as he is the preſerver and increaſer of that grace in us which he has begun. O bleſſed *Spirit!* we owe all that we are, and all that we have to thee, all that we have in hand, and all that we have in hope; thou haſt a right to all, yea, more than all that we can pay thee, ſo infinitely are we indebted to thee: But for ſin and the fleſh, we never promiſed any thing to it, we never got any thing by it, nothing but ſhame and ſorrow from it, and therefore we are not indebted to it. Lord, keep us from being debtors to the moſt cruel and ſevere creditors in the world, ſin and Satan; for the more we pay to them, the more we run in arrears with thee, to whoſe juſtice we muſt pay the uttermoſt farthing.

13 For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.

Our apoſtle here adds a farther reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould not live after the fleſh; before, an argument was drawn *a debito*, now *a damno:* He told us in the former verſe we owed nothing to the fleſh, here he acquaints us what loſers we ſhall be by living to the fleſh; *If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die*; which words are a dreadful commination, and ſevere threatening. In which, *obſerve*, 1. The perſons threatened, ye, the believing Romans, called to be ſaints, chap. i. 7. even they are threatened with hell, who were candidates of heaven; he threatens them with death, to keep them from death. *Learn* thence, That the miniſters of God may uſe arguments drawn from hell torments, to diſſuade the holieſt and beſt of ſaints from ſin, and to perſuade them to their duty; *If ye live after the fleſh*, &c. *Obſerve*, 2. The threatening itſelf, *Ye ſhall die. Learn* thence, That Almighty God threateneth all thoſe that live after the fleſh, with nothing leſs than death and damnation: To live after the fleſh, is to have the fleſh our governing principle, our work and trade, our ſcope and end; and to die for living after the fleſh is to undergo a temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal death; an everlaſting baniſhment from the bleſſed preſence of him in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy: *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.* The former words were a threatening to excite our induſtry; theſe are a promiſe to prevent our dejection. In which, *note*, 1. The act ſpecified, or duty enjoined, and that is mortification; *If ye mortify*, that is, kill every ſin; it is not enough to oppoſe ſin, but we muſt deſtroy it, nothing but the deſtruction of ſin muſt content us. *Obſerve* alſo, The continuance of the act, *If ye do mortify*; though they had already mortified ſin, yet they are called upon to proceed in the work: The axe muſt be daily laid to the root, and the knife muſt ſtill ſtick in the throat of ſin, till it drop down dead. Mortification muſt be continual, and it muſt neceſſarily be painful; nothing that has life will be put to death without pain and ſtruggling; the longer we delay to mortify ſin, the more painful ſhall we make it to ourſelves. *Note*, 2. The proper object of this duty, *The deeds of the body*, by which all ſin is to be underſtood, relating both to the inward and outward man, though the latter only be mentioned, becauſe the body is that which is *manifeſtativum peccati*, it is that wherein ſin doth eſpecially ſhew and diſcover itſelf. *Learn* hence, *Mortification* muſt be univerſal as well as continual, not one deed, but deeds; not the deeds of the body only, but of the ſoul alſo muſt be mortified; all evil diſpoſitions, depraved habits, corrupt affections, as well as irregular actions, muſt be watched againſt, and the whole body of ſin become the object of mortification. *Note*, 3. The agents in this work, and they are two: 1. The more principal agent is the Holy Spirit. 2. The leſs principal is the Chriſtian himſelf, *If ye through the Spirit*; we can do nothing without him, he will do nothing without us. *Learn* hence, That in mortifying ſin, the Spirit's aſſiſtance and our endeavours muſt concur: Mortification indeed, is not the work of nature, yet man muſt be an agent in it, not in his own, but in God's ſtrength; we have brought ſin, that rebel, into our own ſouls, and we muſt uſe our own endeavours to caſt it out: True, it cannot be done alone by ourſelves, but it will never be done without ourſelves; we can *ſin* of ourſelves, but cannot overcome ſin by ourſelves; we know how to be ſlaves, but are unable of ourſelves to be conquerors. The believer is *principium activum*, but the Spirit is *principium effectivum*. *Note*, 4. The reward promiſed to the performers and performance of this duty, *Ye ſhall live*, namely, a life of grace and holineſs, a life of joy and comfort, a life of glory and happineſs. Our life of grace is an evidence and an earneſt of the life of glory: Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the fruit. *Learn*, That a life of grace and comfort on earth, together with a life of glory and happineſs in heaven, is, and ſhall be, the aſſured portion and privilege of all thoſe, who by the Spirit's aſſiſtance, and their own concurring endeavours, do mortify ſin, and crucify the deeds of the body: *If ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live*; that is, holily, comfortably, and eternally; ye ſhall live a life of exemplary graciouſneſs, a life of higheſt delight and pleaſure on earth, and of eternal bleſſedneſs and glory in heaven.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God.

Obſerve here, 1. A glorious privilege proclaimed, the being *the Sons of God*. 2. A deſcription of the perſons to whom that privilege doth belong, they are ſuch *as are led by the Spirit of God*. *Learn*, 1. That the Holy Spirit of God doth perform the office of a guide and leader to all the children of God, he gives life and motion to them, by infuſing gracious habits, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) by exciting the ſoul to act ſuitably thereunto, and by aſſiſting it in acting; he gives directions and guidance to them, he directs their actions, by enlightening their underſtandings, by guiding their inclinations, by influencing and inclining their wills; and where he guides, he governs. A general that leads an army, orders its motions and marches; as Chriſt was, ſo the Holy Spirit is, a leader and commander to the people. 2. That ſuch as are thus led by the Spirit of God, may know and conclude themſelves to be the ſons of God, becauſe holineſs is a certain evidence of adoption. Such as are *led by God's Spirit*, are undoubtedly *God's children*; and ſuch as are not his children, refuſe to be led by his Spirit, but live under the uncontrouled activity of their own.

15 For ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Obſerve, 1. That there is a ſpirit of bondage, which the children of God do for ſometime receive, working fear in them. By the ſpirit of bondage underſtand thoſe convictions and terrors of conſcience which awakened perſons labour under, when the law of God charges them home with the guilt of ſin; and lays them under direful apprehenſions of the wrath of God. The ſpirit of bondage is neither to be ſlighted, nor yet to be reſted in; not to be ſlighted, becauſe it is preparatory to converſion; and not to be reſted in, becauſe it is like a ſpark of hell kindled in the conſcience; it is a bearded arrow ſhot in the conſcience, which only the hand of God can pluck out. 2. That the ſpirit of bondage to God's children is ſucceeded by, and ends in a ſpirit of adoption; the ſigns of ſuch a ſpirit are a child-like love to God, a child-like fear and hope, a child-like truſt and dependance, and a child-like obedience to his commands.* 3. That God's Holy Spirit, after he has once been a ſpirit of adoption, never again becomes a ſpirit of bondage to the ſame ſoul, *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear*. 4. That one principal work of the ſpirit of adoption is to enliven and embolden the ſoul in prayer, *whereby we cry, Abba, Father*.

16 The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.

Note here, 1. That our adoption into God's family is evidenced by the teſtimony of the Spirit, bearing witneſs to and with our ſpirits; here are two witneſſes produced to teſtify the truth of a believer's adoption, namely, God's Spirit and his own; the Spirit teſtifies by laying down marks of trial in the holy ſcriptures, by working ſuch graces in us as are peculiar to God's children, and by helping us to diſcover this work in our own ſouls more clearly and evidently; our own ſpirits teſtify by reflecting upon our primitive converſion, upon our habitual diſpoſition, upon our general converſation; the Spirit teſtifies our adoption by evidencing to us our ſanctification: And all this is done, not by ſudden impulſes, and immediate inſpirations, which is the witneſſing of the Spirit that enthuſiaſts pretend to, but the Spirit witneſſes in a way of argumentation. Thus, whoever repents, believes and obeys the goſpel, ſays the ſcripture, ſhall be ſaved; but the Spirit helps us to ſee that we do ſo, and accordingly enables us to infer and conclude that we ſhall be ſaved. 2. That a Chriſtian may in this life, without a divine revelation, attain a well-grounded aſſurance of his adoption and ſalvation; for the Spirit of God both bears witneſs to him, and bears witneſs with him, as touching the ſincerity of his heart and life. Laſtly, That there is no ſafe and ſecure way to prove our adoption, but by teſtimonies brought of our ſanctification; the privy ſeal of our adoption muſt be thus atteſted under the broad ſeal of our ſanctification; the goodneſs of our ſtate and condition muſt be evidenced by the holineſs of our lives and converſation.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt:—

Our apoſtle having aſſerted and inſured the believer's adoption in the foregoing verſe, doth in this verſe infer the certainty of his inheritance; *If children, then heirs*. *Learn* thence, That all God's children, by ſpecial grace and adoption, are undoubted heirs of a bleſſed and glorious inheritance. He next declares whom they are heirs of, and whom they are heirs with; they are *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt*. 1. They are heirs of God, they do inherit God himſelf, their Father is their portion; man leaves his heirs what he has, God gives his heirs what he is; he which gives them the inheritance, is the inheritance itſelf which he gives them, by being not only heirs to him, but heirs of him; they have an intereſt in all his attributes; his wiſdom is their's to guide and direct them, his power is their's to ſuſtain and preſerve them, his mercy and pity is their's to relieve and ſuccour them. O happy and bleſſed privilege of God's adopted ones! they are not only heirs of heaven, but heirs of God himſelf; they have him for their portion, and exceeding great reward. 2. They are heirs with Chriſt; as Chriſt is God's heir, ſo are they heirs with Chriſt; Chriſt is God's heir by nature, as he is the Son of God by nature; whatever is God's is his, and they are heirs with Chriſt; they are members of him, and ſhall be heirs with him, 1 Cor. iii. ult. All is your's, and ye are Chriſt's, Eph. i. 11. In him we have obtained the inheritance; we are heirs in his right. O bleſſed Jeſus! how endearing are our obligations to thee! All that we have is from thee, by thee, and in thee: We are choſen in thee, juſtified by thee, ſanctified through thee, and ſhall be glorified with thee: *For if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt.* It follows,

—If ſo be that we ſuffer with *him*, that we may be alſo glorified together.

Here we ſee what accompanieth our adoption, namely, preſent affliction; we are now to ſuffer, but not alone, we ſuffer with Chriſt: *If ſo be that we ſuffer with him.* This *if* is not a word of ambiguity and doubting, but a word of certainty and aſſurance, and ſignifies as much as, ſeeing that we ſuffer with him. *Learn*, 1. That a ſtate of ſuffering and affliction on earth, is one condition of obtaining our glorious inheritance in heaven: we muſt ſuffer, that God may be glorified, our graces improved, our love to the world mortified, our longings for heaven increaſed. 2. That the ſufferings of believers are the ſufferings of Chriſt; they ſuffer with him, and he with them; they ſuffer with him in a way of conformity, he with them in a way of tender ſympathy; they are ſenſible of any indignity offered to him, and he is ſenſible of any injury offered to them; the ſuffering ſaint pledges Chriſt in his own cup. Farther, they ſuffer with him when they ſuffer for him, when they ſuffer in his cauſe, and for his ſake; that is, for doing their duty. Finally, they ſuffer with him when they ſuffer by an aſſiſtance derived from him, when by his enablement, and by a power communicated from him, they ſuffer hard things for his name and truth. 3. That as ſufferings go before glory, ſo glory ſhall certainly follow ſufferings: *If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall be alſo glorified together.* Suffering is the beaten path to glory, and that which makes it ſo much the more glorious; ſuffering fits us for glory, and diſpoſes us for the reception and fruition of it; by the croſs we are fitted for the crown. 4. The ſuffering members ſhall not only be glorified, but be conformable to their glorified Head in glory; as they have here *ſuffered with him*, they ſhall hereafter *be glorified together*, not with equal glory, but with the ſame kind of glory. Three things are implied in our being glorified together with Chriſt: 1. Conformity: we ſhall be like him in glory. 2. Concomitancy: we ſhall accompany him, and be preſent with him in glory. 3. Conveyance or derivation: we ſhall be glorified with him, that is, our glory ſhall be derived from him, his glory ſhall be reflected upon us, and we ſhall ſhine in his beams. O happy condition of God's adopted and afflicted children! The ſupports which you have under ſuffering, the comfort which you have in ſuffering, the benefits which you have by ſuffering, and the glory which will follow after ſuffering, render it not only tolerable, but deſirable; well may they glory in tribulation, which expect ſuch a glory after it.

18 For I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.

Obſerve here, 1. The nature and property of the ſaints' preſent ſufferings; they are ſhort and momentary: *The ſufferings of this preſent time.* If ſharp, they ſhall yet be ſhort; though great, they cannot be long; for their afflictions cannot laſt longer than their lives; the one ſhall end when the other ends. O bleſſed condition of the righteous! your afflictions are only for this preſent time, the grave will ſet you beyond the reach of trouble. Ah wretched condition of the wicked! your ſufferings are not only *for this preſent time*, but for eternal ages; your worm will never die, your fire never be quenched, but you ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord. 2. The nature and property of the ſaints' future glory: It is hidden, it is *a glory that ſhall be revealed. Learn* hence, That the glory which God has prepared for his ſuffering ſaints and children, is an hidden glory; it is hidden from the eye of the world, and lies altogether out of their ſight and view; and it is in a great meaſure hidden from the ſaints themſelves; it is now the object of their faith, but ere long it ſhall be the object of their ſight. 3. The vaſt diſproportion between the Chriſtian's preſent ſuffering, and his future glory and happineſs; the one is not worthy to be compared with the other: *The ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed. Learn* thence, That the weight of the ſaints' croſs is not comparable with the glory of their crown; the happineſs of their future glorified ſtate doth infinitely outweigh the miſery of their preſent afflicted ſtate, they are not to be named on the ſame day. 4. The apoſtle's judgment or determination about this matter: *I reckon*, "I have caſt up the matter, as if the apoſtle had ſaid, and have had my ſhare of ſufferings; but I make light of them, they are not worth ſpeaking of, compared with the glory I ſhall receive as a reward of my ſufferings." *Learn* hence, That ſuch of the ſaints of God as have been exerciſed and tried with the heavieſt ſufferings, make lighteſt of them, having the higheſt account of heaven's glory: *I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.*

19 For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. 20 For the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of him who hath ſubjected *the ſame* in hope: 21 Becauſe the creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now:

Note here, 1. That there is a time indeed a-coming, when all the ſons of God, all his adopted children, ſhall be made manifeſt: how manifeſt? (1.) In their perſons: It ſhall then appear who are God's ſons, and who are Satan's ſervants; they ſhall then be made manifeſt to themſelves, to one another, yea, to the very conſciences of the wicked. (2.) In their actions, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt, of what nature it is, what they have done, whoſe intereſt they were in. (3.) In their condition; their glory and happineſs ſhall be made manifeſt: *When Chriſt their life ſhall appear, they ſhall appear with him in glory.* *Note*, 2. That the creature, or whole creation, expecteth, waiteth, and longeth for the time of this manifeſtation. Some by the creature, and the whole creation here, underſtand the Gentile world; then the ſenſe is, "That the heathen ſhall, by the preaching of the goſpel, be reſcued from their idolatry, unto which they have been long enſlaved, and be brought into the glorious condition of Chriſt's redeemed ones, to whom the glorious inheritance of heaven doth belong." But others, by the creature and the whole creation, underſtand this viſible world, ſenſitive and rational, animate and inanimate; and then the ſenſe is, "That the whole frame and courſe of the creation is ſo ordered and diſpoſed of by God, as that it carries in it a vehement deſire, and earneſt longing for the full manifeſtation of God's glory in and towards his children." 3. The preſent condition which the creature is ſubjected to through the ſin of man, *It is made ſubject to vanity*; that is, to corruption and mortality, to ſervitude and ſervility: The ſin of man did not only ſtain the glory of man, but marred and ſpoiled the beauty of the whole creation; all creatures are fallen from their firſt perfection by the fall of our firſt parents. 4. The reſtleſſneſs and uneaſineſs of the creature under this vanity and ſervility; it groans like a man under a burden, or like a travailing woman in labour. *Learn* hence, That the ſin of man is burdenſome to the ſenſeleſs creature; it is in continual labour to ſerve man's neceſſity; it is oftentimes puniſhed together with man for the ſin of man, witneſs the old world, and Sodom: And as they are oftentimes conſtrained and compelled by men to ſerve the luſts of men, thus the whole creation groaneth under the burden of man's ſin, when he himſelf groans not; and accordingly, the groans of the creature are upbraiding groans, they upbraid our ſtupidity and unthankfulneſs; they are accuſing groans, they will witneſs againſt us at the bar of God; they are awakening groans, to excite and ſtir us up to ſigh and long for a better ſtate; and they are inſtructive groans, to teach us our ſins, and their vanity. 5. The expectation which the creature is under of a ſtate of liberty and freedom from that vanity and corruption which they are now ſubject to for our ſin, it has *an earneſt expectation* of being delivered from this bondage. But how can the ſenſeleſs and inanimate part of the creation be ſaid to have *an earneſt expectation?* Not properly, as if the creature was able to put forth ſuch an act directly; for then it muſt be ſuppoſed to have not only life and ſenſe, but reaſon and grace: but the meaning is, That there is a vehement inclination in the creature to be reſtored to that firſt condition which it was in before the fall; and accordingly, it is ſaid to *wait for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God*; that is, for that liberty and freedom from ſervility and corruption, which, according to their capacity, the creatures hope for and expect, when the full privileges and dignities of the ſons of God ſhall be manifeſted. Laſtly, That the liberty which God's children are reſerved for, and appointed to, is a glorious liberty; that is, a liberty which ſhall be attended with unſpeakable glory: *The creature ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

23 And not only *they*, but ourſelves alſo which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourſelves groan within ourſelves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

And not only they; that is, all the creatures in the viſible creation, join in this, they groan together; they do not ſome groan, and others ſing; ſome travail in pain, and others in pleaſure; but they all groan and travail together in pain until now; that is, until the glorious manifeſtation of the ſons of God; but not only do they groan, but we ourſelves alſo, who have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, &c. *Note* here, 1. A ſpecial deſcription of God's adopted children, they have the firſt fruits of the Spirit; that is, they have the Holy Spirit in its ſanctifying gifts, and graces, and comforts, in ſome meaſure, called here firſt fruits, becauſe of the ſmallneſs of their quantity; the firſt fruits were but an handful, a little portion in compariſon of the whole crop: yet was it an evidence and pledge that God would give them the full crop. Thus grace is an earneſt of glory, it is a pledge of everlaſting life; the beginnings of grace here, are certain forerunners of the accompliſhment of glory hereafter. 2. The actions attributed to the forementioned perſons; they groan, they wait. (1.) They groan, *We who have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit do groan*; they groan under the burden of ſin and affliction; the guilt of ſin, the pollution of ſin, the ſad remains of indwelling ſin, make them groan; their proneneſs and inclination to evil, their backwardneſs and indiſpoſition to good, make them groan; their too frequent backſlidings, their daily infirmities, make them groan; their ſufferings alſo from God, and from man for God's ſake, cauſe them to groan; but it is added, *We groan within themſelves*, that is, ſecretly to ourſelves, undiſcerned by the world, and in a manner peculiar to ourſelves, as perſons influenced by religion and grace; as Chriſtians have joys and comforts, ſo have they griefs and groans peculiar to themſelves. (2.) They wait, but for what? 1. For the adoption, that is, for the completing of their adoption, for the laſt finiſhing ſtroke in their ſanctification, and for their perfect glorification. 2. For the redemption of their bodies, that is, for their reſurrection, for their redemption from mortality and corruption, for the redemption of their whole man, ſoul and body, do believers wait; their bodies were members of Chriſt, temples of the Holy Ghoſt, inſtruments of, and companions with the ſoul in holy duties; and accordingly, the hour is coming, when the complete redemption both of ſoul and body ſhall be fully and finally perfected, but in the mean time they groan and wait for it. *Learn* from the whole, That all ſanctified Chriſtians, who have received the firſt fruits of the Spirit, do groan and wait for a much better ſtate than what they do at preſent enjoy.

24 For we are ſaved by hope. But hope that is

ſeen is not hope: for what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we ſee not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

We are ſaved by hope, that is, we are at preſent ſupported by hope, our preſent expectation of our future glorious condition beareth up our ſpirit under its ſufferings, and carrieth us joyfully through all difficulties; or, *We are ſaved by hope*, that is, all the ſalvation which we have at preſent is in hope not in hand, in expectation not in poſſeſſion; heaven in hope, is more worth than the whole world in hand; and ſeeing there is a certainty of hope, there is a certainty of ſalvation: *We are ſaved by hope*. *Note* next, The nature of hope declared: It is an expectation of good things promiſed, but not enjoyed: viſion and fruition put an end to hope, none hopes for that he already enjoys: Hope is converſant about things unſeen, as well as faith: Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen, and hope is the expectation of thoſe things: The object of hope is a future good, a poſſible good, a promiſed good, a good promiſed by God, and believed by us. Laſtly, The neceſſary adjunct, and the inſeparable companion of hope, and that is patience, and waiting for the good hoped for: *If we hope*, &c. *then do we with patience wait for it*. *Learn* hence, That they only hope for eternal life aright, who continue in the purſuit of it with patience and perſeverance; there muſt be found with us a waiting patience, a working patience, a bearing and forbearing patience, with a perſevering continuance in well doing, if we hope for glory and immortality, and eternal life.

26 Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Learn hence, 1. That the holieſt and beſt of ſaints labour oftentimes under great infirmities in the work and duty of prayer, not knowing what to pray for, or how to manage that important affair as they ought. Hence it was that the apoſtles themſelves, being ſenſible of their own diſability in this kind, made their addreſſes to Chriſt himſelf to teach and inſtruct them how to pray, Luke xi. 1. *Learn*, 2. That it is the work and office of the Holy Spirit of God to help our infirmities in prayer, or, as the word ſignifies, to help together with us, to ſet his ſhoulder to our's, and lift with us at the ſame burden: The Spirit of Chriſt and our own ſpirit muſt both do their part in carrying on this work: if we expect the Spirit's aſſiſtance, we muſt exert our own endeavours; more particularly, the Spirit helps us in prayer, by working in us a deep ſenſe of our ſpiritual wants, by giving us an inſight into the promiſes, and enabling us to plead them at the throne of grace, by creating and ſtirring up deſires in our ſouls to have our wants ſupplied, by encouraging and emboldening us to come to God in prayer as to a Father, with an humble reverence and child like confidence. But though the Holy Spirit be our guide and aſſiſtant in this duty, yet not ſo as to give us occaſion to think that the words of prayer are immediately inſpired and dictated to us by the Holy Ghoſt; let us have a care that we miſtake not an idle and fooliſh loquacity, a frothy eloquence, and affected language, outward vehemency and boldneſs of ſpeech, a natural fervency, or acquired fluency of expreſſion, for the Spirit's help and aſſiſtance in prayer. Implore the Spirit's help, and he will help thy infirmities; he will ſhew thee thy ſins, to give thee matter of confeſſion, he will ſhew thee thy wants, to give thee matter of petition, he will ſhew thee the mercies and bleſſings of God, to yield thee matter of thankſgiving, he will ſhew thee the church's miſeries and neceſſities, to furniſh thee with matter of interceſſion. Thus the Spirit will aſſiſt thee, but never expect that he ſhould act without thee. 3. The proper work and office of the Holy Spirit in prayer; it is to make *interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. But how is the Spirit an interceſſor? Is not that Chriſt's office? *Anſ.* Chriſt is an interceſſor for us, the Holy Spirit is an interceſſor in us. Chriſt, in reſpect of his meritorious ſufferings, is an Advocate, Mediator, and interceſſor with the Father for us: The Holy Spirit intercedes in us, by enabling us for, and aſſiſting us in, the duty; by quickening our affections, and enlarging our deſires; by ſetting us a-groaning after the Lord. Groaning denotes the ſtrength and ardency of deſire, which through the fervency of it puts the ſoul to pain, and an holy impatiency, till it be heard. Lord, how flat and dead are our hearts ſometimes in prayer! How much are our ſpirits ſtraitened! But if we want words, let us not want groans; let thy Spirit help us to groan out a prayer, when we want ability to utter it; for ſilent groans proceeding from thy Spirit, ſhall be heard in thine ears, when the loudeſt cries ſhall not be heard without it.

27 And he that ſearcheth the hearts, knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints according to *the will of* God.

Note here, 1. The title or attribute given and appropriated unto God, *He ſearcheth*, or knoweth *the heart*. He was the maker of the heart, and is the diſpoſer of the heart, and will judge every man according to his heart, and therefore, he muſt know the heart thoroughly and perfectly, certainly and infallibly, and it is the joy of an upright perſon, that God knoweth and ſearcheth the heart. When the world condemns him for inſincerity, he rejoiceth that God knoweth his integrity; and when he has it in the purpoſe of his heart to do good, but wants power in his hand to accompliſh and effect it, this is his conſolation, that God accepts it as done, what he did deſire and reſolve to do, 2 Chron. vi. 8. *Note*, 2. The action here attributed to the heart ſearching God; he *knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit*: That is, he knoweth the workings of the Holy Spirit, and of our own ſpirits alſo, in the duty of prayer. It is a great comfort to the children of God, that the Lord knoweth what kind of ſpirit is working in their hearts, when they are before him upon their knees. Do we labour under difficulty of utterance in prayer? Are we attended with diſtractions in prayer? Do we at any time forget and leave out in prayer what we intended to put into it? The Lord knoweth what is the mind of our ſpirits in that matter. God doth not only hear his people's prayers, but he hears their deſires, and grants not only the deſires of our lips, but the deſires of our hearts, which have not been expreſſed by our lips. 3. Who the perſons are whom the Holy Spirit intercedes for in prayer: They are ſaints; *He maketh interceſſion for the ſaints*; for them excluſively, and none but them; for them incluſively, for all and every one of them: The Spirit ſanctifies all thoſe in whom and for whom he intercedes; he is firſt a Spirit of regeneration, before he is a Spirit of interceſſion: he firſt puts gracious diſpoſitions into us, and then ſtirs up holy deſires in us. 4. The qualification neceſſary to render our prayers acceptable to God, they muſt be according to God: that is, *according to the will* and mind *of God*. And that, 1. In reſpect of the matter of them, we muſt pray only for things lawful and warrantable. 2. In regard of the manner of them, we muſt pray in faith, with fervency, and in the name of Chriſt. 3. In reſpect of the end of them, and what we propound to ourſelves in them, which is the glory of God: Notwithſtanding Chriſt's mediation, and the Spirit's interceſſion, we may aſk and not receive, if we aſk amiſs; that is, for bad ends, that we may conſume it upon our luſts.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpoſe.

That is, "All diſpenſations of providence whatſoever, whether they be ordinary afflictions, or extraordinary trials, which do befal the children of God in this life, ſhall certainly be directed by his wiſdom, and over-ruled by his power and goodneſs, for the temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal good of his children and people." *Obſerve* here, 1. What thoſe things are, which are eſpecially intended in that comprehenſive term, *All things*. By all things here we are to underſtand, *Omnia triſtia, non omnia turpia*: "All the ſaints afflictions, not their ſins;" for then they might rejoice in their ſins and wickedneſs, which is damnable impiety, as well as in their ſufferings for Chriſt, ſeeing they may rejoice in that which by God's deſignation tendeth to their good: But by *all things*, the apoſtle means all providential occurrences and diſpenſations, all ſtations and conditions whatſoever, be it proſperity or adverſity, health or ſickneſs, liberty or captivity, life or death, God's glory and his children's good, ſhall be certainly furthered and advanced by it. 2. In what ſenſe *all things* may be ſaid to *work for good*, to good men; namely, as they ſhall promote and further the temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal welfare of the children of God. If it be good for them to be rich, to be in honour, to be at liberty, they ſhall be ſo: If it be better for their ſouls, and more conducive to their eternal welfare, to be low in the world, to be frequently under the rod, to be harraſſed with afflictions, and aſſaulted with temptations, they ſhall have them: Nothing that is needful ſhall be kept from them, only God muſt be judge what is needful, and when it is needful. He that thinks he can cut better for himſelf than God can carve for him, makes himſelf wiſer than God, and has not only loſt his faith, but his wits too. 3. That *all things* are ſaid *to work together* for good; not ſingly, ſeparately, and apart, but as coadjutors and adjuvant cauſes, and mutual helps. Afflictions and temptations ſeem to work againſt us; but being put into the rank and order of cauſes, they work together with other bleſſed inſtruments, as the word and prayer, to an happy iſſue. More particularly, they work together with God, they work together with us, and they work together one with another, for our good, ſooner or later. 4. How can *all things* be ſaid *to work for good*: particularly, evil things? Sufferings from God, and ſufferings from man for God's ſake? What! muſt we call evil good, pain pleaſure, torment eaſe, and loſs gain? Muſt we diſbelieve our ſenſes, that we may believe the ſcriptures? *Anſ.* Though affliction, which is evil in its own nature, cannot bring forth good, yet ſurely God can bring forth good out of evil, light out of darkneſs, and make his people's troubles the way to their triumph, and every croſs providence, a ſtep to the accompliſhment of his promiſe. God ſuffers evil things to befal us, to keep out worſe things, and cauſes evil things to prepare us for better things; the croſs makes way for the crown: For affliction there is glory; for light affliction, a weight of glory; and for light affliction which is but for a moment, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 5. The character of the perſons to whom this privilege doth belong: They are deſcribed by their Chriſtian affection, they *love God*, and by their effectual vocation, they are *called according to his purpoſe*. They love God, and evidence their love to him, by an high eſtimation of him, by their delight in him, by their deſires after him, by their longings for the full fruition and final enjoyment of him. And as they love God, ſo are they called of God; externally by the diſpenſation of the goſpel; internally, by the operation of his Holy Spirit: They are called out of darkneſs into light, out of bondage into liberty, and all this efficaciouſly and powerfully, yet ſweetly and freely; in a way congruous to the will's liberty. 6. The certainty and evidence of this propoſition and aſſertion, *That all things work together for good*. It is not built upon conjecture, or bare probability, but upon certain knowledge; *we know*; partly by divine revelation, God has told us ſo; partly by experience we find it ſo. And when the apoſtle ſpeaks it out, *we know*, it is a word of confidence and aſſurance, it is a word of comfort and encouragement; all the ſaints of God to the end of the world, as well as the apoſtle himſelf, may depend upon it, live in the faith and aſſurance of it, and draw all that conſolation from it, which may render their lives, in ſome ſort, an heaven upon earth. And now, if this be an indubitable and undeniable truth, That whatever ſufferings and afflictions a ſaint meets with ſhall work together for good; then we may infer, that a ſuffering condition is not ſo bad a condition as the world ſuppoſes it. The lion of affliction is not ſo fierce as he is painted. Times of difficulty and trial bring ſerious thoughts of God into our minds, who are too prone to forget both him and ourſelves in affluence and quiet. Bleſſed be God, the time of affliction is no unprofitable time, nor uncomfortable time neither: It is a thinking time, an awakening time, a teaching time, a repenting time, a weaning time; therefore, bleſſed is the man whom God correcteth and teacheth.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.
30 Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called:

called: and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

St. Paul in theſe verſes, lays before us a chain of the cauſes of ſalvation inſeparably linked together, the firſt of which was before all time, namely, God's foreknowledge of us from all eternity, and his predeſtinating or appointing of us to eternal life: *Whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate.* But what were we predeſtinated unto? He tells us in the next words, *To be conformed to the image of his Son:* That is, to be made like unto the Lord Jeſus in affection and diſpoſition, in life and converſation, in the temper of our minds, and in the actions of our lives; like unto him in his ſufferings, in the cauſe of his ſufferings, righteouſneſs ſake and well doing; in the kind of his ſufferings, reproach, hatred, outward violence, and death itſelf; and in the manner of his ſufferings, with meekneſs and patience; and like unto him in his glory; ſuffering with him, we ſhall be glorified together. The ſecond privilege we are partakers of, is in time, namely, effectual vocation: *Whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called.* They are called out of a ſtate of ignorance and darkneſs, of ſin and wickedneſs, of ſlavery and bondage, unto knowledge, grace and holineſs; and the Holy Spirit of God, inclines and enables them to obey this call. The third privilege is juſtification: *Whom he called, them he alſo juſtified:* That is, abſolved from guilt, and freed from condemnation; diſcharging them from their obnoxiouſneſs to wrath, and the ſeverity of divine diſpleaſure. The laſt privilege we are partakers of, is after time, namely, glorification; *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.* They are already glorified in Chriſt their head, they have already the earneſt and firſt fruits of glory, namely, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and they ſhall ere long partake of the ſame glory which Chriſt himſelf is in poſſeſſion of: John xvii. *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, may be with me, where I am,* &c. But it may be ſaid, that one link is wanting in this golden chain of ſalvation, namely, ſanctification: No mention is here made of that, *Anſ.* Some conceive, that ſanctification is couched in effectual vocation; others, that it is included in glorification; for ſanctification is *gloria inchoata*, glorification is *gratia conſummata*; grace is the loweſt degree of glory, and glory is the higheſt degree of grace. Others anſwer, That the apoſtle makes no mention here of ſanctification, for this reaſon, becauſe he was ſetting down here the cauſes of ſalvation. Now, ſanctification being the way to ſalvation, but not the cauſe of it, the apoſtle mentions not that here; though elſewhere he ſufficiently ſhews, that none are now juſtified, or can be hereafter glorified, that are not here ſanctified and renewed. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That there were certain perſons, before all time, choſen of God to poſſeſs and inherit eternal life. 2. That God's deſign in chuſing of them, was to render them conformable to Chriſt, in his holineſs, in his ſufferings, and in his glory. 3. That thoſe whom God chuſeth before time, he calleth, juſtifieth, and ſanctifieth in time, and will finally glorify, when time ſhall be no more.

31 What ſhall we then ſay to theſe things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* againſt us?

What ſhall we ſay to theſe things? that is, to the forenamed truth and doctrines, to the forementioned privileges and benefits, what comforts doth ariſe from them? How ſhall we live up anſwerable to them? Neither the tongues of men or angels is ſufficient to declare the comprehenſive fulneſs of the foregoing favour of vocation and juſtification here, and glorification in heaven. Such love and goodneſs are beyond expreſſion; it is as much as if the apoſtle had thus ſaid, "What boundleſs love did our God move? No tongue can it expreſs: No angel can this myſtery ſcan, nor tell our happineſs." *What ſhall we ſay to theſe things?* It follows, *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* That is, ſeeing God is for us, who can, ſafely and ſucceſsfully, be againſt us? *Learn* hence, 1. That at all times, but eſpecially in the time of affliction and diſtreſs, danger and difficulty, God ever has been, and will be, on his people's ſide. 2. That thoſe whom God is for, and on whoſe ſide he is of, need not fear, either how many or how mighty they be that are againſt them. God is for his people; that is, he approves and owns them, he aſſiſts and helps them, he will ſucceed and bleſs them, reward and crown them. Who then can be againſt them rationally, againſt them ſucceſsfully, againſt them ſafely? How dangerous is it to be againſt thoſe whom God is for? *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* And if God be againſt us, who can be for us?

32 He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?

Here we have, 1. A propoſition laid down, containing matter of the higheſt conſolation to us; namely, That God ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. *He ſpared not*; that is, he did not ſpare to give him, or part with him; with Abraham, he did not withhold his Son, his only Son from us. Again: *He did not ſpare him,* that is, he did not ſpare to puniſh him; he did not abate him one farthing, nor ſpare him one ſtroke, which divine juſtice did or could demand. It is farther added, that *God delivered him up for us all.* Judas delivered up Chriſt, Pilate delivered him up, and the Jews alſo: Judas for money, Pilate for fear, the Jews for envy; but none of theſe delivered him up for us: But God the Father delivered up his Son, and God the Son delivered up himſelf, as a priſoner by the ſentence of the law is delivered up to execution; and his being delivered up for us, denotes the vicegerency of his ſufferings, not only for our good, as the final cauſe, but for our ſins, as the meritorious cauſe, in our room, place and ſtead. *Learn* hence, That the utmoſt rigour and ſeverity of divine juſtice was inflicted and executed upon our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the day of his paſſion, and that by the pleaſure and appointment of God the Father: *He ſpared not, but delivered up his own Son.* 2. The comfortable inference and concluſion which the apoſtle draws from the foregoing propoſition: *How ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* Intimating, that the greateſt mercies and beſt of bleſſings ſhall not be denied to us, or withheld from us. If Chriſt be our's, 1 Cor. ii. 21 all things are your's (that is, all ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal mercies) and ye are Chriſt's. For, 1. No other mercy can be ſo dear to God as his own Son: He was his ſoul's delight. If, therefore, he ſpared not the moſt excellent mercy, he will not withhold any inferior mercy. 2. There is no other mercy we want, but we are entitled to it by the gift of Chriſt, and it is conveyed to us with Chriſt; all things (as to right) are our's, if we be his. 3. If God gave us his Son, when we were his enemies, certainly he will deny us nothing that is good for us, now we are reconciled and made friends. It is our apoſtle's argument, Rom. v. 9. *If, when we were enemies, we were,* &c.

33 Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that juſtifieth:

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's confident and daring challenge: *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Where *obſerve,* The univerſality of the challenge: It is univerſal in a double reſpect: 1. In reſpect of perſons accuſing, *Who ſhall?* He excepts none in heaven, none in earth, nay, none in hell; neither ſin, nor the law, nor Satan, nor conſcience, having any thing to lay to their charge, in order to our condemnation. 2. In reſpect of crimes; he excepts no ſort of ſins, though never ſo heinouſly aggravated, and ſadly circumſtantiated: Juſtifying grace is their full diſcharge. *Learn* hence, That it is impoſſible for any charge or accuſation to take place againſt thoſe whom God doth juſtify, becauſe there is nothing to accuſe them of, none to accuſe them to, and nobody to frame or make the accuſation againſt them. Well might the apoſtle ſay, Who can, who ſhall, who may, who dare lay any thing to the juſtified perſon's charge! *Note,* 2. The ground and reaſon of this confident challenge; it is God that juſtifieth, who ſhall condemn? Here *obſerve,* 1. That there is a very gracious privilege vouchſafed to believers, which the ſcriptures call juſtification. 2. That it is God that juſtifieth the believer's perſon, and pardons his ſins, and none but God; he is the perſon againſt whom the offence is committed, and he alone it is that abſolves us from the guilt contracted. When the juſtice of God accuſes, when the law of God accuſes, when our own conſciences accuſe, when Satan and wicked men accuſe, the mercy and goodneſs, the truth and faithfulneſs of God will, for the ſake of his Son's ſatisfaction, acquit and diſcharge us: *for it is God that juſtifieth.*

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.

The apoſtle here goes on with the triumphant challenge in the foregoing verſe begun, Who ſhall condemn the juſtified believer? And here *note,* 1. The holy challenge of faith, it is ready for all comers, and bids defiance to all accuſations, If the law implead, faith ſays, Chriſt, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, has condemned ſin in the fleſh. If death looks the believer in the face, faith ſaith, Chriſt has aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light. If Satan roar, faith can ſcorn, and tell him to his teeth, he is a conquered enemy; that Chriſt by his death has deſtroyed him that had the power of death. Yea, if God himſelf frown upon the believer, faith can bring to God a righteouſneſs that is highly pleaſing to him, with reſpect to which *God may be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.* 2. The ground of this triumphant challenge which faith enables the believer to make, and that is the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, in the four eminent branches of it, his death, reſurrection, exaltation and interceſſion. *Chriſt died,* is *riſen again,* is *even at God's right hand, making continual interceſſion for us.* Thence *learn,* That a believer's triumphs over condemnation, do eminently ariſe from the ſeveral acts of Chriſt's mediation. Chriſt died and roſe again: our debt is therefore paid, becauſe our ſurety is diſcharged; he ſits at God's right hand as a teſtimony of the completeneſs of his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction for us, and he continually intercedes, that is, preſents himſelf to his Father in both his natures, and in our names, as our Surety, our Advocate and Mediator: *Who then ſhall lay any thing to the believer's charge,* &c.

35 Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? *ſhall* tribulation? or diſtreſs? or perſecution? or famine? or nakedneſs? or peril? or ſword?

That is, none ſhall ſeparate, nothing ſhall ſeparate the believer from the love of Chriſt; either from the love that Chriſt bears to him, or from that love which he bears unto Chriſt; no perſon ſhall, no condition of life can ſeparate them, neither outward troubles, nor inward diſtreſſes, no evils either felt or feared; the apoſtle defies and deſpiſes them all, becauſe neither of them alone, nor all together, can unclaſp the arms of divine love, in which believers are ſafely enfolded. *Learn* hence, That no troubles, tribulations or diſtreſſes whatſoever, can diſſolve the union betwixt Chriſt and believers, or ever ſeparate them from his love.

36 (As it is written, For thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter.)

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “The ſaints of old have endured all manner of ſufferings, and yet were not ſeparated from the love of God; therefore, the like or worſe ſufferings ſhall not be able to ſeparate us now.” Here *note,* What may be the lot and portion of believers in this life, and that is, killing for the ſake of Chriſt: *For thy ſake we are killed all the day long.* The words, *all the day long,* denote the continuance of the perſecution, the unweariedneſs of the enemy, and the patience of the ſaints. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as reſolve upon the profeſſion of Chriſtianity muſt prepare for killing, if God requires, and be ready to lay down their lives for their religion, when God calls: *For thy ſake we are killed*; that is, ready to be ſacrificed; a readineſs of diſpoſition, and a preparation of mind, is found with us, to part with all that is dear unto us, even life itſelf, for the ſake of Chriſt.

37 Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “We are ſo far from being ſeparated from Chriſt, by the afflictions and perſecutions which we undergo, that we are conquerors by our patience, nay, more than conquerors; we do not only bear our trials, but we glory in tribulations; we conquer by our patience, we are more than conquerors by our cheerfulneſs." But becauſe theſe words, *more than conquerors*, look big, and ſound great, the apoſtle inſtantly ſubjoins, it is that by Chriſt's ſtrength, and not by our own, that we overcome and conquer: *More than conquerors* through him *that loved us*, which words are a *periphraſis* of Chriſt: It is both a proper deſcription of him, and a comprehenſive deſcription. When the apoſtle ſaid, *he that loved us*, he doth in effect ſay every thing elſe: he that was born for us, that died for us, that redeemed and ſaved us; all theſe were the effects and fruits of his love, and they are all comprehended in this ſaying, *Him that loved us.* Laſtly, How the believer is ſaid to overcome by the help of this perſon. *More than conquerors through him that loved us.* Whence *learn*, That all a Chriſtian's ſtrength lies in Chriſt, and not in himſelf; all his ſtrength for victory over ſin, all his ſtrength for victory over ſuffering, is all received from Chriſt, is all to be attributed and aſcribed to Chriſt; the ſtrength of every ſaint, yea, the whole hoſt of ſaints, lies in the Lord of hoſts.

38 For I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

Our apoſtle concludes this excellent chapter with triumphant expreſſions, as he had begun it; in the firſt verſe he proclaims, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus; *I am perſuaded*, &c. Where *obſerve*, 1. The propoſition poſitively laid down, nothing ſhall ſeparate from the love of Chriſt; his love is like himſelf, unchangeable and everlaſting; he ever loves the ſame perſon, and ever loves for the ſame reaſon: Likeneſs is the ground of love, the attractive and loadſtone of it; now the image of Chriſt, by the Spirit of Chriſt, is both preſerved and increaſed in the believer's ſoul; this engages the heart of Chriſt towards Chriſtians in ſuch a manner, that nothing ſhall ſeparate them from his love. 2. The enumeration and induction of particulars which the apoſtle makes uſe of, for confirming this propoſition, that nothing can ſeparate the believer from the love of Chriſt, nor diminiſh his intereſt in him: *Neither life, nor death*, that is, neither the hope of life, nor the fear of death: *Nor angels*, neither good nor bad: not the good angels, for they will not attempt it; nor the bad angels, for they can never effect it: *Nor principalities, nor powers*; by them underſtand earthly power, the great and mighty potentates of this world perſecuting us for Chriſt, yet ſhall never be able to divorce us from him: *Nor things preſent, nor things to come*; neither the things which we enjoy at preſent, or endure at preſent, or may hereafter meet with, be it proſperity or adverſity; their preſent and future condition of life ſhall be ſanctified, whatever comes; come what may come, come what will come, come what can come, nothing ſhall come amiſs unto them: whatever has happened, does happen, or may happen to them in this world, ſhall not fruſtrate their hopes of future happineſs in the world to come: *Nor heighth, nor depth*; that is, neither height of honour, nor depth of ignominy, neither the top of worldly advancement, nor the bottom of worldly debaſement, neither the height of ſpiritual enlargement, nor the depth of ſpiritual deſertions. God can and will keep his ſaints in an honourable, in a comfortable, yea, in a ſafe ſtate and condition all at once: *Nor any other creature*; that is, if there be any other creature not comprehended, or comprized in the foregoing enumeration, whatever it be, it muſt fall under the rank and denomination of creatures; and no creature either in heaven, or in earth, or in hell, ſhall ſeparate Chriſt and us. *Learn* hence, That it is matter of unutterable conſolation, and inexpreſſible triumph to believers, that nothing, though never ſo great and powerful, though never ſo amiable or terrible, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the love of their Saviour. Bleſſed be God, our ſtanding in Chriſt is not ſo lubricous and ſlippery as it was in Adam: He might ſtand or might fall: the believer ſhall ſtand, the root bears up the branches: we ſhall be kept by the mighty power of God, with the concurrence of our own careful and continual endeavours, through faith unto ſalvation. 3. The full aſſurance which the apoſtle had of the ſtability of a believer's eſtate, *I am perſuaded*, or I am fully aſſured: But how ſo? Not by extraordinary and ſpecial revelation, not by rapture into heaven, not by the apparition of an angel to him: But his aſſurance is built on that which is common to all believers; namely, the ſame ſpirit of faith, and the ſame love of God ſhed abroad in the hearts of all believers. 4. How the apoſtle having ſpoken in his own perſon in the former verſe, ſaying, *I am perſuaded*, changes the number in the laſt verſe: Nothing ſhall ſeparate *us*, not *me*. Where *note*, How he aſſociates himſelf with all true believers in the participation of this privilege: They have all an intereſt in the ſame love of God, the ſame promiſes of ſalvation, and have felt the ſanctifying work of the ſame Spirit. It is impoſſible that God ſhould retract his merciful purpoſe to believers; he that choſe them from eternity, from before all time, and gave his Son to ſuffer death for them in the fulneſs of time, will perſevere in his purpoſe; namely, by grace to bring them to glory. He whoſe grace prevented them when they were in their pollutions, in a ſtate of enmity, yea, in a ſtate of obſtinacy, will he leave them after his image is engraven, and re-imſtamped upon them? He that united them to Chriſt when they were ſtrangers, will not caſt them out of his love, now they are his members: their interceſſor will preſerve them from falling, and preſent them faultleſs before the preſence of his Father's glory with exceeding joy. God's love unto his children is everlaſting, and the covenant that is built upon it, is more firm than the pillars of heaven, and the foundations of the earth: Well might the apoſtle then ſay, Nothing ſhall ſeparate *us* from the love of God. 5. and laſtly, The ground of this love's permanency and duration towards believers: It is the love of God *in Chriſt Jeſus* that is vouchſafed to us for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus: God looks upon Chriſt, and loves him, and them in him; he loves all that are members of him, all that are like unto him. O bleſſed Jeſus! it is for thy ſake that the Father ſmiles upon us; we are choſen in thee, juſtified through thee, ſanctified by thee, and ſhall be eternally glorified with thee: *For neither life, nor death,* &c. *ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Eternal thanks to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the conſolation that flows from hence! May ſo high and glorious a privilege oblige all that are intereſted in it, to the exerciſe of univerſal holineſs, remembering, that as the privileges of the goſpel are glorious and great, ſo the duties it requires are exact and ſtrict. If we would enjoy the conſolation in the laſt verſe of this chapter (here dilated upon) we muſt perform the duty in the firſt verſe (there inſiſted on) namely, to walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit; otherwiſe the privilege of non-condemnation there, and of no ſeparation from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus here, will neither belong unto us, or ever be enjoyed and improved by us.

CHAP. IX.

Our apoſtle, in this and the two next chapters, labours mightily to convince his countrymen the Jews, *of their obſtinacy againſt God, in rejecting his counſel concerning their juſtification by faith in Chriſt: And that their obſtinacy was the certain cauſe of their rejection, or caſting out of the favour of God, and of the calling of the Gentiles; that is, of inveſting the Gentiles with the privileges of the abdicated* Jews.

I Say the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt,

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's ſolemn aſſeveration or oath; he calls Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt to witneſs for the truth of what he ſays, which is the very formality of an oath. *Learn* thence, That it is not barely lawful, but in ſome caſes expedient and neceſſary to aſſert and confirm by oath the truth and certainty of what we ſpeak; in caſes of great moment, which cannot otherwiſe be ſufficiently confirmed, a Chriſtian may eſtabliſh his ſaying by an oath. 2. The perſons whom the apoſtle ſwears by, *Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt*; he calls them to be witneſs of the ſincerity of his conſcience in what he doth aſſert: *I ſay the truth in Chriſt,* &c. But why doth the apoſtle ſwear by the name of Chriſt, and not rather by the name of God, ſeeing the Jews did not believe his divinity, and ſo were not like to give any whit the more credit to what was atteſted by him? I *anſwer*, Probably to aſſert the Godhead of Chriſt, which the Jews generally denied, and therefore wanted that honour which was and is due unto it. None but God was to be ſworn by; the apoſtle ſwearing by Chriſt, proves him to be truly and really God, as alſo the Holy Ghoſt; for an oath being an act of religious worſhip, and the apoſtle ſwearing by Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, doth thereby acknowledge their divinity, according to the words of Moſes in Deut. vi. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* 3. As the apoſtle appeals to Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, ſo alſo to his own conſcience, as the avoucher and witneſs of the the truth of what he ſays, *My conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs.* *Learn* thence, That God has placed a conſcience in every man, whoſe office it is to bear witneſs of all his words and actions; yea, of all his thoughts and inward affections. Conſcience is God's regiſter, to record whatever we think, ſpeak or act; and happy he whoſe conſcience bears witneſs for him, and doth not teſtify againſt him; who can ſay with the apoſtle here, *My conſcience beareth me witneſs, that I lie not,* &c.

2 That I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart.

The original word ſignifies ſuch ſorrow as is found with women in travail; a ſorrow continually affecting his heart, and afflicting his ſpirit, for his countrymen and kinſmen the Jews, upon the account of their obſtinate infidelity, obduration of heart, and ſpirit of ſlumber which was fallen upon them, which had provoked God to reſolve to caſt them off, to reject their nation, and to ſcatter them up and down throughout the world. Behold here, 1. What are the diſmal effects and dreadful conſequences of obſtinate unbelief, under the offers of Chriſt tendered to perſons in and by the diſpenſation of the goſpel, without timely repentance; the iſſue will be final rejection, inevitable condemnation, and unutterable. Behold, 2. The true ſpirit of Chriſtianity: its puts men upon mourning for the ſins and calamities of others in a very ſenſible and affectionate manner. Good men ever have been, and are men of tender and compaſſionate diſpoſitions; a ſtoical apathy, an indolency of heart, or want of natural affection, is ſo far from being a virtue, or matter of juſt commendation unto any man, that the deepeſt ſorrow and heavineſs of ſoul, in ſome caſes, well becomes perſons of the greateſt piety and wiſdom. 3. That great ſorrow and continual heavineſs of heart for the miſeries of others, whether imminent or incumbent, but eſpecially for the ſins of others, is an undoubted argument, ſign and evidence of a ſtrong and vehement love towards them. The apoſtle's *great heavineſs* and *continual ſorrow* for the Jews, his brethren, was a great inſtance and evidence of his unfeigned love and affection to them.

3 For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren my kinſmen according to the fleſh:

That is, “So great is my concern for the ſalvation of my brethren the Jews, that I could undergo the greateſt miſery and evil that can befal myſelf, to prevent their deſtruction.” This wiſh of St. Paul is plainly an hyperbolical expreſſion of his great affection to his countrymen the Jews, and his zeal for their ſalvation, which was ſo intenſe and vehement, that were it a thing reaſonable and lawful, were it proper, and could avail to the procuring their ſalvation, he could have wiſhed the greateſt evil to himſelf; for their ſakes, not only to be excommunicated from communion with the church of Chriſt, but to be ſeparated from Chriſt himſelf. If it be ſaid, that ſuch a wiſh is ſinful and unnatural, to deſire the ſalvation of others with our own damnation; I *anſwer*, True: And therefore the apoſtle's words are not an abſolute and poſitive wiſh:

He doth not ſay, *I wiſh*; but, *I could wiſh*: Juſt as we are wont to ſay, when we would expreſs a thing to the height, which is not fit nor intended to be done by us: "*I could wiſh ſo or ſo: I could even be content to do this or that.*" Which kind of expreſſions no man takes for a ſtrict and preciſe declaration of our minds, but for a figurative expreſſion of a very great and vehement paſſion. Thus here, the apoſtle ſays not, *I wiſh*, but *I could* even *wiſh*. Were it proper to make ſuch a wiſh, I could even wiſh ſo great a bleſſing to my brethren, though with the loſs of my own happineſs. Hence *learn*, 1. That it is neither lawful nor reaſonable for any man to renounce his own eternal ſalvation, and to be willing to be damned upon any account whatſoever, be it for the good of brethren, or for the glory of God himſelf. The very thought of ſuch a thing is enough to make human nature tremble at its very foundation; for the deſire of our own happineſs is the deepeſt principle that God has planted in our natures: And to pretend a reaſon from the glory of God, is impoſſible; becauſe our damnation cannot make for the glory of God, unleſs by our own impenitency and wilful obſtinacy, we have deſerved damnation. 2. That ſuch may be the ardency of a ſaint's affection towards others, and ſo fervent his deſires for their converſion and ſalvation, that he may be willing to ſacrifice himſelf, and all that is dear unto him in this world, for the accompliſhing of that end: *I could wiſh I were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren*, &c.

4 Who are Iſraelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice *of God*, and the promiſes; 5 Whoſe *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt *came*, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle, to vindicate himſelf for bearing ſuch a paſſionate affection to the Jews, and for being ſo ſlightly concerned for their eternal welfare, doth here recount and ſum up the high privileges and prerogatives belonging to the Jews above any nation under heaven; namely theſe, they were Iſraelites, that is, the ſeed and poſterity of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob: *To whom pertaineth the adoption*; that is, national adoption, not perſonal; God adopting the nation of the Jews to be an holy people to himſelf, and calling them his ſons and his firſt-born: *And the glory*; that is, the glorious preſence of God among them, the temple, the ark, but particularly the Schechinah, or divine preſence from between the cherubims: *And the covenants*; that is, the covenant made with Abraham and Moſes, the old and new covenant, Jer. xxxi. 32. *And the giving of the law*; it was the prerogative of this people, that all their laws, ceremonial, judicial, and moral, were compoſed and delivered to them by God himſelf: *And the ſervice of God*; that is, they only had the true worſhip of God amongſt them, and no other nation could have the like, but by being a debtor to them for it: *And the promiſes*; that is, in general, all the bleſſings promiſed to them in the land of Canaan; and, in particular, the promiſe of the Meſſiah, or God's gracious purpoſe and intention to ſend his Son into the world, to accompliſh its redemption: *Whoſe are the fathers*; that is, the beloved fathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, were their anceſtors, and they their offspring: *Of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came*; that is, of which Iſraelites Chriſt came; the promiſed Meſſias according to the fleſh or human nature, was their offspring, even he, who, according to his divine nature, *was over all, God bleſſed for evermore. Note* here, 1. How the apoſtle reſerves the greateſt privilege for the laſt: Chriſt's being born one of their nation, and according to the fleſh, deſcended from the Jewiſh ſtock, this was the topping privilege. 2. That this reſtrictive clauſe, *according to the fleſh*, plainly ſuppoſeth another nature in Chriſt, according to which he came not from the Iſraelites, which can be no other but the divine nature or Godhead, which, in the following words, is attributed to him: *Who is over all, God bleſſed for evermore.* Which glorious title given to Chriſt, as it highly exalts the prerogative of the Jews, as being a people of whom ſo bleſſed and great a perſon deſcended; ſo, on the other hand, it aggravates their ſin and condemnation, rejecting a perſon of ſuch infinite worth and dignity, notwithſtanding he deſcended from them. Now from the whole, *learn*, 1. That a fulneſs or richneſs of inſtituted means of grace, for the true knowledge and worſhip of God, is matter of high dignation and gracious condeſcenſion from God to man: Here the *glory*, the *covenants*, the *ſervice of God*, &c. are numbered amongſt the great and gracious reſpects vouchſafed by God to the Jews. 2. That the higheſt privileges and vouchſafements from God may be conferred upon a people who are neither pleaſing to God, nor accepted with him: Such were the Jews, to whom the forementioned privileges did belong, a people rejected by God for their obduracy and unbelief. 3. That it is no ſmall honour to be of the race or kindred of ſuch as have been holy ſaints and faithful ſervants of the moſt high and holy God: The Jews here were very honourable, as they were the ſeed of Abraham; but much more ſo, had they trod in the ſteps, and done the works, of their father Abraham. 4. That Jeſus Chriſt, who was the ſeed of Abraham according to the fleſh, was yet, according to his divine nature, *Lord over all, God bleſſed for evermore:* He is over all, that is, over all things, and over all perſons; and he is bleſſed for evermore, which is the conſtant title given to him that is God, and to none but him. The Socinians, to avoid the force of this text, which fully proves the divinity of Chriſt, turn the words into a thankſgiving for Chriſt, and read them thus: Of whom Chriſt was, according to the fleſh: *God, who is over all, be bleſſed for ever.* A manifeſt perverſion of the ſenſe of the apoſtle's words, which was to ſhew, that according to the fleſh he deſcended from Abraham; but that he had another nature, which was not derived from Abraham, even a divine nature, according to which he was *over all, God bleſſed for evermore.*

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael: 7 Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham *are they* all children: but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the fleſh, theſe *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed. 9 For this *is* the word of promiſe,

At this this time will I come, and Sara ſhall have a ſon.

Here the apoſtle anſwers to an objection againſt the rejection of the Jews: "If they be caſt off by God, what will become of the promiſe of God made to Abraham? ſaying, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.*" He anſwers, by diſtinguiſhing a twofold ſeed that Abraham had: Some were only his carnal ſeed, or the children of his fleſh; others were his ſpiritual ſeed, or the children of his faith. Now the carnal ſeed of Abraham, born according to the courſe of nature, were not the children of God, to whom the promiſe was made, but the children repreſented by Iſaac, born by the ſupernatural power of the Spirit of God; theſe are to be accounted the true ſeed of Abraham, mentioned in the covenant, when God ſays, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.* So that the force of the apoſtle's argument lies thus: The rejection of ſuch Jews, or ſuch of Abraham's ſeed only who were ſo according to the fleſh, cannot make the word or promiſe of God to Abraham and his ſeed of no effect, becauſe he made no abſolute promiſe to them as ſuch. But, ſays the apoſtle, none of thoſe Jews, whoſe rejection I ſpeak of, have any ſuch promiſe made to them; therefore the rejection of ſome of Abraham's natural ſeed doth not make void the word and promiſe of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That the promiſes of God to his children and people, are firm and ſtable; they ſhall not be made void, but be accompliſhed and made good to thoſe that have a title to them, and intereſt in them, and fulfil the conditions of them: *Not as though the word* or promiſe *of God has taken no effect: All are not Iſrael that are of Iſrael.* *Learn* thence, 2. That as all were not true Iſraelites of old that did bear the name of Iſraelites; ſo all are not true Chriſtians at this day, who take upon them the name of Chriſt, and bear the name of Chriſtians. 3. That men are very prone to bear up themſelves upon the piety of their anceſtors, though ſtrangers, in practice, to their piety; as the Jews boaſted they were the ſeed of Abraham, but did not the works of Abraham; whereas men are ſo far from being God's children, becauſe they had godly parents, that Chriſt told the Jews, who came forth out of Abraham's loins, that they were of their father the devil. John viii. 44.

10 And not only *this*; but when Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, *even* by our father Iſaac: 11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) 12 It was ſaid unto her, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.

Our apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes, proved, from what was done in Abraham's family, that it was the purpoſe and pleaſure of God to account only thoſe for Abraham's ſeed who were the children of his faith, and to reject the reſt for their unbelief; in theſe verſes he proſecutes the ſame argument, by inſiſting upon another ſpecial diſpenſation of God in the family of Iſaac, whoſe wife Rebecca had twins, namely, Jacob and Eſau, and had neither of them any thing in them to move God to love the one, and diſlike the other: Yet a preference was given to the one before the other: So that the apoſtle's argument runs thus: "As Jacob and Eſau, were begotten of the ſame father, born of the ſame mother, lay together in the ſame womb, and had neither of them done any thing at all to oblige or diſoblige Almighty God; yet he was pleaſed to make a difference between them and their poſterity after them, giving the beloved Canaan to Jacob and his ſeed, which by birth-right belonged to Eſau and his offspring: So in like manner is it the will and pleaſure of God, that the believing Gentiles ſhould become heirs of the promiſe by faith in Chriſt, and that the unbelieving Jews ſhould be rejected and caſt off for their infidelity." *Learn* hence, 1. That Almighty God chuſes perſons to the participation of divine favours. 2. That the choice which God makes of men to the enjoyment of that ſpecial favour of being his peculiar people, is not according to their external privileges or works, but according to his own free pleaſure. 3. That as Jacob's and Eſau's being unborn, and having done neither good nor evil, is uſed as an argument to prove, that the choice of the one before the other could not be of works; ſo it is a ſtrong argument againſt the pre-exiſtence of ſouls, and their being ſent unto bodies by way of puniſhment for former ſins: For upon that ſuppoſition, it could not be true, that the children had done neither good nor evil before they were born, ſeeing they might both have ſinned, in that ſtate of pre-exiſtence. *Learn* 4. and *obſerve*, That the apoſtle doth not ſay, That before the children had done either good or evil, God ſaid, Jacob have I loved, and Eſau hated, but only, *the elder ſhall ſerve the younger.* Hatred here may be taken two ways, either, (1.) For a leſs degree of love, God preferring the ſeed of Jacob before the poſterity of Eſau, giving the former the good land of Canaan, to the latter the barren mountains of Seir. Or (2.) If hatred be taken in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, then God is ſaid to hate Eſau, that is, the Edomites, after their wicked and unnatural behaviour toward their brethren the Iſraelites: And upon that occaſion, ſee Obadiah, ver. 10. *For thy violence againſt thy brother Jacob, ſhame ſhall cover thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever.* Nothing renders a perſon the object of God's hatred but ſin; he doth not hate the devil himſelf as he is his creature, but only as he is a ſinner. God adjudges none to eternal perdition, but with reſpect to ſin. *Obſerve*, 5. That Jacob and Eſau are not here to be conſidered perſonally, but collectively; for the Iſraelites that deſcended from Jacob, and for the Edomites which ſprang from Eſau; for Eſau in his own perſon did not ſerve Jacob, but the Edomites did ſerve the Iſraelites. Thus *the elder did ſerve the younger.* Again, it appears that Job and all his friends were of the poſterity of Eſau: God did not then hate the perſon, or all the poſterity of Eſau, but only thoſe of them who by their violence and wickedneſs rendered themſelves the object of his hatred.

14 What ſhall we ſay then? *Is there* unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. 15 For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.

The apoſtle having by the two foregoing inſtances aſſerted his doctrine, concerning the purpoſe and decree of God to juſtify thoſe that ſhould believe on his Son, be they Gentiles or Jews; and conſequently made it good, that no word or promiſe of God falls to the ground by the rejection of the unbelieving Jews; proceeds in this verſe to demonſtrate the righteouſneſs of God in the execution of this his purpoſe. *Is there then*, ſays he, *unrighteouſneſs or injuſtice with God? God forbid.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Is there any cauſe to ſay, that God, who preferred the poſterity of Iſaac before that of Iſhmael, and the ſeed of Jacob before the numerous offſpring of Eſau; is there any juſt reaſon to ſay, that God is now unjuſt in calling the Gentiles, and upon their faith owning them for his people, the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, and rejecting the Jews becauſe of their unbelief? God forbid that we ſhould accuſe him of unrighteous dealing upon this account." *Learn* hence, That God is juſt, infallibly and inflexibly juſt and righteous in all his dealings with, and diſpenſations towards the children of men: *Is there unrighteouſneſs with God?* That is, there is none, there can be none. 2. That all ſuch tenets or doctrines which reflect any manner of unrighteouſneſs upon God, or charge him with hard dealing, ought to be diſclaimed with the utmoſt abhorrency and deteſtation: *Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. Note* next, How the apoſtle proves that there is no unrighteouſneſs in this diſpenſation of God, in rejecting the Jews, and calling the Gentiles, becauſe he had ſaid to Moſes, he would ſhew mercy, where, when, and to whom, or to what people he pleaſed. If, therefore, upon the infidelity of the Jews, he will call the idolatrous Gentiles, and receive them to be his people, who can accuſe him of any injuſtice upon that account? Shall not Almighty God diſpenſe his favours where, and upon whom he pleaſes? May he not confer his kindneſs upon ſome, which he owes to none? *Learn* hence, That God is abſolutely and ultimately reſolved to follow the counſel of his own will, in and about the juſtification of ſinners; and whatſoever he doth, or reſolves to do, his will being the rule of righteouſneſs, is for that reaſon exactly juſt, and undeniably righteous.

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The foregoing inſtances abundantly ſhew, *that it is not of him that willeth*; for Abraham willed that Iſhmael might live to be partaker of the bleſſing promiſed to his ſeed, when he ſaid, Gen. xvii. 18. *O that Iſhmael might live before thee!* Nor is it of him that runneth: For when Eſau ran to fetch veniſon for his father, that he might receive the bleſſing, Gen. xxi. the wiſdom of God ſaw fit to have it otherwiſe, and to confer the bleſſing upon Jacob; but it is of God that ſheweth mercy, that any one is choſen to be the ſeed to which the promiſe made to Abraham belongs, and ſo to be his church and people." *Learn* hence, That it is of God's mere grace and mercy, that any ſinners are called and admitted to the privilege of juſtification and adoption, upon any terms and conditions whatſoever. The reaſon why the ſinful and unworthy Gentiles were called to be a people, who were not a people, while the Jews were left out, and caſt off, for their unbelief, was not becauſe the Gentiles were either more worthy or more willing, but from God's diſcriminating grace and mercy: *It is not of him that willeth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.*

17 For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Our apoſtle here proceeds to remove another objection, namely, the ſeeming injuſtice or ſeverity of rejecting the Jews, and reſerving them to wrath, giving them up to an obdurate heart, becauſe they would not accept of the way which the wiſdom of God had appointed for their juſtification; namely, faith in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This he clears by another inſtance; to wit, that of Pharaoh, who had ſo often hardened his own heart obſtinately, and provoked God at laſt to harden him judicially. *For this cauſe*, ſays God, *have I raiſed thee up:* In the original it is, *I have made thee to ſtand*; that is, "I have ſuſtained thee, and kept thee alive, when thou deſervedſt, and mighteſt juſtly have expected to be cut off by the ſeveral plagues inflicted on thee for thy obſtinate hardneſs of heart, *That I might ſhew my power in thee*, &c. Or, I have patiently born thy ſtubbornneſs for a long time, that my power and juſtice might more illuſtriouſly appear at laſt in that conſpicuous judgment, which I will execute upon thee in the ſight of all the nations of the earth." *Learn* hence, That ſome ſinners, whom the patience of God has long waited upon, are preſerved of him, and raiſed out of great and imminent dangers by him, for this end; namely, to make them examples of his juſt indignation againſt ſtubborn and obdurate rebels, and that in the moſt illuſtrious and ſignal manner. *For this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

As if he had ſaid, "From theſe ſcripture-inſtances, we may gather and conclude, that God, may, without the leaſt injuſtice, magnify his mercy, in ſparing and pardoning ſome ſinners, and render his juſtice glorious in puniſhing others; yea, in puniſhing ſin with ſin, hardening them judicially, who had hardened themſelves obſtinately." Here *note*, That God did not harden Pharaoh's heart by any poſitive act or influx upon it, by infuſing any evil into it, for this would make God the author of ſin; but he was hardened by way of judiciary tradition, after he had long hardened himſelf. Firſt he was delivered up into the hand of Satan, who deluded him by the magicians counterfeiting the ſame miracle that Moſes wrought, and this hardened him againſt the belief of any thing that Moſes either did or ſaid. Secondly, He was delivered up to his own luſts, particularly, idolatry, ambition, and covetouſneſs, and theſe hardened Pharaoh's heart. As an idolater, he was loath to receive a meſſage from the God of Iſrael, whom he knew not: *Who is the Lord*, ſays he, *that I ſhould obey him? I know not the Lord.* As an ambitious prince, it went to his very heart, to hear ſo mean a man as Moſes controul him in his own dominions, ſaying, *Let the people go, that they may ſerve the Lord.* This enraged him, to hear of any Lord over that people but himſelf; and as a covetous man, he was loath to hear of parting with a people, by whoſe pains, in making brick, he had ſo great an income. Thus Pharaoh's affected hardneſs, was followed with inflicted hardneſs. *Learn* hence, That God doth juſtly deliver that man up to hardneſs of heart, by way of puniſhment, who has often hardened his own heart againſt God by repeated acts of ſin.

> *Juſte toties cor ejus obduratur in pœnam,*
> *Quoties ipſe cor ſuum obduravit in culpam,* Lightfoot.

19 Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? 20 Nay, but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed *it*, Why haſt thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another to diſhonour?

Here the apoſtle brings in the unbelieving and rejected Jews making an objection againſt God: "If the caſe be thus, that God doth ſometimes, and that juſtly, leave obdurate ſinners to harden themſelves, why is he offended at it, and complains of it? If God hardeneth us becauſe he will, why doth he find fault with us for our hardneſs of heart? For who hath at any time reſiſted his will? How is it in our power to avoid being hardened, if it be his will that we ſhould be hardened?" *Learn* hence, That guilty ſinners are full of hard thoughts of God, and very prone to think the divine diſpenſations unreaſonable, if not unrighteous; but upon falſe and miſtaken grounds: *Why doth he find fault? Who hath reſiſted his will?* To this objection the apoſtle returns a very ſmart anſwer, ſaying, *Who art thou, O man, that replieſt againſt God? Shall*, &c. In which anſwer, *note*, 1. A vehement objurgation or reproof. 2. A ſubſtantial vindication of the righteouſneſs and wiſdom of God, in his proceedings with men. *Obſerve*, 1. The objurgation or reproof drawn up in an interrogative form, which argues great intenſement of mind in the perſon ſpeaking; *Nay, but, O man, who art thou?* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "What bold and unheard of preſumption is this, that man, blind and ignorant man, guilty, ſinful man, obnoxious to wrath and eternal death, that he ſhould undertake to reprove and cenſure, to judge and condemn the actions and diſpenſations of the moſt high and holy God, as if they were crooked and perverſe, defective either in juſtice or wiſdom!" *Learn* hence, That it is no leſs than horrid and horrible preſumption, for ſo weak, ſinful and worthleſs a creature as man is, to conteſt and diſpute with the moſt high God about the wiſdom or righteouſneſs of any of his ways: *O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God?* 2. How the apoſtle vindicates the wiſdom and righteouſneſs of God in his proceedings with men in general, and againſt the Jews in particular; ſhewing, That there is no more cauſe to make this objection againſt God for rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and ſhewing favour to the believing Gentiles, than for the pitcher to contend with him that formed it, why he made it of ſuch a ſhape, and not of another figure; or for the clay, when it is marred and broken, to complain of the potter, for making of one part of it a veſſel unto honour, and the other unto diſhonour. *Learn* hence, That men, who have made themſelves obnoxious to the juſtice of God, by a long continual courſe in ſin and diſobedience againſt God, (as the unbelieving Jews here ſpoken of evidently did) have no cauſe to complain, neither of God's ſevere proceedings againſt themſelves, or of his favourable diſpenſations towards others. What juſt cauſe had the Jews, rejected for their own unbelief and hardneſs of heart, to murmur againſt God for ſhewing mercy to the Gentiles, who ſubmitted to the terms of mercy?

22 *What* if God, willing to ſhew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory? 24 Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "What though God doth not preſently puniſh the obſtinate and unbelieving Jews according to their deſert, but beareth with them, and exerciſes forbearance towards them, and they go on, by their continual rebellions, to make themſelves fit objects of his wrath; but he is pleaſed ſtill, with great gentleneſs and patience, to bear with them, as he did with Pharaoh; and if, after all, they be more hardened, as he was, by God's forbearance, what ſhew of injuſtice, I pray, is it, if he puniſhes them at laſt with greater ſeverity, as God did him? If he ſwallow up their nation, deſtroy their temple, ruin their city, what injuſtice is it to deſtroy thoſe, who, by making themſelves objects of God's wrath, are fitted for deſtruction?" Here *note*, That the *veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction*, are ſuch as the apoſtle ſaith, *God endured with much long ſuffering*; and therefore, they were not made veſſels of wrath by God, but by themſelves; after they had filled up the meaſnre of their ſins, and thereby fitted themſelves as veſſels for deſtruction. God endured them with much long-ſuffering, though judgment at laſt took hold upon them to the uttermoſt. *Learn* hence, That Almighty God may, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of injuſtice or unrighteouſneſs, puniſh, with the utmoſt ſeverity, ſuch a perſon or a people, whom he hath long endured, with much forbearance, to go on in a courſe of ſinning, if at laſt they repent not. This was the manner of God's dealing with the Jews here. His lenity towards the Gentiles is next expreſſed, ver. 22. *That he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy*, &c. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Can God be taxed with unrighteouſneſs, in ſhewing the riches of his glorious grace and mercy towards the deſpiſed Gentiles, whom he hath called to the faith of Chriſt, and thereby fitted and prepared them to be veſſels of mercy? Hath he not a juſt right to ſhew his mercy to ſuch perſons who have ſubmitted to the terms upon which he hath promiſed favour and acceptance, and to own them as his peculiar people, although they be not the natural ſeed of Abraham, ſeeing they are his ſpiritual?"

Note here, That as the unbelieving Jews were called in the former verſe, *Veſſels of wrath*; ſo the believing Gentiles are called in this verſe, *Veſſels of mercy*; becauſe, as veſſels are fitted and formed by the hand of the artificer, for the uſe for which they are deſigned, in like manner, are believers wrought by God, and framed by his Holy Spirit, and made meet to receive the mercy of God; that is, the fruits and effects of his mercy, eſpecially, pardon of ſin, and peace with God. Concerning the veſſels of wrath, the apoſtle ſpeaks paſſively, they are fitted for deſtruction: Concerning the veſſels of mercy, he ſpeaks actively, that God has prepared them unto glory; that is, made them meet and fit by grace here, for glory hereafter. *Learn* thence, That the new creation of the ſaints, and all the ſpiritual workmanſhip that is found upon them, is to be aſcribed unto God, and to the effectual working of his grace: *He hath afore prepared them unto glory.* 2. That the fulleſt meaſures of glory hereafter, ſhall be the portion of ſuch, and only ſuch, as are firſt prepared by grace and holineſs to receive them here. 3. That thoſe only are veſſels of mercy, prepared by God unto glory, who upon the evangelical call, have been prevailed with, by faith and repentance, to anſwer the call and command of God: *That he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called.*

25 As he ſaith alſo in Oſee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her, Beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there ſhall they be called, The children of the living God.

Our apoſtle having hitherto vindicated the wiſdom and righteouſneſs of God, in the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles; leſt the Jews ſhould ſtumble and take offence at it, in theſe, and the following verſes, he proves that the calling of the Gentiles was long before foretold, both by the prophet Hoſea, and the prophet Iſaiah: By the prophet Hoſea, chap. ii. 22. *I will call them my people, which were not my people.* And chap. i. 10. *Inſtead of, Ye are not my people, it ſhall be ſaid, Ye are the ſons of the living God.* Which expreſſions ſignify and import, God's receiving the Gentiles into the church, as an act of free and undeſerved mercy, whom the Jews looked upon as caſt-aways, as ſtrangers, as dogs; accounting themſelves only to be of his family and houſhold. Next, he produces the teſtimony of Iſaiah.

27 Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael, Though the number of the children of Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant ſhall be ſaved. 28 For he will finiſh the work and cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs: becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Eſaias ſaid before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a ſeed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

Here the apoſtle ſhews how the reduction of the obdurate Jews was foretold by Iſaiah, as well as Hoſea: That although the number of the Jews, according to the fleſh, were as the ſand of the ſea, yet the greateſt number of them would be paſſed by for their unbelief, and a remnant only ſaved. Thus the prophet ſpeaks of thoſe Jews who eſcaped the hand of Sennacherib; and the apoſtle makes the deliverance of thoſe few, a type of them that ſhould believe in Chriſt, and be ſaved by him. And the prophet farther adds, That God would finiſh his work and cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs; that is, God will make quick work with that incorrigible and unreclaimable people; ſuch ſwift deſtruction ſhall come upon the multitude of evil doers in the land of Iſrael, as ſhall bring them very low, cut them ſhort, lop them off, ſo that they ſhall be left as a tree, of which only the ſtump remaineth. They ſhall be reduced to a ſmall remnant, and a remnant only of that remnant ſhall be converted. Now, firſt, From the literal import of thoſe words, *Though Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant only ſhall be ſaved*, we *learn*, That a numerous people or nation, among whom God hath been truly worſhipped, and this for a long ſeaſon, may, notwithſtanding, for their wickedneſs, be deſtroyed and reduced by God to a very ſmall number. Secondly, From the typical import of theſe words, together with the apoſtle's ſcope in citing them, we gather, that amongſt thoſe multitudes who are called by the goſpel to believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who make profeſſion of his name and truth, the number of thoſe who will be at laſt eternally ſaved, will be but comparatively ſmall and little; *A remnant ſhall be ſaved.*

30 What ſhall we ſay then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs which is of faith: 31 But Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, hath not attained to the law of righteouſneſs. 32 Wherefore? Becauſe *they ſought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone;

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Lord, what ſhall we ſay to this great myſtery of grace, the calling of the Gentile world, and the cutting off and caſting away moſt of the preſent Jewiſh nation! That the Gentiles who lived in ignorance and blindneſs, in ſin, and unrighteouſneſs, ſhould attain to righteouſneſs by faith in Chriſt; and that the Iſraelites, who had God's own righteous law amongſt them, and truſted to be juſtified by the obſervation of it, yet ſhould they not attain to that righteouſneſs which God accepteth. And wherefore have they not attained it? but becauſe they ſought not juſtification by that faith which God preſcribeth for that end, namely, faith in the Mediator; but thought it muſt be attained by the works of the law, keeping all the ceremonial precepts, by which no fleſh can be juſtified; and the reaſon why they ſought it not by faith was this, *They ſtumbled at the ſtumbling-ſtone*; that is, at the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, taking offence at his poverty and mean condition in the world, and at the ſpirituality of his kingdom." *Learn* hence, That the great humiliation of Chriſt in the days of his fleſh, did prove a ſnare and occaſion to many perſons to deſpiſe and reject him, to ſtumble at him, and fall foul upon him. But in what reſpects is Chriſt called a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence? *Anſ.* Negatively: not becauſe he was by God deſigned, either intentionally or accidentally, to be ſuch. All ſtumbling and offence taken at Chriſt are accidental, proceeding from the depravity of man, not from the deſign of God. Much leſs were the Jews fore-appointed and ordained by God to ſtumble at his Son, for God appoints no man to do that which he prohibits all men from doing. And as no man is neceſſitated by the decree of God, ſo neither is he conſtrained or neceſſitated by Satan, by his corruption, or any other inſtrument, to ſtumble or take offence at Chriſt; for actions neceſſitated upon men are neither demeritorious nor puniſhable. But poſitively Chriſt is called a ſtone of ſtumbling, becauſe men willingly ignorant and wilfully perverſe, do take offence at him. Though God never deſigned or deſired any man's ſtumbling at Chriſt, yet he knew and foreſaw, that many, very many, would ſtumble at him; and accordingly expreſſed him by a prophetical character, anſwering the event, and predicting that which in time came to paſs: *Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling block.*

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-ſtone and rock of offence: and whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.

Note here, 1. What uſe and office our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is of to his church: He is a ſtone, a corner ſtone, the chief corner ſtone: a corner ſtone for ſtrength, the chief corner ſtone for ornament and beauty: as the corner ſtone bears the weight of the building, ſo doth Chriſt bear the weight of his church, and ſupports all the pillars and ſupporters of it: yet this precious corner ſtone is accidentally and eventually *a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence.* Some are offended at the poverty of his perſon, and the meanneſs of his condition, others at the ſublimity and ſanctity of his doctrine; ſome are offended at his croſs, others at his free grace; but ſuch as, inſtead of being offended at him, do believe on him, ſhall never be aſhamed of, or confounded by him. *Learn* hence, That thoſe who, according to the direction of the goſpel, do believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall never have cauſe to be aſhamed. Here *note*, What they ſhall not be aſhamed of, when and why they ſhall not be aſhamed. 1. What the ſincere believer ſhall not be aſhamed of! *Anſ.* He ſhall never be aſhamed of his choice, he ſhall not be aſhamed of his profeſſion, he ſhall never be aſhamed of the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt which he has owned and vindicated in the world; he ſhall never be aſhamed of the work and ſervice of Chriſt, nor of any time ſincerely ſpent in that work and ſervice; he ſhall never be aſhamed of his reproaches and ſufferings, tribulations and perſecutions, for the ſake of Chriſt. In a word, he ſhall never be aſhamed hereafter, that he never was aſhamed here, either of Chriſt and his goſpel, his work and ſervice, or his cauſe and intereſt. 2. When the believer ſhall not be aſhamed; namely, when he is called forth to bear his teſtimony of Chriſt before the world, at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment; neither the dreadfulneſs of the day, nor the majeſty of the Judge, not the number of the accuſers, not the impartiality of the ſentence, nor the ſeparation which ſhall then be made, will in the leaſt cauſe him to be aſhamed. 3. Why the believer ſhall never be aſhamed. *Anſ.* The cauſe of ſhame is removed and taken away, namely, ſin; thoſe only from whom he can reaſonably fear ſhame, will never be aſhamed of him; he can look God and Chriſt, his own conſcience, and the whole world, in the face, without ſhame and bluſhing. O that ſinners would now be aſhamed of their unbelief! which otherwiſe will put them to eternal ſhame, and bring upon them everlaſting confuſion in the day of the Lord: *Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall never be aſhamed; but he that believeth not in him, ſhame and the wrath of God abideth on him.*

CHAP. X.

Our apoſtle proſecutes in this the argument which he had begun in the former chapter, viz. *The temporary rejection of his countrymen the* Jews, *for their obſtinate refuſal of that way of juſtification which the wiſdom of God had preſcribed, namely, by faith in his Son* Jeſus Chriſt.

BRETHREN, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved.

Where *note*, 1. The mighty concern which the apoſtle had for the eternal ſalvation of his countrymen the Jews, who ſought his deſtruction; their ſalvation lay very near his heart, and he was afraid they ſhould miſs it, by taking the wrong way for obtaining it, by building all their hopes of ſalvation upon ſuch a bottom as would never bear the fabric, but utterly fail them, namely, juſtification by works. 2. What it was that made the apoſtle ſo concerned for the Jews: It was not upon the account of their wicked lives and ſcandalous immoralities, but for their bad principles and fundamental errors. They oppoſed the honour of God to the Son of God, and the obſervation of the law to the faith of Chriſt. From whence *learn*, That we ought to be concerned for thoſe who lie under damnable errors, although they be men of good carriage and commendable converſation. Not only the vicious and ungodly, but the erroneous and unſound, are to be the objects of our pity and prayer: For error is as damnable as vice; the one is an open road, the other a by-path to hell and deſtruction; and accordingly, he that has a due care of his ſoul's ſalvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous principles, as of debauched practices.

2 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I can bear them witneſs that many, very many of the Jews, have a zealous deſire in their way to pleaſe God, and do what is acceptable in his ſight; but though it be a warm, it is but a blind zeal, and not according to right knowledge." Here *note*, 1. The apoſtle is deſirous to ſay the beſt he could of his countrymen the Jews; he commends the good meaning of their zeal, but blames the ill conduct of it. It was a miſguided and miſtaken zeal, and not directed as it ought. Zeal is either one of the beſt or worſt things in the world: It is a good thing, when it is right in its object, right in the meaſure and degree, and purſued by right means. As to the object of our zeal, it muſt be that which is certainly good, and conſiderably good: certainly good, or elſe we are zealous for we know not what; or conſiderably good, or elſe it doth not deſerve our zeal. To be zealous and hot beyond all meaſure for the obſervation of a ceremony or cuſtom, as ſome in the Chriſtian church were of old about the obſervation of Eaſter, is certainly a zeal not according to knowledge. Again, zeal muſt be proſecuted by lawful and warrantable means; we muſt not from a principle of zeal do any evil, that good may come. But there is a zeal amongſt the church of Rome, which I am ſure cannot be according to knowledge, and that is a zeal for ignorance. This is a zeal peculiar to themſelves: they will not allow the people to underſtand what they do in the ſervice of God; they require them to pray, but will not let them know what they pray for; and all this under a pretence, that ignorance, which makes a man a block, is the mother of devotion; as if the leſs men underſtood the ſervice of God, the better he was pleaſed with it, and the more they were edified by it.

3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.

That is the Jews being ignorant of God's way of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, diſcovered in the goſpel, and relying upon, and truſting to their own works, their obedience to the ceremonial and moral law, to juſtify and ſave them, they have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God; that is, to the way and method which the wiſdom of God has diſcovered for the juſtification of a ſinner by the blood of his Son. *Note* here, 1. That by God's righteouſneſs we are to underſtand that righteouſneſs which Chriſt has wrought for us, which God beſtows upon us, and the goſpel reveals unto us: By eſtabliſhing their own righteouſneſs, is to be underſtood their reſolution and endeavour to depend upon their own works; their obedience to the law for their juſtification before God, in oppoſition againſt, and in contradiction to, that way of juſtification which God had declared; namely, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, the one and only Mediator. 2. That upon the firſt opening of the goſpel, no evangelical doctrine was more diſreliſhed by the Jews than juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. They were poſſeſſed with this principle then, that eternal life was attainable only by the works of the law: And according to the example of the Jews at the beginning, perſons ever ſince, even to this very day, are fond of that way of juſtification. The natural man is a proud man, he likes to live upon his own ſtock, he cannot ſtoop to a ſincere and univerſal renunciation of his own righteouſneſs, and to depend wholly upon the righteouſneſs of another. It is natural to a man to chuſe rather to eat a brown cruſt, or wear a coarſe garment, which he can call his own, than to feed upon the richeſt dainties, or wear the coſtlieſt robes, which he muſt receive as an alms from another. Lord! how hard is it to ſubdue this pride of ſpirit, and to be thoroughly convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of another and a better righteouſneſs than our own, to conſtitute us righteous in the ſight of God! From the whole, *learn*, 1. How dark-ſighted the wiſeſt men are by nature in God's way of juſtifying and ſaving ſinners; *ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*, that is, of the way which the wiſdom of God has diſcovered for juſtifying guilty ſinners by faith in his Son. This is known only by divine revelation, Rom. i. 17. *The righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith:* It is purely an object of faith, and hangs all upon divine revelation, both as to the righteouſneſs itſelf, and the manner of imparting it. 2. How abſurd is the attempt, and how injurious the deſign, to ſet up and eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of our own, either in oppoſition to, or in conjunction with, the righteouſneſs of God. Alas! we fulfil the law only in ſincerity, we cannot fulfil it to perfection; and if it be not to perfection, it cannot be to juſtification. Therefore, to truſt to any righteouſneſs of our own for juſtification before God, which is imperfect and polluted, is both ſinful and unſafe. Sinful, becauſe it is confronting the plain declarations of the goſpel; and unſafe, becauſe it evacuates Chriſt: For Chriſt is of no effect unto us; whoſoever are juſtified by the law, are fallen from grace, Gal. v. 4. *Learn*, 3. What an hindrance is pride to the ſalvation of men: It ſtiffens the will that it won't ſtoop to God's terms; They will not have juſtification in God's way, and they ſhall not have it in their own. Here it ſtuck with the Jews; they would not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God; and here it ſticks with too many at this day. 4. Not to count a righteouſneſs of your own needleſs to be poſſeſſed of, becauſe you want the righteouſneſs of another to confide and truſt in. We plead the meritorious righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to anſwer the demands of the law; but contend for a perſonal righteouſneſs of our own, to anſwer the commands of the goſpel. Chriſt doth indeed eaſe us of the load of our ſins, but not diſcharge us from the care of our duty. Our being in Chriſt frees us indeed from condemnation, but then that in-being muſt be proved by our holy walking, not after the fleſh but after the Spirit, Rom. v. 1. *Learn*, 5. To ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, as ever you would enjoy peace with God. The more holy we are, and the more ſanctified we grow, the meaner opinion we ſhall have of ourſelves, and the more need of a Saviour, and of juſtification by him; and ſhall bleſs God for the goſpel, in which the righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith; and ſhall dread it as hell to be found amongſt the number of thoſe, who, though they be not ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, yet will go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, refuſing to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God.

4 For Chriſt *is* the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

There was a threefold law of God, which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the end of; namely, judicial, ceremonial, and moral: 1. The judicial law was that which God by Moſes delivered to the Jews, containing directions for the adminiſtration of their civil government. Now Chriſt was the end of this law, as he has aboliſhed it: for the Jewiſh polity was to continue till the coming of the Meſſias, and not longer, Gen. xlix. Dan. ix. 2. The ceremonial law was that which did preſcribe certain ſacred rites and ceremonies, to be obſerved in the external worſhip of God by the people of Iſrael. The former law had relation to them as a nation, this as they were a church. Now Chriſt is the end of this law, as he has abrogated it. All the ceremonies of that law were ſhadows and types of Chriſt; now the ſhadows were to ceaſe, when once the ſubſtance was come. 3. The moral law is that holy and eternal rule of righteouſneſs given by God to men, for the right ordering of their thoughts, words, and actions towards God, their neighbour, and themſelves. This law is ſummarily comprehended in the ten commandments, and is called *the law of righteouſneſs*, Rom. ix. 31. *the royal law* by St. James, ii. 8. Now Chriſt may be ſaid to be the end of this law, (1.) As he is the ſcope of it. (2.) As he is the accompliſhment of it. The precepts of the law point at Chriſt, as he by whom they are accompliſhed; the promiſes of the law point at him, as he by whom they are ratified; and the threatenings of the law may be ſaid to point at him, as he by whom they are eſcaped. Chriſt was the ſum of the law, as well as the ſubſtance of the goſpel. In a word, (3.) Chriſt is the end of the law, inaſmuch as he is to a believer, what the law would have been unto him if he could have perfectly kept it; namely, righteouſneſs and life, juſtification and ſalvation. For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to be imputed to every one that believeth in him, the law being our ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith, Gal. iii. 25.

5 For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man which doth thoſe things ſhall live by them.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Righteouſneſs by faith can never be obtained by the works of the law, becauſe Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs of the law thus, That the man that doth theſe things ſhall live by them; that is, a proſperous and happy life in the land of Canaan, ſay ſome; and eternal life in heaven, ſay others." But then by the law muſt be underſtood the moral, not the ceremonial law, according to that of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*; that is, the moral law. This do, and thou ſhalt live. Where *note*, That ſuch as ſeek juſtification and ſalvation by the works of the law, muſt keep the moral law perfectly and exactly; which being impoſſible to man in his fallen eſtate, Chriſt has obtained of his Father, that for the ſake of his righteouſneſs, our ſincere, though imperfect obedience, ſhould find acceptance with God, and be available to ſalvation.

6 But the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe: Say not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down *from above.*) 7 Or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.) 8 But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach.

In which words the apoſtle ſeems to ſet forth the great anxiety and trouble of mind which is found with an awakened ſinner; he is at a loſs to find out the way how he ſhall ſtand juſtified in the ſight of God. The law propounds to him life, but it is upon an impoſſible condition; but the goſpel clearly reveals to him, that Chriſt has performed what is neceſſary for his juſtification, and that, by a practical and lively faith, he ſhall have an intereſt in it. We need not therefore ſay, *Who ſhall aſcend into heaven for us?* for Chriſt being aſcended, hath given us a convincing proof, that the propitiation for our ſins is perfect; for otherwiſe our ſurety had not been received into God's ſanctuary: Therefore, to be under perplexities how we may be juſtified, is to deny the value of his righteouſneſs, and the truth of his aſcenſion. And ſay not, *Who ſhall deſcend into the deep?* that is, to bear the torments of hell, and expiate ſin; for this is to deny the virtue of his death, whereby he appeaſed God, and redeemed us from wrath to come. In the *law*, the condemning righteouſneſs of God is made viſible: in the goſpel, his juſtifying righteouſneſs is revealed from faith to faith. Eternally magnified be omnipotent love, that the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has diſcovered how God may ſhew mercy to repenting and returning ſinners, without any prejudice or injury done to his juſtice. Hereby the ſoul is at once freed from the fear of God's wrath and anger, and has a lively hope of his love and favour. Lord! What ſins are there which ſo entire a ſatisfaction doth not expiate? What torments can they deſerve, which his wounds and ſtripes have not removed? God is juſt as well as merciful, in juſtifying him that believeth on Jeſus. From the whole, *note*, That the way of acceptance with God, is ſo clearly ſtated and diſcovered in the goſpel, that we need not be in any doubtful ſuſpenſe where to find it, or ſeek other ſatisfaction than God has given us in his word. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart*, &c.

9 That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

Obſerve here, The two great and principle things which the goſpel requires, in order our juſtification and ſalvation. The firſt is, *Confeſſion of Chriſt with our mouth*; that is, in all times of danger, particularly in a time of perſecution, to own Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, and to declare that we will ſerve him, and adhere to him, will be ruled of him, and expect only to be ſaved by him. The ſecond is, *To believe in our hearts, that God hath raiſed Chriſt from the dead.* But why is the article of Chriſt's reſurrection only named, ſeeing faith reſpects his birth, life, and death, &c. *Anſ.* Becauſe this article of the reſurrection pre-ſuppoſes all the reſt of the antecedents to it, and conſequents of it; namely, his incarnation, death and paſſion, aſcenſion and interceſſion. This article therefore of the reſurrection is put for all the reſt, and includes all the reſt: For as he could not have riſen, had he not firſt died, ſo his death had availed us nothing, unleſs he had riſen again. *Learn* hence, 1. That all thoſe who would be accepted with God unto righteouſneſs and life, muſt be ſuch as do believe in Chriſt with the heart, and openly confeſs with the mouth, that he is the

Son of God, and the Saviour of the world: *If thou confeſs and believe, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* 2. That the principle ſeat and ſubject of faith is not the underſtanding barely, but the will, called here the heart, *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs*; not the head. Although knowledge is ſo neceſſary to faith, that it is ſometimes put for faith, as in Iſa. liii. *By his knowledge, or by the knowledge of him, ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many*; yet there may be much light in the underſtanding, where there is no life in the will; much knowledge in the head, where there is no faith in the heart, nor obedience in the life. Therefore ſays the apoſtle here, *With the heart man believeth*, &c.

11 For the ſcripture ſaith, Whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: For the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.

Note here, How the apoſtle proclaims Jeſus Chriſt a common and univerſal Saviour of all mankind who believe in him, without any diſcrimination or difference between Jew and Gentile: *Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall not be aſhamed; and whoſoever ſhall call upon his name, ſhall be ſaved.* Where, by believing on him, and calling upon him, muſt be underſtood ſuch a faith in him, as is the parent and principle of obedience to him. For the devil himſelf may as well paſs for a believer, as a diſobedient ſoul. If our works be no better than the works of devils, our faith is no better than their's neither, in the account of God. He believes, ſo as not to be aſhamed, who lives as he doth believe. In vain is it to expect ſalvation by Chriſt, if we do not yield ſubjection to him. Lord! how many are there that deſire thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer for their ſins, ſo they may have the ſatisfaction to commit them; content that thou ſhouldeſt bear the blame, ſo they may have the liberty to commit the faults? If they may but live in their ſins, they take it kindly that Chriſt will die for them; but the deſign of Chriſt's death was to deliver us not only from the danger, but from the dominion of our ſins; to free us not only from the wrath of God, but from the rage of our luſts.

14 How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how ſhall they preach except they be ſent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

The ſcope of the apoſtle in theſe words is to prove, that there was a neceſſity of preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, in order to their believing on Chriſt; and his way of arguing is very forcible, demonſtrative, and convincing, Thus, "God has by the prophets promiſed ſalvation to the Gentiles; but without calling on him, there is no ſalvation; and without faith, there is no calling upon him by prayer; and without hearing, there is no faith; and without a preacher, there is no hearing; and without ſolemn miſſion, or ſending by Chriſt and his miniſters, there can be no preacher." And the apoſtle's manner of ſpeaking is by way of interrogation, which is equivalent to a negation? *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* That is, it is impoſſible to do it, and it would be impious and wicked to do it. None muſt be the object of our prayers, but he that is the object of our faith and truſt; it is God alone that is the object of our faith and truſt; therefore he alone muſt be prayed unto. And if ſo, then the practice of the Papiſts in praying to angels and ſaints departed, is very blame-worthy and abominable in the ſight of God. How can they pray unto them, unleſs they believe in them, and truſt in them? And if they truſt in them, that curſe falls upon them, *Curſed is that man that truſteth in man*; that is, in any creature. The truth is, if Chriſt himſelf were a mere man, and not God as well as man, we ſhould ſin by worſhipping of him; but it is one good argument to prove the divinity of Chriſt, that the ſcripture repreſents him as the object of faith, and religious invocation. From the whole, *note*, That the only way to heaven is by Chriſt, the only way to Chriſt is by faith, the only way to faith is by the word, it cometh by hearing; the only way, that is, the only ordinary way. What becomes of thoſe who never heard of Chriſt in the preaching of the goſpel, God only is fit to judge. This is certain, that all men at the great day ſhall be judged according to the law that they were under, and obliged by, and no other. Now promulgation being of the eſſence of a law, the goſpel cannot be a law to them to whom it was not promulged, and made known: But a practical belief of the goſpel is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the ſalvation of them to whom it is revealed. *Note*, farther, The great reverence and high eſteem which is due and payable to the preachers of the goſpel, and that by the approbation of God himſelf. He commands us to admire the very feet of them that preach the goſpel of his Son unto us, and bring glad tidings of good things: *How beautiful are the feet of them*, &c. And for great reaſon ſhould it be thus, becauſe the miniſters of the goſpel are the meſſengers of Chriſt; they receive both their miſſion and commiſſion from him; they are inſtructed by him, they negociate for him, they ſpeak in his name, they act in his ſtead; and whatſoever they either promiſe or threaten in God's name, he ſtands ready and reſolved to perform it. Iſa. xliv. 26. He *confirmeth the word of his ſervants, and performeth the counſel of his meſſengers.* Lord! how beautiful and bleſſed are the feet of thy meſſengers and miniſters in thy account? Let them be ſo in thy people's eſtimation alſo. *Learn* hence, That nothing ought to be ſo welcome to us, and ſo joyfully entertained by us, as the preaching and preachers of the goſpel: *How beautiful are the feet of them*, &c.

16 But they have not all obeyed the goſpel. For Eſaias ſaith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Here an objection is tacitly implied and anſwered: Some might ſay, "If the goſpel be thus excellent, and the feet of them that preach it ſo beautiful, whence was it that the Jews, to whom it was firſt preached, did not receive, and yield obedience to it?" The apoſtle anſwers, that this infidelity and obſtinacy of the Jews was foretold by the prophets of old, particularly by Iſaiah, who complains, chap. liii. 1. *Lord, who hath believed our report? Learn* hence, 1. That the faith of the goſpel is not common to all that hear the goſpel. True, the hearing of the word is neceſſary unto faith, but faith doth not neceſſarily follow the hearing of the word. 2. That the prophets of God did foreſee, and by a ſpirit of prophecy foretel, what ſmall ſucceſs the preaching of the goſpel would have to and amongſt the Jews. 3. That yet the prophet's prediction was not the cauſe, but the conſequence of the Jews rejection of the goſpel: It was not becauſe the prophet ſaid ſo, that they did not believe; but becauſe they believed not, therefore the prophet ſaid ſo: *They have not believed the goſpel*; for ſo Iſaiah ſaith of them.

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "It is very evident, and theſe teſtimonies ſhew, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the preaching of the word of God." The grace of faith is wrought by the Spirit in the act of hearing; and the matter heard by which this faith is wrought is the word of God preached. Perſons muſt hear, that they may believe; and God's word muſt be preached, that they may hear. A non-preaching miniſter, then, is no miniſter; he is like a bell without a clapper, or a cryer without a voice; he neither anſwers the deſign of his commiſſion, nor the end of the goſpel's inſtitution, which was to be the inſtrumental mean of faith: *Faith cometh by hearing.*

18 But I ſay, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

It was no leſs than a miracle, that the goſpel, in the ſpace of a few years, ſhould be preached to all nations, and planted in the remoteſt parts of the world; and yet thus it was: Which makes St. Paul here apply that to the preaching of the apoſtles, which David applies to the preaching of the heavens, Pſal. xix. 4. The goſpel of Chriſt, like the ſun in the firmament, caſts its beautiful and glorious beams all the world over. For upon the commiſſion given out by Chriſt to his apoſtles, to go into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature, the apoſtles divided themſelves into the ſeveral quarters of the world, for the ſpeedy performance of this ſervice, namely, the carrying of the light of the goſpel, as the ſun doth his light, unto all the nations of the earth. As if St. Paul had here ſaid, "Like as the voice of the heavens are gone through the world, ſo is the voice of Chriſt, and the light of his goſpel, which doth much more declare the glory of God, than the ſun and the moon in the heavens can do." Some obſerve, That there was hardly any one conſiderable nation in the world, but within forty years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, had the glad tidings of the goſpel preached to it. Hence the apoſtle tells us, Tit. ii. 2. *That the grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared unto all men:* That is, the goſpel without reſtriction was tendered unto all nations, Jew and Gentile; to all perſons, bond and free, honourable and ignoble. Behold! the goodneſs and mercy of God, in enlightening the dark corners of the world, with this glorious light from heaven. Behold! the great power and efficacy of the word, under the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit. Behold! an example of laborious diligence and induſtry in miniſterial ſervice! What pains did the apoſtles take? What hazards did they run? What journies did they undertake, to preach Jeſus Chriſt, to plant and propogate the everlaſting goſpel? Shall not we attend our flock, and travel from houſe to houſe to viſit our charge, which falls within the compaſs of a few miles, when the apoſtles compaſſed ſea and land, travelled far and near, laboured night and day, to tranſmit the goſpel to the ends of the world? Lord! how does their indefatigable diligence ſhame our ſupine negligence!

19 But I ſay, Did not Iſrael know? Firſt, Moſes ſaith, I will provoke you to jealouſy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a fooliſh nation I will anger you. 20 But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not; I was made manifeſt unto them that aſked not after me. 21 But to Iſrael he ſaith, All day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people.

Did not Iſrael know, that is, of the preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles, and of their own infidelity in rejecting it? This they might have known, both from the teſtimony of Moſes and Eſaias. Firſt from Moſes's teſtimony, Deut. xxxii. *I will provoke you* (Jews refuſing to believe) *unto jealouſy by them that are* (yet) *no people* (of God); *and by a fooliſh nation*, (ſo the Gentiles were accounted by the Jews) *I will anger you.* When God preferred the Gentiles before the Jews, the hearts of the latter were vexed with jealouſy and anger, to behold all their privileges taken from them, and given to the former, whom they accounted a people moſt vile and deſpicable. The ſecond teſtimony is that of Eſaias, who the apoſtle ſays was very bold; that is, very plain and expreſs, in foretelling God's calling of the Gentiles, and rejecting of the Jews; calling the Gentiles by his free grace, and ſeeking them that firſt ſought him not; and caſting off the Jews, who, after all his forbearance and long ſuffering, did continue obſtinately to reject the offers of his grace, and the tenders of his mercy. Here *note*, 1. The holy courage of this evangelical prophet Iſaiah, in the diſcharge of his office: With great boldneſs and freedom he foretells the calling of the Gentiles, and caſting off the Jews, although it coſt him dear, even his life, being ſawn aſunder by a wooden ſaw, as ſome affirm. There ought to meet in the miniſters and meſſengers of God, both courage and impartiality; courage in fearing no faces, impartiality in ſparing no crimes. 2. What little cauſe of reaſon the miniſters of God have to ſit down in deſpondency, after ſo many unwearied attempts made in vain to reclaim ſinners from their wicked ways; when they conſider the infinite patience of God towards them, *who ſtretches forth his hands all the day long to a diſobedient and gainſaying people*; that is, patiently contends with their obſtinacy aud perverſeneſs. Lord! why ſhould we, that are ſinners ourſelves, think much to bear with ſinners? Let us rather imitate thy example in waiting upon them with the offers of grace and mercy, and follow them with our melting intreaties and paſſionate importunities, till we either overcome their obſtinacy, or leave them totally inexcuſable.

CHAP. XI.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this chapter is twofold: 1. *To keep the* Jews *from dejection and deſpair.* 2. *To preſerve the* Gentiles *from preſumption and pride. And for this end he thus beſpeaks them both:*

I Say then, Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

Our apoſtle having ſhewn, in the end of the foregoing chapter, that the Jews would be rejected, and the Gentiles called, begins this chapter, by anſwering a great and popular objection. Some hereupon might be ready to ſay, "If this be ſo, then God has caſt away his covenant people, violated his covenant promiſe, and forgot the ſeed of Abraham his friend." He anſwers, by his accuſtomed form of denial, *God forbid:* and then proceeds to ſhew, that the rejection of the Jews was not total; God did not reject them all, but the unbelieving part of them only. And this he proves by producing himſelf as an inſtance in the caſe, *I myſelf*, ſays he, *am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.* As if he had ſaid, "I am myſelf a Jew by nature and nation; not a proſelyte converted to the Jewiſh faith, but a Jew by lineal deſcent, of the ſeed of Abraham, according to the fleſh; yet am not I caſt off by God; therefore, God has not caſt away all his people." *Learn* hence, How many unbelievers ſoever God rejects, he will not caſt away one ſoul that ſincerely believes in his ſon, and gives up himſelf to the obedience of the goſpel. Believers are God's jewels; he will not caſt them away. They are his children, his portion, his inheritance; he will never caſt them off. They are united to him by the bond of the Holy Spirit, and he has engaged himſelf to them by the bond of an everlaſting covenant. Believers love God and his truth for ever, and the God of truth will love them for ever. *God has not caſt away his people.*

2 God hath not caſt away his people, which he foreknew.—

Here we have a ſecond argument, to prove that God would not wholly caſt off the Jewiſh church and people; namely, becauſe he had foreknown them; that is, had choſen the body of them to be a ſpecial and peculiar people to himſelf, above and before all the people of the earth: And has alſo foreknown, that is, foreſeen, that many of them would, through the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, ſavingly believe on the promiſed Meſſias. God never did, never will caſt away ſuch, either among Jews or Gentiles.

—Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias? how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael, ſaying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. 4 But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal.

Another inſtance is here produced, to prove that God had not ſuffered all the Jews to apoſtatize and fall away through unbelief; and that is the inſtance of Elias, in whoſe days there was ſuch a general revolt among the Jews from the worſhip of the true God to Jeroboam's idolatry, that he thought himſelf alone. But God aſſures him, that there was not ſuch a dearth of ſaints as he feared, he having reſerved to himſelf ſeven thouſand true and faithful worſhippers of himſelf, who had never bowed knee to the image of Baal. *Learn* hence, That even in times of univerſal apoſtaſy and epidemical degeneracy, God has a number to ſtand up for, and witneſs to his name and truth, and that the number of them is more than we either imagine or believe. God has ever had, and always will have a ſeed to ſerve him, which ſhall be accounted to him for a generation; and although the number of revolters be great, yet the number of the righteous is not ſmall.

5 Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwiſe work is no more work.

Here we have St. Paul making application of the foregoing example to the preſent caſe. As Elias was not alone in the corrupt ſtate of Iſrael then, ſo neither was the apoſtle alone now, in this time of general rejection of the Jewiſh church and nation. God had a number then, he has a remnant now, which, according to his free and gracious purpoſe, are brought to believe in his Son. Although the Jews who believed were few, in compariſon of them that were rejected, called therefore a *remnant*, which is but ſmall and little in reſpect of the whole piece; yet there were many thouſands of them that did believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and obtained, no doubt, ſalvation by him: Acts xxi. 20. *Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſand Jews there are which do believe.* *Obſerve*, farther, The concluſion which the apoſtle doth infer and draw from the forementioned aſſertion: "If a remnant be ſaved according to the free purpoſe and gracious election of God, then it is not upon the conſideration of the merit of their own works; they are not juſtified and accepted for the works of the law, otherwiſe *grace is no more grace:* for what need is there of grace, where men have continued in all things written in the law to do them? For the man that doth thoſe things ſhall live in them: But, on the other hand, if it be of works that we are juſtified and accepted, then *it is no more of grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.*" *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as are choſen in Chriſt to be a people near unto God, are put into this ſtate by mere grace, and unmerited favours. 2. That grace comes in to ſupply the defect of our works, and to procure pardon for the non-performance of them, according to the tenor of the law. God was good to man before his fall, in making him his creature; he is gracious to man ſince his fall, in recovering him to the divine favour, by reſtoring him to the divine likeneſs. The fabric of grace in the hearts of his people goes up, as did the building of the ſecond temple, with ſhouts and acclamations, *Grace, grace*; and every ſtone in the building of our ſalvation, from the foundation to the ſuperſtructure, is free-ſtone, *otherwiſe grace is no more grace.*

7 What then? Iſrael hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded: 8 According as it is written, God has given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not ear, unto this day.

Obſerve here, 1. What the apoſtle affirms concerning the main body of the Jewiſh nation, they obtained not what they ſought after; that is, deliverance by the Meſſiah, juſtification and righteouſneſs by the works of the law. This they ſought, but found not; yet *the election hath obtained it*; that is, the choſen generation of believers, ſeeking righteouſneſs and life in the goſpel way, namely, by faith in Chriſt the Mediator, have obtained it. *And the reſt were blinded:* But who and by whom? *Anſ.* 1. By their own ſin and prejudice; and then, 2. By the juſt judgment of God, leaving them to their own ignorance and obſtinacy, for ſhutting their eyes againſt the clear light of the goſpel; and by giving them over to Satan, the god of this world, who blindeth the eyes of them that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *Obſerve*, 2. The direful judgment which followed upon this dreadful ſin; they ſhut their eyes, and ſaid, they will not ſee, God cloſed their eyes, and ſaid, they ſhall not ſee. Becauſe they would not obey the Spirit of God, which would have awakened and enlightened them, God gave them up to a ſpirit of ſlumber, ſtupidity, and blindneſs; that is, he permitted them to continue and lie under thoſe prejudices againſt the true Meſſiah, which they had taken up and entertained in their minds. *Learn* hence, That no greater judgment can befal a people, than ſottiſh ſtupidity of mind, and inſenſibility of ſpirit; whereby they are drowſily careleſs of their ſalvation, and know not the things belonging to their peace, although they be before their eyes. This was the caſe with the chief body of the Jewiſh nation, and continues to be ſtill their caſe: They have eyes, and ſee not; ears, but hear not, until this day.

9 And David ſaith, Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompenſe unto them. 10 Let their eyes be darkened that they may not ſee, and bow down their back alway.

The apoſtle proceeds here to declare unto us, that the general unbelief and hardneſs of heart which was found amongſt the rejected Jews, was not to be wondered at, becauſe it was prophetically foretold by holy David, in the perſon of the Meſſiah, of whom he was a type, that his own people the Jews ſhould extremely injure and wrong him, oppreſs and vex him: For which wickedneſs, he foretels what dreadful and tremendous judgments ſhould come upon the Jews; namely, *That their table ſhould be made to them a ſnare, a trap, and a ſtumbling-block*; that is, that all their pleaſant and delightful things ſhould become the inſtruments of their deſtruction, *That their eyes be darkened, and they may not ſee.* The darkening of their eyes ſignifies the taking away of the judgment and underſtanding from a people. And *the bowing down of the back always*, intimates and implies their grovelling upon this earth; their reliſhing and ſavouring nothing but earthly things, never lifting either head or heart to God. Now all this which David ſpake of the wicked Jews in his time, the apoſtle applies and adapts to the incredulous and unbelieving Jews in his days, to whom the very preaching of the goſpel was an occaſion of obduration and hardneſs of heart. *Learn* here, 1. That to the obſtinate and obdurate enemies of God, the beſt things become baneful, and, through their own corruption, become the inſtruments and means of their own deſtruction: *Let their table be made a ſnare, a trap, and a ſtumbling-block.* 2. That to be deprived of the uſe both of our judgment and underſtanding, eſpecially in things pertaining unto God, is a very dreadful judgment: *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not ſee.* 3. That imprecations are to be uſed very warily, and only in weighty matters. Theſe, and other expreſſions of David, which look like imprecations, may as well be accounted prophetical predictions, foretelling what will come upon obſtinate ſinners, rather than praying that evil may come: Great is the ſin and danger of uſing imprecations lightly, either upon ourſelves or others. Some perſons uſe them to gain credit to what they ſay; but this will not do with wiſe men, who frequently obſerve, that perſons moſt guilty are moſt apt to call for vengeance upon themſelves, that they may be thought guiltleſs. Lord! how do ſome ſinners wiſh and call for that at which the devils tremble! I mean damnation. Alas! it ſlumbereth not; within a moment or two thou ſhalt *feel* what thou wilt not fear.

11 I ſay then, Have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall ſalvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealouſy.

Our apoſtle had in the preceding verſes proved the rejection of the Jews not to have been total; here he proves, that it ſhall not be final, but they ſhall be generally called before the end of the world. *Have they ſtumbled*, ſays he, *that they ſhould fall?* that is, "Have they ſo ſtumbled and fallen as never to riſe more? Are they utterly forſaken and caſt off? No ſuch thing; but God in his juſt and righteous judgment hath permitted them to fall, that they having obſtinately refuſed the goſpel, it might be preached to the Gentiles; and their receiving of the goſpel God will, in his infinite wiſdom, make uſe of, to provoke the Jews to jealouſy and emulation, ſeeing themſelves ſo far outſtript by thoſe whom they ſo contemned and deſpiſed, and in the cloſe, make this jealouſy and emulation a mean and occaſion of the Jews converſion." *Learn* hence, That emulation and jealouſy doth heat and heighten the mind of man to an eager purſuit of the beſt things. *Obſerve* it in the inſtance before us, the ſalvation of the Gentiles bred emulation in the Jews: "What! ſay the Jews, ſhall the Gentiles go away with heaven alone, whom we thought the vileſt people upon the earth? Come, let us put in for a part and ſhare in goſpel mercies and privileges with them." Thus they were provoked to emulation, and this emulation occaſioned their converſion.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulneſs?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If the caſting off the Jews was ſo profitable to the Gentile world; if the Gentiles have been ſuch great gainers, by occaſion of the ſin and fall of the Jews, how much more when they ſhall become Chriſtians, will they add to the fulneſs, the glory and greatneſs of the Chriſtian church?" *Note* here, The wonderful wiſdom, the aſtoniſhing goodneſs, the over ruling providence and power of God, in cauſing the fall of the Jews to be the occaſion of God's manifeſting his abundant grace in the converſion of the Gentiles, and ſpreading the plentiful knowledge of Chriſt over all the world; and alſo, in cauſing the general converſion of the Jews towards the end of the world, to confirm the faith of the believing Gentiles.

13 For I ſpeak to you Gentiles, inaſmuch as I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them. 15 For if the caſting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *ſhall* the receiving *of them be* but life from the dead?

Note here, 1. The honourable office which St. Paul was called to; namely, to be an apoſtle, and the apoſtle of the Gentiles. 2. The honour which God put upon him in the faithful execution of that office: (1.) In making him inſtrumental, for calling many of the blind and ignorant Gentiles to the obedience of the faith: And, (2.) In provoking the Jews (whom he calls his own fleſh, becauſe of his own nation) not to ſuffer the Gentiles alone to go away with the privileges of the goſpel, but to put in for a ſhare with them: *If by any means I may provoke to emulation:* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "O that I could once ſee an holy emulation take hold of my countrymen: That rather than not believe at all, and be ſaved, I might ſee them at laſt believe for anger, or for very ſhame, and go to heaven in a holy chafe!" 3. What an argument the apoſtle makes uſe of, why all perſons ſhould greatly deſire the general converſion, both of Jews and Gentiles, to the faith of Chriſt. As *the caſting away of the Jews* at preſent, *will be the reconciling of the world:* that is, be an occaſion of ſending the goſpel to the Gentiles all the world over, whereby they become reconciled unto God; what will the receiving of the Jews again into the grace and favour of God, and the communion of the viſible church, be to you Gentiles, but even as life or reſurrection from the dead? *Learn* hence, (1.) That the converſion of the Jews, and the calling in the fulneſs of the Gentiles, are mercies much, very much, to be deſired, and earneſtly prayed for. (2.) That ſuch will be the bleſſed ſtate of the church, when the fulneſs, both of Jews and Gentiles, are brought into it, that it will be looked upon as a new life, or reſurrection from the dead.

16 For if the firſt-fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* alſo *holy:* and if the root *be* holy, ſo *are* the branches.

Here the apoſtle produces another argument to prove the univerſal reſtoration of the Jews unto the grace and favour of God, before the end of the world; and it is drawn from the covenant of God made with Abraham, (as the root of the Jewiſh nation) which ſaid, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.* Now, the argument runs thus: "As the branches follow the nature of the root, ſo do the Jews follow the condition of Abraham, and the holy patriarchs, with reſpect to the outward privileges of the covenant. Was the root holy, ſo are the branches holy, not inherently, but federally holy, being called, conſecrated, and ſeparated from the world unto the ſervice of God. If then Almighty God, by entering into covenant with Abraham, hallowed to himſelf all his poſterity, even as the firſt-fruits hallowed the whole lump; in like manner, will God, in his own good time, be ſo mindful of the Jews, the poſterity of Abraham, as to bring them again nigh unto himſelf, in remembrance of his holy covenant: So that they ſhall be his people, and he will be their God." *Learn* hence, That the Jews, though at preſent caſt off by God, are ſtill an holy people; they are under an hereditary dedication to God, they have a federal holineſs, as deſcending from holy progenitors, with reſpect to whom the love and compaſſion of God are towards them, and they ſhall, in his own time, be called and converted by him: And therefore, in the mean time, the Jews are not to look upon themſelves with deſperation, nor ſhould the Gentiles look upon them with diſdain. *The firſt-fruits being holy, the lump is alſo holy: The root being holy, ſo are the branches alſo.*

17 And if ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree wert graffed in amongſt them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree; 18 Boaſt not againſt the branches: but if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt ſay then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. 20 Well; becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. 21 For if God ſpared not the natural branches, *take heed* leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.

The deſign and ſcope of our apoſtle in theſe words, is to exhort the believing Gentiles not to deſpiſe and reproach the rejected and unbelieving Jews: And he draws an argument from the condition of the Gentiles, both paſt and preſent; in their paſt condition, they were like a wild olive tree; in their preſent condition they were graffed into the true olive. Here *note*, That by the olive tree we are to underſtand the viſible church of God; by the root, he means Abraham; he was the root of the olive tree, the Jewiſh church. But, how ſo? *Anſ.* Not the root by way of communication, but in a way of adminiſtration; not by way of communication, as if either Jew or Gentile did receive any ſap or ſpiritual life from him, as branches receive a natural life from the root: for thus Chriſt alone is the root of the church. But Abraham was the root of the olive tree in a way of adminiſtration, the Lord calling him forth as the firſt man with whom he was pleaſed to treat, and enter into that covenant with. Again, by the fatneſs of the olive tree, we are to underſtand all outward privileges and ordinances, all ſpiritual benefits and bleſſings which belong to the Jewiſh church. By the branches of the olive tree, we are to underſtand the members of the Jewiſh church; and by the wild olive, the Gentile world. Now, though the Gentiles, through rich grace, were inſtated in the privileges of the Jews, yet the apoſtle foreſaw, that inſtead of thankfulneſs to God, for the favours received from him, they would be puffed up with pride; and accordingly, he adviſes them, not to be high-minded, but fear: As if he had ſaid, "O ye Gentiles, your ſtate is high, let your hearts be humble. The Jews are fallen, and unleſs you walk in holy fear, you cannot ſtand: Unbelief ruined them, take heed that pride doth not ruin you; for the juſt and holy God is no reſpecter of perſons. He that ſpared not the natural branches, will no more ſpare thee." From the whole *learn*, 1. That man is naturally a very proud creature; and although he has nothing but what he has freely received, yet he is prone to boaſt. 2. That man is eſpecially apt to magnify himſelf, and to glory over thoſe who are fallen before him, either into ſin, or under affliction. 3. That the beſt preſervative from falling, is humility and holy fear. If ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. Take heed you do not fall, by thinking it impoſſible to fall. *Be not high-minded, but fear. Timor tuus, ſecuritas tua*; Thy holy fear will keep thee from falling, when others ſecurity and preſumption will lay them on the ground. Let not a man that ſtands on the top of a tree boaſt of his height, but look to his hold.

22 Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God: on them which fell, ſeverity; but towards thee, goodneſs, if thou continue in *his* goodneſs: otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. 23 And they alſo, if they abide not ſtill in unbelief, ſhall be graffed in. For God is able to graff them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and were graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more ſhall theſe, which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive-tree?

Our apoſtle, in theſe, and the following verſes, proceeds in his exhortation to the Gentiles, not to inſult over the rejected Jews, but to carry it towards them with great modeſty and Chriſtian humility; and he uſeth ſeveral arguments by way of motive, to excite and quicken them thereunto. The two firſt are drawn from the ſeverity of God in cutting off the Jews, and the goodneſs and bounty of God in calling of the Gentiles: *Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of God*, &c. Juſtice and mercy, goodneſs and ſeverity, are attributes or qualities eminently found in God; and contrary only in their effects upon men. The ſame God is merciful and ſevere, with reſpect to different perſons, and different qualifications. All mercy is not a virtue, but that which is conſiſtent with other perfections of wiſdom and righteouſneſs. The next argument is taken from the condition upon which the Gentiles hold their preſent ſtanding in the favour and grace of God; namely, *If they continue in this goodneſs*, that is, if they walk worthy of this favour from God, and ſuitably to ſuch a kind and gracious diſpenſation; otherwiſe, they, the Gentiles, ſhall be cut off and caſt away, as well as the ſtubborn and unbelieving Jews. The Lord is with a people *only* whilſt they are with him: If they ſerve and ſeek him, he will be found of them; but if they forſake him, he will caſt them off for ever. The next argument to ſuppreſs arrogancy and pride in the Gentiles, and to prevent their inſulting over the fallen Jews, is taken from the hopes of the Jews reſtoration: Which the apoſtle proves to be both poſſible and probable. *They ſhall be graffed in if they abide not in unbelief*; *for God is able to graff them in again.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The ſame God that rejected them, is able to reſtore them, and re-ingraff them; the only obſtacle is their unbelief, and this God is alſo able to remove." Laſtly, He ſhews the probability as well as the poſſibility of the Jews converſion; namely, becauſe God had done that which was more unlikely already, to wit, in-graffing the Gentiles, who were wild olives, into the true olive, which was more difficult and unlikely, than to graff in the Jews again, which were natural branches. The argument runs thus: "If the Gentiles, which were a kind of wild olive branches, were graffed into a good olive tree, (the church of God) which is contrary to nature, ſeeing men uſe to graff a good ſcion into a wild ſtock, and not a wild ſcion into a good ſtock; how much more ſhall the Jews, which are the natural branches of the good olive, be graffed again into their own olive tree, to which they formerly did belong? The one is according to the order of nature, but the other is againſt, and contrary to nature." *Learn* hence, How improbable and unlikely, how difficult and impoſſible ſoever, the converſion and calling of the Jews to the Chriſtian religion, may ſeem to us, it is neither contrary to right reaſon, nor true faith. The greateſt obſtacle in the way of the Jews converſion to Chriſtianity, it is to be feared lies in the wicked and ſcandalous lives of thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, leſt you ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits, that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſins.

Here the apoſtle fully proves, that the rejection of the Jews was neither total nor final; not total, becauſe *blindneſs* *in part* only, *happened unto Iſrael:* That is, part of the Jews only are left in unbelief, and under the power of ſpiritual blindneſs; nor is their rejection final, but for a time only, namely, till the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in; that is, till the Gentile churches be advanced to an honourable ſtate and fulneſs. And then all the Iſrael of God, the faithful ſeed of Abraham, and the main body of the Jews, ſhall make up the catholic church, and be ſaved from their unbelief; according to that gracious promiſe, Iſa. lix. 20, 21. *The Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, my Spirit ſhall not depart from thy ſeed, nor thy ſeed's ſeed, from henceforth and for ever. Learn* hence, That there ſhall be a general calling of the Jews to the faith of the goſpel before Chriſt's ſecond coming, is not only poſſible and probable, but infallible, ſure and certain, and that from the prophecies and predictions of the prophets of God: Let us therefore believe it firmly, pray for it fervently, and live in the expectation of it continually.

28 As concerning the goſpel, *they are* enemies for your ſake: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the father's ſake. 29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

Here we have two farther arguments to prove the general converſion of the Jews: The firſt is taken from the dignity of the Jews, they being the ancient people of God, whoſe father Abraham he choſe, and made his firſt covenant with him and his ſeed; and therefore, as to making the election of that nation to be an holy people to himſelf, they are beloved by God for their father's ſake; that is, for the ſake of Abraham their holy progenitor, who had the honour to be called the friend of God. Though grace deſcends not from parent to child, yet many times the children of godly parents are very large ſharers in outward privileges and bleſſings for their gracious parents' ſake. The Jews here are ſaid to be loved of God for their father Abraham's ſake, whilſt, for their unbelief and contempt of the goſpel, they had rendered themſelves the deſerved objects of God's hatred. The ſecond argument is drawn from the immutability and unchangeable nature of God: *His gifts and calling are without repentance*; that is, although the Jews have rendered themſelves unworthy of the favour of God, yet the covenant having been once made with their fathers, and they having had the honour to be his ſpecial and peculiar people, God will never repent of his kindneſs to them, nor of his covenant made with them; but will certainly reſtore them to their former privileges, aud happy ſtate: *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Take the words relatively, and the note is this, "That the gifts and calling of God, whereby he was pleaſed to adopt the poſterity of Abraham, and to engage himſelf by covenant to them, are inviolable, and ſuch as ſhall never be reverſed or repented of." *Obſerve*, laſtly, The ſad and deplorable condition which the Jews are at preſent in and under; they are enemies to the goſpel. *As concerning the goſpel they are enemies for your ſake:* That is, becauſe you Gentiles receive the goſpel, therefore the Jews reject it, and for that reaſon are rejected by God. But this happened well to the poor Gentiles; for upon the Jews refuſal, the goſpel was brought the ſooner to the Gentiles, and they were converted by it.

30 For as ye in times paſt have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; 31 Even ſo have theſe alſo now not believed, that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy.

Here we have the concluſion of the apoſtle's argument, to prove the converſion and calling of the Jews towards the end of the world. The argument is drawn from a compariſon of equals: "If God, after a long time of diſobedience, received the Gentiles to mercy, he will alſo, after a long time of infidelity, receive the Jews to mercy. If God hath called the Gentiles to his grace after long idolatry, though God never promiſed to be their God, how much more will he recall his covenant people from their infidelity in his own appointed time?" So that the argument is from the leſs to the greater: If the infidelity of the Jews was an occaſion of mercy to the Gentiles, much more ſhall the mercy ſhewed to the Gentiles be an occaſion of mercy to the Jews; and conſequently their preſent infidelity ſhall be no obſtacle to their converſion afterward.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

That is, "Almighty God hath in wiſdom and righteouſneſs ſuffered both Jews and Gentiles ſucceſſively, for ſome time, to remain under the power of unbelief and diſobedience, that ſo he might in his own time fulfil the great counſel of his goodneſs, in ſhewing undeſerved mercy unto all, both Jew and Gentile." Now from all the foregoing arguments for the calling of the Jews, ſummed up together in this chapter, we may collect and gather, that the converſion of the Jewiſh nation to the Chriſtian faith has good foundation in the holy ſcriptures, and has been the received doctrine of the church of Chriſt in all ages of the church.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!

Here the apoſtle concludes the chapter with an awful admiration at the depth of the abundant grace and goodneſs of God, in bearing with the infidelity of the Jews, and the obſtinacy of the Gentiles; as alſo of his unſearchable wiſdom in making firſt the rejection of the Jews a mean of calling the Gentiles, and then working upon the obſtinate Jews by his mercy ſhewn unto the Gentiles. By *judgments* here, ſome underſtand the decrees and determinations of God's will; by *ways*, the adminiſtration of his providence, in order to the execution of thoſe decrees: Both which are ſecret, unſearchable, and unfathomable. There are myſteries of providence, as well as myſteries of faith, and both of them tranſcend our human underſtanding.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counſellor? 35 Or who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "No creature ever did, or ever can pierce into the mind of God, nor was ever called to be of his council. No creature ever did or can adviſe him, nor can any creature challenge God, as if he were indebted to him. Who ever gave any thing to God, that he did not firſt receive from him? Or who can merit any thing at his hands, ſeeing he owes us nothing? And if ſo, who hath reaſon to complain that God deals hardly with the Jews, in rejecting them, and preferring the Gentiles before them! Surely Almighty God may diſpenſe a favour to ſome, which he owes to none." *Learn* hence, That in thoſe diſcriminating favours which God diſpenſes towards ſome of the children of men, no other reaſon can be aſſigned but his own good will and pleaſure. This particularly appears in his ordering matters relating to the Jews and Gentiles, recorded in the foregoing chapter.

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

That is, "All things are of God, as the author and efficient cauſe; all things are through him, as the providential director, and preſerving cauſe; and all things tend to him, as the ultimate end and final cauſe; therefore to him all praiſe, honour, and glory, ought for ever to be aſcribed." *Learn* hence, That God is the firſt cauſe, and laſt end. He is the firſt cauſe; that is, he is the cauſe of all things beſides himſelf, the fountain and original of all created beings; nothing was before him, but all things created by him, and dependent upon him: And as he is the firſt cauſe, ſo he is the laſt end; that is, all things tend to him as their ultimate end; their deſign and aim was the illuſtration of God's glory, and the manifeſtation of his divine perfections. And if God be the firſt cauſe, let us with humility and thankfulneſs acknowledge him, admire and adore him, love and ſerve him, who is the author of our being, and the cauſe of all other beings. And if he be the laſt end, let us refer all our actions to his glory; in all our natural actions, our civil actions, but eſpecially in all our religious actions, let the glory of God be our ſupreme aim and ultimate end. For if we do not now live unto him, we can never expect hereafter to live with him.

CHAP. XII.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed the doctrinal part of his diſcourſe, begins here to make application of it. In the former part of his epiſtle, he had copiouſly handled the doctrinal points of faith, juſtification, ſanctification, &c. *Now from hence to the end of the epiſtle, there is contained an exhortation to religious and moral duties, as an argument of their ſincerity, and as an ornament to their profeſſion.*

I Beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reaſonable ſervice.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's loving and courteous compellation, *brethren*; ſo he calls the believing Romans. They were brethren by place and nation, and brethren by religion and profeſſion: *Eodem ſanguine Chriſti conglutinati*, cemented together by the blood of Chriſt, and by the bands of love. 2. The manner of the apoſtle's exhortation; it is by way of obſecration and intreaty, *I beſeech you, brethren.* It imports great lenity and meekneſs. The apoſtle did not want authority to command, but uſes ſuch humility as to intreat. The miniſter's work and office is not only to be a teacher, but a beſeecher. He muſt not barely propound and recommend the doctrines of the goſpel to his people's underſtanding, but muſt endeavour to work upon their wills and affections to embrace and entertain them. The underſtanding is the leading, but the will the commanding faculty. 3. The exhortation itſelf: *Preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice.* Preſent your bodies, that is, dedicate your perſons, devote yourſelves, your whole man, ſoul and body, to the ſervice of God and his glory. Chriſtians are prieſts, or a royal prieſthood; they offer up themſelves in ſacrifice unto God, as a whole burnt offering. 4. The properties of the Chriſtian ſacrifice; it muſt be voluntary; *Preſent yourſelves.* It muſt be a living ſacrifice, an holy ſacrifice, a reaſonable ſacrifice, otherwiſe it will find no acceptance with God. 5. The argument or motive which the apoſtle makes uſe of, to perſuade perſons to preſent and give up themſelves to God, and his ſervice, and that is drawn from the mercies of God; *I beſeech you brethren, by the mercies of God. Learn* thence, That the mercies of God revealed in the goſpel, are the moſt proper, powerful, and effectual argument to perſuade with, and prevail upon, ſinners, that have not given up and devoted themſelves to God, to do it: and thoſe that have done it, to do it more and more: *I beſeech you by the mercies of God, that ye,* &c.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's dehortation, *Be not conformed to this world:* That is, "Do not faſhion or accommodate yourſelves to the corrupt principles and cuſtoms, to the ſinful courſes and practices of the men of the world." The Chriſtian is to walk ſingularly, and not after the world's guiſe: He muſt not cut the coat of his profeſſion according to the faſhion of the times, or the humour of the company he falls into. 2. An apoſtolical exhortation: *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind:* That is, "Be ye regenerated and changed in your whole man, beginning at the mind or underſtanding, by which the Spirit of God worketh upon the inferior faculties of the ſoul." Every converted perſon is truly and really changed, thoroughly ſanctified and renewed, endowed with new diſpoſitions and affections; yet this converſion and renovation is not a ſubſtantial, but a qualitative change, a change, not in the ſubſtance of the faculties of the ſoul, but in the quality of thoſe faculties. And the renewed Chriſtian is ſanctified *totus*, but not *totaliter*; he is ſanctified thoroughly in all faculties, but not perfectly in all degrees. There is in a renewed man's underſtanding too much blindneſs and ignorance, in his will too great obſtinacy and perverſeneſs, in his affections too much irregularity and ſenſuality. Yet ſuch is the indulgence of the goſpel, as to call him an holy perſon, a perſon transformed by the renewing of his mind. 3. The reaſon of the apoſtle's exhortation: *Be ye transformed*, &c. *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:* That is, that ye may diſcern and approve what the will of God is under the goſpel, which requires not what is ritually, but what is ſubſtantially good, and conſequently always acceptable to him. *Note* here, That in oppoſition to the Levitical ceremonies and ritual injunctions, the apoſtle ſtyles the goſpel inſtitution, the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and as ſuch, may we love and embrace it, and be found in the delightful practice of it.

3 For I ſay, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himſelf* more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.

The apoſtle having exhorted to an holy life in general, verſe the firſt, and to a ſpiritual renovation of mind, in order to it, verſe the ſecond, comes now to a cloſe exhortation to more particular duties; the firſt of which is modeſty and true humility of mind. This he recommends eſpecially to ſuch who bear any public office in the church, and had received ſome peculiar and ſpecial gifts to fit and furniſh them for the diſcharge of that office. St. Paul here particularly enjoins them, by virtue of his apoſtolic office, to watch againſt pride and haughtineſs of mind; not to think themſelves wiſer or better than they were, but to think ſoberly and modeſtly of themſelves, according to the truth, and to the degree of faith and wiſdom given unto them of God: Plainly intimating, That ſuch as are exalted to a degree of eminency in the church above others, are in great danger of the ſin of pride, which it is their duty to watch and pray againſt, and to be found in the exerciſe of that humility and lowlineſs of mind, which is ſo greatly ornamental to their perſons and profeſſion. *Let not any man think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but let him think ſoberly.*

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another.

Here the apoſtle lays before us a ſpecial reaſon why the officers of the church ſhould exerciſe humility towards, and employ their gifts and talents for, the general good and benefit of the church: The argument is drawn from a compariſon between the natural body and the myſtical body. “ As in the natural body there are many members, and every member has its diſtinct office; the eye to ſee, the ear to hear, the hand to work, the foot to walk: In like manner, in the myſtical body, the church of Chriſt, there are many members; but each member muſt keep his own place, and not invade the duty, or uſurp the office of another, but every one employ his own proper gift to the benefit and comfort of the whole, without diſdaining or envying one another.” *Learn* hence, 1. That the church of Chriſt is one body. 2. That though the body of the church be one, and the head one, yet the members are many, united to Chriſt their head by faith, and to one another by love. 3. That all believers, which are members of this body, have every one his particular gift, his ſeveral function, his proper office, which they are duly to execute and perform, without encroaching upon others by proud curioſity, or buſy meddling: But as all the members of the body labour jointly together for the preſervation of the whole, ſo ought all the officers and members of the church to keep their diſtinct ſtations, and employ and improve regularly their ſeveral talents for the mutual edification and benefit of each other, without encroachment or intruding upon the offices of each other. God is a God of order, and hates diſorder in his church.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophecy* according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or miniſtry, *let us wait* on *our* miniſtring; or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with ſimplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that ſheweth mercy, with cheerfulneſs.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, “ Seeing it has pleaſed God to appoint diſtinct officers in his church, and to furniſh thoſe officers with various degrees of gifts, and not to make all equal either in gifts or office, let every one in general faithfully execute his office, and keep within the limits of his calling, neither neglecting his own duty, nor invading another's; in particular, *let him that propheſieth*, that is, expoundeth the ſcriptures in the church, do it, *according to the proportion of faith*, or according to what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, as the rule of our faith.” We muſt not rack nor wreſt the ſcriptures, to make them ſpeak what we pleaſe, but what the prophets and apoſtles taught, whom we interpret; otherwiſe we do not expound according to the analogy and proportion of faith. “ Let him that miniſtereth, teacheth, or exhorteth, attend upon that work with all diligence; and he that performs the office of a deacon, who *are* called *helps* (1 Cor. xii. 28.) and is employed to relieve the poor out of the church's ſtock, and to take care of ſtrangers, orphans, aged, ſick, and impotent perſons, *let him do it with ſimplicity*, that is, without partiality and reſpect of perſons: And *with cheerfulneſs*, that is, with alacrity of heart, with gentleneſs in words, with pleaſantneſs in countenance, bearing with the infirmities of the aged, with the loathſomeneſs of the ſick and diſeaſed, and adminiſtering with delight to the neceſſities of all that want.' Now, from the whole, *note*, 1. That God of his free bounty has beautified his church with divers offices and gifts. 2. That thoſe whom God has beſtowed miniſterial gifts upon, ought humbly and faithfully to improve them to the church's benefit and edification.

9 *Let* love *be* without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. 10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

The foregoing exhortations reſpected church officers in particular; theſe that now follow concern all Chriſtians in general, and acquaint them with their duties in common converſation. He begins with the grace and duty of love, that being a radical grace, the root from which all other graces and duties ſpring and flow. This love to one another, the Holy Ghoſt requires that it be *without diſſimulation*, that is, ſincere and unfeigned, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: Alſo, that it be an affectionate and tender, as well as an unfeigned and ſincere love. *Be kindly affectioned one to another:* The word ſignifieth ſuch an affectionate tenderneſs as a mother bears to the fruit of her womb, and as creatures bear to the fruit of their young; and no wonder that ſuch a fervent love is required, when laying down our lives for the brethren is commanded, 1 John iii. 16. Likewiſe, that our love to others do incline us to give preference unto others; really conceiving others to be more worthy of honour than ourſelves, and rejoicing to ſee them placed in a more uſeful and honourable poſt than ourſelves. Yet *note*, Though our love muſt be hot towards our neighbour, it muſt not hinder us from abhorring that which is ſinful and evil in our neighbour: *Love without diſſimulatiou, and abhor that which is evil.* When we love the perſons, we muſt hate the vices, of men. The love of our friends muſt not make us in love with their faults; nor muſt the hatred of men's vices draw us off from delighting in, and cleaving to, that which is good in any man: *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.*

11 Not ſlothful in buſineſs; fervent in ſpirit; ſerving the Lord.

The next duty exhorted to, is diligence and induſtry in all our duties both to God and man, but particularly in the duties of our calling. We muſt avoid the two extremes, of ſlothfulneſs on the one hand, and exceſſive drudgery on the other, in the management of our ſecular affairs and worldly buſineſs. But in the ſervice of God we muſt *be fervent*, as in the ſervice of the world we muſt not be ſlothful. What is done for the world, is beſt done with indifferency; but what is done for God, is beſt done with warmth and fervency, or not done at all. Our moſt ardent affections and active powers muſt be employed in his ſervice; for, to be cold and careleſs therein, diſparages his excellency, and will defeat our own expectation. We muſt be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord; and may not be ſlothful in buſineſs, ſerving the world.

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing inſtant in prayer;

The apoſtle next directs the converted Romans how they ſhould manage themſelves under afflictions; namely, to endure them patiently, to rejoice in hope of preſent deliverance, or future happineſs; and, in order to both, to be much in the duty of prayer. *Learn* hence, That hope, patience, and prayer, are powerful ſupports under all afflictions, and will render them not only tolerable, but joyous. By patience we poſſeſs ourſelves; by hope we poſſeſs God; by prayer we are enabled unto both.

13 Diſtributing to the neceſſity of ſaints; given to hoſpitality.

The next duty exhorted to, is that of charity and almſgiving to the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially when under perſecution; ſhewing hoſpitality towards them, and giving entertainment to them, when they ſeek it of us. *Learn* 1. That charity to all perſons, but eſpecially to the perſecuted members of Jeſus Chriſt, is a neceſſary and important duty. 2. That hoſpitality is an eminent part of Chriſtian charity: True hoſpitality, I mean, which is accompanied with prudence and ſobriety. There is a wide difference between riotous houſe-keeping and true hoſpitality; the latter is always deſigned for the help of the poor, and particularly for the godly poor. There are great houſe-keepers, who are not good houſe-keepers, becauſe their houſe-keeping is rather for the great than the good, not for the houſhold of faith, eſpecially not for the poor of that houſhold. As to ſpirituals, God fills the hungry with good things, but ſends the rich empty away; whereas, moſt men, as to corporals, fill the rich with their good things, with the fat and the ſweet, but ſend the poor, if not empty away, yet relieved only with the ſweepings of their table. This is not according to the precept before us: *Diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints*, &c.

14 Bleſs them which perſecute you: bleſs, and curſe not.

The apoſtle having taught us our duty to our friends in the former verſe, teacheth us our duty here towards our enemies. *Bleſs them that perſecute you:* That is, pray for them, and wiſh well to them, whatever provocation you may have to the contrary. *Learn* hence, 1. That good men muſt make account of, and prepare for, perſecution; either the perſecution of the tongue, or of the hand, or both. 2. That it is their duty ever to bleſs, never to curſe, their perſecutors and oppoſers. *Bleſs, but curſe not.* Where *note*, That the apoſtle doubles the exhortation, *Bleſs your perſecutors; bleſs, and curſe not.* This doubling the exhortation, ſhews both the difficulty of the duty, how contrary it is to corrupt nature; and alſo the conſtancy of the duty, we muſt ever bleſs, and never curſe; always wiſh well, never any ill to the worſt of men. Take we great heed of giving way to ſecret wiſhes of hurt to our enemy. God forbid we ſhould hurt ourſelves by ſinful paſſion, becauſe others hurt us by ſlander and falſe accuſation: We are naturally prone to ſpeak ill of others, and to wiſh ill to others with delight: This ſin perſiſted in, ſhuts out of heaven as well as murder.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

The next duty required, is Chriſtian ſympathy and mutual affection between brethren, both in proſperity and adverſity, to rejoice in the one, and to mourn together in the other, as being members of the ſame body. Teaching us, that it is a Chriſtian's duty to rejoice in thoſe good things, whether inward or outward, which befal his brethren, and alſo to mourn and lay to heart all theſe afflictions and ſorrows whether inward or outward, which come upon them. But, Lord! how far are they from this duty, who, inſtead of mourning for the ſufferings of others, are glad at calamity, rejoice at the downfal of others? Oh! help us to lay the troubles of others to heart, when we ourſelves are freeſt and fartheſt from trouble: Let us *weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them*, &c. The goſpel acquaints us with the pity of God towards us, and preſſeth us to pity one another.

16 *Be* of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. Be not wiſe in your own conceits.

Theſe words, *Be ye of the ſame mind one towards another*, are an exhortation to unity among Chriſtians: This is threefold, an unity of the head, or an unity of judgment and opinion; an unity of the heart, or an unity in love and affection; and an unity of the tongue, which is an unity of expreſſion. Happy we! when in all theſe reſpects *we are of the ſame mind one towards another*. *Note* next, The hindrances of mutual concord and unity among Chriſtians, and they are two: (1.) Pride, *Mind not high things*. (2.) Arrogancy, *Be not wiſe in your own conceits*. *Mind not high things:* That is mind not preferment, nor riches, nor vain glory, but be content with, and thankful for, a middle ſtate and condition in the world; which is far more eligible and deſirable than a ſtate of riches, plenty, and abundance, as being leſs liable to temptations. And *be not wiſe in your own conceits*; that is, entertain humble thoughts of your own knowledge, think it not greater than it is; take heeed of an over weening opinion of your own wiſdom, as if you wanted neither divine aſſiſtance and guidance, nor yet the the advice and counſel of your brethren. Man is naturally a proud creature; but more proud of the endowments of his mind, than of thoſe that adorn his body.

17 Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.

By *evil* here, we are to underſtand wrongs and private injuries: By not recompenſing them, is meant not revenging them. Corrupt nature is very prone to return wrong for wrong, one ill turn for another; but Chriſtianity ſets a nobler pattern before us, even the example of him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again*; *when he ſuffered, he threatened not*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. *Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men*. Having exhorted them before to be careful of their converſations towards God, he now preſſes them to be watchful over their converſations before the world, that by honeſty and innocency of life, they may cut off all occaſion from the enemies of religion to ſpeak evil of them, and their holy profeſſion; that all their words and actions be juſtifiable and unexceptionable to that degree, that the heathens may be in love with Chriſtianity, by obſerving their lives and actions to be holy and honeſt. *Learn* hence, That a Chriſtian muſt carefully look, not only to his conſcience but to his converſation; that his conſcience be holy and upright in the ſight of God, and his converſation honeſt and unblameable before men: The world cannot diſcern our hearts, but they can ſoon diſcover the errors of our lives, and will throw the dirt of our ſins upon religion's face; therefore, we had need *provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men*.

18 If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Note here, 1. The duty directed and exhorted to, namely, peaceableneſs; *Live peaceably*, that is, be of a peaceable temper, and follow thoſe things which make for peace. 2. The extent and latitude of this duty: *With all men live peaceably*; not with friends only, or with thoſe of your own judgment and perſuaſion, but with men of diſagreeing humours and intereſts, with men of different principles and apprehenſions from you. Again, 3. A double reſtriction and limitation with which the duty is bounded; firſt, *If it be poſſible*, implying, that there is a ſort of men in the world who make peace impoſſible; but for others, if it may be enjoyed upon honeſt terms, though upon hard terms, we muſt not ſtick at them, always remembering that peace and truth are two precious things, which can never be bought too dear, if they be not purchaſed with ſin and baſeneſs. The ſecond reſtriction follows, *As much as in you lieth*; now this reſpects our endeavours, not our ſucceſs: If we follow peace with all men, though we cannot overtake it, yet we ſhall not miſs of our reward in purſuing of it. Peace is a moſt important duty, a ſingular benefit and bleſſing, which every Chriſtian is bound to purſue and promote, and that with all men. *If it be poſſible*, &c.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, ſaith the Lord.

Note here, How the apoſtle renews his exhortation to all Chriſtians to watch againſt the ſin of private and perſonal revenge; he urged it before, ver. 17. he reinforces it here, ver. 19. thereby ſhewing how prone our corrupt natures are to commit this ſin, and how hard the contrary duty is to fleſh and blood. The heathens reckoned revenge to be a part of juſtice, and ranked it amongſt the number of their virtues; but the ſcriptures require, that inſtead of revenging an injury, we remit and forgive it. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves*; it follows, *rather give place unto wrath:* What wrath? or whoſe wrath? *Anſ.* Give place to your own wrath, ſay ſome interpreters; give way a little, and turn aſide from the perſon you are angry with, and do not ſuffer your anger to hurry you away to revenge. Give place to the wrath of thoſe that wrong you ſay others; decline their wrath, and give not word for word, which will but add fuel to the fire, and oil to the flame. But it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of God's wrath; leave the matter to God, he will right your cauſe; do not take God's work out of his hand, but ſuffer him to come in with his wrath upon your enemies, who wrong and injure you; rather give place to the wrath of God againſt them; for vengeance is his, and he will repay it. *Learn* hence, That ſuch, who having ſuffered wrong, do ſeek to revenge themſelves, take revenging work out of God's hand; whereas, if they leave the matter with God, his juſtice will right them fully.

20 Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him;

if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Inſtead of revenge, render kindneſs, return courteſies for injuries, affability for affronts; *If thine enemy hunger, feed him.*" The words, as ſome critics obſerve, ſignify to feed cheerfully and tenderly, as birds feed their young ones. *So doing, thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head.* By coals of fire (1.) Some underſtand, an heart-melting fire; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "By thy kindneſs thou wilt melt and mollify his ſpirits towards thee, as hardeſt metals are melted by coals of fire; it muſt be a very ſtony heart indeed, that this fire will not melt, a very diſingenuous nature that meekneſs will not mollify: Clemency will melt an enemy, and even force him by a ſweet compulſion to become a friend, though of a rough and rugged diſpoſition." (2.) By coals of fire heaped upon the head, others underſtand a ſin-puniſhing fire. *Thou ſhalt heap coals of fire*, that is, the fire of divine vengeance upon his head, by making his malice and hatred againſt thee more inexcuſable. *Learn* hence, 1. That to conquer and overcome an enemy by love and kindneſs, is a noble conqueſt, and a glorious victory, to melt him down, by obliging favours into a good affection. 2. That if an enemy, after ſuch kind offices, will perſevere in his enmity againſt us, the event will certainly be this; by our patience towards him, and forbearance of him, we ſhall engage the wrath of God againſt him, and heap coals of fire, that is, the divine vengeance upon him. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Learn hence, That every Chriſtian ſhould not only take heed that he *be not overcome of evil*; but alſo labour and endeavour what in him lieth *to overcome evil with good.* *Queſt.* What are we to underſtand by *evil?* *Anſ.* Any unkind or injurious dealings from others, any miſchief or ill turn which our neighbour has done us. *Queſt.* What is it to be overcome of evil? *Anſ.* 1. When we dwell in our thoughts too much, too often, and too long upon the injuries and unkindneſſes we have met with: This is, as if a man that was to take down a bitter pill, ſhould be continually champing of it, and rolling it under his tongue. 2. We are overcome of evil, when we are brought over to commit the ſame evil, by ſtudying to make ſpiteful returns in a way of revenge, for the injuries we have received. *Queſtion*, Wherein conſiſts the duty and excellency *of overcoming evil with good?* *Anſwer*, It renders us like to God, who does good to us daily, though we do evil againſt him continually; hereby we imitate God in one of the choiceſt perfections of his divine nature; hereby we overcome ourſelves; hereby we overcome our enemies, and make them become our friends. *Queſtion*, How ſhould we *overcome evil with good?* *Anſwer*, By doing good for evil, by returning courteſies for injuries, ſpeaking well of others, although they ſpeak hardly, yea very ill, of us. *Be not overcome of evil*, &c.

CHAP. XIII.

The apoſtle having treated of moral duties in the former chapter, treats of political duties in this, proving that magiſtracy is God's ordinance, for the good of human ſociety, and enforcing the duty of ſubjection unto magiſtrates, in obedience to the commandment of God.

LET every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.

Note here, 1. The title given to the magiſtrates, they are *powers, the higher powers*, that is, perſons inveſted with power, and placed in ſupreme authority over us. All mankind is not of one rank, doth not ſtand upon an equal level. Magiſtracy is an eminency or ſuperiority of ſome perſons above others. 2. The original fountain from whence all power is derived, and that is God himſelf; *there is no power but of God*; that is, all power is derived from God, and is to be uſed for God; the magiſtrate acts by his authority, and conſequently is to act for his intereſt, honour and glory. It is agreeable to the will of God, that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as magiſtracy and government in the world; and it is his appointment that men ſhould be governed by men, deriving the power and authority from him: *the powers that be are ordained of God.* 3. The apoſtle's ſtrict injunction for ſubjection unto magiſtracy, as a divine ordinance; *Let every ſoul be ſubject*, that is, every perſon, be he of what rank, or in what ſtation he will, high or low, honourable or ignoble, rich or poor, clergy or laity, he muſt be ſubject to God's ordinance. Where *note*, That Chriſt is a friend to Cæſar, and Chriſtianity no enemy to loyalty; the beſt Chriſtians are always the beſt ſubjects; none ſo true to their prince, as they that are moſt faithful to their God: Obedience to magiſtrates is both the duty of Chriſtians, and the intereſt of Chriſtianity.

2 Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.

The forementioned duty of ſubjection unto magiſtracy, inſiſted upon in the foregoing verſe, the apoſtle urges and inforces upon all Chriſtians, by ſundry arguments in this and the following verſes: As, namely, (1.) From the ſinfulneſs of reſiſtance; *they reſiſt the ordinance of God:* they make war upon God himſelf; he that rebelleth againſt his prince, is a rebel alſo to his God. (2.) From the danger of reſiſtance; *They ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* That is, 1. Temporal judgment from the hand of the magiſtrate, to whom the ſword is committed, as Korah, Abſalom, and others did experience. 2. Eternal puniſhment from the hand of God, who will plead the cauſe, and vindicate the honour of his vicegerents and repreſentatives here upon earth, and caſt thoſe into hell, who pour contempt upon them, if ſincere repentance by a timely interpoſure prevent it not.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but

to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame:

Here we have a further argument for ſubjection to rulers and governors, drawn from the end of the magiſtrate's office, which is to puniſh vice, and to promote virtue: *Rulers are not a terror to good works*; that is, they ought not, and they ordinarily are not: they were not ordained for that end, and it is not their place ſo to be, namely, a terror to the good, but to the bad only; for God giveth no authority againſt himſelf, or his own righteous laws, which require the puniſhing of the bad, and the rewarding of the good. *Learn* hence, 1. That magiſtrates, by virtue of their place, ought to be a terror, or exceeding terrible, to evil works and evil workers. 2. That magiſtrates are not terrible, but amiable to good men; they fear rulers, but it is with a fear of reverence, not with a tormenting, ſervile fear. *Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt not be afraid of the power.*

3 For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the ſword in vain: for he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doth evil.

Here our apoſtle ſubjoins a reaſon, why a magiſtrate is not to be unduly dreaded and feared by his ſubjects who live well; for *he is* by his inſtitution *the miniſter of God to thee for good*, if thou beeſt a doer of that which is good. *Learn* hence, That the magiſtrate is the miniſter of God for the good of them over whom he is ſet, eſpecially of them that are virtuous and good; he is a ſhield to the godly, a huſband to the widow, a father to the orphan, a patron to the poor, and a refuge to the oppreſſed. *Note* farther, How the magiſtrate is ſet forth with the enſign of terror to evil-doers; he has a ſword put into his hand by God himſelf, a ſword to wound, not a wooden dagger to ſcare offenders barely; and a ſword not ruſting in the ſcabbard but drawn and whetted; he muſt ſhew it, and ſtrike with it upon a juſt occaſion, and make thoſe feel it who are not awed with the ſight of it: *He beareth not the ſword in vain.* Again, Though the magiſtrate is ſaid to bear a ſword, yet he is never called *a ſword*, but *a ſhield* often; a ſhield is for defence, a ſword for deſtruction, intimating that the magiſtrate's power ſhould rather be executed in protecting than in puniſhing, rather in ſaving than deſtroying. The primary deſign of the magiſtrate's power is protection, not deſtruction; magiſtrates have ſwords, but they are ſhields, and not ſwords; they have a ſword to cut off evil doers; God help them to draw it upon atheiſm and blaſphemy, upon vice and immorality: One hearty ſtroke of the magiſtrate's ſword would ſtun error and vice more than a thouſand ſermons. Laſtly, The magiſtrate is ſaid not to ſnatch or take the ſword, but to bear the ſword: He doth not wreſt it out of the hand of another, but it is put into his hand by God himſelf; the commiſſion to bear the ſword is from God; the magiſtrate doth not hold his authority by virtue of the ſword, but he holds his ſword by virtue of his authority: When he draweth the ſword, it is not merely backed with an arm of fleſh, but with a warrant and commiſſion ſigned by God himſelf; *He beareth the ſword.*

5 Wherefore *ye* muſt needs be ſubject not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.

Here the apoſtle doth again aſſert the neceſſity of ſubjection to the civil magiſtrate, ſeeing that magiſtracy is God's ordinance, for the good of human ſociety; ſeeing that the ſword in the magiſtrate's hand is backed and edged with God's authority, therefore there is a neceſſity of ſubjection unto magiſtracy and magiſtrates; and that for a double reaſon; for fear of wrath and puniſhment from man, and from a principle of conſcience, in obedience to the command of God: *We muſt be ſubject, not only for wrath*, that is, not only for fear of man's wrath, but *for conſcience ſake*; that is, with reſpect to the command of God, which has made ſubjection our indiſpenſible duty.

6 For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo: for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing.

From the duty of ſubjection unto magiſtrates, the apoſtle proceeds to urge and enforce the duty and neceſſity of paying tribute to them, or allowing them an honourable maintenance, for and towards the ſupport of the government which they ſuſtain and bear. The payment of taxes and tribute to the ſupreme magiſtrate is neceſſary upon ſeveral accounts: 1. As it is an acknowledgment of the power which God hath ſet over us: 2. As it tends to the ſupport of the government which we live under: 3. As it is a ſmall recompence for the governor's continual care and induſtry, he *attending*, that is, watching perpetually, and taking pains continually, for procuring and maintaining the good and happineſs of his ſubjects; and therefore, both duty and obligation, both religion and gratitude, do bind and engage us to aſſiſt him, and, ſo far as it is in our power, to requite and reward him for his care of the common ſafety, and regard to the public good.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute *is due*; cuſtom, to whom cuſtom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.

A twofold duty towards magiſtrates is here laid down by our apoſtle, namely, maintenance and reverence: (1.) There is due unto them maintenance. Tribute and cuſtom is payable to them for that purpoſe, and not without great reaſon and obligation; *for he is the miniſter of God for our good*, that is, an inſtrument under God to preſerve our bleſſings to us; and farther, becauſe ſuch ſupplies are neceſſary to defray thoſe vaſt expences, which they are conſtrained to be at, for the ſecurity and welfare of their ſubjects. Taxes, tribute, and cuſtom, are not ſo much gifts, as due debts to princes, which by the command of God are to be juſtly and cheerfully paid unto them, and which cannot, without ſin and injuſtice, be denied to them, or purloined from them: To cheat our prince is as great a ſin in the ſight of God, as to rob our father, though few think it ſo: *Render tribute to whom tribute is due.* Again, (2.) There is reverence as well as maintenance due to magiſtrates;

trates; *Render fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour*, is due. Fear denotes inward reverence, and honour outward reſpect. Fear is the magiſtrate's due by reaſon of his authority, and honour by reaſon of his dignity. Here *note*, That the apoſtle is thus particular and expreſs in aſſerting the rights of princes, and aſſigning the proper duties of ſubjects towards them, becauſe the Jews held opinions which were deſtructive of all civil government; as namely, that they being the only people of God, God alone was to be owned as their Lord and Governor, and none under him, but ſuch as ſhould be immediately choſen by him; and as a conſequent of this, they refuſed to pay tribute to Cæſar, looking upon that as a token of ſubjection to him: Therefore the apoſtle here preſſes the Chriſtians at Rome to ſhew their freedom from, and oppoſition to all ſuch pernicious principles, and to give the world a convincing proof that Chriſtianity makes the beſt men, the beſt magiſtrates, the beſt ſubjects of any religion in the world.

8 ¶ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed his exhortation to duty towards our ſuperiors, comes now to enforce the duties which we owe unto our neighbours; the firſt of which is, to render and pay every one what is due unto him. Moral duties are mutual debts which we owe one another; one of which, namely, that of love, we can never fully diſcharge, but muſt ever be paying, yet always owing. *Owe nothing to any man, but love*, implying that we muſt be always owing. The truth is, this debt of love is ſo far from a poſſibility of being paid on earth, that it is due in heaven to God, angels, and ſaints: *There abideth charity*, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. All other debts but this may be paid whilſt we live. *Note*, The argument, reaſon, or motive, to excite unto this duty, and that is drawn from the excellency of this grace of love: *He that loveth, hath fulfilled the law*; that is, he that loveth his neighbour as he ſhould and ought to do, in deed and in truth, out of a pure heart fervently, he hath *fulfilled the law*, that is, the law relating to his neighbour; the duties of the ſecond table are fulfilled by him.

9 For this, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not kill, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Two particulars are here obſervable, namely, a propoſition aſſerted, that *love is the fulfilling of the law*; and this propoſition proved by an induction and enumeration of particular duties belonging to the ſecond table. *Obſerve*, 1. The propoſition aſſerted and maintained by the apoſtle, ver. 8. 10. namely, that *love is the fulfilling of the law.* "But can the law be ſaid to be fulfilled by us? If ſo, in what ſenſe?" *Anſ.* By the law here, we are certainly to underſtand that branch of the moral law which reſpects our duty to our neighbour. All our duty to men is virtually comprehended in loving them as ourſelves; as no man will hurt himſelf, ſo neither will he hurt his neighbour, if he loveth him as himſelf: Thus love is the complement or fulfilling of the law relating to our neighbour. The church of Rome would infer from hence, That a perſon may keep the law of God perfectly, and without the leaſt deficiency. But *note*, He that loveth, keepeth the law: How keepeth? Even as he loveth: If he loveth perfectly, he keepeth the law perfectly; but if his love be imperfect, (as is the beſt on this ſide heaven) then is his fulfilling of the law imperfect alſo: Perfect fulfilling of the law is what we ſhould labour after, but whilſt in an imperfect ſtate we cannot attain unto: Yet ſuch is the grace of God in the goſpel, as to account ſincerity inſtead of perfection, and to eſteem unfeigned love to our neighbour the fulfilling of the law, or all the duties of the ſecond table. *Obſerve*, 2. This propoſition is proved by an induction and enumeration of particular duties belonging to the ſecond table; *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, nor bear falſe witneſs, nor covet*; where all injury is forbidden to be done to our neighbour, in his name, in his eſtate, marriage-right, &c. and this is called the fulfilling of the law. "But how can that be? Is the law fulfilled by mere negatives, by doing no hurt to our neighbours? Is not doing them all the good we can required alſo?" *Anſ.* Yes, no doubt: When the apoſtle ſays, *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, it is implied, that love doth all poſſible good to his neighbour, as well as worketh no ill; though the negatives are only mentioned, yet the affirmatives are alſo included.

11 ¶ And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of ſleep: for now *is* our ſalvation nearer than when we believed.

Here begins the laſt part of the chapter, which treats of our duty towards ourſelves, namely, ſobriety, temperance, mortification of ſin, and all the works of darkneſs, ſuch as rioting and drunkenneſs, chambering and wantonneſs, and the like, and the argument or motive which the apoſtle uſes in this verſe to excite and quicken the converted Romans to the laſt mentioned duties, is drawn from the conſideration of their preſent ſtate and condition; they were believers, the goſpel light was riſen upon them, *and they were nearer ſalvation now, than when they firſt believed: Now is your ſalvation nearer than when you believed.* This, by the way, is a meditation full of comfort to a gracious perſon; every breath he draws, draws him a degree nearer to perfect happineſs; he is nearer heaven, nearer his reward, than when in the infancy of his faith; therefore let him gird up the loins of his mind, and be more cheerful and more laborious in his Lord's work. Lord! how tranſporting is it to thy faithful ones to conſider how ſmall a matter is betwixt them and their complete ſalvation! No ſooner is their breath gone, but the full deſire of their ſouls is come; their ſalvation is near, very near, much nearer than when they firſt believed. But, oh! what a meditation of terror to a wicked perſon! his damnation is nearer, and every hour nearer and nearer; there is but a puff of breath betwixt him and hell; ere long his laſt breath and his laſt hope will expire together. Lord! give ſinners hearts to confide, that a graceleſs man ere long will be a hopeleſs man; the ſtate he was born in was ſad, the ſtate he is now in is worſe, but the ſtate he will ſhortly be in, without converſion, will be unſpeakably worſt of all; his damnation is near, it ſlumbereth not.

12 The night is far ſpent, the day is at hand: let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honeſtly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle puts the Romans in mind of their former ſtate before converſion, when *the night* of heatheniſh ignorance and darkneſs was upon them, when they ſpent their time and ſtrength in *rioting and drunkenneſs*, in *laſciviouſneſs and wantonneſs*. Where *mark*, The odious character wherewith ſin is branded; it is *darkneſs*, *a work of darkneſs*; ſo ſtyled, becauſe ſin originally ſprings from darkneſs, becauſe it naturally delights in darkneſs, becauſe it ultimately leads to eternal darkneſs. *Note*, 2. How he puts them in mind of their preſent ſtate and condition ſince the day-ſtar of the goſpel did dawn upon them: *The night is far ſpent, and the day is at hand*; that is, the night of heatheniſh ignorance, blindneſs, and darkneſs, is in great meaſure paſt and over, and the day of grace and ſalvation is come unto you; the goſpel light is among you, illuminating grace and ſaving knowledge is now found with you. 3. The duties injoined anſwerable to the privileges enjoyed, and that is, to walk as the children of day, ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, abſtaining from all intemperance and exceſs in every kind, and being clothed with all Chriſtian virtues and graces, which are called *armour of light*; armour, becauſe they defend us againſt the attempts of ſin, Satan, and the world, and all our ſpiritual enemies whatſoever; and armour of light, becauſe ſuch Chriſtian graces are bright and ſhining in the eyes of the world. *Learn* hence, 1. That the enjoyment of goſpel light lays a perſon or a people under ſpecial obligations to caſt off the works of darkneſs. 2. That ſuch as enjoy the light and liberty of the goſpel, ought to walk as becometh the goſpel which they do enjoy, that is, according to the precepts and commands of the goſpel, anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of grace which the goſpel affords, and anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious hopes which the goſpel raiſes the Chriſtian up to the expectation of: *This is to caſt off the works of darkneſs*, &c.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make not proviſion for the fleſh, to *fulfil* the luſts *thereof*.

Obſerve here, The apoſtle doth not ſay as a moral philoſopher would have ſaid, "Inſtead of rioting and drunkenneſs, chambering and wantonneſs, put on temperance, put on ſobriety, put on chaſtity, and ſo ſet a ſingle virtue againſt a ſingle vice;" but, "Put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeek by faith union with him, that ſo you may derive virtue from him, to enable you unto holy walking before him. Set the doctrine and life of Chriſt continually before you; follow every inſtruction, and imitate all the parts of his holy converſation; even as the garment is commenſurate to the body, *Put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*:" May not the expreſſion imply, 1. That the ſoul of man, ſince the fall, is in a naked ſtate, deſtitute of thoſe divine graces of the Holy Spirit, which were its original clothing in the day of undefiled innocency? 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is our ſpiritual clothing? (1.) In his righteouſneſs, to pardon and juſtify us: He is our clothing, to cover the guilt of ſin out of God's ſight. (2.) In his grace, to ſanctify us, by which he cleanſes us from our ſins, pollution, and filthineſs. (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt, in order to our ſpiritual clothing, muſt be put on by faith: An unapplied Chriſt juſtifies none, ſaves none. It was not ſufficient under the law, that the blood of the ſacrifice was ſhed, but it was alſo to be ſprinkled, in order to the expiation of guilt. The perſonal application of Chriſt's blood by faith on our part, is as abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, as is the ſhedding of his blood on his part, in order to our remiſſion and ſalvation. *Put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: It follows, *And make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof*. *Note*, The apoſtle doth not ſay, *Make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil* the neceſſities, and the neceſſary deſires thereof: But *to fulfil the luſts* or the inordinate deſires *thereof*. Then only is proviſion for the fleſh ſinful and unlawful, when it is ſought more to ſatisfy its appetite, and to gratify inordinate deſires, than to ſtrengthen and fit us for our duty to God and man. In this latter ſenſe, to make proviſion for the fleſh, is to furniſh our enemy with arms and ammunition to fight againſt ourſelves. Interpretatively, he makes proviſion for his luſts, that doth not provide againſt them; he feeds his luſts, that doth not ſtarve them; he nouriſhes and ſtrengthens his luſts, that doth not mortify and kill them: Explicitly and directly, men provide for their luſts, by entertaining ſuch thoughts in their minds, as do kindle, excite, and ſtir up luſt; and when thoſe thoughts are gratified with deſires, and thoſe deſires accompanied with endeavours; but worſt and ſaddeſt of all it is, when men's deſires to gratify their luſts are turned into prayers unto God almighty, in order to that end. Thus the apoſtle, James iv. 3. *Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts*. *Learn* hence, 1. That a ſober and moderate uſe of the creatures which God has given us, not barely for neceſſity, but delight, is allowable, and a commanded duty. 2. That to make uſe of the comforts of life, not to ſatisfy our natures, but to gratify our luſts and inordinate deſires, is a perverting of God's intention, in beſtowing the ſupports of life upon us, and a very heinous ſin. Make we then no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof.

CHAP. XIV.

The apoſtle, in this chapter, treats of things of an indifferent nature, neither commanded nor forbidden by any divine law, and ſpeaks of the right uſe of our Chriſtian liberty. The Gentiles *looking upon the* Jews *as ſuperſtitious, and the* Jews *cenſuring the* Gentiles *as profane, St. Paul admoniſhes the believing* Jews, *not to condemn the believing* Gentiles; *and exhorts the believing* Gentiles, *not to refuſe communion with the*

the believing Jews; *and thus, by a mutual forbearance, to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

HIM that is weak in the faith receive you, *but* not to doubtful diſputations.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon deſcribed, whom the apoſtle recommends to their charity and forbearance; *Him that is weak in the faith:* Not him that is ſick unto death through fundamental error, but one that is ſound in the faith, though weak in judgment: men of honeſt hearts, but weak heads. *Obſerve*, 2. Here is an injunction of charity and Chriſtian forbearance towards theſe weak ones; *Receive them*, take them into your houſes, yea, into your hearts; receive them into your ſociety, into your communion, and let not difference in judgment cauſe any diſtance in affection. 3. The limitation of this injunction; *Receive him, but not to doubtful diſputations*; that is, "Do not quarrel or contend with him about his opinions, or fill his head full of curious and intricate queſtions, or trouble him with doubtful diſputes." *Learn* hence, That Chriſtians are to receive ſuch as are weak in the faith, into their hearts by love, without troubling their heads with perplexing diſputes. Weak Chriſtians cannot well judge of arguments: And practical piety, and Chriſtian love, will much ſooner rectify the judgment of the weak, than fierce argumentations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 ¶ Let not him that eateth deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.

Here the apoſtle declares the ground of difference that was between them; namely, the difference of meats. One thought all meats to be lawful under the goſpel; another, rather than eat any meats forbidden by the law, will eat only herbs. Where *obſerve*, How the church of God, in all ages, has been ſtrangely divided about little and indifferent things. What jars and ſtirs were there between the Eaſtern and Weſtern churches, about the obſervation of Eaſter? About the celebrating the Lord's ſupper with leavened or unleavened bread? And verily, the fatal evils which our hot contentions have occaſioned amongſt ourſelves, only about indifferent rites and ceremonies, tears of blood are not ſufficient to bewail. *Note*, next, the apoſtle's exhortation to the two contending parties, not to vilify or ſet at nought one another, condemning each other as humourous and ſcrupulous, much leſs as obſtinate and wilful; but eſpecially not upon this occaſion to ſeparate from, or break communion with each other. Let not *him that eateth* all kinds of meats, *deſpiſe him*, that through weakneſs durſt not eat of any. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Whilſt there is error in our underſtandings, weakneſs in our judgments, narrowneſs in our faculties, differences will ariſe in the church of God: But take care, that where there is no compliance, that yet there may be peace: Deſpiſe not, judge not one another." *Obſerve*, laſtly, The reaſon our apoſtle offers, why they ſhould receive their weak brother; becauſe *God hath received him.* God, that is moſt holy, and hateth ſin, receiveth ſuch; therefore, ſo muſt you, if you pleaſe God. Why ſhould you refuſe to hold communion with ſuch who hold communion with God?

4 Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? To his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. Yea, he ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand.

Another reaſon is here produced, why we ſhould not raſhly cenſure or judge our brother differing in judgment from us about leſſer things; namely, becauſe he is God's ſervant, and it is God's ſentence, and not our's, which he muſt ſtand or fall by: and if theſe differences ſhall not hinder God's acceptance of him to ſalvation, why ſhould they hinder us in accepting of him into our communion! To love, is our duty; to judge, is God's prerogative: Let it be more in charity, and leſs in cenſure. *Learn*, That the ſcripture forbids us to judge one another, as having no grace, for the doing or not doing of thoſe things, which are conſiſtent with a preſent ſtate of grace.

5 One man eſteemeth one day above another: another eſteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

The ſecond caſe, as to indifferent things, is about the obſervation of days. Many of the believing Jews could not be taken off from ſolemnizing thoſe feaſts which were of God's own founding and inſtituting among the Jews. Another looked upon them truly as abrogated by Chriſt. Now, the apoſtle adviſes, that neither the one nor the other, neither he that regardeth, nor he that regardeth not thoſe days, ſhould be judged or hardly cenſured for ſo doing, becauſe he acts therein according to the direction of his conſcience. He that, according to his light, doth either eat or not eat ſuch meats, keep or not keep ſuch days, intends or deſigns it as an act of obedience to God; praying for, and giving thanks unto, Almighty God for his acceptance. So then, if they both aim at the ſame end, they ought not to condemn one another for each other's act. *Learn* hence, That perſons, diſagreeing with us, and differing from us in leſſer things, from a real principle of conſcience, firmly perſuaded, that what they do, or refuſe to do, is for the glory of God, and out of a ſincere deſire to pleaſe him, ought not to be judged by us, but left to the righteous judgment of the heart-ſearching God.

7 For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

Here our apoſtle proves what he had before aſſerted, that Chriſtians, in their particular actions, have a ſpecial regard to the Lord and his honour, becauſe they devote themſelves, living and dying, to the ſervice of him and his glory: *None of us*, Chriſtians, *lives unto himſelf*, but we ſpend our lives in his ſervice; neither do *we die unto ourſelves*, nor when we pleaſe, but when he appoints: Therefore, *living* or *dying*, we are his. From the words abſolutely conſidered, we may *learn*, That the beſt evidence we can have that we are Chriſt's ſervants, is this, when we make our aim and ſcope, our deſign and care, to live and die unto Chriſt our Lord, and not unto ourſelves. *Queſt.* "But when may we be ſaid to live unto the Lord, and to die unto the Lord?" *Anſ.* When we do not frame our lives after our own wills, but according to the word and will of God, making that the rule and ground of all our actions; when the great end why we deſire life, is to do ſervice for Chriſt on earth, and to be fitted by him for the fruition of him in heaven. Finally, then, we live and die unto the Lord, when we are willing to be at the diſpoſal of God, both for life and death; and this as to time, manner, and means; yea, all circumſtances whatſoever, both of life and death. When a man is willing to lay down his life for the Lord, or at the call of the Lord, it is a certain evidence, that he liveth and dieth to the Lord.

9 For to this end Chriſt both died and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. 11 For it is written, *As* I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. 12 So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God.

Three things are here obſervable: 1. That Jeſus Chriſt, by virtue of his meritorious paſſion, and glorious reſurrection, was conſtituted Lord of all things, and has power to judge all perſons. *To this end Chriſt died, roſe again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*; that is, be the judge and rewarder of all mankind. 2. That to this ſupreme and abſolute Lord every one of us muſt give an account of our actions, and from him receive our final doom: *We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* 3. The argument which the apoſtle draws from hence to diſſuade us from cenſuring and judging one another; and that is drawn from the conſideration of the laſt and final judgment, which we are all haſtening apace unto. *Why doſt thou judge thy brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Let there be a mutual forbearance among Chriſtians: Do not raſhly judge, and uncharitably cenſure one another, becauſe in ſome little things you differ from each other. What though your brother cannot in conſcience comply with your opinion or practice? muſt you preſently accuſe him of ſtomach, and condemn him for ſtubbornneſs, calling his non-compliance obſtinacy and humour, pride and ſingularity, which he calls *conſcience towards God?* Remember the judge ſtandeth at the door, and you muſt ſuddenly ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; *where every one of us muſt give an account of himſelf to God.*" Where *note*, The univerſality of the ſubjects rendering this account; *every one of us:* The ſubject-matter of which the account muſt be rendered; and that is, *of ourſelves:* As alſo the deſignation and deſcription of the perſon unto whom this account muſt be rendered; and that is, to the all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God; to God the Creator, but eſpecially to Chriſt the Lord, the Redeemer, who is ſuch a judge as the power of the mightieſt cannot daunt; ſuch a judge as the riches of the wealthieſt cannot bribe; ſuch a judge as the ſubtlety of the wiſeſt cannot delude; ſuch a judge as there is no appealing from, no repealing of his ſentence: *Therefore, judge nothing before the time*, &c.

13 ¶ Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall, in *his* brother's way. 14 I know, and am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itſelf: but to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkeſt thou not charitably. Deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died. 16 Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of.

Obſerve here, 1. How the apoſtle adviſes perſons to be very cautious in the uſe of their Chriſtian liberty; *Put not a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion of falling, into your brother's way.* *Learn* hence, That to uſe our Chriſtian liberty when it may be an occaſion of ſin, by laying a ſtumbling-block before others, although we do not uſe it with an intent or purpoſe to make them ſtumble, is very ſinful. 2. The apoſtle's final determination concerning thoſe meats, which ſome of the Jews ſcrupled as unclean; *I am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean of itſelf.* The difference and diſtinction of meats, as clean and unclean, was taken away by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 3. That although the apoſtle pronounces that there is no meat unclean in itſelf, yet notwithſtanding this, to him that eſteemeth any thing unclean, to him, as to the uſe of it, it is unclean. 4. With what tenderneſs the apoſtle directs all Chriſtians to carry themſelves towards their weaker brethren, even to the abridging themſelves of their lawful liberty in the uſe of indifferent things, rather than give the weak occaſion of offence. *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat*, (though no meat be unclean of itſelf) yet in eating thou doſt amiſs, for three reaſons: (1.) Becauſe it is againſt the laws of charity ſo to act in things indifferent: *If thy brother be grieved, now walkeſt thou uncharitably.* (2.) Becauſe it is the way to occaſion him to ſin, and conſequently to do what in us lies to bring deſtruction upon him for whom Chriſt died: *Deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died.* (3.) Becauſe eating thus with offence to the weak, cauſeth Chriſtian liberty, purchaſed by Chriſt, to be evil ſpoken of before the world: *Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of.* The ſum of the whole is this, to ſhew how uncharitable, unſafe, and unchriſtian a thing it is to make ſuch an undue uſe of our Chriſtian liberty, as may occaſion our weak brother to fall or ſtumble.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and

drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

That is, "The ſpiritual kingdom of God and Chriſt in the world, conſiſteth not in theſe little things of meat and drink, but *in righteouſneſs* towards God and our neighbour; *in peace*, that is, in peaceableneſs of diſpoſition, in Chriſtian love, concord and unity; and *in joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, that is, in the joyful ſenſe of the love of God, ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt. In theſe things Chriſtianity conſiſts." *Learn* hence, That the eſſence of Chriſtianity, and the life of religion, is far from conſiſting in little and indifferent things; and therefore, for perſons to lay a mighty ſtreſs upon them, one way or the other, is neither wiſe nor ſafe. 2. That righteouſneſs and holineſs, charity and peaceableneſs, love and joy, and ſuch-like fruits of the Holy Spirit; theſe are the great things wherein Chriſtianity or the kingdom of Chriſt conſiſts, and in which the life and ſoul of religion is found: *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace*, &c.

18 For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

He that in theſe things, that is, in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God:* That is, this ſhews and evidences that he is a perſon accepted of God and approved of men, of wiſe, charitable, and good men; yea, the natural conſciences of men in general will applaud and approve what is done by him, notwithſtanding the fore-mentioned difference in leſſer things concerning meats and days. *Learn* hence, That the love and practice of religious duties, ſuch as righteouſneſs and peace, is a clear and ſtrong argument of a perſon's acceptance with God. *Learn*, 2. That ſuch as are for thoſe things accepted by God, ought by no means, for differing from us in leſſer things, to be diſowned of us, and caſt out of communion by us.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

This verſe is an inference drawn from the foregoing diſcourſe. "Seeing the kingdom of God, or our common Chriſtianity, doth not conſiſt either in the doing or declining of theſe little indifferent things, let us by no means hazard the peace of the church, or break communion with ſuch as in their ſentiments differ from us; much leſs let us deſpiſe and ſet at nought each other, upon the account of theſe ſmall, yet unhappy differences: But let us earneſtly purſue the things that make for the common peace of all Chriſtians, and the things by which we may further each other's edification and ſalvation. *Learn* hence, That in caſe of any emergent differences amongſt Chriſtians, it ought to be the joint care and endeavour of all and every one to purſue the things which make for peace, and that this peace be ſuch as will conſiſt with, and greatly help forward the good of the church: *Let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

20 For meat deſtroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

That is, "For meat deſtroy not *thou* the work of God. Do ~~not *thou*~~, for ſo inconſiderable a matter as eating is, endanger the Chriſtianity of thy brother, or hazard the peace of the church, and cauſe any through ſcandal to fall off from their Chriſtian profeſſion. If any of you ſay, that all meats are clean, and therefore lawful; in anſwer, they are certainly ſo in themſelves, but yet it is your ſin, if you uſe them to the ſcandal and offence of others, that are not ſatisfied in the lawfulneſs of them." It is moſt certainly the duty of Chriſtians to deny themſelves the uſe of their Chriſtian liberty in ſome things, when by making uſe of it, they may endanger any of their brethren, by cauſing them to fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs.

21 *It is* good neither to eat fleſh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

It is not good; that is, it is not charitable to make uſe of any part of our Chriſtian liberty, when by ſo doing any weak Chriſtian is offended, diſcouraged, and driven from his profeſſion, and brought to any kind of ſin. And if it be a Chriſtian's obliged duty to forbear the uſe of indifferent things, when it is a ſcandal to the weak; how much more is it a duty to avoid obtruding and impoſing ſuch things, to the ſcandal, offence, and hurt of others?

22 Haſt thou faith? have it to thyſelf before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth.

Here the apoſtle anſwers an objection, Some might be ready to ſay, "That they had faith, that is, a firm and full perſuaſion, that it is lawful for them to eat thoſe meats, which others judged to be ſinful; and therefore it is neceſſary that they profeſs it, and own it, and aſſert their liberty." The apoſtle anſwers, "Haſt thou more knowledge than he, to believe thoſe things to be lawful, which he apprehends to be ſinful? Keep thy knowledge and belief to thyſelf, to juſtify thy actions before God, but uſe it not to the hurt and prejudice of others; for he is a happy man, that when he knows a thing to be lawful, doth ſo uſe his liberty about it, as not to offend others, or condemn himſelf; for that is a ſad kind of knowledge which is uſed to deſtroy others, and condemn ourſelves. Such Chriſtians as have different ſentiments from their brethren, as to the matter of indifferent things eſpecially, ought to keep their judgment and and opinion to themſelves, and not to hazard the peace of the church by an imprudent publication: *Haſt thou faith? Have it to thyſelf?*

23 And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, becauſe *he eateth* not of faith: for whatſoever *is* not of faith is ſin.

That is, "He that doubteth whether he ſhould eat or no, and yet eats, is condemned of himſelf, becauſe he doth a thing when he is not ſatisfied of its lawfulneſs; for whatſoever is not done of faith, that is, with a perſuaſion that it is lawful, is to him that does it undoubtedly ſinful.

Whatever a man does, believing it to be a ſin, is certainly a ſin in him. Here *obſerve*, That an erring conſcience binds us to do nothing againſt it. A ſcrupulous conſcience is a troubleſome one, but it is better than a preſumptuous conſcience. As we muſt not nouriſh our ſcruples and doubtings, ſo neither muſt we act againſt our ſcruples and doubts. In ſhort, no man is to act contrary to his conſciance; but then it is as much his duty to inform his conſcience, as to follow his conſcience. To act againſt conſcience, is a very great ſin; but a man may act according to his conſcience, and yet be a very great ſinner. St. Paul, when he was a bloody perſecutor, tells us he acted according to his conſcience: Acts xxvi. 9. *I verily thought with myſelf, that I ought to do many things againſt the name of Jeſus of Nazareth.* Pray we then for a conſcience rightly informed by the word of God; and that we may ſo follow the dictates and directions of it whilſt we live, that it may neither reprove nor reproach us when we come to die. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

Our apoſtle in the former part of this chapter proceeds upon the ſame argument, and proſecutes the ſame deſign, as in the foregoing chapter, exhorting the ſtronger Chriſtians to bear with the infirmities of their weaker brethren; and this from the example of Jeſus Chriſt: And accordingly he beſpeaks them thus:

WE then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves. 2 ¶ Let every one of us pleaſe *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. 3 For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Obſerve here, 1. A great doctrine aſſerted, and a ſpecial duty declared, namely, that the ſtrong, that is, ſuch as do thoroughly underſtand their Chriſtian liberty, ſhould bear with the infirmities, the ignorance, frowardneſs, and ſcrupulouſneſs of the weak, and alſo forbear the doing of that which may ſcandalize and hurt the ſouls of men who have not the ſame meaſures of knowledge with ourſelves: *The ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* 2. The univerſality of the duty: *We*, that is, not only all private Chriſtians, but all church-governors: He puts himſelf into the number, that he may propoſe himſelf as an example of the following duty; *We*, that are the officers, the paſtors and governors of the church, like parents who bear with children in their waywardneſs, ſo muſt we bear, though not with hereſies in doctrines, or enormities in practice, yet with ſuch errors and miſtakes in both, as proceed from ignorance, or common infirmities. 3. A farther duty urged and enforced, namely, not to pleaſe ourſelves, but others; *Let every one of us not pleaſe ourſelves, but our neighbours*; that is, not pleaſe ourſelves by inſiſting upon the uſe of our lawful liberty, but rather, for the ſake of others, depart a little from our own right. Yet, 4. The limitation and reſtriction of this duty, *for his good to edification:* It is not ſimply and abſolutely ſaid, "Let every one pleaſe his neighbour." The heretic, the drunkard, and others, would like that well, to have every one ſpeak and act as they do: But the rule is, to pleaſe every man *for his good to edification*; thus far we may pleaſe them, but no farther. Edification is the rule, ſcope, and boundary of all our complacency in, and compliance with others. 5. How the apoſtle urges and enforces this duty, from the example of Jeſus Chriſt: *He pleaſed not himſelf*, therefore ſuch as profeſs faith in him, muſt ſtudy to be as he was: Nothing was more remote from Chriſt when here on earth, than ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-pleaſing; he did not conſult his own eaſe or ſatisfaction, but rather reſpected others benefit than his own; yea, he was ſo far from pleaſing of himſelf, that he did willingly expoſe himſelf to all the reproaches and contumelies of men, in obedience to his Father's will; and was ſo tender of God the Father's honour, that all the reproaches which fell upon the one, afflicted the other: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.* Now from the whole we *note*, That Chriſtians ought to be very tender towards one another in the uſe of their lawful liberty; they muſt not do whatever they pleaſe in things of an indifferent nature, without ſhewing any regard to others; much leſs ſhould they pleaſe themſelves in a proud reflecting upon their own knowledge, and in contemning thoſe that have not ſo great a latitude and liberty as themſelves: *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities*, &c.

4 For whatſoever things were written afore-time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope.

The apoſtle here informs us what is the general uſe of the holy ſcriptures, and what is the particular reaſon for which they were written; namely, 1. For inſtruction, *they were written for our learning*; all the precepts, promiſes, threatenings, rewards, and puniſhments, recorded in the ſcriptures, are for our information, conviction, and direction. 2. They were written for our comfort and conſolation alſo, *that we through patience and comfort of them might have hope*; that is, that we through patience in bearing the like cenſures and reproaches, which we find the ſcripture-ſaints have borne before us, might have hope of being rewarded as they were for it. *Learn* hence, That the great end for which the holy ſcriptures were written, was the informing of our judgments, and the directing of our practice, that by the examples which we find there of the patience of holy men under ſufferings, and of God's relieving and comforting them in their diſtreſſes, we might have hope, yea, confidence and aſſurance, that God will alſo comfort and relieve us, under the like preſſures and burdens.

5 Now the God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus: 6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. How the apoſtle concludes his foregoing exhortation, with votive ſupplications, and fervent prayer; the miniſters of God muſt follow the word they deliver with prayer: they muſt not only wreſtle with their people, but they muſt wreſtle with God for, and in behalf of their people, if they ever hope to overcome. 2. The prayer and ſupplication itſelf, and that is, for concord and unity among Chriſtians; *That they may with one mind and one mouth, glorify God*; that in their Chriſtian aſſemblies they may all worſhip God after the ſame manner; and not one this way, and another that. Unity among Chriſtians in common converſation, but eſpecially in church-communion, is a very deſirable mercy, and much to be prayed for, by the miniſters of God. 3. How the apoſtle addreſſes himſelf in prayer to God for this mercy under a double title. As a God of patience, *The God of patience grant you to be like-minded*; intimating, (1.) What great need there is of patience, in order to maintain love and unity among Chriſtians: And, (2.) That God muſt be applied to in prayer, who is the author of it, to produce and work this grace of patience, in order unto peace and unity among Chriſtians: *The God of patience grant you to be like-minded.* The unity of the ſaints greatly depends upon the exerciſe of patience one towards another; and that they might attain it, he begs the God of patience to give it. (3.) Our apoſtle joins with this another title, namely, *The God of conſolation*; wherein he points them to that abundant comfort, which would reſult to themſelves from ſuch a bleſſed unity, continued and maintained by the mutual exerciſes of patience and forbearance one towards another; *The God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another. Obſerve*, 4. The great pattern and example which he lays before them to excite and quicken them to this duty, namely, the example of Chriſt himſelf; *according to Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, according to the example of Chriſt Jeſus: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “Let us conſider how the Lord Jeſus bears with us, how many thouſand infirmities and failings doth he find in the beſt of us, yet is he pleaſed to maintain communion with us; and ſhall not we after his example do the like, that thereby God may be eminently glorified by us?” 5. How God is called the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 6. (1.) As he begat him by an eternal and ineffable generation. (2.) As he was man, ſo he created him, St. Luke i. 35. (3.) As Mediator, ſo he appointed him to, and qualified him for that office. And eternally magnified be omnipotent love, that the comfort of this compellation redounds to us! for, as he is the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo he is in him our Father alſo, our merciful, our gracious and loving Father: May we ever demean ourſelves towards him as dutiful and obedient children!

7 ¶ Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us, to the glory of God.

Here our apoſtle concludes the argument which he had hitherto inſiſted upon in this and the former chapter, namely, That all chriſtians, both ſtrong and weak, ſhould mutually forbear one another, and that both Jew and Gentile ſhould receive each other into fellowſhip and communion, without contention about things of an indifferent nature; *Wherefore receive ye one another.* And, to enforce his exhortation, he propounds the example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *Receive one another, as Chriſt alſo received us*; that is, after the example of Chriſt, who puts no difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, but receives both, and bears with the infirmities of both: Which action in Chriſt, and the imitation of it in us, will much redound to the glory of God; his declarative and manifeſtative glory being much promoted by this concord and union with and among all his members, of what denomination ſoever they are, whether believing Jews or Gentiles. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has given full and ample demonſtration of his great and wonderful love unto his church and people. 2. That this love of Chriſt towards all his children and people ought to be improved by them, as an argument to love one another; *Receive one another, as Chriſt received us.* 3. That chriſtians receiving, embracing, and loving one another, and bearing with one another's weakneſſes and infirmities, according to Chriſt's example and command, will contribute exceedingly to the honour and glory of Almighty God, and to the abundant conſolation and ſatiſfaction of each other: *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us, to the glory of God.*

8 Now I ſay that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes *made* unto the fathers: 9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy: as it is written, For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name. 10 And again he ſaith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praiſe the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him all ye people. 12 And again Eſaias ſaith, There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles: in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

The apoſtle had, in the foregoing verſe, propounded the example of Chriſt, in receiving both Jew and Gentile to his grace and favour, as an argument to perſuade all chriſtians to receive one another: Now, in the verſes before us, he declares how, and after what manner Chriſt received both Jews and Gentiles. As for the Jews, firſt, whom he calls *the circumciſion*, the apoſtle telleth us, that Jeſus was their miniſter; that is, he was circumciſed like them, converſed generally with them, and exerciſed his miniſtry among them, according to the many promiſes which God had made to the Jewiſh patriarchs; and thus he ſhewed his love and mercy towards the Jews in the days of his fleſh. Then, ſecondly, As to the Gentiles; he affirms, that, according to the ſeveral prophecies and promiſes in the Old Teſtament, they were called and received to mercy by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the partition-wall being by him broken down, and Jew and Gentile become one ſheep-fold, under one Shepherd. Now, from the truth and faithfulneſs of Chriſt towards the Jews; and from his love and tenderneſs, mercy and compaſſion towards the Gentiles; and from his divine indulgence towards both, the apoſtle very fitly draws this inference and concluſion, That all chriſtians, how differing ſoever from one another in their judgments and opinions as to leſſer things, ought to receive one another into fellowſhip and chriſtian communion; and inſtead of biting and devouring one another, be once at length ſo wiſe and happy, as to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.

Note here, 1. How the apoſtle cloſes his exhortation to brotherly concord and unity with a pithy and pathetic prayer; his example herein is inſtructive. 2. The title or appellation which he gives unto God in prayer; *The God of hope:* Sometimes he ſtyles him the God of grace, ſometimes the God of peace, ſometimes the God of patience, here the God of hope; he being ſo objectively, the only object of our common hope; and alſo effectively, as he is the author and producer of hope in us. 3. The mercies he prays for, (1.) That they may *be filled with all joy and peace in believing*, that their hearts may overflow with peace from God, and one towards another, and with all that joy which reſults from both. (2.) That *they may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt*; where, by *hope*, underſtand the good hoped for, namely, heaven and eternal life, a firm expectation of which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. *Learn*, 1. That God is the object of a Chriſtian's hope, and if ſo, the ſin of deſpair is a moſt unreaſonable ſin; for why ſhould any deſpair of his mercy, who is the God of hope, who commands us to hope in his mercy, and takes pleaſure in them that do ſo? Pſal. cxlvii. 11. *Learn*, 2. That the grace of hope, together with joy and peace in believing, are wrought in the Chriſtian's heart through the power of the Holy Ghoſt, that is, through the ſanctifying influences of the Holy Ghoſt, enlightening the underſtanding, inclining the will, rectifying the affections, and reducing all the rebellious powers and faculties of the ſoul (in concurrence with our endeavours) under the government and dominion of reaſon and religion.

14 And I myſelf alſo am perſuaded of you, my brethren, that ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another. 15 Nevertheleſs, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in ſome ſort, as putting you in mind, becauſe of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 That I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring the goſpel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt. 17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt in thoſe things which pertain to God.

Our apoſtle being now about to conclude his epiſtle to the church at Rome, excuſes himſelf that he had written ſo largely, and with ſuch freedom to them, believing that they abounded in grace and knowledge, and were very fit and able to inſtruct and direct one another; however, he thought fit to write unto them, having had the honour conferred upon him by Chriſt, to be called to the apoſtolical office, and particularly to be the ambaſſador of Chriſt to the Gentiles; moſt paſſionately deſiring that he might preſent and offer them up unto God, as an acceptable ſacrifice through the power and aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; and that his ſucceſs in the converſion of the Gentiles would be matter of abundant glorying in him. *Note*, 1. How the apoſtle, in preparing the Gentiles for the obedience of the goſpel, compares himſelf to a Levitical prieſt, converſant about his ſacrifice, and fitting it to be offered up to God. 2. That the Gentiles dedicated by the apoſtle's miniſtry to the ſervice of God, were the apoſtle's ſacrifice and oblation. 3. That the Holy Spirit is a libamen poured on this ſacrifice; by which it is ſanctified and rendered acceptable unto God. 4. That ſuch an oblation, or offering up of a people in this manner unto God, is matter of rejoicing, yea, matter of glorying, to the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: *I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt.*

18 For I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed. 19 Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt. 20 Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named, leſt I ſhould build upon another man's foundation; 21 But, as it is written, To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee; and they that have not heard ſhall underſtand,

Note here, 1. The indefatigable induſtry and pains of the holy apoſtle in order to the converſion of the Gentiles: *From Jeruſalem round about unto Illyricum, he fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt.* This, according to Pareus's computation, was little leſs than a thouſand miles. The induſtry of the apoſtles, in planting and propagating the goſpel of Chriſt, was almoſt incredible. Lord! what pains did they take? What hazards did they run? What difficulties did they conteſt and contend with, in that great work? 2. That although their induſtry was great, yet their ſucceſs was greater than their induſtry, and beyond all human expectation. This appears by the vaſt ſpreading of the goſpel in ſo ſhort a ſpace: *From Jeruſalem round about unto Illyricum.* Within thirty years after our Saviour's death, the goſpel was not only diffuſed through the greateſt part of the Roman empire, but had reached as far as Parthia and India. 3. That the goſpel or doctrine of Jeſus had likewiſe a wonderful power and efficacy upon the lives and manners of men: The apoſtle tells us, that the Gentiles who were converted to Chriſtianity, *were obedient by word and deed:* Upon the change of their religion, followed the change of their converſation, and whole courſe of life. 4. The reaſon of all this wonderful ſucceſs which St. Paul and other apoſtles had in preaching the goſpel; and that was the extraordinary power of the Holy Ghoſt, in enabling them to work miracles for the confirmation of the goſpel, ver. 19. *Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.* Such was the miraculous power of healing diſeaſes, of caſting out devils! of inflicting corporal puniſhment upon ſcandalous perſons! all which did ſerve in general for the confirmation of the goſpel, and did in particular ſupport the honour and authority of the apoſtles, and ſupply the want of the magiſtrate's power, which the Chriſtians could not expect whilſt the Roman emperors continued Heathen: not that all theſe miraculous powers were given to every one of the apoſtles, or that they which had them could exerciſe them at all times, or whenever they pleaſed; but only as was moſt expedient for the uſe and benefit of the church. 5. That the apoſtle, in preaching the goſpel, choſe to go to ſuch dark and blind places as never heard of the goſpel before, rather than amongſt them where Chriſt had been named, that ſo he might lay the foundation of Chriſtianity himſelf, and not build upon another man's foundation: And likewiſe that in his miniſtry, the prophecy of Eſaias might be fulfilled, chap. lii. 15. *To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee: and they that have not heard, ſhall underſtand.*

22 For which cauſe alſo I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now having no more place in theſe parts, and having a great deſire theſe many years to come unto you; 24 Whenſoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you. For I truſt to ſee you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if firſt I be ſomewhat filled with your *company*.

The apoſtle having, in the former verſes, excuſed himſelf for dealing ſo plainly in his writings with them, doth here apologize for his not coming amongſt them, affirming, that the true reaſon why he did not viſit Rome, was this: He looked upon planting of churches as more neceſſary than watering of them, and the preaching of Chriſt where he had never been named, to be the moſt needful work. Now at Rome there had before been a church planted, and elders ordained to build upon that foundation; for this reaſon he had hitherto declined coming to Rome: But now, *having no more place in theſe parts*, that is, having no more churches to plant hereabouts, he ſignifies both his inclinations and fixed reſolutions to viſit them at Rome, as he took his journey into Spain, and to ſtay ſome time with them, that they might be mutually filled and ſatisfied with, and refreſhed by, each other's company. Here *note*, 1. That the Romans were very early converted and called to the Chriſtian faith, ſoon after Chriſt's aſcenſion; for the twentieth year after it, did Paul write this epiſtle. But he had a deſire of ſeeing the Romans many years before he wrote unto them, and therefore many years before they were converted to the faith. 2. That our journeying from one place to another, is not according to our purpoſe, but God's diſpoſal. The apoſtle, no doubt, intended to go into Spain when he wrote this; but God over ruled the matter beyond the apoſtle's expectation. The travels of the apoſtles from place to place, in order to the planting and propagating of the Chriſtian faith, were under the ſpecial influences and direction of the Holy Ghoſt. Acts xvi. 7. *They aſſayed to go into Bithynia: But the Spirit ſuffered them not.* *Note*, 3. The great end why the apoſtle was ſo deſirous of the ſight and enjoyment of the Chriſtians at Rome; it was that he might be refreſhed, nay, *filled with their company*. Lord! How deſirable is the communion of ſaints, and how beneficial the ſociety of ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians! Their company is filling, (not empty, vain and frothy, as the company of moſt is, but) adminiſtering both grace and comfort to them that enjoy it; *I deſire to ſee you in my journey, that I may be filled with your company.*

25 But now I go unto Jeruſalem to miniſter unto the ſaints. 26 For it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor ſaints which are at Jeruſalem. 27 It hath pleaſed them *verily*: and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things, their duty is alſo to miniſter unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have ſealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am ſure that when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.

Here the apoſtle acquaints them with his preſent intended journey to Jeruſalem, as alſo with the occaſion of it; namely, to carry the charitable contributions of the Greek churches in Macedonia and Achaia, into Judea, and up to the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem, whoſe neceſſities required it, and unto whom they were in a ſort indebted for it; *the Gentiles having been made partakers of their ſpiritual things* (receiving the goſpel from Judea) they are obliged in gratitude to miniſter to them in carnal things. He farther aſſures them, that as ſoon as he had finiſhed his journey and performed this charitable office, he would come to them, and that in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of peace. *Note* here, 1. The title given to the poor Chriſtians at Jeruſalem: They are called *ſaints*; *I go to Jeruſalem to adminiſter to the ſaints neceſſities.* Saints they were by baptiſmal dedication, by viſible profeſſion, and many, yea moſt of them, it is to be hoped, by inward ſanctification alſo. 2. That poverty and ſanctity are not inconſiſtent; the ſaints at Jeruſalem are poor, but God provided a purveyor for them; he ſtirs up the apoſtle, and the hearts of the Macedonians, to adminiſter to the neceſſities of theſe poor ſaints. 3. How the ſaints in one church did ſuccour and relieve the poor Chriſtians in another; thoſe in Macedonia and Achaia ſend relief into Judea, and to the poor ſaints which were at Jeruſalem; teaching us, that it is our obliged duty to extend our charity to the churches abroad and beyond the ſeas, when their wants and neceſſities require it, and our capacities enable us unto it. 4. The nature of this charity declared: It was a free and cheerful contribution performed with much pleaſure: *It pleaſed them* to make a contribution; it was not extorted or ſqueezed from them, but given with cheerfulneſs by them: Contributions muſt not be compulſions, but voluntary oblations. 5. How this charity is called fruit; *when I have ſealed this fruit*: becauſe it was the fruit of their faith, liberality and love; becauſe as fruit, it would redound both to the benefit of the giver and receiver. Charity and alms are fruit redounding to account in the great day of account. 6. The great integrity and fidelity of the apoſtle in ſecuring of this charity: *When I have ſealed*, or ſecured, *unto them this fruit.*

fruit. The church's charity is a ſealed treaſure, not to be diminiſhed and embezzled, but applied to the uſes to which it is devoted. Laſtly, The aſſurance which he gives them, that when he comes among them, he ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of peace unto them; that is, with a full impartment of ſpiritual gifts and goſpel bleſſings, much knowledge, grace and comfort.

30 Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea: and that my ſervice which I *have* for Jeruſalem may be accepted of the ſaints; 32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.

Here in the cloſe of the epiſtle, our apoſtle moſt affectionately recommends himſelf to the prayers of the Chriſtian Romans unto whom he wrote: *I beſeech you brethren, ſtrive,* &c. Where *note*, 1. The apoſtle's courteous compellation, *brethren*. There is a threefold brotherhood, which the ſcripture takes notice of: (1.) Betwixt Chriſt and believers; Heb. ii. 11. *He is uot aſhamed to call them brethren.* (2.) Betwixt believers themſelves, they are brethren by grace; 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Love the brotherhood*; that is, the collective body of believers. (3.) Betwixt the miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved people, there is alſo a brotherhood, Rev. i. 9. *I John your brother:* Teaching the miniſters of the goſpel to carry it towards their people with love and gentleneſs, and the people to make reciprocal returns of love and affection. 2. The manner of the apoſtle's requeſt: it is by way of ſupplication and intreaty: *I beſeech you brethren.* Though as an apoſtle he might have enjoined them, yet for love's ſake he rather intreats them. 3. The requeſt itſelf, that they ſtrive together in their prayers for him. The original word ſignifies to ſtrive together as wreſtlers do, who exert all their power and might in that bodily exerciſe. 4. Our apoſtle's ſincerity, and holy ingenuity in this requeſt which he makes unto them; he deſires them *to ſtrive with him* in their prayers to God for him: He doth not, with ſome, beg the prayers of others, and neglect to pray for himſelf, but is willing to draw with them in the ſame yoke. 5. A double argument which the apoſtle makes uſe of, to inforce his ſupplication and requeſt: (1.) For the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, for the ſake of him who is ſo dear both to you and me. (2.) For the love of the Spirit; that is, if the grace of love be wrought in you by the Holy Spirit of God, ſhew it by your fervent prayer for all ſaints in general, and for myſelf a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt in particular. *Note*, 6. The particulars concerning which he deſires their ſupplications: (1.) For preſervation in his journey to Judea; that the unbelieving Jews, which were prejudiſed againſt him, might have no power to hurt him. (2.) That his perſon, and his performance *for the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem*, might find acceptance with the Chriſtian Jews, to whom he was not over-acceptable; he therefore begs their prayers, that the believing Jews at Jeruſalem might be reconciled both to the believing Gentiles that ſent this alms, and alſo to himſelf that brought it: *That my ſervice for Jeruſalem may be accepted of the ſaints.* (3.) That he might have a proſperous journey to them by the will of God. Where *note*, How much is it our duty always, and in all things, to refer ourſelves, our intentions and actions, to the pleaſure and providence, to the wiſdom and will of God. And *obſerve*, laſtly, The ſpecial reaſon why he was ſo deſirous to viſit and come unto them, that he might be refreſhed with them, and by them; that the company and converſation of each other may be to their mutual refreſhment and ſatisfaction: *That I may come unto you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.*

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The apoſtle had deſired their prayers for him; here he concludes with a fervent prayer for them: In which *note*, The title or attribute given unto God, *The God of peace:* the lover, the author, and giver of peace. The apoſtle having exhorted the believing Romans to be at peace among themſelves, and not to contend about indifferent things, implores the diſpenſer of this grace to be with them, to dwell among them, and to pour out the great and invaluable bleſſings of peace and unity, of love and concord, upon them; *The God of peace be with you all. Amen.* As we honour the God of peace, whom we ſerve; as we love the Prince of peace, in whom we believe; as we hope for the comfort of the Spirit of peace; and as we tender the ſucceſs of the goſpel of peace, let us preſerve it where it is, and purſue it where it flies from us.

CHAP. XVI.

This chapter, which cloſes our apoſtle's epiſtle to the Romans, *is chiefly made up of charitable and friendly ſalutations and commendations of ſome particular perſons: according to the earlineſs and ſtrength of their ſeveral graces, and their labour of love for the intereſt of Chriſt and his church.*

I Commend unto you Phebe our ſiſter, which is a ſervant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh ſaints, and that you aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſs ſhe hath need of you: for ſhe hath been a ſuccourer of many, and of myſelf alſo.

The firſt perſon here mentioned is Phebe; who, going upon ſome occaſion to Rome, St. Paul is ſuppoſed to have ſent this epiſtle to the Romans by her: "I commend, ſays he, to your care and affectionate regard, Phebe, our ſiſter in the faith, who ſerved the church at Cenchrea," in the quality of a deaconneſs, as ſome think, or as others, who ſpent her time in receiving and harbouring poor Chriſtians that were driven out of their own country, and who had been a ſuccourer and ſupporter of the apoſtle himſelf. He exhorts them to receive her in the Lord; that is, with Chriſtian love for the Lord's ſake, and to be aſſiſtant and helpful to her in her outward affairs and buſineſs. *Learn* hence, What honour God puts upon the female ſex, in making uſe of ſome of them to be aſſiſtants to the apoſtles, and taking care that their offices of love and ſervice for and towards the miniſters and members of Chriſt, ſhould not be forgotten, but had and kept in everlaſting remembrance. The ſervices which Phebe did, are here recorded, to poſterity tranſmitted, and to our imitation recommended.

3 Greet Priſcilla and Aquila my helpers in Chriſt Jeſus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but alſo all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewiſe *greet* the church that is in their houſe.—

The firſt perſons at Rome, whom St. Paul ſaluteth by name, are Priſcilla and Aquila. The woman is named before her huſband, and ſhews, that they were all one in Chriſt Jeſus, in whom there is neither male or female. Here, by the way, it appears how weakly the papiſts argue for St. Peter's primacy, becauſe placed firſt in the catalogue of the apoſtles. By the ſame argument, the woman is the head of the man, becauſe here named before the man. 2. The honourable title which St. Paul puts upon theſe two perſons, Aquila and Priſcilla; he calls them his helpers in Chriſt Jeſus. They were his aſſiſtants in propagating the goſpel by private inſtruction, though not by public preaching, Acts xviii. 26. *Note*, 3. The Chriſtian courage which was found with this holy woman Priſcilla, and her huſband Aquila: *They laid down their own necks* for the apoſtle; that is, expoſed themſelves to the hazard of their own lives for his preſervation. 4. The thankful reſentment which the apoſtle and all the churches of the Gentiles had of this their great and noble ſervice, in hazarding their own lives for his: *To whom I give thanks, and all the churches of the Gentiles.* Becauſe St. Paul was the apoſtle of the Gentiles, and his preſervation redounded to the benefit of them all; therefore were the churches of the Gentiles ſo ſenſible of, and thankful for, the apoſtle's preſervation. Laſtly, The ſalutation ſent *to the church that was in their houſe.* By which ſome underſtand their houſhold, their Chriſtian family, which he calls a church, becauſe of the pious order, and religious worſhip which was there obſerved. O happy houſes! and thrice happy houſholders! whoſe families are little churches for piety and devotion. Others underſtand by the church in their houſe, the number of Chriſtians which uſed there to aſſemble for religious worſhip. Be it the one or the other, our apoſtle forgets not to ſend kind and Chriſtian ſalutations to them.

—Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the firſt-fruits of Achaia unto Chriſt. 6 Greet Mary, who beſtowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinſmen and my fellow-priſoners; who are of note among the apoſtles, who alſo were in Chriſt before me.

Three perſons are here ſaluted by name: The firſt, Epenetus, whom he calls the firſt fruits of Achaia: that is, the firſt perſon that embraced Chriſtianity, or the faith of Chriſt, in the region of Achaia; the ſecond is Mary, a common name, but the perſon here intended was of ſpecial note, having beſtowed much pains upon, and done many good offices for, the preachers of the goſpel; the third is Andronicus, noted for his ſufferings and ſervices among the apoſtles, as alſo for his early embracing the Chriſtian faith. He was in Chriſt before me; that is, converted to Chriſtianity before myſelf. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſeniority in grace is a very great honour: And to be in Chriſt before others, is a tranſcendent prerogative. 2. That God will have the good works of all his ſaints, and the ſervices eſpecially which are done to his miniſters and ambaſſadors by any of his people, to be applauded, valued and recorded. Mary's labour beſtowed on the apoſtle, is here mentioned with reſpect.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane our helper in Chriſt, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Chriſt. Salute them which are of Ariſtobulus' *houſhold.* 11 Salute Herodian my kinſman. Greet them that be of the *houſhold* of Narciſſus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphoſa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Perſis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus choſen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Salute Aſyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15 Salute Philologos, and Julia, Nereus, and his ſiſter, and Olympas, and all the ſaints which are with them.

Here *note*, 1. How the apoſtle ſalutes the Chriſtians at Rome, not in general, but particularly, and by name, that they might be convinced how particularly mindful he was of them. And as he mentions them by name in his ſalutations, it is not improbable, but that he might mention them alſo by name in his ſupplications and private addreſſes to God. No doubt, he bore them, and all converted by him, upon his heart, whenever he went in and out before the Lord. A ſpiritual Father can never be forgetful of his ſpiritual children. 2. The perſons ſaluted by the apoſtle are not men of fame in Rome, noted for their dignity and greatneſs, or for their wealth or riches, but for their piety and goodneſs, for labouring in the Lord, and for labouring much in the Lord, for being in Chriſt, approved in Chriſt, and helpers in Chriſt; that is, aſſiſtants in propagating the goſpel of Chriſt, and ſerviceable to thoſe whoſe work and office it was ſo to do. It is religion that renders perſons renowned, and no perſons deſerve ſo well to be remembered by us, as thoſe who are moſt perſevering and laborious in their ſervices for God. 3. Here are ſeveral women, as well as men, remembered and ſaluted, and their ſervices for Chriſt and his miniſters recorded. God will have none of his faithful ſervants forgotten, nor any of their good deeds buried in oblivion. 4. That in all this roll of ſalutations, there is no mention made of St. Peter's name. Had he now been at Rome, as the papiſts will have him, and biſhop of that ſee, it had been morally impoſſible for our apoſtle to have forgotten him in his ſalutations, when ſo many of his inferiors were remembered by him.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiſs. The churches of Chriſt ſalute you.

Note here, How the apoſtle proceeds from greeting the ſaints at Rome himſelf, to perſuade them to ſalute one another. There had been much diſſenſion among them about meats and days; he therefore craves of them for the future to embrace each other with cordial love, and affectionate kindneſs; and, as a token and ſymbol of it, to ſalute one another with an holy kiſs, the uſual expreſſion of friendſhip in thoſe times. The primitive Chriſtians, at the end of their prayers, before the celebration of the ſacrament, did ſalute one another with a kiſs, and then the bread and cup was brought forth; and ſome obſerve, that it was done by the men apart, and the women apart. But this cuſtom being afterwards abuſed, was gradually laid aſide. That which is lawful in its uſe, and innocent in its own nature, may and ought to be laid aſide, when it becomes mattter of ſcandal and juſt offence.

17 Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned; and avoid them, 18 For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.

Note here, 1. How our apoſtle takes his leave and farewel of theſe Romans, with an admonition to them, to take heed of perſons that there were erroneous in doctrine, and ſcandalous in practice. It is probable, he means, either thoſe Jews who pleaded the neceſſity of circumciſion, and the obſervation of the Moſaic rites, as neceſſary to the ſalvation of the Gentiles; or the Gnoſtics, to whom the following characters do well agree. Whoever they were, they were dangerous ſeducers, and to be avoided. 2. The character which our apoſtle gives of theſe perſons; *They ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly*. *Note*, That ſeducers are always ſelf-ſeekers; they are deſigning men: They aim at themſelves, under a pretence of acting for Chriſt and his glory. *They ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly*. *Note*, 3. The arts and methods which they uſe to delude and deceive: *By good words and fair ſpeeches they deceive the ſimple*. Seducers have ſmooth and gloſſing tongues; and innocent harmleſs men are miſled by their fine pretences, and fair ſpeeches: and thus they impoſe upon the ſimple. 4. The double advice which the apoſtle gives, in order to their being preſerved and ſecured from the poiſon and contagion of theſe ſeducers; namely, to mark them, and avoid them. (1.) To mark them: The word ſignifies ſuch a marking, as a watchman uſeth when he ſtandeth upon a tower to deſcry an enemy, which is performed with great accuracy. (2.) To avoid them as a ſound perſon would ſhun him who has the plague on him. Where *note*, The apoſtle adviſes to mark them, in order to the declining of them, not deſtroying of them; to cut them off by excommunication, not to cut their throats, or burn their bodies for hereſy. *Mark them which cauſe diviſions, and avoid them*. *Note*, 5. The perſons whom this exhortation concerns, who they are that ſhould judge of the doctrines and ſeducers · They are the common people, the Romans, the ſaints or Chriſtians at Rome, to whom he was now writing; to them the apoſtle allows a judgment of diſcretion, a power to try and examine the doctrines delivered by perſons pretending to infallible inſpiration: *I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned*. Chriſtians are by no means to be led by their teachers blindfold, but ought to ſee with their own eyes, to take nothing upon truſt, but all upon trial, to examine the doctrines they are taught, and to obſerve and mark the teachers of them. *I beſeech you*, ſays our apoſtle, *mark them*.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wiſe unto that which is good; and ſimple concerning evil.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I do not accuſe you, but adviſe and warn you only: I acknowledge that you, the Chriſtians at Rome, are famous for your obedience to the apoſtolical doctrine, and that you walk in faith and love, in unity and concord, to the credit of the goſpel, and the honour of your holy religion. But I would have you know, that you are not wholly out of danger of being infected by theſe judaizers: I wiſh you therefore wiſdom to eſcape their ſnares; the Lord make you wiſe as well as zealous, that you may diſcern that which is good, and decline that which is evil." *Learn* hence, That the holieſt, beſt, and wiſeſt of Chriſtians, muſt not look upon themſelves as ſecure from the ſnares of ſeducers, but ſtand in need of all the cautions and warnings, of all the advice and counſel of their ſpiritual guides, in order to their preſervation from the poiſon of their principles, and the contagion of their example.

20 And the God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen.

Theſe words may be conſidered either relatively, or abſolutely; if relatively, or with relation to the context, then by Satan is to be underſtood ſeducers and falſe teachers, whom he had warned the Romans of, in the preceding verſes: *Mark them which cauſe diviſions*, &c. *Learn* hence, 1. That all corrupters of divine truths, and troublers of the church's peace, are Satan's inſtruments: *God ſhall bruiſe Satan*, that is, Satan in his inſtruments, *under your feet*. *Learn*, 2. That divine evangelical truth ſhall be finally victorious; no weapon formed againſt it ſhall proſper; the head of error ſhall fall low at laſt at the feet of truth. Seducers may bluſter for a time, but ſhall be bruiſed at laſt; the God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan ſhortly. Conſider the words abſolutely, and we have a victory proclaimed; the author of that victory declared, the God of peace; the enemy conquered, Satan; the conqueſt, or manner of conquering, by bruiſing; the time of the conqueſt, not preſently, but ſhortly. *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly*. *Learn*, 1. That the reconciler of the world ſhall be the ſubduer of Satan; and in ſubduing Satan, he conquers all his inſtruments: He ſaith not, God ſhall bruiſe ſeducers and heretics under your feet; but Satan, and, in him, all that belong unto him; as the fall of the general puts the whole army to the rout. 2. That

Almighty God, in his own time, will make believers complete conquerors over Satan, and all their ſpiritual enemies. *Note*, That it is by virtue of Chriſt's conqueſt over Satan, that believers become conquerors; for the promiſe here refers to the original promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. That Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, ſhall break the ſerpent's head: So then it is by virtue of that act of Jeſus Chriſt, bruiſing the ſerpent's head, yea, breaking it, that Satan is bruiſed under our feet. As Chriſt bruiſed him under his own feet, ſo in his own time will he bruiſe him under our feet. The perſonal, as well as the repreſentative ſeed of the woman, ſhall break the ſerpent's head. Remember, poor tempted Chriſtian, for thy comfort, the God of peace will tread Satan under thy feet, ſhortly; thou ſhalt ſet thy foot on the neck of thy enemy; and when once thy foot is over the threſhold of glory, thou ſhalt caſt back a ſmiling look, and ſay, "Now, Satan, do thy worſt: through grace I am where thou ſhalt never come."

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius and Jaſon and Soſipater my kinſman, ſalute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epiſtle, ſalute you in the Lord. 23 Gaius mine hoſt, and of the whole church, ſaluteth you. Eraſtus the chamberlain of the city ſaluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Our apoſtle had, in the former part of the chapter, ſaluted divers perſons himſelf; here he ſends the ſalutations of thoſe that were with him to the ſaints or Chriſtians at Rome: Hereby ſhewing that mutual love and amity, that happy concord and unity, which is and ought to be between all the ſincere diſciples and followers of Jeſus, when, though not in body, yet in mind, they ſhould be preſent with one another, and though diſtant in place, yet undivided in affection. The two principal perſons here ſending joint ſalutations with the apoſtle to theſe Romans, were Timothy and Gaius. The former St. Paul calls his work-fellow, or fellow-labourer *Timotheus my work-fellow.*—Where *note*, The great humility of the apoſtle in dignifying ſo young a man as Timothy then was, with this title. What greater dignity, then to be a fellow-worker with the apoſtle, in planting and propagating the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? The latter was Gaius, whom the apoſtle calls *his hoſt, and the hoſt of the whole church*; that is, a perſon employed by the church of Corinth to entertain Chriſtian ſtrangers. To perform the meaneſt offices of love and ſervice for the perſecuted or diſtreſſed ſaints and ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to entertain them in our houſes, yea, to waſh their feet, is an honourable and acceptable ſervice.

24 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

Here again our apoſtle, from the abundance of his affectionate heart towards them, repeats his benediction of them, that the mercy, grace and goodneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt may abide upon, and evermore continue with them. Where *note*, The fountain and original ſpring from whence all grace doth riſe and flow; namely, from Jeſus Chriſt: *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* It is ſo called, becauſe he purchaſed it for us, becauſe he applies it to us.

25 Now to him that is of power to eſtabliſh you according to my goſpel and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the revelation of the myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, 26 But now is made manifeſt, and by the ſcriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith, 27 To God only wiſe, *be* glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle here concludes his excellent epiſtle with a ſolemn doxology or thankſgiving to God: In which he firſt deſcribes God, and then aſcribes eternal glory to him. He deſcribes him, both by his power and by his wiſdom. By his power firſt, *To him that is able to eſtabliſh you according to my goſpel*; that is, to eſtabliſh you in grace and truth, in faith and holineſs, and to keep you from falling into ſin and error. Such is our weakneſs, and Satan's power, that unleſs God confirm and eſtabliſh us, we ſhall ſoon run into ſin and danger. *Note* farther, The inſtrumental means which God makes uſe of, for his people's eſtabliſhment, and that is the goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, the doctrine of the goſpel which Chriſt and his apoſtles taught and delivered. This is called a myſtery, kept ſecret ſince the world began, and now made manifeſt for the obedience of the faith; that is, that it may be believed and obeyed. The ſecond attribute in the deſcription of God, is his wiſdom: he is called the wiſe, the only wiſe God; not to exclude the Son and Holy Ghoſt, but the wiſdom of the creature only: He is only wiſe originally, his wiſdom is of himſelf; yea, his wiſdom is himſelf: The wiſdom of God is not a quality ſeparable from himſelf, but is his very eſſence and nature. He is only wiſe, becauſe he is incomparably wiſe; there is none that for wiſdom can compare with him. He has wiſdom in ſuch a degree and eminency, that the very angels are chargeable with folly before him. In a word, he is only wiſe, becauſe all wiſdom is derived from him; all the wiſdom of angels and men is but a ray from his light, a drop from his ocean. And if ſo, then let the wiſdom of God, in all his dealings with us and our's, be admired and adored by us; for all his works of providence are as orderly and perfect as his works of creation, though we perceive it not.

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO THE
CORINTHIANS.

That this Epiſtle was written by St. Paul *to the church at* Corinth, *was never doubted by the church of God.* Corinth *was the eye of* Greece, *a very opulent and wealthy city, but infamous for pride and luxury, for wantonneſs and uncleanneſs; yet* God had much people in this city, *in order to whoſe converſion to Chriſtianity, this apoſtle continued preaching amongſt them a* year and ſix months: *And ſuch a ſpecial bleſſing did accompany his endeavours, that this new-planted church became one of the moſt famous and eminent churches for all manner of ſpiritual gifts throughout the Chriſtian world.*

The occaſion of writing this epiſtle was an unhappy ſchiſm that aroſe in the church of Corinth, *by the people's preferring one preacher before another. Inſtead of being thankful to God for the endowments of all his miniſters, and endeavouring to reap the benefit and advantage of all their mutual labours, they vainly gloried in men, ſome crying up* Paul, *others* Apollos, *&c. Hereupon St.* Paul *ſent this epiſtle as a bucket to quench this fire, which had threatened the deſtruction of this flouriſhing church.*

And obſervable it is, with what freedom and impartiality the apoſtle proceeds in the management of this epiſtle: He ſharply reproves both their erroneous opinions and vicious practices; he wiſely rebukes them for their ſchiſms and diviſions, for their confuſion and diſorders in public aſſemblies, for their horrid profanation of the Lord's ſupper, for their toleration of inceſt, for going to law before heathen magiſtrates: He aſſerts the miniſters maintenance, the excellence of ſpiritual gifts, the nature and neceſſity of charity; and by multiplied arguments, confirms the doctrine of the reſurrection.

CHAP. I.

PAUL called *to be* an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt through the will of God, and Soſthenes *our* brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called *to be* ſaints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours. 3 Grace *be* unto you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's aſſerting his commiſſion, or the work of the miniſtry, to be from God; he was *called to be an apoſtle by the will of God:* He did not thruſt himſelf into that high and honourable employment, but was choſen, called, and ſent by God. Such as enterpriſe the ſacred function without a regular call and commiſſion, may expect a blaſt inſtead of a bleſſing. 2. The double object of St. Paul's ſalutation in this epiſtle; he firſt ſalutes the church of Corinth in particular, and then all the churches of Chriſt in general: *To all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Where *note*, That they were not real ſaints, no nor all viſible ſaints (but called to be both) whom he calls the church. Many ſecretly vile and ſcandalouſly profane perſons were found amongſt them; yet the apoſtle ſalutes them as the church of God; *To the church of God at Corinth. Learn* hence, That there may be a mixture of profane and ſcandalous perſons with real ſaints in the church of God here on earth; there may be, I ſay: I mean, *de facto*, there have been, and there will be; not *de jure*, that there ought to be ſuch a mixture; yet if ſo, this doth not unchurch the aſſembly in which they are; they are the diſeaſe of the church, but not its death; ſuch corruptions and blemiſhes cannot conſiſt with the well being, but may conſiſt with the being of particular churches. 3. The ſalutation itſelf, *Grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *note*, 1. A double bleſſing deſired, *grace and peace*; grace is of all bleſſings the richeſt, and peace is of all comforts the ſweeteſt. 2. A double ſpring diſcovered from whence this double bleſſing flows, God and Chriſt: God, as the original ſource and fountain of all good in himſelf; and Chriſt, as the donor and diſpenſer of all good to us. 3. The order of the words, firſt grace, then peace; there can be no peace without grace, and no grace but there will be peace; there can be no peace but from God, no peace from God but as a father; no peace from God as a father, but as our father; and he cannot comfortably be ſaid to be our father, but through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That all that grace and peace which believers ſhare in, and are made partakers of, is derived from God the Father, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; 6 Even as the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you. 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 8 Who ſhall alſe confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9 God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I am very thankful to God for his grace and favour beſtowed upon you through Jeſus Chriſt, in and by the preaching of the goſpel, and particularly for the gift of tongues, and other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit vouchſafed to you, whereby the divinity of the goſpel (called here *the teſtimony of Chriſt*, becauſe it teſtifies of Chriſt) was atteſted and confirmed." He farther tells them, that he was firmly perſuaded, that God would confirm them unto the end, cauſing them to perſevere unblameable in holineſs till the coming of Chriſt to deliver his faithful ſervants, and remarkably to deſtroy his crucifiers; becauſe of the faithfulneſs of God, who having *called them to the fellowſhip of his Son*, and to partake of his invaluable benefits, will never leave them, but accompliſh the whole pleaſure of his will in them. *Note* here, 1. That the apoſtle, in the third verſe, prayed affectionately for the grace of God to be beſtowed upon the Corinthians; in the fourth verſe, he thanks God abundantly for the grace they had already received; and no man has ſuch ſupplies of grace, but he ſtands in need of farther influences; and there is no ſuch way to attain more grace, as to be thankful for what we have already received. 2. To whom the apoſtle returns his thanks for all that grace the Corinthians had received, even to the God of all grace: *I thank my God for the grace which is given you.* All grace depends upon God, as to its being and production, as to its exerciſe and operation, as to its growth and augmentation, as to its evidence and manifeſtation, as to its perſeverance and preſervation; he is both the author and finiſher of our faith: Both ſeed, increment, and perfection, the beginnings, increaſings and finiſhings of grace, are all from God the Father, but by and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who by his blood purchaſed grace for us, and by his Spirit produceth it in us. 3. That believers, in the firſt ages of the Chriſtian church, received not only ſanctifying graces, but the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the gift of tongues and miracles. 4. That they obtained theſe gifts by Jeſus Chriſt, and through faith in him. 5. That by theſe gifts *the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed*, that is, the doctrine of the goſpel, teſtifying that Jeſus was the true Meſſias, by his being raiſed from the dead. 6. That by theſe gifts, and by this earneſt of the Spirit, they had encouragement to expect and wait for the approach and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 7. *Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

10 ¶ Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and *that* there be no diviſions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment.

Theſe words are a pathetical exhortation to a moſt important duty: In which *note*, 1. The duty itſelf, directed and exhorted to, and that is, unity and unanimity amongſt Chriſtians: This is threefold, the unity of the head, of the heart, and of the tongue: The unity of the head, and that is an unity in judgment and opinion; the unity of the heart is an unity in love and affection; and the unity of the tongue is an unity in language and expreſſion, when we all ſpeak the ſame things, and with one mouth, as well as with one mind, glorify God. 2. The powerful arguments here inforcing this duty. The firſt is an apoſtolical obſecration, *I beſeech you:* He that had authority to command, has the meekneſs to intreat, and in a ſupplicatory way to beſeech. The ſecond is, the nearneſs of the relation, *I beſeech you, brethren*; an endearing expreſſion, and full of affection; they were brethren by place and nation, and brethren by faith and profeſſion, owning the ſame God, profeſſing the ſame religion, animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame promiſes, partakers of the ſame hope, and heirs of the ſame glory. The third argument is, the name he beſeeches in, and that is Chriſt's: *I beſeech you by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* that is, "I adjure you for his ſake, and his authority, by all that he has done, ſuffered, and purchaſed for you. If you have any reverence for his authority, as a ſovereign, if you have any regard for his undertaking as a Saviour, look that there be no diviſions amongſt you, *but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.* 3. That ſo exceedingly was the apoſtle's heart ſet upon this duty, that in both his epiſtles to the Corinthians he preſſes them very earneſtly to the love and practice of it: here, in his firſt epiſtle and firſt chapter, and in his ſecond epiſtle and laſt chapter: *Be of one mind, live in peace,* &c. From whence *note*, That the apoſtle makes this exhortation to unity among Chriſtians the *alpha* of his firſt epiſtle, and the *omega* of his laſt: it is the firſt duty which he commends to their conſiderations in the former epiſtle, and the laſt which he recommends to their care and practice in the latter epiſtle; intimating thereby unto us, that this unity in judgment and affection is the firſt and laſt thing to be reſpected among Chriſtians, as being both the beginning and perfection of Chriſtianity.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the houſe* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 ¶ Now

this I ſay, that every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul;
and I, of Apollos; and I, of Cephas; and I, of Chriſt.
13 Is Chriſt divided? was Paul crucified for you?
or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Note here, 1. The apoſtle declares a reaſon why in the foregoing verſe he preſſed his exhortation to love and unity with ſo much fervour and vehemency, namely, becauſe he had received information, that there were contentions and ſidings, diviſions and parties amongſt them, to the great ſcandal of Chriſtianity, which was ſo newly planted amongſt them. Whence *learn*, That diviſions and factions do quickly creep into the beſt and pureſt churches. This church of Corinth was a garden newly planted by St. Paul; yet notwithſtanding all his care and perſonal inſpection, theſe ill weeds of diviſion and diſſenſion grew apace; it was not while men ſlept that theſe tares were ſown, but while the officers of the church were both awake and watchful. 2. What was the cauſe of theſe diviſions and diſſenſions that were found among them; it was having men's perſons in admiration, factiouſly crying up one miniſter above another, naming themſelves the followers of this and that man, ſetting up teachers one againſt another, and even Chriſt againſt his miniſters. *Learn* hence, That although it is the people's duty to have a great and high eſteem of the miniſters of Chriſt, yet muſt not their reſpect degenerate in a ſinful admiration of their perſons; for the factious affecting of one miniſter above another, is both ſinful and dangerous; it occaſions enmity and diſſenſion among miniſters themſelves, and their people alſo, when the gifts and abilities of one are cried up in contempt of others. 3. That theſe Corinthians did not only ſinfully admire the perſons of their teachers, but alſo ſet up their teachers as heads of ſeveral parties, ſinfully reſting upon them, and glorying in them. *Learn* thence, That it is not barely unlawful, but very dangerous, and exceeding ſinful for perſons to call themſelves by the name of any men, though ever ſo eminent, ſo as to build or pin their faith upon them; we are not believers in Paul or Peter, but in Chriſt; there is but one head of the church, and that is Chriſt, and he is not divided: His diſciples we are in whoſe name we are baptized, and that is not in the name of any man, but in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. To build therefore our faith upon any man, is to make him our Saviour, and to put him in Chriſt's room and place.

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but
Criſpus and Gaius; 15 Leſt any ſhould ſay, that I
had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized
alſo the houſhold of Stephanas: beſides, I know
not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Chriſt
ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel:
not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt
ſhould be made of none effect.

Note here, 1. That though baptizing was God's ordinance, and St. Paul, as Chriſt's miniſter, had a commiſſion and ſufficient authority to baptize, yet the providence of God ſo ordered, that he baptized very few, leſt any ſhould ſay he baptized in his own name. 2. That among thoſe few he baptized, here is a whole houſhold mentioned, *the houſhold of Stephanas*. Where *learn*, That as Abraham, and others under the Old Teſtament, were to bring their houſhold into covenant with God by circumciſion, ſo did thoſe that had houſholds under the New Teſtament, endeavour to bring their whole families into God's covenant, by baptiſm. The gaoler and his houſe, Lydia and her houſe, Stephanas and his houſhold, are all baptized. 3. The compariſon here made betwixt baptizing and preaching, and the preference given to the one before the other: *Chriſt ſent me not to baptze, but to preach*; that is, rather to preach than baptize: this was his great buſineſs, his principal work; though baptizing was within his commiſſion, yet it was not that, but preaching the goſpel, to convert ſouls to Chriſt, that he was called after ſuch a wonderful manner, and endued with ſuch extraordinary gifts for the performance of. It is neither wiſe nor ſafe to cry up one ordinance of God above another, but to have them all in eſtimation, and none more than the preaching of the goſpel, which is one principal part of our commiſſion. 4. The manner after which Chriſt ſent St. Paul to preach the goſpel: *not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of no effect:* that is, not attracting and drawing men to the faith by the power of human eloquence, leſt the doctrine of Chriſt ſhould be rendered ſuſpected by ſuch a pompous way of preaching. Plain truths, without art and varniſh, may be conveyed with more warmth and vigour to the conſcience, than all the charms of human eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular tongue. The way and manner of St. Paul's preaching was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable. With what brevity, without darkneſs! with what gravity without affectation! with what eloquence, without meretricious ornament, were St. Paul's diſcourſes! Solidly inſtructing men in the great and neceſſary duties of the goſpel, and furniſhing them with arguments and motives to a good life; and this in ſuch a plain and familiar manner, that the ſucceſs and prevalency of his preaching appeared to be of God, and not of man.

18 ¶ For the preaching of the croſs is to them
that periſh fooliſhneſs; but unto us which are ſaved
it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will
deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to
nothing the underſtanding of the prudent. 20
Where *is* the wiſe? where *is* the ſcribe? where *is* the
diſputer of this world? hath not God made fooliſh
the wiſdom of this world?

Obſerve here, 1. The character and deſcription given of the preaching of the goſpel; it is called *the preaching of the croſs*, that is, of a crucified Saviour; it repreſents him who died upon the croſs, as the proper object of our faith and hope, of our affiance and truſt. 2. The low and mean eſteem which the philoſophers and wiſe men among the Heathens had of the doctrine of the croſs, and of the preaching of the goſpel; they eſteemed it *fooliſhneſs: the preaching of the croſs is, to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs:* So eſteemed (1.) In regard of the ſubject of it; it is the doctrine of the croſs, that is, of a crucified and deſpiſed Saviour; it acquaints us, that the *eternal God*, in the fulneſs of time, became a *mortal man*; that life became ſubject to death, and bleſſing ſubject to a curſe: All which are ſuch appearing contradictions, that natural reaſon is very prone to ſcorn and deride them. (2.) The wiſdom of the world, or the wiſe men among the Gentiles, did eſteem the preaching of the goſpel fooliſhneſs, in regard of the manner of it; becauſe the goſpel doth nakedly and barely propound ſome doctrines of faith, and poſitively requires our aſſent to them, from the evidence of the things themſelves, and from the authority of the principal ſpeaker, God himſelf. The myſteries of the Chriſtian religion, though not contrary to reaſon, yet are above our comprehenſion; notwithſtanding which, they do not only require our aſſent, but alſo challenge the obedience and adoration of our faith. Now the wiſdom of the world is not ſatisfied with God's Αυτος εΦη, with God's authority in aſſerting; but requires that every doctrine of faith, and every myſtery of the goſpel, be made ſo plain and obvious, ſo clear and perſpicuous, that their ſhallow reaſon may be able fully to comprehend it; for theſe reaſons is *the preaching of the croſs, to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs.* 3. What efficacy and virtue the goſpel is of unto believers; *unto us which are ſaved*, ſays the apoſtle, *it is the power of God*; that is, a powerful inſtrument in God's hand, for men's converſion and ſalvation; the word preached is the organ or inſtrument through which the vital power of the Spirit is conveyed into the ſouls of ſinners, how much ſoever it is contemned and deſpiſed in the world. 4. How the apoſtle upbraids the pride and folly of the learned philoſophers and reputed wiſe men among the Heathens, who though they excelled in natural wiſdom, yet deſpiſed evangelical truths, making reaſon their ſupreme rule, and philoſophy their higheſt principle: *Where*, ſays the apoſtle, *is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world?* That is, where is the wiſdom now of the wiſeſt philoſophers among the Gentiles? where is the wiſdom of the *ſcribe*, or the interpreter of the law among the Jews? *Where is the diſputer of this world*, or the curious ſearcher into the depths and ſecrets of nature? Let them ſhew ſo many brought, by all their wiſdom, learning, and eloquence, to the knowledge of God, and to the practice of their duty, as the preaching of a crucified Chriſt hath done; yea, all their natural wiſdom is mere folly, in compariſon of the glorious effects which the preaching of the goſpel has produced.

21 For after that, in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.

Obſerve here, 1. That the frame of this world, or the work of creation, is here called *the wiſdom of God:* The name of the cauſe is given to the effect, becauſe divine wiſdom ſhines ſo clearly forth in the work of creation; the beautiful frame of heaven and earth doth diſcover the ſeveral excellencies and perfections which are in God, and amongſt the reſt his admirable and unerring wiſdom. 2. What is here affirmed concerning the moſt wiſe and learned men among the Heathens, namely, that with all their *wiſdom they knew not God*; that is, they did not own and acknowledge him, ſerve and glorify him, as they ſhould and ought to have done: *The world by wiſdom knew not God*, that is, they knew him confuſedly, but not diſtinctly; they knew in general, that a God there was, but knew not particularly who the true God was; they knew him notionally, but not practically; their knowledge had no influence upon their hearts or lives; they knew him as eſſentially conſidered in himſelf, but knew him not relatively, as conſidered in Chriſt, they knew not *Immanuel*, God with us, and becoming a Mediator for us, him they did not know. *Learn* hence, That the greateſt wits of the world, having no more but the common light of nature, and the advantage of human accompliſhments, are oft-times exceedingly to ſeek as to the ſpiritual and ſaving knowledge of God and Chriſt; human wiſdom and divine knowledge, as they are diſtinct in their nature, ſo are they ſeparable in their ſubject: Let thoſe who have both, bleſs God with eternal thankſgivings. *Obſerve*, 3. God's gracious ſupply of that defect which the world laboured under; when by all their wiſdom, collected from the book of the creature, they could not arrive at the right knowledge of the true God, then *it pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe.* Where *note*, 1. The perſons deſcribed whom the wiſdom of God thinks fit to ſave, *them that believe*, them excluſively, and none but them. 2. The great inſtrumental means which the wiſdom of God ordained in order to the believer's ſalvation, namely, the preaching of the goſpel; *it pleaſed God by preaching to ſave them that believe.* 3. The mean and low opinion, the vile and baſe eſteem which the world have of this venerable ordinance of God, the preaching of the goſpel, they think fit to ſtyle fooliſhneſs; *the fooliſhneſs of preaching.* 4. The moving, impelling, and impulſive cauſe of this gracious diſpenſation, to wit, the preaching of the goſpel in order to men's ſalvation; and that is the good will and pleaſure of a gracious God: *It pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, &c.

22 For the Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom: 23 But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. 25 Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men; and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.

Note here, 1. How both Jews and Gentiles conſpired together in their contempt and rejection of the goſpel: *The Jews require a ſign*; that is, beſides all the miracles and the reſurrection of Chriſt, the Jews require ſome ſign from heaven, to prove that Chriſt was ſent from God; ſo unreaſonable and obſtinate was their infidelity, that all the miracles of our Saviour's life, death, and reſurrection, could not remove it: *And the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom*; that is, they look for profound wiſdom, eminent learning, and deep philoſophy in the goſpel; they ſcorn it, becauſe they find not there what they expected: *The Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom.* 2. The apoſtle's peremptory reſolution to preach Chriſt crucified, though he were to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.

But how was *Chriſt a ſtumbling-block to the Jews?* In regard of his poverty and ſufferings, the meanneſs and miſery of his condition in the world. They expected that their Meſſias ſhould be a victorious prince, one that ſhould reſcue them from their enemies: Inſtead of which, they find this Jeſus to be overcome by his enemies; that he had no power to defend himſelf, much leſs to deliver them; that he was deſerted of God whom he called Father, forſaken by his followers, whom he ſtyled diſciples, ſcourged with rods, crowned with thorns, ignominiouſly treated, ſhamefully crucified; this was to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and continues ſo to be. But how was *Chriſt to the Greeks fooliſhneſs? Anſ.* The Gentiles deſpiſed the goſpel of Chriſt, as an abſurd, ridiculous, and ill-contrived fable; for what in appearance could be more unbecoming God, and injurious to his perfections, than to take the frail garment of fleſh, to be torn and trampled upon? They concluded the incarnation impoſſible, that a being infinitely perfect ſhould unite with a nature ſo inferior to itſelf; and rejected the doctrine of our Saviour's death, as an impiety contumelious to God; they could not reconcile ſervitude with ſovereignty, puniſhment with innocence, the loweſt of human miſeries, with the higheſt of divine honours; and accordingly, they eſteemed it fooliſhneſs, to expect eternal life from him that was put to death; and that he ſhould bring them to the higheſt glory, who ſuffered himſelf in the loweſt weakneſs. Thus was the *preaching of Chriſt crucified to the* generality of the *Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.* But, *note,* 3. It was not thus unto all, there was a number of both, converted and ſaved by the doctrine of the croſs, unto whom *Chriſt was the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.* Here *obſerve,* 1. That Chriſt was the power of God; Iſaiah ſtyles him the mighty God, chap. ix. 6. Works of mighty power were performed by him, as the work of creation, Coloſ. i. 16. *By him were all things created in heaven and in the earth.* The work of providence, Heb. i. 3. *He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.* The work of redemption, Gal. iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* The curſe and wrath of God was a burden that would have broke the back of angels: none could ſtand under it but Chriſt, and not he neither, as mere man, but as ſupported by the infinite power of his Godhead. 2. Chriſt is the wiſdom of God; alſo his divine nature had a fulneſs of infinite and uncreated wiſdom found with it; alſo his human nature had a fulneſs of infuſed and created wiſdom found in it; and the redemption of man by Jeſus Chriſt, was a deſign of admirable wiſdom. He that turns his back upon Chriſt, rejects the wiſdom of God, and renders his ruin both dreadful and certain; they muſt periſh eternally by the hand of ſtrict juſtice, who will not be ſaved according to the methods of divine wiſdom, which are to ſave us from hell by ſaving us from our ſins. *Note,* 4. The reaſon aſſigned why the preaching of Chriſt crucified, became the power of God unto ſalvation, *becauſe the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men;* that is, the ordinances and inſtitutions of God, though they ſeem weak and fooliſh in the eye of the world, yet are more efficacious and powerful than all the wiſdom of worldly men. *Learn* hence, That the ordinances and inſtitutions of God, and particularly the preaching of the goſpel, though deſpiſed by the men of the world, yet by the power of God have glorious operations, and produce wonderful effects: *The weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men;* that is, the weakeſt inſtruments which God uſes, are ſtronger in their effects, than the ſtrongeſt which men can uſe: *And the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men;* not that there is either fooliſhneſs or weakneſs in God; but that which men account fooliſhneſs and weakneſs, and deride as ſuch, doth yet overcome all their admired wiſdom and ſtrength; and if the wiſdom of man cannot match the fooliſhneſs of God, how ſhall it vie and contend with the wiſdom of God? No wiſdom or power of man can ſtand before the fooliſhneſs and weakneſs, much leſs before the wiſdom and power of God: *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men,* &c.

26 For ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called.* 27 But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed hath God choſen, *yea,* and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.

Note here, 1. The ſingular favour which our apoſtle calls upon the Corinthians to eye and view, namely, their effectual vocation and calling out of heatheniſm to the profeſſion of chriſtianity; *you ſee your calling, brethren.* Such as are exalted by God in any kind, ought to call to mind their former meanneſs; but thoſe that are perſuaſively called by God out of a ſtate of nature, ought frequently to obſerve and conſider the worth and weight of that mercy, and the freeneſs of that divine favour: *Brethren, ſee,* and take notice of *your calling.* 2. That God has in all ages called ſome of all ranks and degrees of men, of the wiſe and great, the rich and noble, to the knowledge of himſelf, and his Son, *not many wiſe, not many mighty, not many noble are called:* He doth not ſay, not any, but not many, leſt the world ſhould think that chriſtians were deceived through their ſimplicity and weakneſs; one rich Joſeph of Arimathea, one honourable Nicodemus, one Criſpus, a ruler of the ſynagogue, but not many men of might and power: Men of ſtrong reaſon, and ſharpneſs of wit, are too proud to ſtoop to the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and the humbling, ſelf-denying terms of it; yet ſome of the wiſe and mighty are called, leſt any thing in man ſhould ſeem too hard for the grace of God; but not many, leſt worth and worthineſs in us ſhould be thought the motive that rules God. Men of greateſt fame and renown in the world, have been the fierceſt enemies againſt Chriſt and chriſtianity. Galen, the chief phyſician; Porphyry, a chief philoſopher; Lucian, a chief orator; with many others, were all profeſſed enemies of the chriſtian religion. Wherefore *note,* 3. That although God called ſome of the wiſe, rich, and noble, among the Jews and Gentiles, to eſpouſe chriſtianity, yet the far greater number of thoſe which hear his voice, and obey his call, are poor and mean, and, in the world's eſteem, weak and fooliſh, baſe and deſpicable; *God hath choſen fooliſh things to confound the wiſe, and weak things to confound the mighty.* This was verified in the choice which God made of the apoſtles, who firſt planted Chriſtianity in the world, and though illiterate fiſhermen, confuted and confounded the wiſeſt among philoſophers; and alſo in the choice which God made of the primitive Chriſtians, who firſt entertained the goſpel, and were a poor deſpiſed company, James ii. 5. *Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?* This choice Chriſt thanks his Father for, Matt. xi. 25. and the wiſdom of God therein, deſerves our higheſt admiration; becauſe thereby, (1.) God plainly ſhewed, that chriſtianity needed no worldly props to ſupport it. As it was firſt planted and propagated by weak and contemptible means and inſtruments, ſo is it ſtill upheld and ſupported without human policy or riches: God can out-wit wiſe men by fools, and over-power mighty men by thoſe that are weak; witneſs the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians. (2.) God, by this choice of the weak and fooliſh, of the baſe and deſpiſed, does pour contempt upon thoſe things which are moſt admired among men, namely, the internal endowments of the mind, ſtrong reaſon, and ſharpneſs of wit: and the external gifts of providence, nobility of birth, riches and honours. Lord! what ſhame and confuſion of face will cover the noble and honourable, the great and mighty, the rich and wealthy, in the coming world, when they ſhall ſee thoſe poor Chriſtians, whom they deſpiſed for their poverty, ſcorned for the meanneſs of parts, as unworthy to come into their preſence, highly exalted in the favor of God, and proclaimed the heirs of his kingdom! For as here God has more rent and better paid him (as the great landlord of the world) from many ſmoky cottages, than from divers great palaces, where perſons wallow in plenty, and forget God; ſo will God own his faithful, though deſpiſed ſervants, at the great day, and make it evident to angels and men, that he *accepteth not the perſon of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor*; but every one that here feared him, and wrought righteouſneſs, ſhall be accepted of him, and rewarded by him.

30 But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Our apoſtle had, in the foregoing verſes, acquainted the Corinthians how low and deſpicable their outward condition was in the world; he tells them, the world looked upon them as *weak* and *fooliſh*, and as ſuch, deſpiſed and diſdained them, but as a ſuperabundant recompenſe for the deſpicable meanneſs of their outward condition, he tells them what they are in Chriſt Jeſus, how rich they are as chriſtians; that Chriſt is made unto them *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption. Note* here, 1. An enumeration of the believing chriſtian's privileges, received by virtue of his intereſt in Chriſt, and union with him; and they are *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption:* To relieve us againſt our ignorance and blindneſs, he is *our wiſdom*, the fountain of divine illumination, enabling us to ſee both our ſin and danger; to diſcharge us from the burden of our guilt, and obnoxiouſneſs to divine wrath, he is our *righteouſneſs*, the author of juſtification, procuring for us remiſſion of ſin, and acceptance with God; to free us from the pollution and power of ſin, he is *our ſanctification*, purging us by his Spirit, as well as pardoning by his blood, coming both by water and blood into our ſouls; and, to ſet us at liberty from captivity and thraldom to ſin and Satan, and the law; he is made *our redemption*, that is, the bleſſed author of a beloved redemption, not from Egyptian bondage, or Babyloniſh captivity, but from the dominion of ſin and ſervitude to Satan, from the wrath of God, from the curſe of the law, from the danger and dread of death. *Learn* hence, That God has ſtored up in Chriſt all that we want, a ſuitable and full ſupply for every need, and made it communicable to us; he is our wiſdom, our righteouſneſs, our ſanctification and redemption, our all in all, our all in the want of all. *Note*, 2. The method, way, and manner, by and after which believers come to be inveſted with, and made partakers of theſe glorious privileges; *Chriſt of God is made unto us:* This denotes, (1.) That Chriſt, with all his benefits, becomes our's, by a ſpecial and effectual application; he *is made unto us.* (2.) That this application of Chriſt is the work of God, and not of man; *of God he is made unto us. Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all the precious fruits and invaluable benefits of his death, became our's by God's ſpecial and effectual application. *Note*, 3. The reaſon here aſſigned why the whole œconomy of grace is put into the hand of Chriſt, why all is communicated by him, and derived from him, namely, that all the ſaints glorying may be in him, and not in themſelves; *That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence, but as it is written, Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord*, ver. 29. 31. Infinite wiſdom and ſovereign pleaſure has centered all grace in Chriſt; it has pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell, and the fulneſs that is in him is a miniſterial fulneſs, it dwells in him on purpoſe to diſpenſe to us, according as our exigencies do require, and our faith deſerve; for *of him are we in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.

CHAP. II.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God.

Our apoſtle had in the foregoing chapter declared how Chriſt had ſent him to preach the goſpel in the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it, *not with the wiſdom of words*, ver. 17. that is, not in a pompous or flouriſhing way and manner of preaching, mingling the ſimplicity of the goſpel with human wiſdom: Accordingly, in this verſe, he tells them, that when, purſuant to his commiſſion, he came and preached to them at Corinth, he *came not with excellency of ſpeech*; that is, he ſtudied not to gratify their curioſity with rhetorical ſtrains, or philoſophical niceties, to pleaſe their wanton wits, but ſolidly to inform their judgments with the great and neceſſary duties of the goſpel, and to furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt arguments and motives for a good life. This is preaching: but had he come with human wiſdom, this would have detracted, (1.) From the excellency of the goſpel, which, like the ſun, ſhines beſt with its own beams; ſcripture-eloquence is moſt piercing and demonſtrative, and convinceth a man by its own evidence; human wiſdom charms the ear, but this ſtrikes the conſcience. (2.) It would have detracted from the glory of God, which is more honoured by the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the goſpel, than by the luxuriancies of wit, or the moſt admired oratory in the world; all human wiſdom muſt be denied, when it comes in competition with, or ſtands in oppoſition to, the doctrine of the goſpel. *Obſerve* farther, The title given to the goſpel, which he preached amongſt them in ſo much plainneſs and ſimplicity; he ſtyles it the *teſtimony of God*. Where *note*, That the teſtimony of the apoſtles concerning Chriſt's death, reſurrection and aſcenſion, is called the *the teſtimony of God*, becauſe God teſtified and bare witneſs to the truth of theſe doctrines by ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.

That is, "I determined not to diſcover to you, or diſplay before you, the eloquence and wiſdom of the Greeks, or to give you any other knowledge but that of a crucified Saviour, which, alas! is to them fooliſhneſs." Yet muſt not theſe words be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; not as if the apoſtle did abſolutely deſpiſe or contemn all other ſtudy and knowledge, much leſs vilify true philoſophy, logic, or oratory; for all knowledge is uſeful to him that knows how to refer it to right ends, and God has made nothing knowable in vain; but that all other knowledge, without the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, is inſignificant and ineffectual. *Note* here, 1. The ſubject-matter of St. Paul's ſtudy and preaching, it was Jeſus Chriſt; not Jewiſh traditions, not the Gentiles' philoſophy, but him *in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*. 2. The ſpecial relation in which our apoſtle choſe to ſtudy and preach Jeſus Chriſt, and that was *as crucified*; Chriſt above all other ſubjects, and Chriſt crucified above all other conſiderations, becauſe Chriſt crucified was to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; human wiſdom deſpiſed the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, but the apoſtle made them the ſubject of his ſtudy, and the ſcope of his preaching. *Learn* hence, 1. That as all of Chriſt, ſo more eſpecially his death, in all the myſteries of it, ought to be the principal ſubject of a Chriſtian's ſtudy and knowledge. 2. That as there is no doctrine more excellent in itſelf, ſo none more neceſſary to be preached than the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. Oh! let miniſters then preach, and by preaching, prepare their people to receive the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. And let both miniſters and people count all things but droſs, in compariſon of that excellency which is in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

3 And I was with you in weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling.

Note here, 1. How the apoſtle declares that his perſon was ſuitable to his preaching, both plain, neither pompous; 2 Cor. x. 10. he tells us, *That his bodily preſence was weak and mean, and his ſpeech contemptible.* Tradition tells us, That Paul (according as his name ſignifies) was a man of a very little ſtature, his voice ſmall, and wanting that preſence which ſome others had. 2. Some pain that the apoſtle was in, fearing leſt the infirmity of his fleſh ſhould render him as a miniſter deſpicable in the eyes of any, or the courſe of the goſpel be hindered and obſtructed by his bodily infirmities; for this was he with them *in fear and much trembling*. Nothing doth ſo much affect and afflict the miniſters of Chriſt, as an apprehenſion and fear, leſt any thing in or from themſelves ſhould obſtruct or hinder the ſucceſs of the goſpel which they teach: It is ſad when our people take occaſion, either from our poverty or mean appearance, to deſpiſe our meſſage, or from any natural imperfections found with us; but much ſadder, when ſuch moral blemiſhes are found with us, as do render us the occaſion of our own contempt, and the cauſe of our miniſtry's unſucceſsfulneſs.

4 And my ſpeech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.

Here our apoſtle goes on, declaring after what manner he did, and did not, preach the goſpel of Chriſt to the Corinthians. *Note*, 1. How he did not preach unto them: He tells us, that *his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom*; that is, his preaching was not garniſhed with human eloquence, did not conſiſt in rhetorical proofs, was not accompanied with the witty inſinuations of artificial learning, which pleaſes the ear, but affects not the heart; therefore the apoſtles did not, like rhetoricians and orators, poliſh their diſcourſes with an affected curioſity and exactneſs of language, but although they came in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of ſpeech; our apoſtle's preaching at Corinth, was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable: With what brevity, without darkneſs! With what gravity, without affectation! With what natural eloquence, without meretricious ornament, were St. Paul's diſcourſes! A miniſter's words ought not to be *inſtantia*, but *inflammantia*, not high-ſwelling, but heart-inflaming words. 2. How the apoſtle did preach unto the Corinthians; namely, *in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power*; that is, the doctrine which he preached was accompanied with, and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, to convince them that Jeſus was riſen from the dead, and was made Lord of all, whom therefore they ought to believe and obey: He did not go about to bewitch men with eloquence, nor to entangle their minds by ſubtile reaſonings, but he offered to men a ſenſible proof and demonſtration of the truth of what he delivered, in thoſe ſtrange and miraculous operations to which he was enabled by the Holy Ghoſt. This demonſtration of the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the word, we are not now to expect; but the miniſtry of the word is ſtill attended with a divine power of the Spirit, enlightening the underſtanding, and perſuading the conſcience; which may be called a demonſtration of the Spirit, becauſe the evidence of truth is no longer diſputed or contradicted, but the underſtanding aſſents to the word as true, and the will embraces it as good. 3. The reaſon aſſigned by the apoſtle, why he preached the goſpel in and after this plain and inartificial manner, namely, *that their faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God*; that is, that your faith or belief of the goſpel ſhould not ſeem to be obtained by human wiſdom and eloquence, but be aſcribed to a divine power, influencing ſuch weak means as my plain preaching was amongſt you. It is the praiſe of Omnipotency to work by improbabilities: God delights to do great things by weak and unlikely means, knowing that the weakneſs of the inſtrument redounds to the greater honour of himſelf, the principal agent. Human faith is an aſſent to any thing credible, as credible, upon the fallible teſtimony of the man it is founded upon, and reſolved into the authority of the ſpeaker: But divine faith is an aſſent to any thing credible, as credible, upon the infallible teſtimony of God, and is grouuded on, and reſolved into, the evidence of divine revelation. Upon this foot ſtood the Corinthians faith, *not in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.*

6 Howbeit we ſpeak wiſdom among them that
are perfect: yet not the wiſdom of this world, nor
of the princes of this world, that come to nought.
7 But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery,
even the hidden *wiſdom* which God ordained before
the world unto our glory:

Our apoſtle here proceeds in diſcourſing to the Corinthians of the excellency of his miniſtry among them, to obviate the contempt which ſome might caſt upon it for want of human eloquence, ſublimity of learning, and accurateneſs of ſpeech; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Though the wiſe men of the world account me a fool, and my preaching fooliſhneſs, yet I ſpeak the higheſt *wiſdom among them that are perfect*, or fully inſtructed in the principles of the Chriſtian faith." Although the diſcourſes of the ableſt miniſters of the goſpel ſeem jejune and dry to carnal hearts, yet they have an excellency of wiſdom and depth of judgment in them, which ſpiritual and judicious Chriſtians do own and acknowledge. Here *obſerve*, 1. The title which the apoſtle gives to the goſpel of Chriſt, which he preached: He ſtyles it *the wiſdom of God, the wiſdom of God is a myſtery, the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world was: The wiſdom of God*, becauſe it makes men truly wiſe, wiſe to ſalvation, directing us to uſe the beſt means in order to the beſt and higheſt end; and *the hidden myſterious wiſdom of God*, becauſe it lay hid in the ſecret counſels of God from all eternity, and afterwards lay hid under the Jewiſh types, but is now revealed by the miniſtry of Chriſt and his holy apoſtles; revealed in due time to our glory, that is, to be the means of our happineſs and glory. The gracious purpoſe and deſign of God in the recovery of a loſt world to happineſs and glory, by the death and ſufferings of his dear and only Son, was ſo myſterious and ſurpriſing, that it could never have entered the thoughts of men or angels, had not God himſelf diſcovered it by the revelation of the goſpel. 2. The compariſon which the apoſtle makes betwixt the wiſdom of the goſpel and the wiſdom of this world; *the wiſdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, comes to nought.* By the wiſdom of the world, underſtand the wiſdom of the heathen Gentile world, the learning of their admired philoſophers, all which *comes to nought*; that is, it is of no ſignificancy at all in order to the beſt and higheſt end, the ſalvation of the ſoul. Chriſtianity, or the knowledge of the goſpel, is the beſt knowledge, the trueſt and higheſt wiſdom; it is the beſt knowledge, becauſe it contains the knowledge of God and our duty, which is the moſt excellent, the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful knowledge; and it is the trueſt wiſdom, becauſe it is to be wiſe for ourſelves, and to be wiſe as to our chief intereſt! it propounds to us the nobleſt end, to wit, the glory of God, and our ſouls' ſalvation; and it directs us to uſe the beſt, the ſureſt and wiſeſt means for the certain obtaining of that end.

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

That is, which divine wiſdom, neither Caiaphas, nor Herod, nor Pontius Pilate, nor any of the Jewiſh or Gentile rulers, did underſtand. Where *note*, The apoſtle calls the learned Rabbies, the admired Philoſophers among the Heathens, the celebrated doctors among the Jews, *princes*, but preſently adds a dimunitive term, which darkens all their glory; he ſtyles them *the princes of this world*, utterly unacquainted with the wiſdom of the other world. *Note* farther, What a clear and full proof the apoſtle gives of their ignorance of this divine wiſdom which the goſpel reveals: *Had they known it*, that is, practically known it, ſo as to believe it, to be influenced and perſuaded by it, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Obſerve* here, 1. A royal title given to Chriſt, *The Lord of glory.* There belongs to him, (1.) An eſſential glory, as God, which is unſpeakable, yea, inconceivable, Phil. ii. 6. *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; that is, to have a peerage or equality with his Father in glory. (2.) A mediatorial glory, as head of the church, which conſiſts in that fulneſs of grace which is inherent in him, and in that dignity and authority which is put upon him. (3.) A paſſive glory, (as ſome divines call it) or a glory which ſhall to all eternity be given to him by his redeemed ones, by ſaints and angels, upon the account of his mediatorial work: Rev. v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory, and honour, and worſhip*, for he hath redeemed us, &c. 2. The indignity offered to this glorious perſon, *they crucified him*, they nailed him to an ignominious croſs, and put him to death, as the vileſt criminal, as the greateſt malefactor. 3. The cauſe of this indignity, and that was ignorance: *Had they known, they would not have crucified*, &c. that is, had the princes of this world known, either who Chriſt was, or the work which he came about, they would not have crucified him, but adored him. But was their ignorance of Chriſt a ſufficient excuſe for crucifying him? In no wiſe, becauſe it was not invincible, but a wilful ignorance: They had ſufficient means of inſtruction, by which they might have come to the knowledge of him, and of their duty to him; but they cloſed their eyes, and would not ſee.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? Even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Theſe words, *Eyes have not ſeen*, &c. do not immediately reſpect the happineſs of heaven, and a future ſtate, though very often they are ſo applied, but they are primarily ſpoken of the goſpel ſtate, and of the bleſſings to be enjoyed by them that love God here: From whence a good argument may be drawn to prove the inconceiveable happineſs of the ſaints hereafter. Though they have felt and taſted joys unſpeakable and full of glory, in the actings of their faith and love upon God at preſent, yet all that they have ſeen and heard, all that they have taſted and felt in the way to heaven, falls infinitely ſhort of the perfection and bleſſedneſs of that place and ſtate. Lord! how will thy immediate preſence, when we come into it, be a great ſurpriſe to thoſe of us that have now the greateſt acquaintance with it! Farther, The care and kindneſs of God towards his ſervants, in revealing to them by his Spirit thoſe great and good things prepared for them which ſurpaſs man's underſtanding. Though *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet God has revealed them to us by his Spirit.* There is a twofold revelation of the happineſs of a future ſtate. *Revelatio fidei*, and *revelatio viſionis*, a revelation of faith, and a revelation by viſion and ſight; the former, believers have by the help of the Holy Spirit in this life, as *viatores*; the latter they ſhall ere long enjoy in heaven, as *comprehenſores*, where they ſhall ſee as they are ſeen, and know as they are known. Laſtly, That the Holy Spirit, which thus revealeth hidden counſels to man, and ſearcheth the deep things of God, is omniſcient, and really God. *Mark*, (1.) *He ſearcheth deep things*; he is not only acquainted with, and privy to the ſurface and outſide of things, but ſearcheth things to the bottom. And, (2.) He ſearcheth not only the deep things of man, as of kings and princes, whoſe hearts are a great deep, but the deep things of God; therefore the Spirit is God; for as the apoſtle argues, ver. 11. *No man knoweth the things of a man*, &c. *even ſo the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God*, or he that is with God, in God, yea, God himſelf, as intimate with him as the ſoul is in the body. If the ſpirit that is in man were not man, it could never know the deep things of man; and if the Spirit of God were not God, he could never ſearch and know the deepeſt things of God.

12 Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle declares what ſpirit they had not received, namely, the ſpirit of the world: *We have not received the ſpirit of the world*; that is, the ſpirit which ſuggeſts worldly wiſdom, and ſavours only worldly things, which acts and influences only worldly men. In the whole generation of worldly men, there is the ſame worldly ſpirit, and this ſpirit of the world is an earthly ſpirit; it is a low, a little, and narrow ſpirit: Earthly things, which are preſent and viſible, ſuch a ſoul gapes after, and graſps hard; but future and inviſible things, which are far off, and out of ſight, are neither believed nor ſought after. 2. The apoſtle declares what Spirit they had received, namely, *the Spirit which is of God*; and of what uſe that Holy Spirit is unto them: It teaches them *to know the things which are freely given of God*; that is, the Holy Spirit ſheweth us, both what God is, and what the things of God are; we are enlightened with the knowledge of that grace and goodneſs of God which is diſcovered to us in the goſpel; we know both divine myſteries and divine mercies, both what God hath done for us, and what he hath wrought in us, which are *the things that are freely given us of God*. *Note*, 3. The apoſtle declares, he preached theſe ſpiritual things after a ſpiritual manner, *not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*; that is, not in the words, and after the manner now counted by the Gentile philoſophers to be learned and wiſe, but in the very words and after the very manner which the Spirit of God teacheth us. Where *learn*, That the holy apoſtles ſpake and writ by the immediate inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as the prophets of old time, and delivered nothing as from God, but what God revealed to them by his Holy Spirit; and accordingly, ſome interpret thoſe words, *Comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*; that is, ſay they, comparing the things which were writ by the Spirit in and under the Old Teſtament with what is now revealed to us under the New.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know *them*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

Note here, 1. The ſubject ſpoken of, the natural man; not σαρκικος, the ſenſual, but ψυχικος, the animal man, who acts only by the principles of human reaſon and worldly wiſdom; who though well furniſhed with intellectual and moral improvements, is yet deſtitute of the enlightening Spirit, and the renewing grace of God. 2. What is here affirmed of the natural man, with reference to ſpiritual things. (1.) That he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. (2.) That he cannot know them. Where *note*, That it is not ſaid, that he knoweth not the things of God, but *the things of the Spirit of God*; for there are ſome things of God, which a natural man may know, but *the things of the Spirit of God*, as truths purely evangelical, theſe he receiveth not, neither in his underſtanding, nor in his will. *Note*, further, It is not barely ſaid that he doth not, but that he cannot know them. Natural reaſon alone, by what helps ſoever aſſiſted and improved, is altogether inſufficient, without ſpiritual illumination, to apprehend ſupernatural and evangelical truth; not but that the Spirit of God, in the work of illumination and converſion, makes uſe of our reaſon; that flower of the ſoul is not blaſted, but more opened by the blowing of the bleſſed Spirit. Chriſtianity doth not command us to throw away our reaſon, but to ſubjugate it; not to deny or diſown our reaſon, but to captivate it to the obedience of faith: But the ſenſe of the apoſtle is, that a perſon of the moſt exquiſite natural accompliſhments, and one that has improved his reaſon to the higheſt pitch, cannot behold evangelical myſteries in their proper light, or embrace them in their verity and beauty, without the ſuperadded aids and aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit. 3. The reaſons declared, why the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, *becauſe they are fooliſhneſs unto him*; that is, he accounts them fooliſhneſs when propounded to him, becauſe he doth not ſee them proved from principles of natural reaſon, and by philoſophical deductions, which is the only wiſdom that he ſeeks after. The reaſon alſo is added, why *he cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; that is, the natural man cannot know divine things by that wiſdom which he alone will be conducted by; and ſpiritual things muſt be ſpiritually diſcerned; for being myſteries, they are not knowable by human reaſon, but by ſpiritual revelation. And if the wiſdom of the world, that is, the learned and wiſeſt men in the world, were thus unable, by the ſharpeſt light of reaſon, to diſcover evangelical myſteries; Lord! how endearing are our obligations for the benefit of ſupernatural revelation, whereby the hidden wiſdom of God is made known unto us.

15 But he that is ſpiritual, judgeth all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although *the natural man*, who acteth only by principles of human reaſon, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know them by any ſtudy of his own*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned; yet *he that is ſpiritual*, that is, who hath the revelation and illumination of the Spirit of God, judgeth, or diſcerneth, and trieth all things, that is, all ſpiritual matters: *yet he himſelf is judged of no man*, that is, diſcerned by none who hath no higher principle, than that of nature to diſcern things by." *Learn* hence, That ſuch Chriſtians as are enlightened and renewed with, guided and conducted by, the Holy Spirit of God, are the only proper judges of ſpiritual matters, able to underſtand their duty, and to diſcern between good and evil. *He that is ſpiritual judgeth all things.*

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may inſtruct him? But we have the mind of Chriſt.

That is, "What man, without divine revelation and ſpiritual illumination, ever knew or underſtood the mind of God ſo well, as to be able to inſtruct, direct, and inform the ſpiritual man about it? But we who are ſpiritual, have the mind of Chriſt, and ſo are able to diſcern and direct, to guide and inſtruct others about it." *Learn* hence, That none are fit and ſufficient to interpret the mind of God unto others, who are not acquainted with it themſelves: *We have the mind of Chriſt*, ſaith the apoſtle of himſelf and his fellow-labourers in the goſpel: His meaning is not only this, that they had the mind of Chriſt written in a book, but that they had a clear underſtanding of it, and ſo were fitted to interpret it to others. There is no ſuch knowledge as the knowledge of experience, no teaching like unto experimental teaching.

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle having reproved the Corinthians for their contentions and diviſions, for the factions and parties which were found amongſt them; here ſhews what a ſcandal their diſſenſions were to religion, and a reproach unto themſelves.

AND I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Chriſt.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "My brethren, although I ſpeak the higheſt wiſdom amongſt them that are perfect, yet could not I ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual perſons, but as unto carnal, becauſe the works of the fleſh are found with you, and at the beſt you are but babes in Chriſt." *Learn* hence, That even amongſt thoſe who are the true and real members of the viſible church, ſome are ſpiritual, and ſome are carnal, ſome are men, ſome are babes. The apoſtle doth not call them abſolutely carnal, as if they were wholly given up to the works of the fleſh; but comparatively ſo, having too much carnality and corruption in them, and ſavouring too much of the fleſh, though for the main truly pious; and therefore he uſes the word *as*, for mitigation ſake: I could not ſpeak unto you but *as* unto carnal.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

With milk, that is, with eaſy and common truths; not with the myſterious part of goſpel-knowledge; with the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, and not with the higher doctrines of Chriſtianity, which neither then, nor now, are ye able to bear. *Learn* hence, That it is great prudence and wiſdom in the miniſters of Chriſt to inſtruct people in the firſt principles of religion, in order to their regular advancing higher in Chriſtianity. Miniſters are ſpiritual nurſes; they firſt muſt feed with milk, then with meat, otherwiſe they will not nouriſh, but deſtroy.

3 ¶ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying and ſtrife and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

That is, "Ye are in a great meaſure carnal; for your envy, ſtrife, and diviſions, prove you to be ſo, and that you live according to the corrupt nature of man." They had the ſeed and root of grace abiding, and yet the relics of corruption remaining in them. There is a vaſt difference between weak grace, and no grace: between the preſence of ſin, and the power of ſin. But how could the apoſtle here call the Corinthians carnal, and babes in Chriſt, when in chap. i. ver. 5. he affirmed, that they were *enriched with all knowledge and utterance?* *Anſ.* That might be true as to ſome particular perſons amongſt them, who had thoſe extraordinary gifts of tongues and miracles given them for the confirmation of the goſpel; and yet what is here ſaid, be true, as to the generality of them, that they had too much carnality and unmortified corruption remaining in them: *Ye are yet carnal.* Next, What proof he gives of it, namely, ocular demonſtration; for, ſays he, there are among you *envying, ſtrife, and diviſions.* Envy, as the root, bears ſtrife, and ſtrife breeds diviſions and factions. Envy is a peſtilent luſt, yea, a deviliſh luſt; it makes another's good our grief. The devil envies God and man their happineſs; he rejoices at the deſtruction of ſinners, though he has no advantage by it; nay, though it increaſeth his torment, becauſe they were tempted by him to ſin. There is nothing ſo like the devil as an envious man, with his cloven foot, to make diviſion wherever he comes. *Learn* hence, 1. That envy is the cauſe and companion of ſtrife. 2. That ſtrife and contention, differences and diviſions, are often found in the churches of Chriſt, and among particular Chriſtians. 3. That ſo far as theſe prevail in and among any, it evidences that they are carnal, and walk as men.

4 For while one ſaith I am of Paul, and another, I *am* of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

That is, one ſaith, in oppoſition to another, I am the diſciple of Paul; and another, I follow Apollos: and thus, probably, they call themſelves after the names of their admired preachers, factiouſly crying up one miniſter above another. Hence *learn*, That although it be a people's duty to have a great and high eſteem of the miniſters of Chriſt, yet muſt not their reſpect degenerate into a ſinful admiration of their perſons; for the factious affecting of one miniſter above another, is both ſinful and dangerous. When the gifts and abilities of one miniſter are cried up to the contempt of others, it occaſions enmity and diſſenſion amongſt miniſters themſelves, and their people alſo: *Are ye not carnal, when one ſaith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos?* It is added, chap. i. 12. *And I of Chriſt:* That is, they factiouſly ſaid they were of, or for Chriſt, in oppoſition to his miniſters. They pretended to the immediate teachings of Chriſt, and had no need of the miniſtry, either of Paul or Apollos. *Learn* hence, That although Chriſt only is to be relied upon, as head of his church, yet it is not his will we ſhould deſpiſe his miniſtry, or contemn his miniſters under that pretence.

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Neither Paul or Apollos were the authors of your faith, but only miniſterial helpers of it, as God is pleaſed to furniſh them with gifts, and to give a bleſſing to their miniſterial endeavours." Your miniſters give out to you as God gives in to them; and therefore, you ought not factiouſly to boaſt of their gifts, nor to make parties upon that account. *Learn* hence, 1. That the miniſtry of the word is the inſtituted mean and inſtrumental cauſe, which God hath appointed for working faith in the hearts of men. 2. That God has furniſhed his miniſters with variety of gifts and abilities; all which he makes uſe of, in order to that end. 3. That therefore, the miniſters of Chriſt ought neither to be deified nor nullified, neither to be cried up, nor trodden down; we are not efficient cauſes, but only inſtrumental means of faith. Render therefore unto God the glory of the author, and unto miniſters the honour of the inſtrument. *Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters.*

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increaſe.

I planted: That is, I firſt preached the goſpel among you, and firſt inſtructed you in the principles of Chriſt: I converted you to Chriſt. After me came Apollos, and watered the ſeed which I had ſown; but God it was, and God alone, that cauſed the ſeed which I ſowed, and Apollos watered, to fructify and increaſe. *Learn*, 1. That it is an act of diſcriminating grace and favour in God, to ſend out his miniſters to plant the goſpel amongſt a people that never before heard of it. 2. That it is an act of farther favour and grace in God, to follow a people with a ſucceſſion of miniſters, in order to the watering of the ſeed formerly ſown among them. 3. That all that miniſters can do, is but to plant and water; they cannot give increaſe, nor procure the ſucceſs of their miniſterial endeavours. Bleſſed be God, that he doth not require the ſucceſs of our labours at our hands. Wo unto us, ſhould he ſay, "Either reconcile my people to me, or I will never be reconciled unto you." Diligence and endeavour is our's, the bleſſing and ſucceſs is God's: He will never blame us for doing his work.

7 So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe.

The ſenſe is, 'Neither is he that planteth to be eſteemed as any thing, nor he that watereth as any thing, but the glory of all muſt be aſcribed to God that giveth the increaſe.' Yet muſt we underſtand the apoſtle ſpeaking thus not abſolutely, but comparatively; "They are not any thing, that is, not any thing of themſelves alone, without the concurrence of the Spirit; what excellent gifts ſoever they have, they cannot of themſelves make the word they preach effectual." Lord! how many ſouls do find both the miniſtry and miniſters to be nothing as to them? If it be any thing to purpoſe to any ſoul, it is God, and not his miniſters, that makes it ſo. The beſt and ableſt miniſtry is nothing to any ſaving purpoſe, without God's power giving the increaſe.

8 Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one: and every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one; that is, in their deſign and ſcope, in the aim and end of their miniſtry: therefore, they ſhould not be factiouſly divided, either among themſelves, or by their hearers. Although there is a variety and diverſity in the gifts of Chriſt's miniſters, yet the intent and deſign of their miniſtry being one, they all ought to agree as one. They ſhould be one in doctrine, and one in affection, aiming at one and the ſame mark; namely, the glory of God, and men's ſalvation, as they are one in their office, inſtitution, and end. It follows, *Every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.* Thence *learn*, That every man, eſpecially every miniſter, is ſure to receive a proportionable reward hereafter, according to his labour and working for God here. 2. The approbation and diſtinction of this reward: *He ſhall receive his own reward*; implying, that there are degrees of reward and glory in heaven, according as men have laboured more or leſs for God here on earth: According to this gradual diverſity ſhall be gradual degrees of glory. 3. The meaſure and rule of this reward; according to his labour, not according to his ſucceſs; according to his induſtry, not according to the fruit of his miniſtry: If he labours faithfully, God will reward him proportionably, though few or none have believed his report.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's huſbandry, *ye are* God's building.

Note here, 1. The honourable title put upon the miniſters of God; they are labourers, or workers together with God. But in what ſenſe are they ſo? *Anſw.* Not ſo by any power of their own, to produce any ſpiritual effect, as if they without God could work faith and repentance in the hearts of ſinners; but they work only by an external application of the miniſtry of the word, and the means of grace to the ſouls of men. They are under-labourers to God, and God honours them by working by them, and working with them, for the converſion of men. 2. The honourable relation in which the church ſtands to God: The church and people of God, are his huſbandry, and his building: *Ye are God's huſbandry, ye are God's building.* Which phraſe implies, (1.) Power and goodneſs in making them ſo: A building is not of itſelf, nor is a field clothed with goodly corn of itſelf. (2.) It implies dominion and abſolute ſovereignty: The maſter is the orderer of the houſe, and the huſbandman the diſpoſer of his ground. (3.) It denotes propriety and intereſt, that we are not our own, but God's. The houſe is the owner's, not its own. God is their's, and all that God has is their's alſo.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wiſe maſter-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Note here, 1. The character which St. Paul aſſumes to himſelf, namely, that of a maſter-builder, yea, of *a wiſe maſter-builder.* But was it not vain-glorious in the apoſtle thus to deſcribe himſelf? Is not Chriſt the great and wiſe maſter-builder of his church? Yes, undoubtedly: But the apoſtles were inſtruments in his hand, which he honoured with ſucceſs; for which reaſon, St. Paul thus ſpeaks. *Learn* hence, That in ſome caſes it is not vain-glory, but a neceſſary duty, for the miniſters of Chriſt to magnify their work and office received from Chriſt. 2. The ſpecial work performed by St. Paul, the wiſe maſter-builder, *he laid the foundation*; that is, he firſt acquainted them with the rudiments and fundamental principles of the Chriſtian religion, which they had never heard of before. *Learn* thence, that it is a ſpecial part of divine wiſdom in a miniſter to lay at firſt a good foundation of ſcripture knowledge in the minds and underſtandings of his people. Unleſs we have a knowing people, we are not like to have a gracious people. All our ſermons will be daſhed to pieces upon the rock of our people's ignorance, if they be not well catechiſed and inſtructed in the fundamentals of Chriſtianity. 3. How very careful our apoſtle is to aſcribe all our ſtrength, his aſſiſtance and ſucceſs as a maſter-builder, to the grace of God: *According to the grace of God given to me.* *Learn* thence, That it is the property of every godly man, much more of every gracious miniſter, to attribute all that good which is either received or done by him to the grace of God. What man ever received more grace from God, or did more ſervice for God, than St. Paul? And ſo enlarged is he upon all occaſions, in magnifying the grace of God, that he is never ſatisfied in exalting of it: *Not I, but the grace of God that was with me,* &c. 4. The cautionary direction given by St. Paul to all ſucceeding miniſters of Chriſt, to take heed that they lay no other foundation than what was laid by him; and that they build ſuitably upon that foundation: *Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.* *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of Chriſt are to take ſpecial care that they preach no other doctrine than what Chriſt and his apoſtles preached, and laid as the foundation of Chriſtianity; and that they do not build upon that foundation any doctrine which may endanger their own or their people's ſalvation: *I have laid the foundation, and let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

That is, no other true foundation can any man lay, than that which is already laid by me; namely, the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and faith in him. The miniſters of Chriſt ought to lay no other foundation than Chriſt: They are to lead their people to, and build them upon, no other rock but Chriſt. All threatenings, promiſes, commands, duties, privileges, are to be preached, and preſſed with reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt: He is to be laid as the only foundation in reſpect of knowledge, in reſpect of faith, in reſpect of juſtification, in reſpect of interceſſion and acceptance with God. The miniſter's great work is to ſet Chriſt forth in all his glorious fulneſs, to repreſent him in all his offices, as a glorious object for the eye of our faith to look into, and fix upon.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble; 13 Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt. For the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire ſhall try every man's work of what ſort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he ſhall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved; yet ſo, as by fire.

In theſe words the apoſtle ſpeaks of two ſorts of preachers under the metaphor of builders: (1.) Some that are ſound and orthodox, who hold the foundation, and build upon it *gold, ſilver,* and *precious ſtones*; that is, ſuch ſincere and wholeſome doctrine as will bear the touch-ſtone and trial. (2.) Others that are unſound and erroneous, who hold indeed the foundation of Chriſtianity, but build upon it ſuch doctrines as will not bear the trial, expreſſed by wood, hay, and ſtubble, which are not proof againſt the fire. *Learn* hence, 1. That the doctrine of Chriſt and the truths of the goſpel, are very excellent, and exceeding precious; compared to gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones, for their uſefulneſs and preciouſneſs. *Learn,* 2. That all errors and falſhoods in religion, all erroneous and falſe doctrines, though not fundamental, are yet no better than hay and ſtubble, vain and unprofitable, vile and contemptible. (3.) As a two-fold builder deſcribed, ſo a two-fold event declared: Some men's work, that is, their doctrines and practices, will abide the fire, others will be burnt up, and ſuffer loſs; where, by the fire, underſtand the word and Spirit of God. A probatory, not a purgatory fire, is here intended; becauſe it is ſaid to burn not the perſon, but the action, and every action too of every man. Now the Popiſh purgatory fire tries not all perſons, ſome are exempted as martyrs; and not all actions neither, but wicked ones only; whereas this fire ſhall try every man's work. The meaning is, that the light of God's word and Spirit will manifeſt the verity and vanity, the ſoundneſs or falſeneſs of doctrines delivered by all preachers. Sound doctrine, that, like good metal, will endure the furnace, ſhall be rewarded; but ſuch doctrines as will not endure the trial, ſhall miſs of the reward. *Learn* hence, 1. That all the ways and works of wickedneſs in general, and all hidden and ſecret ways of falſe doctrine in particular, God will one day reveal and make manifeſt; *Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt: for the day ſhall declare it.* 2. That the true and ſincere doctrine of the goſpel is firm and durable, and ſuch as will abide the cloſeſt trial; yea, and will grow more illuſtrious and glorious thereby. 3. That men may hold the foundation, and maintain the fundamentals of Chriſtianity, and yet may ſo ſuperſtruct upon it, and ſuperadd ſo many things unto it, whereby they may greatly endanger their own and others' ſalvation: *They ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire*; that is, with great difficulty, having expoſed themſelves to the utmoſt hazard and danger. The ſpeech is proverbial, and ſignifies both the greatneſs of the danger, and the difficulty of eſcaping it; intimating, that errors in judgment, endanger a perſon's ſalvation, as well as ungodlineſs in practice. He that has a due care of his ſoul's ſalvation, will be as well afraid of erroneous principles, as he is of debauched practices: For error is as damnable as vice: The one is an open road, the other a by-path to hell and deſtruction.

16 ¶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

Our apoſtle here, in the judgment of ſome interpreters, makes uſe of a farther argument to convince the Corinthians of the evil of their diviſions. They are the church and temple of God, therefore not to be profaned by diviſions: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?* as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "You Corinthians, by being converted to Chriſtianity, are become a Chriſtian church, an holy temple, in which the Spirit of God doth dwell, and where the Spirit of diviſion ought not to dwell; for if any man defile the temple of God, by dividing the church into factions and parties, him will God deſtroy; for the temple of the Lord is holy, and not to be profaned by your dividing luſts, which temple ye are." *Learn* hence, 1. That the people of God, met together to worſhip him, are the church or ſpiritual temple of God. 2. That the Spirit of God dwells in the church, or temple of God: and this dwelling implies propriety, familiarity, authority, reſidency, and fixedneſs of abode. 3. That ſuch as defile the holy temple of God, either by factious diviſions, or erroneous doctrines, do provoke God to deſtroy them; that is, to puniſh them with temporal deſtruction, and, without repentance, with eternal damnation: *If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy.*

18 ¶ Let no man deceive himſelf. If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe. 19 For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God: for it is written, He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe that they are vain.

Obſerve here, 1. A word of caution; *Let no man deceive himſelf.* Self-deceit is the ground of all other deceit. Whatever deceit is abroad, it begins at home. A deceitful heart will not ſpare ſo much as itſelf; although this ſelf-deceit be moſt unnatural and monſtrous, moſt fatal and pernicious. 2. A word of exhortation, *If any man ſeem to be wiſe, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe*; that is, "If any man ſeems to be wiſe in the wiſdom and learning of this world, let him embrace the doctrine of Chriſt, which the world calls fooliſhneſs, and ſo become a fool to them, that he may be wiſe according to the wiſdom of God." *Learn* hence, That all human and worldly wiſdom cometh far of, and is but a mere ſhadow and appearance, compared with the wiſdom of God manifeſted in the goſpel. *Obſerve,* 3. A word of inforcement: *For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God.* It is ſo in God's opinion and eſtimation; he accounts it ſo. If we compare wit with grace, learning with religion, a rational head with a gracious heart, the latter infinitely tranſcends the former in the account of God. All the admired wiſdom of worldly men, is nothing but contemptible folly in the eſteem of God. The world's wiſe man, is God's fool. 4. A double teſtimony which the apoſtle produces out of the Old Teſtament to prove his aſſertion, that the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs with God. The firſt is out of Job v. 13. *He* *taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs.* *Learn* hence, That no wiſdom or craftineſs of man can ſtand before the wiſdom and power of God. The ſecond teſtimony is taken out of Pſalm xciv. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain*; that is, the choiceſt and beſt thoughts of the wiſeſt men are vain, yea, vanity.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men: For all things are yours: 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye *are* Chriſt's; and Chriſt *is* God's.

Here the apoſtle cloſes his diſcourſe with an inference not to glory in any teacher whatſoever, either in Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, ſeeing they were all theirs; that is, all the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt, from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the greateſt to the leaſt, and all their miniſterial gifts and labours, are all ordained and appointed by God for their uſe and ſervice: *All things are your's, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.* *Learn* hence, That all miniſters, and miniſterial abilities, are wholly for the church's ſervice, and ſpiritual advantage; all their power is for the church's preſervation, all their gifts are for the church's edification. Their meſſage is for the church's comfort and conſolation: Thus all things, in and belonging to the church, are our's. Next he mentions the things of the world as our's. *Or the world*; that is, all the good things in the world are our's, houſes, lands, honours, friends, relations, ſo far as God ſees them good for us. But are there not many that are Chriſt's, who want houſes and friends, and other comforts, how then can they be ſaid to have them? *Anſ.* (1.) They have all things eminently and tranſcendently in God and Chriſt, by whom they have a title to all things, Rev. xxi. 7. (2.) They have all things virtually in their contentment and ſatisfaction of mind which they do enjoy. (3.) They have all things eventually; they have the good of all things, when they have not the actual poſſeſſion of all things; their very wants, in the event, work for good. *Or life*; this is our's two ways: The comfort of life is our's, and the end of life is our's, with the true uſe of it; for the ſincere Chriſtian only lives to purpoſe, by anſwering the great end of life, which is the promoting God's glory, and ſecuring his own ſalvation. *Or death*; that which is in itſelf ſo terrible is for the believer's advantage, their friend, their privilege, their paſſage to heaven, their deliverer from ſin, the perfecter of their grace; when we come at heaven, and not till then, we ſhall fully underſtand what this meaneth, *Death is our's.* *Or things preſent*; that is all the events of providence which befal us, whether proſperity or adverſity, health or ſickneſs, riches or poverty, they are all ſanctified to us, and are inſtrumental for the ſanctifying of us. They are covenant-bleſſings, and diſpenſed in love to us. *Or things to come*; that is, all future things which may befal us in this world, and in the world to come, ſhall be to our abundant advantage, whether they be merciful or good things, or grievous and ſad things; particularly, death is to come, but to die is gain: Chriſt's death was the death of death; he has diſarmed death of its ſting; the believer fears not its dart; it is an hurting, but an healing ſerpent: There is no venom or malignity in it; but that which was before in the number of threatenings, is now brought within the compaſs of the goſpel-promiſes; all things are our's, life or death, things preſent, and things to come. *And ye are Chriſt's*; that is, not Paul's or Apollos's diſciples or ſervants, but only Chriſt's, therefore glory in him. Conſecrate all to the ſervice of Chriſt, and reſign up all to the will of Chriſt; ye are Chriſt's by donation, ye are Chriſt's by redemption, ye are Chriſt's by conqueſt; ye are therefore to glory in him, and in him only. *And Chriſt is God's*; that is, as you are Chriſt's, and for his glory, ſo Chriſt, as Mediator, is God's, and for his glory. He is God's ſervant, to do his will, to execute his pleaſure: He was begotten of his Father before all time: He received his doctrine from the Father in the fulneſs of time: He ſought not his own, but his Father's glory, in the doctrine which he preached, in the miracles which he wrought; but lived in an entire reſignation to his Father's pleaſure. Lord! how will it ſhame us thy ſervants, to follow thy ſervant Chriſt, and to be called by his name, if we ſeek not his glory, and exalt not his will, and live not to his praiſe, who died for us and roſe again.

CHAP. IV.

There are two extremes which perſons are very apt to run into, with reſpect to the miniſters of Chriſt; namely, to extol, and idolize ſome; and to depreſs, and vilify others. To preſerve that due honour, and keep up that juſt eſteem which is payable to all miniſters, is the deſign of the apoſtle in this chapter.

LET a man ſo account of us as of the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although I warned you in the foregoing chapter, againſt an undue eſteem of your paſtors, and againſt a factious preference of ſome before others, to the great ſcandal of religion, and the prejudice of the goſpel: yet I ſpeak not this to draw you off from paying that due honour and deſerved reſpect which belongs to their character: but I deſire you to account them all, neither more nor leſs, but *as miniſters* of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God." Here *obſerve*, 1. A double character given of an evangelical paſtor. He is, (1.) *A miniſter of Chriſt*; that is, a perſon deputed by the command, and inveſted with the authority of Chriſt, to adminiſter in holy things, to preach the word, adminiſter the ſacraments, execute church-cenſures; being in all things an example to the flock: And the people are to account the office and work of the miniſtry, as a divine inſtitution and appointment of Chriſt in his church: Whoever ſlights or oppoſes the miniſtry, flies in the face of Chriſt himſelf. (2.) He is *a ſteward of the myſteries of God*; and that in a two-fold reſpect. 1. He is a ſteward of the truths of God. 2. Of the ordinances of God. Of the truths of

God he is a ſteward, to open and explain them for the ſpiritual edification of all Chriſtians, and to defend and maintain them againſt the oppoſition of all adverſaries: God's ſteward muſt not ſuffer vermin to deſtroy the proviſion of God's houſhold. He is a ſteward of the ordinances of God alſo; which he is obliged to diſpenſe in all faithfulneſs to his congregation: 1 Pet. iv. 10. *As every man hath received the gifts, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God. Obſerve*, 2. As the miniſters of Chriſt are deſcribed, they are *ſtewards*; ſo the qualification of a ſteward is declared, and that is faithfulneſs: *It is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful.* What ground is there for truſt, where there is no truth! Now this faithfulneſs in our ſtewardſhip, includes, (1.) Purity of intention: A pure end in all our ſervices will give us abundance of comfort at the end of our ſervice. (2.) Sincerity and integrity of heart: A faithful miniſter is a ſincere-hearted miniſter, who preaches his ſermons firſt to himſelf, and then to his hearers. (3.) Miniſterial diligence: A ſlothful miniſter can never be a faithful ſteward: We muſt ſtudy the truths of God to paleneſs, preach them to faintneſs, maintain and defend them with ſtedfaſtneſs: We look for happineſs from God, as long as he is in heaven, and he expects faithfulneſs from us as long as we are upon earth. (4.) Faithfulneſs in ſtewardſhip, includes impartiality in all the adminiſtrations of Chriſt's houſe: We muſt take the ſame care of, manifeſt the ſame love unto, attend with the ſame diligence upon, the pooreſt and meaneſt in our congregations, as we do the rich, the great, and the honourable: For all our ſouls are of one price, and rated at one value in our Lord's book. Oh! let us take care we be impartial ſtewards; for we muſt ſhortly give an account of our ſtewardſhip before an impartial God.

3 But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own ſelf.

Not as if the apoſtle was unconcerned, whether the Corinthians had a good eſteem of him or not; or were regardleſs of his reputation among men: But the meaning is, he did not much value himſelf upon the opinion and judgment which any perſons had of him; knowing that his caſe would not be finally determined by any man's judgment, nor yet by his own. Therefore, ſays he, *I judge not myſelf*; that is, definitively, ſo as to acquieſce in that judgment: For I may be deceived in my judgment of myſelf, therefore I leave myſelf to the judgment of God. It is a ſingular ſupport to all the members, but eſpecially the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, that they and their actions have a more righteous judge to be examined and tried by, than either the world or themſelves: The world's judgment may falſely condemn them, their own judgment may flatter and deceive them; but the judgment of God will deal impartially with them.

4 For I know nothing by myſelf; yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Theſe words are not to be underſtood abſolutely and univerſally, but relatively, and reſpectively; not as if the apoſtle knew no ſin in himſelf, (for he went groaning under a body of ſin to his grave) but with reſpect to his miniſtry; his conſcience cleared him of all unfaithfulneſs and neglect of duty: *Though I know nothing* of unfaithfulneſs *by myſelf, yet am I not thereby juſtified* at God's tribunal, *for he that judgeth me is the Lord. Note* here, 1. St. Paul's juſtification of himſelf before men, *he knew nothing by himſelf*; that is, in general, his conſcience did not accuſe him of any groſs prevaricating with God, and in particular did not charge him with any negligence or unfaithfulneſs, in reſpect of his office; he had not been an unfaithful ſteward of divine myſteries, nor guilty of any crimes that his adverſaries could charge him with. 2. His diſclaiming all juſtification thereby in the ſight of God; *yet am I not thereby juſtified*; his ſincerity did comfort him, but could not juſtify him: The righteouſneſs of the holieſt and beſt of men, is not pleadable before the righteous and holy God for juſtification. The reaſon given why the apoſtle did not, durſt not, plead his own righteouſneſs before God for juſtification; *for he that judgeth me is the Lord*; as if he had ſaid, "Were I to appear at man's bar, I doubt not but to come off well enough, for none knows me ſo well as myſelf; but I have to do with an heart-ſearching God, who knows me better than myſelf; and when God comes to look over my work, he will ſpy that which the moſt eagle-eyed perſon cannot ſpy. Therefore, there is no ſtanding for me, a creature, before God, in any creature purity. Angelical perfection is imperfect in his ſight: Angels, though they have not the leaſt ſpot of ſin in their natures, yet are chargeable with folly; their nature being potentially ſinful; the heavens themſelves are not clean in God's ſight.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts: and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.

Our apoſtle's deſign in theſe words, is not to condemn all judgment of perſons, words or actions, or to oblige us to ſuſpend our judging till the day of judgment; but only forbids raſh cenſuring, unadviſed, uncertain, and unſeaſonable judging of the hearts, and final ſtates of men. We may judge what appeareth, but not what is hidden and unſeen; for the judging of hidden things is referred to him from whom nothing is hidden. *Learn* hence, That to take upon us to judge the heart, or to judge that which doth not appear, is to aſſume the office, and to take upon us the place of God; only he that is inviſible can look into that which is inviſible. Farther, The perſon ſpoken of, *who makes manifeſt the counſels of the heart, and brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs*; it is Jeſus Chriſt: *Judge nothing till the Lord come*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. A ſtrong argument to prove the divinity of our bleſſed Saviour: He that has knowledge of the heart, of the ſecrets of the hearts of all men, and has all theſe ſubject to his judgment, is undoubtedly God. But Chriſt aſcribes all this knowledge to himſelf, Rev. ii. 23. *All the churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one according to his works*; therefore he is eſſentially and really God. *Obſerve*, laſtly, What will be the iſſue and conſequence of our Lord's knowing and judging the ſecrets of men; *Then ſhall every one have praiſe of God*; that is, every one ſhall have praiſe, that is praiſe-worthy; every good man, though now diſpraiſed and deſpiſed, though cenſured and condemned, though loaded with ſcandals and falſe reports, yet then every righteous man ſhall have praiſe from Chriſt the righteous Judge.

6 And theſe things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myſelf and *to* Apollos for your ſakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another.

Here the apoſtle proſecutes his former argument afreſh, that neither the Corinthians, nor any other Chriſtian, ſhould ſo overvalue and magnify ſome miniſters of the goſpel, as to undervalue and deſpiſe others, making men of eminency the heads of factions and parties; but that they eſteem all miniſters as inſtruments only in Chriſt's hand, doing nothing of themſelves, but aſſiſted by the grace and ſtrength of God, to whom therefore the ſucceſs and entire praiſe of all their labours is due. This is to think of them according to what is written, chap. iii. 6. 8. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters?* *Learn* hence, That it is too uſual, when people have a very great and high eſteem of the miniſters of Chriſt, to overvalue themſelves by reaſon of their relation to them and dependance upon them; and whilſt they honour and magnify ſome, to vilify and diſeſteem others. This is the fault which all along our apoſtle has been condemning ſince he began this epiſtle, and he has not yet done with it; for thus he proceeds:

7 ¶ For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* And what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? Now, if thou didſt receive *it,* why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received *it?*

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Who is it that maketh one miniſter to differ from, and excel another? Is it not God? If ſo, then, let thoſe miniſters that have received the greateſt gifts from God, whom the inſpiration of the Almighty hath made moſt wiſe and underſtanding, be moſt humble themſelves; let none take occaſion from thence to deſpiſe others who have received leſs." *Learn* hence, That miniſters of great abilities, eminent for gifts and graces, are in great danger of being puft up themſelves, and their people alſo too prone to glory in them: There is a temptation in good things, yea, in the beſt things, to pride; the beſt men on earth may be overheated by what they have received from heaven; and Satan may take occaſion, even from our raptures in ſpirit, to puff us up with ſpiritual pride; therefore our apoſtle puts forth this ſoul-humbling and pride-mortifying expoſtulation, *What haſt thou that thou haſt not received? Who made thee to differ?* There is nothing wherein one miniſter, or indeed one man, differeth, or is diſtinguiſhed from another, or wherein he excelleth another, but it is given him from God; it is God, and not himſelf, that makes him to differ; it is an high degree of pride for any man to ſay, *Ego diſcrevi meipſum,* I of myſelf have made myſelf to differ.

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you. 9 For I think that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We *are* fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye *are* wiſe in Chriſt; we *are* weak, but ye *are* ſtrong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* deſpiſed.

Theſe words are looked upon by interpreters as an ironical reproof given by St. Paul to the Corinthians, in which, with an holy deriſion, he rebukes the overweening and high opinion which they had of their preſent attainments and ſpiritual perfections. *Now ye are full,* &c. As if he had ſaid, "Now ye think yourſelves ſo full and rich in all kinds of knowledge, that you deſpiſe your ſpiritual fathers, myſelf and Apollos, who firſt converted you to the faith: we are looked upon as dull fellows, not worthy to be named in the ſame day with your new-admired teachers. You advance yourſelves as much above us, as a king is above his own ſubjects. I wiſh with all my heart your happineſs were real, that we might be ſharers in it; but verily I fear that you are only puft up with notions; I fear ye have little except in conceit, and there you have a great deal too much." *Learn* hence, That ſpiritual pride, that is, boaſting of, and glorying in the gifts, graces, or privileges which are conferred upon us, is a ſin which the devil ſtrongly tempts, and profeſſors are very prone, to the practice and commiſſion of. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich.* *Note,* next, As the flouriſhing condition of the Corinthians is ironically deſcribed, ſo the afflicted and perſecuted condition of the apoſtles is plainly declared: *We are a ſpectacle to the world, and appointed to death.* The original word is, We are ſet upon a theatre or ſtage, in public view; heaven, earth, and hell, are ſpectators; God, angels, and men, wait to ſee the glorious triumphs of our faith and fortitude. What a great ſolemnity is there at the ſufferings of a ſaint! Bloody perſecutors are for making all the members, eſpecially all the miniſters of Chriſt, a ſpectacle to the world; an alluſion to the Roman ſpectacles, who carried thoſe perſons about for a ſight who were to fight with wild beaſts, and if they eſcaped, were only reſerved for ſlaughter againſt another day: Thus the apoſtles in their martyrdom conflicted with all ſorts of miſery, and with death itſelf at laſt. *Note,* laſtly, How the falſe profeſſors of Chriſtianity branded the apoſtles with folly, for expoſing themſelves thus to ſufferings and death for the ſake of Chriſt: *We are fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt*; that is, in your account we are fools, becauſe we run ſo many hazards for the ſake of Chriſt; but you are wiſe in your profeſſion of Chriſt, becauſe you have an art to profeſs him, and yet enjoy outward proſperity with him. The wiſdom of ſuffering Chriſtians, in hazarding all for Chriſt, and laying down their lives in the cauſe of Chriſt, has been always accounted weakneſs and folly by the men of the world: *We are,* &c.

11 Even unto this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have

no certain dwelling-place; 12 And labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; 13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.

Note here, 1. The ſeveral kinds of ſufferings which the holy apoſtles were expoſed to, and exerciſed with, namely, hunger and want, poverty and reproach, perſecution and death. They ſuffered in their bodies by hunger, and nakedneſs, and ſtripes; in their names, by ſcandals and reproaches, being accounted *the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things*. The world, ſay ſome, ſignifies that dirt and filth which ſcavengers rake together in the ſtreets, and carry to the dunghill. Others think it an alluſion to the ſacrifices which the heathens uſed for the luſtration of a city, who when their city was under any great calamity, choſe out ſome very baſe, vile, and naſty perſon, and burnt him in a ditch, and caſt his aſhes into the ſea, as a ſacrifice unto Neptune, ſaying, "Be thou a purgation for us." Such a baſe and vile eſteem had the world of the holy apoſtles and meſſengers of Chriſt. Lord! to ſee ſuch a man as St. Paul going up and down the world with a naked back and empty belly, without an houſe of ſettled abode to hide his head in; one that did more ſervice for God in a day, than perhaps we have done him all our days: can we, the miniſters of Chriſt, complain of hard uſage from the world, when we conſider what this great apoſtle ſuffered in the world? 2. The duration and continuance of the apoſtles' ſufferings, *even unto this day, and unto this preſent hour*. It was not only at their firſt entrance upon the apoſtolical office, when all the world was ſet againſt Chriſtianity, that they met with this uſage, but all along, from the firſt hour they began to preach the goſpel, even unto this hour, did they meet with oppoſition and perſecution. As long as there is a devil in hell, and wicked men upon earth, all that will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution: But ſurely the dregs of this cup have in all ages been reſerved for the miniſters of Chriſt Jeſus; as if to preach were nothing elſe but to ſtir up the rage, and be blotted with the obloquies of men. 3. The holy and humble behaviour, the meek and patient carriage and demeanour of the apoſtles, under all this load and burden of reproach and ſcorn, diſgrace and ſhame, perſecution and ill uſage: *Being reviled, we bleſs*. When we meet with opprobrious words, we are ſo far from rendering evil for evil, or railing for reviling, that we ſpeak well of, and wiſh well to, the perſons that are thus injurious to us; *Being perſecuted* by them, *we ſuffer it* patiently from them: *Being defamed* by any of them, *we intreat* God for them, to pity and pardon them: and we *intreat* them to pity themſelves. To publiſh invectives againſt thoſe, though the worſt of men, who reproach and perſecute us, is a modern piece of zeal, which the bleſſed apoſtles and holy ſufferers in the primitive times were little acquainted with, but perfect ſtrangers to.

14 I write not theſe things to ſhame you, but as my beloved ſons I warn *you*. 15 ¶ For though you have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt, yet *have you* not many fathers: for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the goſpel. 16 Wherefore I beſeech you, be ye followers of me.

Obſerve here, 1. The holy ingenuity of the apoſtle diſcovered, in the ſharp reproofs given to the Corinthians: It was to warn them of their duty, not to reproach them for their crimes; *I write not theſe things to ſhame, but warn you.* The miniſters of God take far greater pleaſure in exhorting people to be good, than in complaining of their badneſs. 2. The relation which St. Paul ſtood in to the Corinthians; he was their ſpiritual father, and they his children. He firſt converted them to Chriſtianity by his miniſtry among them. *In Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the goſpel. In Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, by the gracious influence of the Spirit of Chriſt, accompanying my preaching, I have turned you from idols to ſerve the living and true God. Hence it is, that I have ſuch an endeared affection for you, and challenge a deſerved reſpect from you. *Learn* from hence, That perſons may and ought to have a great value for, and bear a tender reſpect towards, thoſe miniſters whom God hath honoured, by making them inſtruments of their firſt converſion, and bringing home to Chriſt. Theſe are in a proper ſenſe their ſpiritual fathers; and verily there is no greater love, no ſtronger affection betwixt relations upon earth, than between the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſuch of their beloved people, as they have been happily inſtrumental to bring home to God. 3. The apoſtle having aſſerted his relation to them, that of a ſpiritual father, challenges from them their duty of obedient children; namely, to follow him in the ſteps of holineſs, and ſincere obedience; *Wherefore I beſeech you, be ye followers of me.* Lord! what holineſs of life, and exactneſs of converſation, ought to be found with the miniſters of Chriſt, ſeeing they are to be patterns as well as preachers; and their people not only to be their hearers, but their followers! We are to tread out before them the ſteps which they are to take towards heaven; and it will be found at the great day as dangerous to have miſled them by our example, as by our doctrine. Happy thoſe miniſters that can ſafely ſay to their people, *Be ye followers of us.*

17 For this cauſe have I ſent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved ſon, and faithful in the Lord, who ſhall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Chriſt, as I teach every where in every church.

No ſooner had St. Paul planted a church in Corinth, but by the envy and malice of Satan, moſt notorious diſorders, and ſcandalous abuſes were crept into it. To obviate which great and growing miſchief, he writes them his mind in this epiſtle. But leſt this method ſhould prove ineffectual, becauſe writing at a diſtance is not ſo moving as conferring face to face, he ſends Timotheus unto them, to excite and perſuade them to their duty, by bringing to their remembrance his ways which were in Chriſt, both what he had formerly taught, and did yet continue to teach in every church; *I have ſent unto you Timotheus, my beloved ſon, and faithful in the Lord.* Here *note*, 1. The meſſenger ſent to them, deſcribed by his name, *Timotheus*, or Timothy; by his relation, his *beloved ſon*; that is, his ſon in the faith, his ſpiritual ſon, poſſibly converted, undoubtedly inſtructed by him in the principles of Chriſtianity. He is farther deſcribed by his zeal and diligence in the work of the goſpel: *Faithful in the Lord*; that is, faithful in the work of the Lord, a noble character of a goſpel-miniſter, faithful to God, faithful to ſouls, faithful in his intentions, faithful in his endeavours, faithful in all the adminiſtrations of Chriſt's houſe, faithful and affectionate towards the poor of the flock, remembering that all ſouls are rated at one value in his maſter's book; faithful in public preaching, faithful in private inſpection. Happy are the people who have ſuch faithful perſons for their ſpiritual guides and paſtors. 2. The meſſage and errand Timothy was ſent upon; namely, to acquaint the Corinthians with St. Paul's doctrine and practice, and to excite and perſuade them to their duty, by bringing his ways to their remembrance. Where *obſerve*, That St. Paul had led ſo holy and unblameable a converſation in every place where he had lived, that he is neither afraid nor aſhamed, that his courſe of life ſhould be diſcovered and made known to all the world. A great example for our imitation, to walk before God and our people with ſuch care and caution, with ſuch heedfulneſs and circumſpection, that we need not bluſh, when either our doctrine or practice are publiſhed before all the churches of Jeſus Chriſt. Timothy ſhall acquaint you *with my ways, and with what I teach every where in every church*.

18 Now ſome are puffed up as though I would not come to you. 19 But I will come to you ſhortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

Note here, 1. The advantage which the height and haughtineſs of ſome envious teachers took, upon St. Paul's abſence from Corinth; they entertained low and contemptuous thoughts of him, and vaunted that he durſt not come before them, nor ſtand among them. 2. St. Paul's poſitive reſolution to come again to Corinth with God's permiſſion, with the reaſon for that reſolution: *I will come and know, not the ſpeech of them that are puffed up, but the power*; that is, I will certainly come and try your boaſting envious teachers, not by their plauſible words, and fine talk, diſcovering who hath the ſmootheſt tongue: but I will examine the power; that is, firſt their authority to preach; and next, what power and efficacy there is in their preaching; and laſtly, what power and influence their preaching has upon their own practice: I will find out what real good they have done among you, after all their oſtentatious braggings. Behold here, the true and great end of epiſcopal viſitation. *For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*; that is, Chriſtianity doth not conſiſt in talking, but in doing; not in vaunting, but performing great things. But by *power*, here may be underſtood, a power of working miracles for confirming and propagating the goſpel, which the apoſtles had, but theſe teachers at Corinth had not. To convince men at firſt of the truth of Chriſtianity, the dead were raiſed, the devils caſt out, and many mighty wonders wrought by the apoſtles; by all which the goſpel-doctrine was planted, propagated, eſtabliſhed, and confirmed. The kingdom of God, or the goſpel-church, was not raiſed at firſt, or carried on ſince, by the wiſdom of words, by the charms of popular eloquence, and rhetorical flouriſhes, but by a plain way, and familiar manner of preaching the doctrines of the goſpel, atteſted by miracles, and accompanied with works of divine efficacy and power. Thus *the kingdom of God was not in word, but in power*.

21 What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the ſpirit of meekneſs?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Come I will among you, to regulate diſorders, and to rectify abuſes: Now, chuſe you how I ſhall come; whether in the milder way of kindneſs, love, and meekneſs towards you, or exerciſing the power God has given me, of inflicting corporal puniſhments on offenders, by delivering them to Satan as God's executioner upon their bodies." *Note* here, 1. A power which the apoſtle intimates himſelf to have in the Chriſtian church; namely, the power of the rod, that is, a power of inflicting the ſevereſt of corporal puniſhments, even death itſelf, upon notorious offenders. Thus Elymas the ſorcerer was ſmitten with blindneſs by St. Paul, Acts xiii. Ananias and Sapphira ſtruck dead by St. Peter, Acts v. Hymenæus and Philetus delivered unto Satan, 1 Tim. i. 20. It was uſual with God, in the earlier days of the goſpel, to give Satan leave to ſeize the bodies of ſuch as were, for their obſtinate perſeverance in ſin, cut off from the communion of the church: who plagued them with diſeaſes, and ſometimes with death, which is called *the deſtruction of the fleſh*, 1 Cor. v. 5. *Note*, 2. The neceſſary reaſon for inveſting ſuch a power, ſo great a power as this is, in the apoſtle; becauſe then, there being no civil power of the magiſtrate on his ſide, had he been deſtitute of this extraordinary power, to puniſh bold and hardened tranſgreſſors, he could never have vindicated Chriſtianity from contempt, much leſs have conciliated any tolerable reſpect either to himſelf or it. People would have deſpiſed his perſon, and made a mock of his new religion; whereas, finding him clothed with this power, great fear fell upon the church, yea, on as many as heard theſe things, and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified, Acts v. *Note*, 3. How loath and unwilling the apoſtle was to exerciſe this power of his, *and to come unto them with a rod*, deſiring rather to uſe fair and gentle methods, and *to come unto them in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs*. His paternal tenderneſs and fatherly affection, prompted him to menace and threaten puniſhment, but only to the end that he might not execute and inflict it, provided they would be but obliged by kindneſs, and reclaimed by candid uſage. 4. That the apoſtle was ſometimes forced, out of mere pity, to take his rod into his hand, to uſe ſharpneſs, though with great reluctancy: ſcourging them, to ſhew his compaſſion to them. In like manner muſt eccleſiaſtical rulers, to the end of the world, in order to maintain the church's purity and peace, by church-cenſures, chaſtiſe that vice which doth deface the one, and thoſe diviſions that do diſturb the other.

CHAP. V.

The apoſtle here ſharply rebukes the church of Corinth *for their great negligence in puniſhing ſcandalous offenders, directing to excommunication, as the proper remedy; declaring the intention of that eccleſiaſtical cenſure to be the deſtruction of ſin, and the ſalvation of the ſinner.*

IT is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and ſuch fornication as is not ſo much as named among the Gentiles, that one ſhould have his father's wife.

Note here, 1. The perſons, or the people blamed. The famous church of Corinth has fornication, nay, inceſt charged upon her. Heinous ſins may creep into the beſt and pureſt churches, yet doth not a church preſently ceaſe to be a true church; nor are Chriſtians preſently to ſeparate from the communion of a church, becauſe heinous crimes and ſcandalous offences are found in it. This church of Corinth was a true church, and it was ſchiſmatical to ſeparate from her communion, although erroneous principles and ſcandalous practices were found amongſt the members of it. 2. The crime charged upon them; namely, that fornication was found amongſt them, yea, the higheſt degree of fornication, to wit, inceſt. By the general name of fornication, all uncleanneſs is forbidden, all unlawful conjunctions and ſinful mixtures are condemned. By inceſt is to be underſtood the uncleanneſs of a perſon with ſome near relation, as a mother, a ſiſter, &c. 3. The crime of inceſt is not barely expreſſed, but amplified and aggravated by its heinouſneſs, *ſuch as was not named among the Gentiles*. Not but that many of the more brutiſh Gentiles were guilty of this ſin, but the more civilized among the Gentiles did, by the light of nature, deteſt and abhor it, condemn and forbid it. Lord! how ſad is it, that what is not ſo much as named among Heathens, ſhould be practiſed among Chriſtians! whereas ſuch ſins ought not to be ſo much as named among Chriſtians, which are practiſed among the Heathens. 4. The notoriouſneſs of the crime; *it is commonly reported*; the fame, or rather infamy of the fact ſpread far and near: The ſin became ſo public, that it could not be coloured, much leſs concealed. All ſin is a work of darkneſs. Uncleanneſs, particularly, delights in darkneſs; therefore the notoriety of the act beſpoke the impudence of the agent. Ah, ſad day! when men *declare their ſin like Sodom, they hide it not*. When both ſhame and fear are caſt off, ſin hath an hard forehead, a brazen brow.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Here *note*, 1. The fault charged upon the church, they did not cenſure this offender, therefore the apoſtle cenſures them. The tolerating of ſcandalous ſins, in particular members of churches, is a thing very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and offenſive to his miniſters. 2. As they did not cenſure the offenders, ſo neither did they mourn for the offence, as they ſhould and ought to have done. *Learn*, That the falls of particular members of churches are a juſt cauſe of mourning to the whole church: As members of the ſame body, we ſhould ſympathize with one another; what the natural members do, the myſtical members ought to do. 3. The cauſe of both, why they did neither cenſure the offender, nor mourn for the offence; *they were puffed up*; partly with pride of their own gifts, and partly with vain-glory, upon account of their admired teachers. Now, this pride hindered their ſorrow; a proud man is ſeldom a compaſſionate man: True humility will teach us to lament and bewail others frailty. *Ye are puffed up, and have not mourned:* The original word, *to mourn*, ſeems to refer to a cuſtom in the primitive times, when Chriſtians put on ſolemnly mourning attire, and bewailed excommunicate perſons as thoſe that are dead. Theſe Corinthians being puffed up with pride, were ſo far from their compaſſionate mourning over this inceſtuous perſon, that they rather rejoiced at it, and inſulted over that party to whom this perſon belonged. So prone are perſons to rejoice at the downfal of others, either by ſin or by affliction.

3 For I verily, as abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit, have judged already, as though I were preſent, *concerning* him that hath ſo done this deed; 4 In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ye are gathered together, and my ſpirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 5 To deliver ſuch an one unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although I am abſent from you in body, yet in mind and conſent I am preſent with you, and alſo by my diſcerning ſpirit, by which I am enabled to diſcern things done at a diſtance; and accordingly, by the authority and power given me by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I have already determined, that when you are ſolemnly gathered together in the name of Chriſt, and have my ſpirit concurring with you, and the power of Chriſt confirming the ſentence pronounced by you, that you deliver this inceſtuous perſon unto Satan, by caſting him out of the church, and leaving him to God's executioner, to inflict deſtructive puniſhment on his body, to bring him to repentance, for the ſaving of his ſoul." Here *note*, 1. The cenſure and ſentence pronounced, excommunication, which conſiſteth of two parts: (1.) Privative, in a ſeparation from the communion of ſaints. (2.) Poſitive, which is here expreſſed by delivering unto Satan, who had then a power over the excommunicated perſon's body, to torment it with diſeaſes; which power, though now ceaſed, yet the Chriſtian church has at this day, a power to exclude enormous offenders from the ordinary means of grace and ſalvation, and to expoſe them to the malice and temptations of their grand adverſary the devil, by depriving them of church-communion, which is a more dreadful puniſhment than perſons are ſenſible of. 2. The perſon inflicting this cenſure, St. Paul; *I have judged already:* he pronounced it judicially, and requires the Corinthians, to denounce it ſolemnly. *I have judged already*; implying, that he did not determine raſhly and ſuddenly, but adviſedly as became a judge. And *mark*, They muſt denounce ſolemnly what he had determined judicially, and this in the face of the whole church, *when ye are gathered together*; that is, in the preſence of the chief paſtor, and all his flock at Corinth: A public crime muſt have a public doom, that others may hear and fear: Yet remark, the congregation or church were witneſſes of the cenſure, but they did not judge and determine it. The apoſtle did that. The power of the keys is in the hands of the church, *quoad* χρησιν, *quoad* κλησιν: That the church may have the benefit of them, not the managing of them, for that is committed to the paſtors only, as appears, Matt. xvi. John xx. *Note*, 3. The ſolemn and awful manner, in which the cenſure and excommunication was and ought to be pronounced, *In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, having firſt, in a ſolemn manner, called upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for his direction and benediction: or in the name of our Lord Jeſus; that is, according to the command of Chriſt, by the power and authority of Chriſt, and with an eye to the glory of Chriſt: This ſhould be the manner, and theſe ſhould be the ends in denouncing church-cenſures: And then Chriſt will be at the conſiſtory, and his co-operation will make good the cenſure, as his commiſſion was our warrant to pronounce it; and then the penitent may and ought to dread the ſentence, as coming out of Chriſt's own mouth, and to be inflicted by Chriſt's own hand. 4. The miſerable caſe and ſtate which the perſon that is duly excommunicated is in. He is then delivered unto Satan, as God's executioner, to inflict ſevere puniſhments on the perſon's body, now caſt out of God's ſpecial protection, deprived of the church's communion, and expoſed to the temptations and ſnares of our grand adverſary, Satan. St. Auſtin, in his time, declared, that it was then thought *gravius quam gladio feriri*, much more grievous to be excommunicated, than to be beheaded. But, Lord, where are the perſons at this day, who tremble when their ſins have brought them into this miſerable caſe and ſtate? 5. That perſons ought not to be in this ſevere and ſolemn manner proceeded againſt, but for notorious ſcandalous ſins. To denounce this awful cenſure upon every ſlight and trivial occaſion, is to proſtitute one of the moſt venerable ordinances of Chriſt to contempt and ſcorn. 6. The greateſt and ſpecial end for which the ordinance of excommunication was inſtituted by Chriſt in his church, and executed by his apoſtles; namely, to recover the fallen perſon by repentance, and to be a warning to others. The reforming, and not the ruining of men, was the intention of this ordinance: The cenſure is not mortal, but medicinal. It is, (1.) For the deſtruction of the fleſh, ſo laſcivient in him; for the mortifying his luſts, by afflicting him with grief and ſorrow. (2.) For the ſaving of his ſpirit, that is, his ſoul, that this may be recovered out of the ſnare of the devil. Laſtly, The time is expreſſed, when the penitent perſon ſhall find the benefit of this painful ordinance; namely, *in the days of the Lord Jeſus:* not but that a penitent in this life, ſhall find ſome eaſe in his conſcience, and ſatisfaction in his ſpirit; but the full benefit of eccleſiaſtical cenſure is reſerved to the day of the Lord, the day of judgment: Then will Chriſt manifeſt to the church-triumphant, the good effect of the power of the keys, which he hath committed to his miniſters, to be exerciſed publicly in the church-militant: He will then reveal how all ſtand bound in heaven, whom his church never looſed on earth: and all whom his church hath looſed on earth, ſhall then appear to be looſed in heaven.

6 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that
a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge
out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new
lump, as ye are unleavened. —

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "You Corinthians are prone to pride yourſelves, in the numbers of wiſe and wealthy men, that are found among you; you glory that Corinth is the eye of Greece, and Greece the eye of the world; but what do you glory in this for? When you have ſuch a ſcandalous perſon among you (the inceſtuous man) who is a blot and blemiſh to your whole ſociety, know ye not, that as a little leaven leaveneth and ſoureth the whole lump; ſo ſuch a member, continued among you, will defile the whole body or ſociety of Chriſtians with you? Therefore *purge out this old leaven* (caſt this ſcandalous perſon out of your communion) *that ye may be a new leaven* (your whole church an holy ſociety) *as ye are unleavened*; that is, foraſmuch as ye are, by your profeſſion of Chriſtianity, obliged to be unleavened, that is, ſeparated from ſin and ſinners." *Learn* hence, (1.) That all ſin in general, but the ſin of uncleanneſs in particular, is as leaven in regard of its ſpreading and diffuſive nature: *Old leaven* it is here called, becauſe the Corinthians had been long infamous for this ſin of uncleanneſs, even to a proverb. Next, That the apoſtle having uſed this ſimilitude of leaven, he purſues it, in alluſion to the Jewiſh cuſtom, before the celebration of the paſſover, who were to caſt all leaven out of their houſes with deteſtation and curſing, upon penalty of being cut off from the congregation of Iſrael. Thus the holy profeſſion of Chriſtianity obliges every one of us to cut off every notorious ſinner from our ſociety, every luſt from our hearts, every member of the old Adam, that we may be a new lump, anſwering our holy and heavenly calling.

— For even Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for
us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feaſt, not with old
leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, but with the unleavened *bread* of ſincerity and
truth.

Note here, The apoſtle's reaſon, why the old leaven of uncleanneſs and malicious wickedneſs ſhould be put away by us; namely, becauſe *Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us.* We ſhould therefore be as careful to put away ſinful luſts out of our hearts, as the Jews were to caſt the material leaven out of their houſes. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt is our paſſover, or paſchal lamb; in alluſion to which, he is often called *a lamb* in the New Teſtament: We do not find him expreſſed in the New Teſtament by the name of any other animals, which typified him, but only this of a lamb, a lamb, this being more ſignificant of his innocency and ſufficiency, than any other. St. John i. 20. He is called God's Lamb; here he is called our paſſover, or paſchal lamb: God's, in regard of the author; our's, in regard to the end; God's, in regard of deſignation; our's, in regard of acceptation. 2. That Chriſt is our ſacrifice. A ſacrifice was neceſſary for a ſinful creature, to atone divine diſpleaſure: A ſacrifice for ſin, muſt be pure and ſinleſs; no ſuch ſacrifice could be found but the eternal Son of God; for whatever any creature could do or ſuffer, had been but a debt or duty, and that could never have made compenſation or ſatiſfaction for a debt of rebellion. 3. That Chriſt was a ſacrifice for us, not for himſelf; for being perfectly ſinleſs, he needed no ſacrifice. Now, the notion of all ſacrifices, both among the Jews and heathens, was this, That they were ſubſtituted in the room and place of the offender, to appeaſe an offended Deity, and exempt the guilty perſon from puniſhment. Accordingly, our ſins were imputed to Chriſt, and he died under the imputed guilt of them, as a reputed ſinner; for we cannot conceive how divine juſtice ſhould inflict the puniſhment upon Chriſt, had it not firſt conſidered him under guilt. The weight of all our ſin was laid upon his innocent ſhoulders: our guilt became his by a voluntary ſuſception of the puniſhment; and, conſequently, the ſufferings of this ſacrifice are imputed to us. He took our ſins upon himſelf, as if he had actually ſinned; and gave us the benefit of his ſufferings, as if we had actually ſuffered and ſatisfied. *Note*, next, The inference drawn by the apoſtle from Chriſt's dying ſacrifice for us. *Therefore let us keep the feaſt:* not an anniverſary or yearly, but a daily feaſt, even all the days of our chriſtian life; let the whole of our lives be as the Jewiſh feaſt of paſſover was, free from leaven, from the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, and full of ſincerity and uprightneſs, both towards God and man. *Learn* hence, The duty of every particular and individual chriſtian; ſeeing Chriſt has died a ſacrifice for his ſin, his duty is to live unto Chriſt, by living up to the rule which Chriſt has given him, abhorring all malice, abandoning all wickedneſs, acting all that ſincerity towards God, and exerciſing that truth and uprightneſs towards man, which will be an ornament to our profeſſion whilſt we are upon earth, and will bring us at length to the fruition of God in heaven.

9 I wrote unto you in an epiſtle, not to company with fornicators. 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then muſt ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with ſuch an one, no not to eat.

Here our apoſtle tells them, that he had writ to them in this or ſome other epiſtle, before he was fully acquainted with their affairs, not to company with fornicators; that is, to ſhun all intimacy and familiarity with infidels; but he did not mean or intend, that they ſhould have no converſe or commerce with them, becauſe they lived among unbelievers, and could not go out of the world. But now, ſince, he heard of the miſcarriage of this inceſtuous perſon, who was certainly a chriſtian, and probably a teacher among them, he warns them to avoid all brotherly intimacy and familiarity with ſcandalous Chriſtians, leſt the church be thought to favour ſuch: *With ſuch an one*, ſays he, *no, not to eat*; admit not ſuch to your own table, much leſs to Chriſt's. *Learn* hence, 1. That all unneceſſary ſociety and intimate familiarity with ſcandalous profeſſors, ought to be avoided, that religion may not be thought to favour them, and the church may not ſuffer by them. 2. That as it ought to be the church's care to purge out ſuch, and ſeparate them from her communion; ſo is it every private Chriſtian's duty to avoid that familiarity with them, which is in their power, even that which lieth in friendly eating with them. 3. If civil eating with ſcandalous profeſſors of religion, be forbidden at our own table; much leſs ought any church to permit and ſuffer them a religious eating at the Lord's table, which was never ſpread for ſuch gueſts.

12 For what have I to do to judge them alſo that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourſelves that wicked perſon.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "My juriſdiction extendeth not to heathens, I have nothing to do to judge and cenſure them that are without the church; but ſuch as are within the pale of the church, your own members, who own your juriſdiction, theſe you have an undoubted right and power to judge, leaving the other to the judgment of God: therefore I adviſe, nay, charge you, *To put away from yourſelves that wicked and inceſtuous perſon*, by excommunicating and baniſhing him from your communion." As baniſhment is a civil excommunication, ſo excommunication is a ſpiritual baniſhment: Magiſtrates muſt drive malefactors out of civil ſocieties, and church officers muſt expel enormous offenders, out of their religious ſocieties; for they who are unfit for civil converſe are much more unfit for ſpiritual communion. The laſt words, *therefore put away from among yourſelves that wicked perſon*, help us clearly to underſtand the former precept, ver. 7. *Purge out the old leaven*, &c. that they are not in their firſt and proper ſenſe to be interpreted of particular perſons purging out their luſts, and mortifying their corruptions, though that be a very neceſſary duty; but it is to be underſtood of every Chriſtian church's duty, to purge out from among them, all flagitious and enormous offenders.

Cuncta prius tentanda, ſed immedicabile vulnus
Enſe recidendum eſt, ne pars ſincera trahatur.

CHAP. VI.

The apoſtle having taxed the Corinthians *(who were converted by him to the Chriſtian faith) for their great negligence in not judging the inceſtuous perſon in a caſe eccleſiaſtical; here blames them for their too great forwardneſs in going to law with, and impleading one another*

another before Heathen judges; whereas they ought to have ſubmitted their differences to be heard before, and decided by, their brethren, and fellow Chriſtians.

DARE any of you, having a matter againſt another, go to law before the unjuſt, and not before the ſaints? 2 Do ye not know that the ſaints ſhall judge the world? and if the world ſhall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters? 3 Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life.

Note here, 1. That it was not ſimply and abſolutely their going to law, which the apoſtle condemns, but their impleading one another at Pagan tribunals, and before Heathen judges; *The law is good, if uſed lawfully*; but the beſt thing may be abuſed; ſo is oft the law itſelf: Moſt evident it is, that the apoſtle, who was offended at their uſing the law before infidels, allows it before chriſtians, as the firſt verſe implies. 2. The title given to the Corinthian converts, they are all called *ſaints*; becauſe they were all ſo by outward profeſſion, and many of them ſo by inward ſanctification. Whence *learn*, 1. That all thoſe who take upon them the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are obliged to be ſaints, and may be ſo called, being ſuch by viſible profeſſion. 2. That the true and real Chriſtian is a true and real ſaint; his heart is inwardly renewed and ſanctified, his life thoroughly reformed and changed. *Note*, 3. The ſeveral errors enumerated by our apoſtle, in the Corinthians going to law. (1.) In regard of the adverſary. *Brother goeth to law with brother*; not infidel with infidel, nor infidel with chriſtian, but chriſtian with chriſtian, brother with brother: which ſeems both unnatural and unchriſtian. (2.) In regard of the judges choſen to decide and umpire their controverſies; they were infidels and unbelievers, not ſaints: If brother will go to law with brother, let them make choice of Chriſtian judges; but for Chriſtians to refuſe Chriſtians, and to chuſe to be judged by infidels, was highly ſcandalous. What will heathens ſay, when Chriſtians are together by the ears, and infidels live in unity? 4. The great argument uſed by the apoſtle to diſſuade them from this practice; he argues *a majore ad minus*, from the greater to the leſs. The ſaints ſhall judge the world, the wicked world; yea, the apoſtate angels in another world: Are they not fit then to judge and determine trivial matters between man and man, between one Chriſtian and another, here in this world? *Learn* hence, That the ſaints, as aſſeſſors with Chriſt, and approvers of his righteous judgment, ſhall at the great day judge the wicked world, and the apoſtate angels. Oh ye wicked world! you that now revile and ſcorn, that injure and wrong the ſaints and ſervants of the moſt high God, know, that they ſhall one day be your judges. Oh ye ſaints! who ſhall be judges of the world, know that your time of judging in this world, is not yet; do not anticipate your work, nor antedate your commiſſion: *Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord comes.*

4 If then ye have judgment of things pertaining to this life, ſet them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the church. 5 I ſpeak to your ſhame. Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe man amongſt you? No, not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, becauſe ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather ſuffer yourſelves to be defrauded? 8 Nay, you do wrong and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

It muſt be ſtill *obſerved*, That the apoſtle doth not go about to aboliſh the uſe of ſecular judgments, or condemn going to law; but only reproves the abuſes that were found among them therein: *Brother going to law with brother*; that is, one Chriſtian with another: And this not before a chriſtian, but an heathen magiſtrate; by means whereof, the Gentiles became acquainted with the covetouſneſs, ambition, and revenge, which was among Chriſtians, to the diſhonour of God, and the diſcredit of the goſpel. More particularly, the apoſtle farther cenſures and reproves them, firſt, for going to law about trifles, and ſmall matters: *Are ye unworthy to judge the leaſt matters?* Should Chriſtians thus implead one another before infidels for mere trifles? It ſeems it has been an ancient and too common fault, that every petty difference has peſtered the tribunal. Secondly, For the manner of their impleading and perſecuting one another: It was with heat and paſſion, with impatience and impetuous anger. Going to law is one of thoſe duties which is difficultly managed without ſin; it is an hard matter for a man to right his eſtate, and not wrong his ſoul. Thirdly, He reproves them, becauſe they did not chuſe rather to put up ſome wrongs, than right themſelves by going to law: *Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not ſuffer yourſelves to be defrauded?* Teaching us, that ſomething ſhould not only be hazarded, but parted with, for peace-ſake. Peace is a jewel worth our buying at a dearer rate than moſt men are willing to give for it; and a peaceable Chriſtian will put up many injuries patiently, rather than uſe extremity, referring his cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly; who very often in this life repays us what we part with for peace-ſake twice over: Bleſſed are the meek, they ſhall inherit the earth. Fourthly, The apoſtle blames them for their precipitation and haſte, in going to law one with another; the law ſhould have been their laſt refuge after trial of all other means: Firſt they ſhould have referred it to their brethren; if they could not end it, then the law was open: But inſtead of this, if any difference aroſe, they ſent preſently for a writ to the heatheniſh courts of judicature. Fifthly, He blames the ignorance which was found amongſt them, that there was no wiſe perſon found with them which could compromiſe and compoſe differences before they went too far: ver. 5. *I ſpeak it to your ſhame*, &c. As if he had ſaid, "What, will ye all ſtand and look on theſe unkind bickerings? and is there not one among you, that has ſo much ſkill as to quiet and compoſe them? I am really aſhamed of it." Sixthly, He rebukes their ſlothfulneſs, together with their ignorance, that they were lazy as well as unſkilful, and unwilling to interpoſe for the compoſing of their brethren's differences: A little pains, timely taken by us, may prevent abundance of ſtrife and diſſenſion between contending brethren. Theſe are the principal faults which the apoſtle condemns in theſe Corinthians going to law; it is not the action, or thing itſelf, but the circumſtances attending it, and the miſmanagement of it, that is here condemned; which being rectified, law is no doubt lawful, whatever ſome erroneous perſons have affirmed to the contrary.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle's poſitive aſſertion, and categorical propoſition, *That the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God:* where, by unrighteouſneſs, is meant injuſtice and injuriouſneſs towards our neighbour, as appears by the context, which ſpeaks of defrauding; unrighteouſneſs will as certainly ſhut out of heaven as ungodlineſs. *Note* next, The large catalogue of ſins which the apoſtle reckons up, that will ſhut perſons out of heaven; uncleanneſs, idolatry, inordinate love of this world, drunkenneſs, &c. For the confirmation of this propoſition, he proceedeth to this enumeration of the ſeveral ſins deſtructive of ſalvation; which are not to be underſtood copulatively, but disjunctively; not as if he only who is guilty of all theſe ſhall miſs of heaven, but he that lives in any one of theſe unrepented of: If he doth not forſake his wicked courſe of life, he ſhall never ſee the kingdom of God; whoever allows and tolerates himſelf in any one ſin, is certainly in a ſtate of damnation. Lord, how many thouſand vain hopes are laid in the duſt? And how many thouſand of impenitently wicked ſouls are ſentenced to hell, by this one ſcripture! *Note,* laſtly, The caution or cautionary direction given by St. Paul to the Corinthians, not to deceive themſelves with a contrary expectation; (though one would think men could hardly be deceived in ſo plain a caſe) as if their bare profeſſion of Chriſtianity would ſave them, whilſt they allowed themſelves to live in the practice of any of the aforementioned wickedneſſes: *Be not deceived.* *Learn* thence, That men are very prone to deceive themſelves in this, that though they live wickedly, yet they ſhall die happily, and go to heaven gloriouſly. They have ſuch unlimited apprehenſions of the pardoning grace and mercy of God, that they bound it not to faith and repentance, and an holy life; never conſidering whether they are qualified ſubjects or no, for that grace and mercy. God is a merciful God, ſays the wicked man, therefore I ſhall not go to hell; God is a merciful God, ſaith the devil, therefore I hope to come out of hell: No, ſay you, that doth not follow, for God has decreed and declared the contrary. And has he not decreed and determined, has he not ſaid and ſworn, that the impenitent ſinner ſhall never enter into his reſt? Be not then deceived, O ſinner; whilſt thou continueſt unreformed, thou canſt not *inherit the kingdom of God.*

11 And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God.

Here we have another argument which our apoſtle uſes to diſſuade them from all groſs wickedneſs in general, and from ſuch unchriſtian behaviour, one towards another, as he had before reproved, in particular: namely, that great and mighty change which had been wrought upon ſeveral of them by means of their converſion to the Chriſtian religion, or the faith of Chriſt: *Such were ſome of you; but ye are now waſhed:* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "You are no longer ſwine, but ſheep, and therefore muſt not wallow in the mire of ſin, as you formerly did." *Note* here, 1. The black and filthy condition of a ſinner, before converſion; the apoſtle had reckoned up the vileſt and worſt of ſins that could be mentioned: and then ſays, *Such were ſome of you.* The original word is in the neuter, not in the maſculine gender; not οὗτοι, ſuch perſons, but ταῦτα, ſuch ſins; as emphatically demonſtrating their wickedneſs, that they were not ſo much *peccatores,* ſinners, as *ipſa peccata,* the very ſins themſelves. *Learn* hence, That the converting grace of God is ſometimes vouchſafed to the vileſt and worſt of men; and where it is vouchſafed, makes a very great and mighty change. 2. The particular expreſſions by which this change is repreſented: *Ye are waſhed,* ſacramentally waſhed in baptiſm; *Ye are ſanctified,* purified in your hearts and natures, by the ſanctifying influences of divine grace: *Ye are juſtified,* that is, acquitted for guilt, and approved as righteous. 3. The means by which this change was wrought and effected, in the name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of God: *In the name of our Lord Jeſus;* that is, through the merits, and for the mediation of the Lord Jeſus, and by faith therein: *And by the Spirit of our God;* that is, through the ſanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. (1.) Here we have the defiling nature of ſin ſuppoſed; all men by nature are polluted and defiled, and ſtand in need of waſhing. (2.) Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will not diſdain or refuſe to juſtify by his blood, and ſanctify by his Spirit, the greateſt ſinners, and the filthieſt ſouls, that apply unto him by faith, for pardoning mercy, and ſanctifying grace: *Such were you, but ye are waſhed.* (3.) Though juſtification and ſanctification are diſtinct and different in their nature, yet are they always inſeparable in their ſubject: No perſon is juſtified but he that is ſanctified; Chriſt juſtifies none by his blood whom he doth not ſanctify by his Spirit. Though juſtification and ſanctification are not the ſame thing, yet are they always found in the ſame perſon: By the former, there is a relative change in our condition; by the latter, a real change in our converſation.

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them.

Our apoſtle ſtill proceeds in the reprehenſory part of his epiſtle, and begins here to reprove the growing hereſy of the Gnoſtics and Nicolaitans among them, who allowed the eating *of things ſacrificed to idols, and fornication*, as things indifferent. The apoſtle grants, that all indifferent things are lawful, and may be uſed, firſt, when they are expedient, that is, when they may be uſed without hurting ourſelves and others: And ſecondly, when they do not get ſuch a dominion over us, as to enſlave us to an intemperate and immoderate uſe of them: He inſtances particularly in meats; and grants, that it is lawful to uſe any kind of meat, becauſe God hath ordained it for the good of man's nature; meats are ordained for the belly, and the belly at preſent ordained for the reception of meats; but as God will deſtroy meats, ſo will he deſtroy the belly alſo, as to the uſe it now hath; for in the reſurrection, men ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt any more. *Learn* hence, That Chriſtianity doth not barely reſtrain us from the doing of what is unlawful, but from doing what is expedient alſo; an action in itſelf lawful may by circumſtances become ſinful, and it is both wiſe and ſafe to forbear the uſe of our Chriſtian liberty, when it becomes an occaſion of offence unto our neighbour.

—Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

From this verſe to the end of the chapter our apoſtle labours by ſundry arguments, to convince the Corinthians of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of the ſin of fornication; partly becauſe they reckoned it amongſt the number of indifferent things, and alſo becauſe the Corinthians, before their converſion to Chriſtianity, were ſo notoriouſly addicted to this ſin, that they conſecrated a temple to Venus, at which a multitude of virgins proſtituted themſelves; for which reaſon St. Paul makes uſe of a ſix-fold argument here, to prevent the Corinthians' relapſe into this ſin of fornication after their converſion, which they had been ſo notoriouſly guilty of before converſion. The firſt argument is in the words before us, *Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body:* As if he had ſaid, "You put the body to a uſe for which it was never intended; the belly was made for meats, but the body was not made for fornication, but for the Lord; that is, for the Lord's uſe and ſervice; and the Lord is for the body, that is, for the good and ſalvation of the body." Whence *note*, That ſuch is the wonderful goodneſs of God towards us his creatures, that look in whatſoever we are for him, he is for us; as our bodies are for the Lord's ſervice as well as our ſouls; and therefore our bodies ought to be employed for his glory in every thing: This is the apoſtle's firſt argument againſt fornication.

14 And God hath both raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo raiſe up us by his own power.

Here a ſecond argument againſt fornication is taken from the body's reſurrection: Our bodies are to be raiſed, therefore not to be defiled; to be faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious body in heaven, therefore not to be defiled with luſt here on earth: As if he had ſaid, "Were your bodies to be finally loſt in the duſt, then were it no great matter how you uſed them, or abuſed them; but as God hath raiſed up Chriſt's body, ſo he will raiſe up your body; and ſeeing your body is the garment which your ſoul is to wear to all eternity in heaven, keep it pure and undefiled here on earth."

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? Shall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

A third argument here follows: "Our bodies are the members of Chriſt, as well as our ſouls; that is, the union is made between Chriſt and us, conſiſting of ſoul and body both. Now ſhall we diſpoſe of our bodies, the members of Chriſt, to ſo baſe an uſe? ſhall our bodies, which are joined to Chriſt, ever condeſcend to ſo baſe a conjunction, as that of being joined to an harlot? God forbid that ſuch an indignity be done by us."

16 What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, ſaith he, ſhall be one fleſh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one ſpirit.

The ſenſe is, "That as wedlock makes man and wife one body lawfully, ſo fornication makes the man and the harlot one body ſinfully: all the difference is in the morality of the act, but the ſpecies or kind of act is the ſame; thus the fornicator and harlot are one fleſh; but he that is joined to the Lord, namely, by faith and love, hath a nearer and more noble union, than that of fleſh, for he is one ſpirit with Chriſt, not eſſentially and ſubſtantially one, but myſtically and ſpiritually: Chriſt and the ſincere believer are led and guided, acted and influenced by the ſame Spirit, therefore take heed what you do, for in making your bodies the members of an harlot, you diſſolve the union betwixt Chriſt and them." *Learn* from hence, How cloſely and intimately believers are united unto Jeſus Chriſt; they are nearer than one fleſh, they are one ſpirit with him, they have both one Father, one houſe, one home, one heart, one intereſt, one acquaintance: Happy they who are thus joined to the Lord, for they are one ſpirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every ſin that a man doeth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication ſinneth againſt his own body.

Flee fornication. *Note* here, 1. The apoſtle's advice to eſcape fornication, and that is, to flee it; namely, by ſhunning all occaſions of it, all temptations leading to it, all incentives and provocations of it, not ſuffering our eye to wander, or our thoughts to muſe, much leſs to dwell upon any unlawful or inſnaring object. 2. The argument the apoſtle uſes to *flee fornication*, becauſe other ſins are without the body; but this againſt the body. *Queſt.* But how is the apoſtle to be underſtood when he ſays, all other ſins are without the body? *Anſw.* Thus, though all other outward ſins, as drunkenneſs, murder, theft, &c. have the body as an inſtrument for committing them, yet in this ſin of uncleanneſs the body is not only the inſtrument, but the object alſo; for the unclean perſon doth not only ſin with his body, but he ſins againſt his body: Uncleanneſs leaves that blot and brand of ignominy and baſeneſs upon the body which no other ſin doth, degrading it from that excellent honour whereunto God advanced it in its natural condition, by making it the member of an harlot.

19 What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.—

Here we have the apoſtle's fifth argument againſt fornication and uncleanneſs, and it runs thus: "Temples, which are peculiarly conſecrated unto God and his ſervice, ought not to be profaned or polluted; but the bodies of Chriſtians are the temples of God, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and therefore they ought to be kept pure and undefiled. *Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt*, as well as your ſouls?" Our bodies are called temples of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe he hath ſanctified them for himſelf, for his habitation, and for his ſervice. From whence the divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, may be ſtrongly inferred; a temple always ſuppoſes ſome deity to dwell in it; the tabernacle and temple are called God's *habitation:* Now if the Holy Ghoſt dwells in good men as a temple, he is truly and really God. In fine, ſince all Chriſtians are become the temple of God, by virtue of his holy Spirit ſent into their hearts, conſecrating their bodies to his ſacred ſervice, let us not deſecrate or pollute this temple by defiling it with filthy luſts, but make chaſtity the keeper of this ſacred houſe, and ſuffer nothing that defileth to enter into it, leſt that God, who dwelleth in it, being offended, ſhould deſert his houſe thus defiled.

—And ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your ſpirit, which are God's.

Here we have the ſixth and laſt argument which the apoſtle makes uſe of to flee fornication: Our bodies are not our own, but God's, they are his by creation, his by preſervation, his by purchaſe and redemption: We are bought out of our own hands, as well as out of the hand of divine juſtice; therefore we ſacrilegiouſly rob and wrong God, when we alienate any part of his own from him, and own him not, whoſe we wholly are, by the faithful ſervice both of our ſouls and bodies, which are his. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſtians are not their own, but God's; not their own, and therefore not in their own power, nor at their own diſpoſal, not to live after their own will, or by their own luſts, but according to the will and to the ends and uſes of their principal Lord, whoſe they are. 2. That as Chriſtians are not their own, ſo they muſt not act and live and diſpoſe of themſelves, of their ſouls and bodies, as if they were their own, as if they had an original propriety, a plenary poſſeſſion, and a full dominion over themſelves; a Chriſtian muſt not make his own reaſon his ſupreme rule, nor his own will his chief law, nor his own intereſt his ultimate end, for he was neither made by himſelf, nor made for himſelf. 3. That all of us are God's, and therefore we cannot, without great ſacrilege, invade his right, and give that body to an harlot which is conſecrated unto him. 4. Though we are all God's, yet we have alienated ourſelves from God, and withdrawn ourſelves from his diſpoſal. 5. That being thus alienated from God, he has once more bought us, bought us with a price, a great and full price, the blood of his Son; and we are now God's own again by redemption and purchaſe. 6. That our bodies and ſpirits being thus the Lord's, we ſhould glorify him both in our ſouls and bodies, which are his; glorify him in our bodies by external purity and exemplary ſanctity, glorifying him in our ſpirits by internal purity of heart. Thus if we glorify him in our body, and in our ſpirits, in a way of obedience, he will at laſt faſhion our vile bodies like unto his glorious body, and make our ſpirits as the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in that great day, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe.

CHAP. VII.

Our apoſtle in this chapter reſolves divers caſes of conſcience about which the Corinthians *had written to him, particularly concerning marriage; not about the lawfulneſs of it, but about the expediency of it at that time, in the then afflicted ſtate of the church.*

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

The firſt ſcruple or caſe of conſcience which the Corinthians wrote to the apoſtle about, was concerning marriage. Amongſt many other wicked opinions, which the Gnoſtics, thoſe ancient heretics, maintained, this was one, That marriage was from the devil. Our apoſtle elſewhere, Heb. xiii. 4. aſſerts marriage to be holy and honourable; here he determines firſt in general, that ſuch as have the gift of continency, and can live chaſte in a ſingle ſtate, do well; and, in particular, that a ſingle life at that time was moſt adviſable, and moſt agreeable to the calamitous and afflicted ſtate of the church: So that when the apoſtle ſays in this verſe, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman*, his meaning is, it is more agreeable to the preſent neceſſity, more convenient in regard of the perſecuted ſtate of the church, as being a condition leſs diſtracted with cares, and leſs troubled with diſtraction; for marriage plunges men into an exceſs of worldly cares, it multiplies their buſineſs, and uſually their wants, and thoſe wants are hardlier ſupplied than in a ſingle life, and more difficultly bore; it is much eaſier to bear perſonal wants, than family wants: With reſpect to all which, ſays the apoſtle, eſpecially as the preſent ſtate of the church ſtands, *it is good for a man not to touch a woman*; not that it is at any time ſimply unlawful, but at ſometimes manifeſtly inexpedient.

2 Nevertheleſs, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Such are the inclinations of human nature, that every man cannot always do that which is moſt for his own quiet and eaſe, but men find the ſtrength of luſt and the power of concupiſcence ſo ſtrong in themſelves, that marriage, which is God's ordinance for avoiding fornication, and for the propagation of mankind, is of abſolute neceſſity to ſome perſons; therefore for avoiding fornication, and all ſorts of uncleanneſs, (which was ſo common at Corinth) let every man retain his own wife, and every woman her own huſband." Here *note*, 1. The apoſtle's expreſſion, he ſays, *Quiſque et quæque*, not *quidam et quædam*; let every man and every woman marry, not ſome men and ſome women only: He excepts none, neither prieſt nor nun, but every one is here permitted, yea, for avoiding fornication commanded to marry. *Note* farther, How the apoſtle directs every man to have his own wife, and every woman her own huſband; more than one is forbidden, and polygamy, or the ſin of having more wives, or more huſbands at a time than one, is here condemned: To bridle and reſtrain men's extravagant luſts, the wiſdom of God has directed every man to enjoy his own wife, and every woman her own huſband. Let the church of Rome conſider how ſhe will anſwer at the bar of God for ſpitting in the face of this ordinance of God, for denying the lawfulneſs of marriage to her prieſts and nuns, when God has told her, Heb. xiii. 4. *That marriage is honourable in all; and that all unclean perſons God will judge*; and ſuch too often have their prieſts and nuns been one with another.

3 Let the huſband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewiſe alſo the wife unto the huſband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the huſband: and likewiſe alſo the huſband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer: and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Note here, 1. That matrimonial converſation, or the huſband's and wife's performing towards each other all the duties of marriage which they promiſed, is an act of juſtice which they owe to one another: This is intimated in the word *render*, and conſequently to deny the ſame is injuſtice and fraud; *defraud not one another*. Marriage takes away from perſons that power which they had over themſelves and their own bodies, and transfers it in ſome ſort to the perſon they are married to. Yet *note*, 2. That perſons in a married ſtate may, and in ſome caſes ought, (namely, for religious ends and purpoſes) by mutual conſent, to abſtain from a conjugal duty for ſometime. *Defraud not one another, except it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer.* *Note*, 3. The apoſtle lays no obligation upon any ſingle perſons to take upon them a vow for a ſingle life, nor doth he direct married perſons to thoſe perpetual divorces from the marriage-bed, which the papiſts practiſe, under pretence of religion: For the apoſtle admits of no perpetual ſeparation between huſband and wife, upon any pretence whatever; no, not that they may give themſelves to prayer and faſting, but only permits it for a time, upon condition that they come together again. So far was this holy man from laying a ſnare upon the conſciences of any perſons, either in a ſingle or married ſtate.

6 But I ſpeak this by permiſſion, *and* not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myſelf. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I ſay therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Miſtake me not, as if I impoſed marriage upon all perſons as a duty: No, but I declare it is permitted to all as a remedy againſt fornication: for ſo far am I from that, that I could wiſh all men were unmarried, even as I myſelf am, and that they had the gift of continence with myſelf; but God, who will have the world yet farther continued and increaſed, hath not given this gift to all, nor to all alike in the ſame meaſure. Therefore to the unmarried I ſay, that ſo many are the advantages of a ſingle life, that if they can abide chaſte and ſingle, as I do, it will be many ways for their advantage: But if they cannot, let them uſe God's remedy, which is marriage; for it is better to marry, than to burn in luſt, to be perpetually aſſaulted with unclean deſires, and ſubject to the ravings and inſults of luſt." *Learn* hence, (1.) That marrying or not marrying, is, according to ſeveral circumſtances, matter of advice and counſel, but neither of them abſolutely of precept. (2.) That ſecond marriages are not only lawful, but an incumbent duty, if perſons cannot contain themſelves within the bounds and rules of chaſtity. *To the widows I ſay, if they cannot contain let them marry.*

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord. Let not the wife depart from *her* huſband: 11 But and if ſhe depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* huſband. And let not the huſband put away his wife.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although it be no ſin to marry, yet it is a ſin to depart when married; herein I lay the authority of God's command upon you, that you agree together, and that no difference which may ariſe between you, cauſe you to ſeparate and live aſunder. But to marry upon departure, is a double ſin. Therefore if any diſagreements and diſcontents between huſband and wife cauſe you to live aſunder for a time, think not either of you of marrying to another perſon; but be reconciled to each other, and live together in love, as becometh perſons profeſſing godlineſs." A civil war in families is fatal as well as in the commonwealth. Domeſtic contentions, eſpecially betwixt huſband and wife, are dangerous and deſtructive of love and peace. If at any time they ariſe to that height as to cauſe a ſeparation betwixt them two, who are one fleſh, yet nothing of that nature can warrant their divorce; nothing but death or adultery can untie the marriage knot, and releaſe them from their obligations to each other.

12 But to the reſt ſpeak I, not the Lord, If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath a huſband that

believeth not, and if he be pleaſed to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband. Elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

1. Here we have another caſe of conſcience put by the Corinthians to the apoſtle; namely, whether ſuch huſbands as had heathen and infidel wives might put them away; and whether ſuch wives as had infidel huſbands; might not, and ought not to depart from them? The apoſtle reſolves the caſe, That they ought, according to the intent and end of marriage, to cohabit and dwell together; and he aſſigns the reaſon for it, becauſe the unbelieving or infidel wife is ſanctified to the believing or chriſtian huſband. How ſanctified? Not in her nature, but in her uſe; ſo that they might lawfully cohabit and converſe together; being by marriage made one fleſh with him or her that is holy; "And for your children, ſays he, they are not ſeminally unclean, like the children of heathens, but federally holy." *How are they holy?* Not with an inherent, internal, perſonal holineſs; for the holieſt man's child is born in ſin, and by nature a child of wrath; but with an external, relative, and federal holineſs: they are not common and unclean like the children of infidels, but fit to be partakers of the privileges of the church, to be admitted into covenant with God, as belonging to his holy people: *Elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* He doth not ſay, Elſe were your children baſtards, but now are they legitimate, as the enemies of infant-baptiſm, thoſe *duri infantum patres*, would make him ſpeak; but *elſe were they unclean*, that is, heathen children, not to be owned as an holy ſeed, and therefore not to be admitted into covenant with God, as belonging to his holy people. If by holineſs here the apoſtle means a matrimonial holineſs, as the anabaptiſts dream, then, according to their interpretation of the word *holy*, the apoſtle ſpeaks neither pertinently, nor truly: Not pertinently, (1.) For then the anſwer had been nothing to the purpoſe. The caſe put, was concerning huſbands and wives, not concerning men and whores, and the queſtion propounded by the Corinthians, was, not whether a believing huſband, and an unbelieving wife, were lawful man and wife together? nobody queſtioned that; but whether the chriſtian huſband might put away his heathen wife? The apoſtle anſwers, He ought not, if ſhe were willing to dwell with him, for ſhe is ſanctified to him; not ſanctified in reſpect of her perſonal condition, but in reſpect of her conjugal relation, otherwiſe their children would be looked upon as unclean, like the children of heathens; but now are they holy, that is, to be accounted viſible ſaints, and, as ſuch, to be admitted to church-privileges. (2.) According to this interpretation of the word *holy*, the apoſtle had not ſpoken truly; for the children of heathens, born in lawful wedlock, are no more baſtards than the children of chriſtians; for their parents' marriage frees them from the charge of illegitimacy as well as others. Add to this, that in all the New Teſtament, though the word *holy* be uſed above five hundred times, yet it never once ſignifies legitimacy, but is always uſed for a ſtate of ſeparation to God: Therefore, to make it ſignify ſo here, is a bold practiſing upon ſcripture, a wracking and wreſting of the word of God, to maintain a private opinion, to make the text ſpeak what they would have, and not what the apoſtle intends. But the argument for infant-baptiſm from this text, runs thus: "If the holy ſeed among the Jews were therefore to be circumciſed, and made federally holy, by receiving the ſign of the covenant, and being admitted into the number of God's holy people, becauſe they were ſeminally holy; *for the root being holy, the branches were alſo holy*: Then, by like reaſon, the holy ſeed of Chriſtians ought to be admitted to baptiſm, and receive the ſign of the Chriſtian covenant, the laver of regeneration, and ſo be entered into the ſociety of the Chriſtian church."

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a ſiſter is not under bondage in ſuch *caſes*: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* huſband? Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* wife? 17 But as God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, ſo let him walk. And ſo ordain I in all churches.

Here another doubt is reſolved by the apoſtle, in caſe the unbelieving party, either huſband or wife, depart, that is, refuſe to co-habit and dwell with their believing yoke-fellow, and ſo make void, as much as in him or her lieth, the marriage-bond, out of hatred to the faith; in that caſe, if they will go, let them go; you are not bound to leave your family to follow them. However, let every Chriſtian huſband or wife omit nothing, but endeavouring every thing to the utmoſt, to oblige and win, to incline and engage their unbelieving yoke-fellow, to live quietly with them; for God hath called us to peace; and therefore we muſt give no occaſion of quarrel with, or ſeparation from, ſo near a relation: And beſides, by the peaceable dwelling together, there is hope of, and a fair opportunity for, the gaining and bringing over the unbeliever to the faith of Chriſt, and of being the inſtrument of his or her ſalvation: But however that may be, let every Chriſtian diſcharge his duty in every relation in which God has ſet him. This order I appoint in all churches converted to Chriſtianity, knowing it to be agreeable to the mind of God, "That no Chriſtian ſhould pretend his profeſſion of religion, to excuſe him from the duties of any relation."

18 Is any man called being circumciſed? Let him not become uncircumciſed. Is any called in uncircumciſion? Let him not become circumciſed. 19 Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Here the apoſtle proceeds to exhort the Corinthians to be content with the lot and condition which God had diſtributed unto them, and to frame themſelves to walk chriſtianly in it. Particularly, he ſhews, That if any perſon amongſt them were a native Jew, and ſo circumciſed, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity, he ſhould neither trouble himſelf to get off that mark from his fleſh, nor affect the ſtate of him, who, being a Gentile, had never been circumciſed. On the other ſide, if any of them were native Gentiles, and never circumciſed, but now converted to Chriſtianity, let him not affect the ſtate of one who was a native Jew, and circumciſed; *for circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing*; that is, nothing now available to ſalvation, nothing that renders perſons more or leſs acceptable in the ſight of God; but the keeping of the commandments of God, this is all in all: For God regards not men's outward conditions, but obedience to his commands. Chriſtianity conſiſts not in a warm zeal, either for or againſt outward ceremonies, but in poſitive holineſs, and a ſtrict conformity to divine precepts.

20 Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called *being* a ſervant? care not for it; but if thou mayeſt be made free, uſe *it* rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord *being* a ſervant, is the Lord's free-man: likewiſe alſo he that is called *being* free, is Chriſt's ſervant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the ſervants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

The apoſtle ſeems to intimate from theſe words, that ſome perſons converted to Chriſtianity in the primitive times, apprehended, that thereupon they muſt leave their worldly callings and employments, as if they were ſnares to them, or unneceſſary diverſions from better things. No, ſays the apoſtle, *Let every one, in his calling wherein he is called, therein abide with God*; that is, look in what honeſt civil calling they were found when they became Chriſtians, let them keep to that calling ſtill: For God doth not call us from our worldly employments and buſineſs, but calls us to be holy in them; nor doth our ſerving God any whit acquit and diſcharge us from ſerving one another. But particularly it was the opinion of ſome ſervants converted to Chriſtianity, that their ſpiritual freedom by Chriſt, exempted them from all civil ſervice to their maſters. The apoſtle therefore tells them, they are indeed freed by Chriſt from ſinful ſlavery, but not from civil ſervitude and ſubjection; from Jewiſh bondage, but not from Chriſtian obedience. *Learn* hence, That Chriſtianity doth not free men from any civil obligations which before they lay under. Our advantages by Chriſt are ſpiritual, and not ſecular; no man's outward condition is changed by his becoming Chriſtian; though he be now the Lord's free-man, yet he is a ſervant ſtill, if he was ſo before; nay, their Chriſtianity did not exempt them from their ſecular relation to their Heathen and Infidel maſters: As ſervice to man doth not exempt us from, nor is inconſiſtent with, the ſervice of God; ſo our ſpiritual calling doth not make void our civil: *Therefore let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called.*

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I ſuppoſe therefore that this is good for the preſent diſtreſs; *I ſay* that *it is* good for a man ſo to be. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? ſeek not to be looſed. Art thou looſed from a wife? ſeek not a wife. 28 But if thou marry thou haſt not ſinned: and if a virgin marry, ſhe hath not ſinned. Nevertheleſs, ſuch ſhall have trouble in the fleſh: but I ſpare you.

The next caſe which our apoſtle comes to reſolve, is concerning virgins; whether they, being at their own diſpoſal, ſhould marry, or keep themſelves ſingle. He tells them firſt, that he had no ſpecial command, whereby the ſtate of virginity was either enjoined or prohibited, but he would faithfully give his advice, according to the beſt of his judgment: And this he doth in two particulars; Firſt, That by reaſon of the preſent diſtreſs, and danger of perſecution, which threatened the church, it was moſt convenient, that ſuch as were ſingle ſhould continue ſo, if it might lawfully be done. Yet, ſecondly, He declares, that if they marry, they do not ſin; only they will be expoſed to more troubles, as the church's troubles do increaſe. Here *note*, 1. That the apoſtle pronounces marriage lawful in all perſons, of both ſexes, and not ſinful at any time, or in any ſtate and condition whatſoever. 2. That he ſignifies to all perſons, that the troubles of a married life are more than thoſe which attend a ſingle ſtate; *Such ſhall have trouble in the fleſh.* Marriage plunges men into an exceſs of worldly cares; it multiplies their buſineſs, and uſually their wants; and theſe wants are far hardlier to be borne than in a ſingle life. 3. That beſides the ordinary inconveniences of a married life, which all perſons are to expect, ſuch as enter the married condition, when the church is under perſecution, muſt prepare to meet with more than ordinary troubles. *Such*, that is, in thoſe times of perſecution, *ſhall have trouble*, that is, more trouble, *in the fleſh*; *But I ſpare you*, that is, "I forbear to ſpeak any more of that matter, leſt I ſhould ſeem to diſſuade you from marriage, which is the ordinance of God, more than is fit, and be thought by any, to lay the yoke of celibacy, or a ſingle life, upon you. I only tell you, that when Chriſtians are under perſecution and diſtreſs, it is much more for their eaſe and quiet to be ſingle, than to have a wife and children to care for in poverty or flight."

29 But this I ſay, brethren, the time is ſhort. It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as if they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not: And they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it. For the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.

As if he had ſaid, "Let all perſons, both married and unmarried, conſider that the time of this life is ſhort and paſſing; it is but a point of time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a pin to chuſe, whether we had wives or not, or children or not; but before the expected fruit of the comforts be ripe, we ourſelves may be rotten. It is therefore true ſpiritual wiſdom, to look upon theſe things now, as they will be ſhortly; to be very moderate in the enjoyment of them, not to be too much affected when we have them, or too much afflicted when we want them." *Obſerve* here, 1. The apoſtle's propoſition; *the time is ſhort.* This is true in all the notions of it. Take it firſt for the whole duration of this world, from the day of its creation to the hour of its diſſolution; compare it with what ſucceeds it, eternity: and it is very ſhort, but a moment. Secondly, Take time for the whole duration of any one man's life, ſo it is ſhorter; ſo ſhort, that it is nothing. Thirdly, Take time for the ſpecial ſeaſon, either of doing or enjoying good in this life; ſo it is ſhorteſt of all. 2. The inference which the apoſtle draws from this propoſition; therefore, *let them that have wives be as if they had none*, &c. *Learn* thence, That the conſideration of the great ſhortneſs of time, and the uncertainty of human life, ſhould keep our hearts in a great deal of moderation towards the beſt and ſweeteſt of our outward comforts and enjoyments: That we neither love inordinately any mercy when we enjoy it, nor mourn immoderately for any contentment when we come to be deprived of it; *They that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not.* 3. The advice which the apoſtle gives to ſuch as have great poſſeſſions and revenues in this world. (1.) To take heed, that though they poſſeſs theſe things, that they be not poſſeſſed by them. (2.) That they ſo uſe them as not to abuſe them, nor be abuſed by them. There is much evil in the world, yet we may, we muſt uſe it, and it will be our wiſdom to make a good uſe of this world, while we are in it; otherwiſe we neither anſwer the end of God in ſending us into the world, nor the deſign of God in truſting us with the good things of this world. 4. The reaſon aſſigned, why we ſhould uſe the world in the forementioned manner: becauſe *the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* Here the apoſtle compares the things of this world to a ſcene which is preſently changed, and vaniſheth almoſt as ſoon as it appears. As faſhions in this world alter, ſo doth the faſhion of this world alter every day. There is a world to come, the faſhion whereof ſhall never paſs away; but the faſhion or ſcheme of this world paſſeth away continually. This world is like a ſtage, perſons interchangeably act their parts upon it; but they ſoon diſappear, and the ſtage itſelf ere long will be pulled down. *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* Thence *learn*, That this conſideration, that all the comforts and conveniencies of this life are fading and paſſing away from us, ſhould be a ſtrong inducement to us, not to ſet our hearts upon them.

32 But I would have you without carefulneſs.
He that is unmarried careth for the things that
belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord:
33 But he that is married careth for the things that
are of the world, how he may pleaſe *his* wife. 34
There is difference alſo between a wife and a virgin.
The unmarried woman careth for the things of the
Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in body and in
ſpirit: but ſhe that is married careth for the things
of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe *her* huſband. 35
And this I ſpeak for your own profit; not that I
may caſt a ſnare upon you, but for that which is
comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord
without diſtraction.

Here our apoſtle ſubjoins another reaſon why a ſingle life is to be preferred before a married life; namely, becauſe ſingle perſons are comparatively more free from cares and diſtractions, and have commonly more time and leiſure to attend upon the Lord in religious duties. For the unmarried man has but one care upon him, namely, how he may ſerve and pleaſe God: But the married man has another care upon him; to wit, how he may oblige and pleaſe his wife. In like manner, a married woman is incumbered with houſhold affairs, diſturbed with domeſtic cares, and concerned in lawful things to pleaſe her huſband, and conſequently has neither ſo much time nor freedom for holy exerciſes: But the virgin that has no family to care for, no huſband to ſeek to pleaſe, has much more leiſure to attend upon God in holy duties and religious exerciſes; therefore he adviſes them to chuſe that ſtate of life in which they *may attend upon the Lord without diſtraction.* *Learn* hence, 1. That a married condition is certainly and neceſſarily attended with many diverſions and diſtractions, from which a ſingle life is free. 2. That perſons in a conjugal relation may and ought to ſeek the obliging and pleaſing one another with their utmoſt endeavours, without violating their duty to Almighty God. 3. That perſons in a ſingle ſtate have great advantages (may they improve them!) of ſerving God above others, in regard of their freedom from domeſtic cares, troubles, and temptations; they have time and leiſure for pious performances, if the heart be diſpoſed for them. 4. That it is the duty, and ought to be the endeavour of all perſons, both married and unmarried, not only to ſerve God in religious duties, but to attend upon him in them, as much as may be, without diſtraction. Diſtractions are the wanderings of the heart, mind, and thoughts, from God in religious duties. The nature of God requires, that we watch and ſtrive againſt them: His majeſty and greatneſs, his purity and holineſs, his omniſciency and all-ſeeing eye upon us, and within us, do oblige us to this careful endeavour; and the nature of his worſhip calls for it, which is a reaſonable ſervice, and a ſpiritual ſervice; and the nature of diſtractions ſhould make us dread them. They divide the heart, they deaden the duty, contract guilt, and provoke diſpleaſure. Lord, help us in all the ſervices we perform unto thee, to attend upon thee without diſtraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth him-
ſelf uncomely towards his virgin if ſhe paſs the
flower of *her* age, and need ſo require, let him do
what he will, he ſinneth not; let them marry. 37
Nevertheleſs, he that ſtandeth ſtedfaſt in his heart,
having no neceſſity, but hath power over his own will,
and hath ſo decreed in his heart that he will keep
his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then, he that giveth
her in marriage, doeth well; but he that giveth *her*
not in marriage, doeth better.

The next caſe which our apoſtle ſpeaks to, is concerning virgins, who are under the power of others, (and not at their own diſpoſal) as parents and guardians; namely, whether it be beſt and moſt adviſable for them to diſpoſe of their virgins in marriage or not. The apoſtle anſwers, that in this caſe, particular reſpect muſt be had to particular circumſtances; as, namely, if ſhe be of marriageable years, and beyond them; if ſhe has an inclination to, and be deſirous of marriage, then he adviſes that ſhe be diſpoſed off: But if a parent be fully ſatisfied in his own mind, that he wrongs not his daughter in declining to marry her, if he has a perfect freedom in his own will, and his will is not contradicted by his daughter's deſire, he doth well, yea, he doth beſt not to marry her; beſt with reſpect to the diſtreſſed condition of the church, beſt with reſpect to the troubles of the world, which ſhe will be the more free from; and beſt with reſpect to the young woman's liberty and freedom for the ſervice of God, and the exerciſes of religion. *Learn* hence, That although children are to be diſpoſed of in marriage by their parents, yet parents have no ſuch abſolute power over their children, as to hinder them from marriage, or to compel them to it: To do either, is very ſinful, very unnatural.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her huſband liveth: but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will; only in the Lord. 40 But ſhe is happier, if ſhe ſo abide, after my judgment. And I think alſo that I have the Spirit of God.

The apoſtle concludes the chapter with a reſolution of this caſe of conſcience; namely, Whether ſecond marriages of widows were lawful or not. He anſwers, They were. After the huſband was dead, the widow might marry again, provided that ſhe married in the Lord; that is, with a believer, not an infidel; with one of the ſame faith with herſelf. It is very dangerous and ſinful, for perſons profeſſing the true faith of Chriſt, to match with idolaters. There is far greater ground of fear that they will pervert you, than there is ground of hope that you ſhall convert them. But though the apoſtle aſſerts it lawful for widows to marry again, yet he declares, that in regard of the preſent danger which the church was in of perſecution, they would be more happy in their widowhood. So that the determination of the apoſtle as to the caſe of marriage and a ſingle life, is concluded thus: "That ordinarily, where there is no neceſſity, a ſingle life is more for a perſon's peace, more free from diſtractions in God's ſervice, and therefore beſt."

CHAP. VIII.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing chapter, reſolved ſeveral caſes of conſcience concerning marriage; here reſolves that grand caſe touching the lawfulneſs of eating things offered to idols: The Heathens uſed to ſacrifice to their idols, oxen, ſheep, and other cattle, and to feaſt upon their ſacrifices: Now, the queſtion which the Corinthians *put to the apoſtle to reſolve, was this, Whether Chriſtians, if invited to theſe feaſts, might go and eat of theſe meats, either in the idol temples, or in the Pagan houſes, or might buy and eat of any ſuch meat, if it were ſold in the ſhambles? A reſolution of which queſtion, we have in this and the tenth chapter.*

NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

It was the opinion of the Gnoſtics and Nicolaitans, thoſe early erroneous perſons in the apoſtles days, that from the knowledge they had of their Chriſtian liberty, they might either be preſent in the idol temples, or eat of the idol-ſacrifices as they pleaſed. The apoſtle here tells them, that they knew many of them had a good degree of knowledge, but deſires, that they might not be puffed up with it, but that their knowledge may be accompanied with charity, which reſpects the edification of others; and puts men upon conſidering, not only what is lawful to be done in itſelf, and with reſpect to ourſelves, but what is expedient or inexpedient in relation unto others. True love, or Chriſtian charity, will put us upon conſulting the good of our neighbours ſouls, as well as our own; and will not ſuffer us to do that thing which may offend our weak brother, that is, lay a ſtumbling-block before him, to tempt him into ſin. *Knowledge puffeth up*; this is to be underſtood of a notional, literal, and ſpeculative knowledge only; not of a ſpiritual, practical, and experimental knowledge. The more a gracious man knows, the more humble he is, becauſe his knowledge ſhews him his own vileneſs and emptineſs; but the more a carnal man knows, the more proud he is, becauſe he knoweth not himſelf; his knowledge is not only a temptation to pride, but the very matter of his pride. Such knowledge doth not build up, but puff up; whereas *charity edifieth*; that is, applies itſelf to the inſtruction of others, and accommodates itſelf to the edification of others, and conſiders, not only what may lawfully be done, but what is fit and expedient to be done; as in the caſe here before us, eating things offered to idols.

2 And if any man think he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

That is, "If a man have ever ſo much knowledge, yet if it be not accompanied with charity and humility, if he improves not his knowledge to the glory of God, and the good of others, he knows nothing to any ſaving purpoſe, or as he ought to know." *Learn*, that Chriſtians ſhould by no means content themſelves with an empty ſpeculative knowledge, but labour to know as they ought to know. Farther, The apoſtle ſays, *He that thinketh he knoweth any thing*, that is, he that is conceited of his own knowledge, that thinks of it with inſolency and pride, and ſpeaks of it with affectation and vain-glory; he who is thus conceited of his own knowledge, knows not himſelf; yea, he knows nothing as he ought to know. *Learn* hence, That it becomes us to have very humble thoughts of ourſelves, and of our own knowledge, how much ſoever we really know: That man's wiſdom is but conceit, who is only wiſe in his own conceit.

3 But if any man love God, the ſame is known of him.

Note, The apoſtle doth not ſay, If any man know God; *but if any man love God*, the ſame is known, that is, allowed, accepted and approved of him: A man may know much of God in this world; and yet God may be aſhamed to know him in another world; but the ſoul that ſincerely loves God, is certainly beloved of him, and ſhall be owned and acknowledged by him. Now, true love to our neighbour, is a good evidence of our ſincere love to God; and if we love our neighbour truly, we dare not ſcandalize our neighbour ſinfully, nor offend our fellow brethren: Only here we muſt take notice, that by offending the weak, is not meant diſpleaſing them; but by offending them, is meant, laying a ſtumbling block before them, which may occaſion their falling into ſin.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of thoſe things that are offered in ſacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

One argument which the Gnoſtics uſed to prove the lawfulneſs of eating things offered unto idols, was this, That an idol was nothing in the world; but how nothing? It was not materially nothing, for it was wood or ſtone; but formally it was nothing, it was nothing of God's creation, nothing that the idolater took it to be, there was nothing of a deity in it, and nothing of a deity could be repreſented by it; an idol is the vaineſt thing in the world, it is a mere vanity, a perfect nothing, (called therefore the *vanities* of the Gentiles) it is of no worth or value, it has no power or virtue. Some obſerve, That the ſame Hebrew word ſignifies both an idol, and ſorrow, and labour, partly becauſe idols are made and formed with much labour, and great exactneſs; the wood or ſtone, figuratively ſpeaking, is put to pain, you muſt cut it and carve it, to make an idol or ſtatue of it; partly, becauſe idols are ſerved and worſhipped with much pain and labour; falſe worſhip is more painful than true, the ſervice of the true God is an holy and honourable ſervice, a noble and ingenuous ſervice, an eaſy and delightful ſervice; but the ſervice of idols is ſlaviſh, a toil rather than worſhip. Idols are troubleſome both in making and worſhipping; and, after all the buſtle made about them, an idol is nothing in the world, becauſe there is no God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) 6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

Here the apoſtle tells them, that although the heathen idolaters acknowledged a plurality of gods, ſome in heaven, as the ſun, moon, and ſtars; ſome on earth, as men and beaſts, they having their celeſtial and terreſtial gods and lords, but theſe were only *called gods*, that is, in God's name, not in nature, not in reality: Yet, ſays he, we Chriſtians do own and acknowledge but one living and true God, one in nature, not one in perſon, to whom all our prayers muſt be directed; and one Mediator, by whom all our prayers are to be offered. *To us there is but one God the Father.* This text the Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians, exceedingly boaſt of, as if it expreſsly confined the Deity to the Father, as diſtinct from Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt. Thus they argue, (1.) "He who ſaith there is one emperor, to wit, Cæſar, ſays in effect there is no other emperor but Cæſar; ſo when St. Paul ſaith there is one God the Father, he doth (ſay they) in effect declare that there is no other God beſides the Father." To this the Orthodox anſwer, (1.) "That God the Father is often put in ſcripture for the whole Deity, comprehending the three Perſons; he being *fons Dietatis*, and *fundamentum trinitatis*, as the ſchoolmen ſpeak: ſo that the application of the word *God* here unto the Father, doth not exclude the Son from being God, but only from being the fountain of the Deity as the Father is. In Rev. i. 17. Chriſt ſays, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt: Will any conclude thence that God the Father is not Alpha and Omega? Is not he the firſt and the laſt, as well as Chriſt? Again, We call our Lord Jeſus the only Saviour; do we therefore exclude God the Father from being a Saviour? Is he not ſtyled the Saviour of all men? 1 Tim. iv. 10. Again, God the Father is called the Creator of all things, yet it is aſſerted that all things were Created by Chriſt, the word, John i. 2. In ſhort, we aſſert, as well as they, the unity of the Godhead, and that Chriſt is not another God, but only another perſon from the Father. *We anſwer*, (2.) Their own argument may be thus retorted upon themſelves; as the apoſtle ſays here, there is but one God the Father, ſo he adds in the next words, there is but one Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Now if the ſaying that there is but one God, doth exclude Chriſt from being God, then the ſaying that there is but one Lord, doth exclude God the Father from being Lord; and if it be blaſphemy to exclude God the Father from being Lord, it is no leſs to exclude Chriſt the Son from being God." *Know* then, That as Chriſtians have in all ages of the church acknowledged one God only, even God the Father, ſo have they alſo owned that Jeſus Chriſt was truly God, of the ſubſtance of the Father, God of God, very God of very God. The Lord keep us ſteadfaſt in this faith, ſeeing he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father that hath ſent him; but he that denieth the Son, denieth the Father alſo.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge. For ſome with conſcience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conſcience being weak is defiled.

Theſe words are brought in as a reaſon by the apoſtle, why ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould not eat meat offered unto idols with reſpect to thoſe that are weak; as if he had ſaid, "Though many of you know that an idol is nothing, and that meat is neither ſanctified nor polluted which is ſet before it, and therefore, you can eat or not eat without any ſcruple as to yourſelves, yet you ſhould conſider what is ſafeſt to be done with reſpect to others; for every man has not this knowledge, that an idol is nothing, but ſome perſons having a conceit of the idol being ſomething, eat what is offered to it as a thing offered to an idol, that is, not as common meat, but as a ſacred banquet in honour of the idol! and ſo his conſcience being weak, that is, erroneous, is defiled." *Learn* hence, That an action which is lawful in reſpect of ourſelves, may yet be a ſin if done by us with reſpect to others; another, encouraged by our example, may do the ſame act, but not do it with the ſame intent, as in the caſe before us: The ſight of one Chriſtian's eating things offered unto idols, who knows that an idol is nothing in the world, may harden, embolden, and encourage others to do the ſame, who really intend ſome honour by it to the idol; the outward action is the ſame, but the opinion and intention wide and different.

8 ¶ But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better: neither, if we eat not, are we the worſe. 9 But take heed, leaſt by any means this liberty of yours become a ſtumbling-block to them that are weak.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "It is not the eating or not eating barely conſidered, that makes a man either better or worſe, more or leſs acceptable in the ſight of God, but we muſt take great heed leaſt by our example others take occaſion to worſhip the idol; you therefore ought not ſo to eat as to give occaſion to the fall of your weak brother." Still the apoſtle holds forth this truth unto us, That ſuch a man certainly ſins, who uſes his liberty, ſo that it becomes a ſnare and a ſtumbling block to his weak brother, by emboldening and encouraging him unto ſin.

10 For if any man ſee thee which haſt knowledge ſit at meat in the idol's temple, ſhall not the conſcience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat thoſe things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge ſhall the weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died?

The meaning of the apoſtle ſeems to be this; "If any man with an erroneous conſcience goes to theſe feaſts, and there ſees thee, who he thinks has more knowledge than himſelf, ſit at meat in the idol's temple, will not his conſcience be the more emboldened by thy example, to eat things offered to idols in the honour of the idol, or, as thinking it no hurt to worſhip the idol? And thus, by occaſion of thy knowledge, a weak brother is in danger of periſhing, for whom Chriſt died." An indiſcreet uſe of that liberty, which our ſuppoſed knowledge teaches us to make uſe of, doth that, if we be not careful, which may be accounted a deſtroying of our weak brother, by cauſing him to fall into ſin: By all which the apoſtle lets us know the obligation which lies upon every good Chriſtian, not to uſe his liberty to the prejudice of others ſouls, by doing any action which may be let alone, but if done, may really become a ſnare to others.

12 But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt.

The apoſtle goes on to ſhew, that ſuch an uſe of our Chriſtian liberty as doth embolden and encourage others to do that which is evil, is both an act of uncharitableneſs towards our brother, and alſo an act of ſin againſt our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in betraying a ſoul to ruin as much as in us lieth, and hindering his ſalvation for the ſaving of whom Chriſt died, wounding the members of his body, defeating the great end of his death, and deſtroying them whom he deſigned to ſave. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt in dying for the weakeſt believers, hath ſhewn the higheſt degree of love imaginable unto them. 2. That ſuch as will not abate or abridge themſelves of their Chriſtian liberty, when the uſe of it may probably be an occaſion of ſin, and the ruin of their brethren's ſouls, do at once wound their weak brethren, and ſin againſt Chriſt.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

A twofold ſenſe and interpretation is given of theſe words. Some underſtand the apoſtle ſpeaking thus: "If my eating meat offered to idols be a ſtumbling-block to any perſons, and confirms them in their ſinful practice, or be an occaſion of ſin unto them, I will certainly deny myſelf the uſe of that liberty which may prove of ſuch dangerous conſequence to my fellow Chriſtians." Others carry the thing higher, and underſtand it of all fleſh in general, that rather than the apoſtle would offend his weak brother, he would not eat any fleſh to his dying day; an hyperbolical expreſſion, by which the apoſtle declares how far one Chriſtian ſhould condeſcend to another, to prevent each others ſinning againſt God: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Verily I do not make ſo light of another's ſin, nor ſet ſo light by the ſoul of my weak brother, nor by the blood of my bleſſed Saviour, as for fleſh, that is, for an unneceſſary thing, to make uſe of my liberty, when it may prove a temptation unto ſin." From the whole of the apoſtle's diſcourſe in this chapter, we *learn*, That it is the duty of Chriſtians, in matters, wherein they are at liberty by the law of God, to do a thing, or not to do it, to take that part which, they ſee, will give leaſt occaſion of ſin unto their brethren, and to avoid that part, which, if taken, will certainly give occaſion unto others to ſin: Although we be ourſelves never ſo well ſatisfied as to the lawfulneſs of the action, yet we ought to deny ourſelves in ſome things, rather than be an occaſion unto others, to fall into ſin; he forfeits the name of a Chriſtian who will not abridge himſelf of his Chriſtian liberty to preſerve his brother from ſin and temptation.

CHAP. IX.

Our apoſtle having exhorted the Corinthians *to abridge themſelves in the lawful uſe of their Chriſtian liberty, when it will be prejudicial to weak Chriſtians; here propounds his own example for their encouragement and imitation, who though he was an apoſtle, yet reſtrained*

reſtrained himſelf in ſeveral caſes, which are recorded in this chapter.

AM I not an apoſtle? am I not free? have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

The firſt inſtance which the apoſtle gives of his freedom and liberty was this, That when he preached the goſpel amongſt them at Corinth, he had a liberty either to live on the goſpel, and take maintenance of them for preaching, or to live upon his labour, following his trade of tent-making, according as he ſaw it beſt for the furtherance of the goſpel: *Am not I free?* As if he had ſaid, "Have not I as good a claim to freedom and Chriſtian liberty as any man? For *am not I an apoſtle*, or an extraordinary meſſenger of Jeſus Chriſt? And though I never ſaw the face of Chriſt upon earth, *yet have I not ſeen* him, and heard him ſpeaking to me from heaven? And is not the converſion of you, the Corinthians, to the Chriſtian faith by my miniſtry, a fruit and ſeal of my apoſtleſhip? Now, if I be all this, certainly I have as great a right and claim to the uſe of Chriſtian liberty, as any of you can pretend to have: Yet will I only make uſe of it for the benefit of others, and for the furtherance of the goſpel." *Learn* we from the apoſtle's example, in abſtaining from that liberty and power which God had given him for receiving maintenance from them to whom he preached the goſpel, how much it is the duty and concern of all Chriſtians to the end of the world, to abſtain from the exerciſe of that liberty, and rightful power, granted to them by Chriſt, for avoiding the ſcandal of the weak, and provoking men's ſpiritual welfare.

2 If I be not an apoſtle unto others, yet doubtleſs I am to you; for the ſeal of mine apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.

As if he had ſaid, "Whatever others do, you of all men ſhould not queſtion my apoſtleſhip, for you were converted by it: You confirm and ratify my miniſtry, that it is of God, and that God is in it of a truth: The converſion of ſinners, and the building up of ſaints, is God's ſeal to our miniſtry." *Learn* hence, That there is no ſuch argument to prove a miniſter ſent of Chriſt, as the ſucceſs of his miniſtry in the converſion of ſouls unto God: This is God's ſeal to his office, that he is a miniſter called of God, and ſent by God. Happy thoſe miniſters who can ſay unto their people, *Ye are our work, and the ſeal of our apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.* Yet muſt it not be concluded from hence, that a perſon is not a true miniſter of Chriſt, becauſe he cannot produce this ſeal: The good of our miniſtry is not always known to ourſelves, much leſs publiſhed to the world: More good is done many times by the miniſtry of the word than the miniſter knows of: the ſeed ſometimes lies long under the clods before it fructifies; what is ſown in one miniſter's time, comes up in another's; ſo one ſoweth, and another reapeth, but both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, ſhall rejoice together. But where this ſeal can be produced, it is a certain ſign that ſuch a miniſter is ſent of God, and that God is with him, and owns him; yet it muſt be added, that though the ſucceſs of our miniſtry to others is a ſeal of our office, and aſſures us that we are true miniſters, yet it is the efficacy of the word we preach upon our own hearts and lives, that is the witneſs of our ſanctification, and the ſeal of our ſalvation. Lord! how ſad will it be for any of us to have been inſtruments for the helping others to heaven by the ſoundneſs of our doctrine, and to go to hell ourſelves for the badneſs of our example, and the wickedneſs of our lives!

3 Mine anſwer to them that do examine me is
this: 4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?
5 Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter, a wife,
as well as other apoſtles, and *as* the brethren of the
Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas,
have not we power to forbear working?

Here the apoſtle inſtances in another branch of his Chriſtian liberty, and that was marriage; he could have taken a wife, as Peter, and other apoſtles did, had he pleaſed, and have put the church to farther charges in maintaining himſelf, a wife, and family, as did others, without blame: And he and Barnabas had power to forbear working for their living, and maintaining themſelves with their own labour in tent-making; they had power to aſk maintenance of the Corinthians, if they pleaſed. But they conſidered the low circumſtances which the church was in and under at that time, and continued both in a ſingle ſtate, and wrought with their hands to maintain themſelves, when they might have expected maintenance from the church. *Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter, a wife?* That is, to marry, if we ſaw fit. Hence *learn*, 1. The lawfulneſs of the miniſters of the goſpel marrying, as well as other men; neither the prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the apoſtles of the New, did abhor the marriage-bed, nor judge themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their Maker; the doctrine forbidding marriage to any, (which the apoſtle ſays is honourable in all) is called a doctrine of devils. 2. That no Chriſtians, much leſs miniſters, have power, that is, any lawful power, to marry ſuch as are no Chriſtians; their wives muſt be their ſiſters in Chriſt; that is, Chriſtian women, at leaſt by external and viſible profeſſion. 3. That huſband and wife ought to be undivided companions one to another, *Have we not power to lead about a wife?* That is, to take her with us in our travels and journeyings from place to place, for our comfort and aſſiſtance. Huſbands and wives are to be mutual companions, ſharers in each other's ſorrows, and partakers of one another's comforts.

7 ¶ Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "As ſoldiers are paid by thoſe that employ them, and as huſbandmen and ſhepherds live upon the fruit of their labours, ſo may I, and all the miniſters of the goſpel with me." Where *note*, 1. That the miniſterial function is repreſented here as a warfare: the miniſters of Chriſt are ſpiritual ſoldiers, they have many enemies to encounter with, and contend againſt. They are alſo planters, wine-dreſſers, huſbandmen, ſhepherds: All which titles given to them, do intimate and ſignify what care and painfulneſs, what diligence and watchfulneſs, ſhould be found with them. 2. That maintenance, a comfortable maintenance, from the people, is a debt due to the miniſters of the goſpel, who labour in the word and doctrine amongſt them. *Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?* This is the firſt argument which our apoſtle here makes uſe of, to prove the miniſter's maintenance, a duty taken from the law of nature, equity and cuſtom, which do appoint and allow to ſoldiers, vine-dreſſers and ſhepherds, yea, to all that labour for the uſe of others in their reſpective callings, a due reward of wages. What ſoldier goes to war at his own charges?

8 Say I theſe things as a man? or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo? 9 For it is written in the law of Moſes, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes, no doubt, *this is* written, that he that ploweth ſhould plow in hope; and that he that threſheth in hope ſhould be partaker of his hope.

A ſecond argument produced by the apoſtle for the people's cheerful maintenance of the miniſters of the goſpel, is taken from the Levitical law: *Say I theſe things as a man? Or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo?* As if he had ſaid, "I do not ſpeak this only rationally, as a thing very agreeable to the light of nature, and the law of nations, but the Levitical law ſays the ſame: For when God, in Deut. xxv. 4. forbids to *muzzle the mouth of the ox*, who by hard labour treadeth out the corn with his feet, his deſign therein is more than the bare taking care of the ox; for thereby he ſhews in general what equity ſhould be uſed in the juſt rewarding of all men that labour for us; and in particular, the ſpiritual labourers, ſuch as plow, and ſow, and threſh, in the ſpiritual huſbandry, ſhould labour in hope of a livelihood and ſubſiſtence, and eat their bread when they have earned it. If all men are encouraged to work, by a juſt expectation of the fruit of their own labours, why ſhould not the miniſters of the word meet with the like encouragement, which all mankind look upon as their juſt due?

11 If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?

A third argument for the miniſters' maintenance is here taken from common juſtice: They *ſow ſpiritual things*; that is, they diſpenſe the word and ſacraments, and endeavour to make men ſpiritual and holy here, and happy hereafter; and therefore they ought to reap ſome of their people's *carnal things*, things for the ſupport of their lives, and ſubſiſtence for themſelves and their families: So that the miniſters of God are not indebted to their people, but their people are indebted both to God and them; they give their people things of a much greater value, and more excellent uſe, for things of much leſſer value, and more inferior uſe; for their carnal things, they give them ſpiritual things.

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? nevertheleſs, we have not uſed this power; but ſuffer all things, leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt.

Here we have a fourth argument for the Corinthians allowing St. Paul and other apoſtles a ſufficient maintenance; namely, from their own example to other teachers at Corinth: As if he had ſaid, "You maintain others, why not us? Do not you owe more to us, who firſt laid the foundation of a Chriſtian church amongſt you, and have begotten you through the goſpel, than you do to others?" Nevertheleſs he tells them, that himſelf and Barnabas, although they had this unqueſtionable liberty, yet they never made uſe of it, but ſuffered hunger and thirſt, wearineſs and want, leſt it ſhould obſtruct the courſe, and hinder the progreſs, of the goſpel; whilſt ſome might, though very unjuſtly, charge them with covetouſneſs; and others, to ſave charges, might decline hearing of them.

13 Do ye not know, that they which miniſter about holy things, live *of the things* of the temple; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? 14 Even ſo hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel.

A fifth argument is here produced for the miniſters' maintenance, which is taken from the example of the Levites, who lived upon the things that were offered in the temple, and at the altar, and had a conſiderable part of the ſacrifices allowed them by God himſelf for their miniſtration under the law. In like manner, ſays the apoſtle, "It is the Lord's pleaſure and appointment now under the goſpel, (Matt. x. 10. Luke x. 7.) that they who preach the word ſhould be maintained for it, and not diverted from their work, by the cares and buſineſs of the world, but have a livelihood from their labour. Hence it clearly appears, that a maintenance for the miniſtry under the goſpel is of divine right; if it was ſo under the law, it is likewiſe under the goſpel; for *ſo*, ſays the apoſtle, *God has ordained.* God's will in this matter is the ſame under the New Teſtament as it was under the Old; and as a maintenance in general is of divine right, ſo tithes may make thus far a claim to be of that nature, that it is believed the wiſdom of man cannot find out any better expedient, than by them to ſupport a miniſterial maintenance for the preachers of the goſpel to the end of the world.

15 But I have uſed none of theſe things. Neither have I written theſe things that it ſhould be ſo done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die than that any man ſhould make my glorying void.

The apoſtle having thus aſſerted his liberty, now ſhews his great moderation in the uſe of it: Although he had a liberty to marry, and to demand maintenance for his miniſtry as well as others, yet he denied himſelf in both. The apoſtle was charged by falſe teachers, that he preached the goſpel for his own profit and advantage; whereas he gloried in the contrary, that he made the goſpel without charge;

looking upon it as his great honour, that he could, and did, preach the goſpel freely, for ſincere ends, and not out of ſiniſter reſpects; and profeſſes he had rather die by ſtarving, than loſe his advantage of glorying. Now the inference which St. Paul draws from all this diſcourſe, of his declining the uſe of his lawful liberty, is this: "If I your miniſter, for your profit and the advantage of the goſpel, abate of my own juſt right and unqueſtionable liberty, why ſhould not you abate of yours, in the caſe of eating things offered unto idols, to keep your weak brother from deſtroying his ſoul by ſinning againſt God?"

16 For though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: for neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the goſpel. 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward: but if againſt my will, a diſpenſation *of the goſpel* is committed unto me.

That which the apoſtle glories in, is not his bare preaching of the goſpel, but his preaching of it freely, and without maintenance; for, ſays he, "Though I preach the goſpel, that has nothing ſingular in it, others do it as well as myſelf; and I am bound to do it as well as others; for neceſſity is laid upon me, by ſpecial call and command from Chriſt ſo to do; yea, wo is unto me for my diſobedience to Chriſt in the heavenly viſion (Acts xxvi.) if I preach not the goſpel. Now, if I do this thing willingly, that is, freely, without demanding any thing of you for my pains, which I might do, *I have a reward*; that is, a ſpecial reward from God, and may glory in it: But if I preach it unwillingly, (demanding a maintenance for my pains, and refuſing to preach without it) all that can be ſaid is this, that a diſpenſation of the goſpel is committed to me; and ſo in preaching I only diſcharge a truſt of which I cannot boaſt or glory." The ſtrength of the apoſtle's argument lies here: "No man can reaſonably boaſt of, glory in, or expect an extraordinary reward for the doing of that which he is under a command from his ſuperior to do, and that under a penalty too." Now this was his caſe: Neceſſity was laid upon him to preach the goſpel, but no neceſſity but what he laid upon himſelf to preach it freely; therefore for him to do it, without demanding any reward from them for the doing of it, this made it matter of glorying to him, which he declared he had rather die than any ſhould take from him. But was it the apoſtle's own glory that he was thus fond of, and concerned for, that he had rather loſe his life than loſe it? No, it was the glory of God, the honour of the goſpel, that was ſo unexpreſſively dear unto him; this great apoſtle did, upon pure principles of faith and love, from his heart and ſoul, deſign the glory of God, purſuant to which he did cheerfully and willingly apply himſelf to the preaching of the goſpel, waiting upon God for his acceptance and reward, without expecting any wages (as he might) from them his Corinthian converts: and this was the matter of his boaſting and glorying in the face of the falſe apoſtles, who inſinuated that he preached the goſpel for filthy lucre ſake.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that when I preach the goſpel, I may make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge, that I abuſe not my power in the goſpel.

The ſenſe is, "This gives me hopes of a reward extraordinary from God; namely, that I have preached the goſpel to you, without being chargeable to any of you; for had I received maintenance from you, I found my reproaches would have brought an ill report upon me. To prevent which, I made uſe of my Chriſtian liberty, and took nothing of you; which he calls, *his not abuſing his power in the goſpel. Learn* hence, 1. That miniſters, generally ſpeaking, lawfully may expect, yea, require maintenance from their people to whom they preach the goſpel. 2. That although they may expect and demand maintenance for their miniſtry, yet in caſe people are ſo poor, that they cannot give it; or enemies ſo malicious, as to open their mouths againſt them for it; or if it will hinder the progreſs of the goſpel, by keeping people from coming under the preaching of it, fearing it ſhould be chargeable to them; under ſuch circumſtances, if the miniſter can ſubſiſt without it, it is his certain duty to preach freely, and for ſuch extraordinary ſervices he may expect a more than ordinary reward. 3. That the liberty, which God hath intruſted us with, muſt never be abuſed by us, to the prejudice of his glory, or the detriment of his goſpel, or to the diſadvantage of others. All ſuch uſe of our liberty in any thing, is indeed an abuſe of it; therefore, ſays the apoſtle here, I abuſe not my power in the goſpel.

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myſelf ſervant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means ſave ſome. 23 And this I do for the goſpel's ſake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

In theſe verſes our apoſtle proceeds to ſhew the Corinthians farther, how mightily he did abridge himſelf of his Chriſtian liberty, which was the argument he was inſiſting upon: *For*, ſays he, *though I be free from all men*, as being a ſervant to none, yet *have I made myſelf as a ſervant* to all, *that I might gain the more*, to embrace the goſpel. *To the* unconverted *Jew*, *he became as a Jew*, circumciſing Timothy for their ſakes, Acts xvi. 3. *that he might gain the Jews*. *To them*, who in their opinion *were yet under* the obligation of the ceremonial law, he carried himſelf as a perſon *under that law*, *though* he knew himſelf free from it, to the end that *he might gain them that are under the law*; and accordingly he purified himſelf in the temple, Acts xxi. *To them that were without law*, that is, the Gentiles, who were without the ceremonial law, he became as *without law*, abſtaining from the uſe of all ceremonies as they did: But yet, *not being without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt*; that is, as to the moral law of God, which was not aboliſhed, but reinforced by Chriſt, he did never account himſelf free from that, nor durſt do any thing contrary to the eternal rule of righteouſneſs; and all this, *that he might gain them that are without law*. *To the weak* converts, either among Jews or Gentiles, *he became as weak*, by abſtaining from what might hurt their weak conſciences, *that ſo he might gain the weak*. Finally, *he became all things to all men*, by compliance with them in all lawful and indifferent things, *that he might gain* as many as poſſibly he could. *And all this he did for the goſpel's ſake*, that the goſpel might be the better eſteemed, and farther propagated, and that he might himſelf partake of the promiſes and rewards of it, together with them to whom he preached it, and had effectually entertained it. Behold here the humility and charity of this great apoſtle; his ready condeſcenſion to the pitiable weakneſſes of all men; his compliance with them in all lawful and indifferent things for the glory of God, and the advantage of the goſpel. A rare and ſingular pattern for all miniſters and private Chriſtians to imitate and follow. Now from this example of St. Paul's becoming all things to all men, and making himſelf a ſervant unto all, we *learn*, 1. One great duty of a goſpel miniſter, is not to be a ſlave to any, but a ſervant to all; not a ſervant to their luſts, but to their weakneſſes and infirmities. Our apoſtle did not turn, as the flattering and falſe apoſtles did, with the tide and times, nor conform to them in what was ſinful: He did not ſymbolize with all colours, nor was he a man for all hours or humours; for, ſays he, *If I pleaſe men* (he means in any thing ſinful) *I am no more the ſervant of Chriſt*, Gal. i. 10. But wiſely conſidering the caſe and ſtate of all men, he did accommodate his miniſtry, for the gaining of as many as poſſibly he could. Some are all things to all men, that they may gain by all; a ſpirit not only unworthy of a miniſter, but of a man. But St. Paul complied with all men, and made himſelf the ſervant of all, that Chriſt might thereby gain, his goſpel gain, yea, and they themſelves gain; which hints to us a ſecond obſervation, the great end which the apoſtle aimed at, in this his compliance with, and condeſcenſion towards, the weakneſſes of his people: *This I do for the goſpel's ſake*. As if he had ſaid, "Though I thus ſtoop and yield to all men, it is to ſerve my Maſter, not myſelf. Think not that I thus put myſelf into all forms towards men for my own preferment in the world; but that Chriſt may be preferred in the hearts and acceptations of all men: *I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved*." 1 Cor. x. 33. Behold here the noble mark which the miniſter of Chriſt had in his eye, *the ſaving of ſouls*. That he might hit it, he wiſely obſerved the temper and ſtate of his people, ſtriving to render himſelf agreeable and acceptable unto all, that he might by all means ſave ſome; yet had he alſo an eye to himſelf in all this; he had reſpect to the recompenſe of reward, as lawfully he might: *This I do for the goſpel's ſake, that I may be partaker thereof with you:* that is, that I may have a ſhare myſelf in the promiſed rewards of the goſpel which I have preached unto you. Bleſſed be God, it is lawful for all the miniſters and members of Chriſt to do good out of hope of reward; and that his glory and our own happineſs are ſo inſeparably connected and knit together, that by promoting the former, we ſecure the latter.

24 ¶ Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.

Our apoſtle, according to his cuſtom in ſundry epiſtles, does in the end of this chapter fall upon the uſe of terms agoniſtical; borrowed from the Olympic, and other Grecian games, celebrated near Corinth, in which the contending parties did put forth all their ſtrength to outdo one another. Theſe games were running, cuffing, and wreſtling; all which the apoſtle here alludes unto; and firſt to running: *They which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize*; ſo run the Chriſtian race, *that ye may obtain* the prize. *Learn* hence, that Chriſtianity is a race which God hath ſet us, and it is our duty faithfully and perſeveringly to run it. In a race the foundation of it is a prize; in a race there is a conſiderable diſtance between one goal and another; in a race there is a race-plat for the racers to run in, there are certain laws to run by, and there is a certain judge to determine who wins the crown fairly. Now this race of Chriſtianity vaſtly differs from all other races, thus: This is a ſpiritual race, it ſtrains not legs and lungs, but faith and patience. Other races are performed by natural abilities, but this by a ſupernatural power and ſtrength. Thoſe races might be run without diſturbance, but not this; their reward but a garland of bays, our's a crown of immortality. But what is it to run this race? *Anſ.* It ſuppoſes a motion, it imports a vehement and intenſe motion, it implies progreſs and proficiency; every ſtep brings the racer nearer the goal: and it implies perſeverance; the racer muſt hold it to the laſt, or he loſes his labour and reward: every one that runs ſhall obtain the prize; whereas in other races, but one receiveth the prize.

25 And every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things. Now, they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

It was a cuſtom amongſt thoſe that uſed at Corinth the forementioned games of running and wreſtling, to tie themſelves to a ſtrict preſcribed diet, both for quality and quantity, by way of preparation. They did not indulge themſelves in gluttony, or any ſort of exceſs, but were temperate in all things, that the crown might be won by them; which, alas! was nothing but a garland of leaves or flowers. In imitation of whom, he adviſes the Corinthians to be very moderate in the uſe of all worldly things, and to abſtain from whatſoever may hinder their running the Chriſtian race, and their receiving the incorruptible crown.

26 I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly; ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

That is, "I run this race of Chriſtianity myſelf, which I adviſe you unto: But my care is to run ſure, not at uncertainties; to make ſure of the crown at the end of the race; and I do not only run, but fight; I oppoſe whatever

ever oppoſeth me." Here *obſerve*, The apoſtle changes the metaphor from that of running, to the other game of cuffing; and ſays, he did not fight like one that beats the air, but never hurts the adverſary: No, he fought in good earneſt with all his ſpiritual enemies, the fleſh, the world, and the devil. It is not every running that will gain the prize, nor every fighting that will obtain the victory; but it muſt be a running with all perſeverance, and a fighting with our utmoſt power, that will bring us to heaven and eternal happineſs.

27 But I keep under my body,—

The original word may be fitly rendered, I give myſelf blue eyes, alluding to the Olympic game of cuffing, in which the combatants were wont with their blows to beat one another till they made each other livid, their eyes black and blue. The ſenſe is, that by mortification he uſed great ſeverity upon himſelf contending againſt and combating with that body of ſin and death, which did obſtruct and hinder him in running the Chriſtian race which was ſet before him.

—And bring it into ſubjection:—

The word in the Greek is an illuſion to the other exerciſe of wreſtling, wherein the antagoniſts or contenders do ſtrive to caſt each other to the ground, and to keep them under. So he, the better to ſubdue his body of ſin, was careful to keep down the body of fleſh, which, if pampered, is apt to rebel. He concludes all with a reaſon why he exerciſed all this care and caution, namely,

—Leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

That is, Leſt when he had acquainted them with the laws and rules of Chriſtianity, and propoſed to them the way of ſtriving and getting the crown, he himſelf ſhould at laſt be a caſt-way, or one unworthy to be approved or rewarded by God. From whence *obſerve*, 1. That it is poſſible for him, who has been all his life preaching to others, and furthering them in their way to heaven, to be thrown himſelf into hell at laſt. Many that have propheſied in Chriſt's name, ſhall yet periſh in his wrath; and ſuch as have caſt devils out of others, ſhall be caſt to the devil themſelves. 2. That ſuch miniſters as indulge their unruly appetites, giving the fleſh whatever it craves, and can deny it nothing it deſires, pampering the body to the prejudice of the ſoul, go not in St. Paul's road to heaven, but the contrary; they gratify what he mortified, they indulge what he ſubdued: He adminiſtred to the wants, they to the wantonneſs of the fleſh: He knew that Hagar would quickly perk up, and domineer over Sarah; that the body would quickly expect and command more attendance than the ſoul, except it were kept under; and, for this reaſon, ſays our apoſtle here, *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt that by any means*, &c.

CHAP. X.

The apoſtle, in this chapter, continues his arguments to diſſuade Chriſtians from eating of things offered unto idols.

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea.

Among other arguments which the apoſtle produces to diſſuade the Corinthians from eating things offered to idols in the idol temples, and to prove it abſolutely unlawful for Chriſtians to have communion with the Gentiles in their idolatrous banquets, the firſt is drawn from the danger of ſuch ſinful communion; it would endanger their falling into ſuch kind of ſins as the Iſraelites, on that occaſion, fell into, and conſequently expoſe them to ſuch puniſhments as they ſuffered. But firſt of all, in the beginning of this chapter, he acquaints the Corinthians with the great favours and privileges which Almighty God vouchſafed to, and conferred upon the Iſraelites, who came out of Egypt with Moſes into the wilderneſs, who had a pillar of cloud to guide and protect them, the manna from heaven to ſuſtain and uphold them, and water out of a rock to refreſh and ſatiſfy them. *All our fathers were under the cloud*; that is, under the conduct and protection of the cloud; *and all paſſed through the Red-ſea*, as upon dry ground. This cloud which accompanied the Iſraelites in their journeyings, had a threefold uſe: (1.) In reſpect of God; it was a ſign and ſymbol of the preſence of God with them, and of his care and protection over them, for it encompaſſed their camp as a wall doth a city. Hence is that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſpread out a cloud for a covering to them, and fire to give them light in the night ſeaſon*, Pſal. cv. 39. (2.) In reſpect of the Iſraelites, the cloud did guide and direct them in their journeyings; Pſal. lxxviii. 14. *In the day he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.* And as the cloud did guide and direct Iſrael, ſo did it cool and refreſh them in the wilderneſs, preſerving them from the heat of the ſun: It was a covering canopy over them, in a ſcorching deſert. (3.) In reſpect of their enemies, it was darkneſs to the Egyptians, and conſequently, protected the Iſraelites from their enemies, that they could not aſſault or fall upon them. It had a bright ſide to the Iſraelites, and a dark ſide to the Egyptians. Lord! how eaſily canſt thou make the ſame creature a comfort to thy children, and a terror to thine enemies. Every outward bleſſing is that, and no more, which thou art pleaſed to make it to us. A cloud ſhall guide, a cloud ſhall cover, a cloud ſhall comfort Iſrael: And the ſame cloud ſhall be darkneſs, yea, at thy command, ſhall be death to the Egyptians.

2 And were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea;

Note, 1. The Iſraelites are here ſaid to be *baptized* in the cloud and in the ſea; that is, the cloud which overſhadowed them, did ſometimes bedew and ſprinkle them: And the Red-Sea, through which they paſſed, had its waters gathered into two heaps, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, betwixt which the Iſraelites paſſed, and in their paſſage ſeemed to be buried in the waters: As perſons in that age were put under the water when they were baptized; and thus were Iſrael baptized in the cloud and in the ſea. 2. They are ſaid to be baptized *unto Moſes* in the cloud and in the ſea: *Unto Moſes*; that is, into the doctrine taught by

Moſes, they believed him, and followed his conduct through the ſea, and were confirmed in their belief of Moſes (the typical Mediator) as a perſon employed by God; and were obliged under the miniſtry and guidance of Moſes, to follow God whitherſoever he led them. 3. That all this was a figure to which our baptiſm anſwers: both the cloud and the ſea had reſemblance to our being covered with water in baptiſm, by which we are confirmed in the faith of Chriſt, and obliged to profeſs and own him, to truſt in and depend upon him, to ſerve and obey him, and this to the death. Behold how much of Chriſt and his goſpel was ſhadowed and held forth to the Jews under the diſpenſation of the ceremonial law; they had Chriſt in their ſacrifices, and we have all their ſacrifices in Chriſt. The cloud, the ſea, the manna, the rock, all typified Chriſt, and were reſemblances and repreſentations of him. Chriſt was as truly repreſented to the Jews as unto us, as truly, though not ſo clearly.

3 And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink. (For they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Chriſt.)

They, that is, the fathers in the wilderneſs, did all eat of the manna which came down from heaven, which is here called ſpiritual meat; either becauſe it came down from heaven, which is the habitation of ſpiritual beings; or becauſe it was food given out by the miniſtry of angels, thoſe ſpiritual agents; or elſe it is called ſpiritual, that is, ſacramental meat; becauſe it typified Chriſt, who is the bread of life, the true bread which came down from heaven. That manna was a type of Chriſt, thus appears: "Was manna provided by God for the Iſraelites without their labour and induſtry? ſo is Chriſt given unto men without any merit or work of their own, but of the free gift and goodneſs of God. Did manna come down from heaven beſides the ordinary courſe of nature? So was Chriſt's birth wonderful, and not as the birth of other men; being not begotten of mortal ſeed, but by the influence of the Holy Ghoſt. Was manna diſtributed to all alike, one not having more and another leſs, but all an equal ſhare? In like manner, Chriſt communicates himſelf unto all alike, without exception of perſons: a beggar may have as great a part in Chriſt as a prince. Again, as manna was food, plentiful food, ſweet and pleaſing food; ſo is Chriſt, the food of life, very ſweet to ſuch a ſoul as can truly reliſh him. Farther, muſt the manna, before fit for food, be beaten in a mortar, or broken in a mill, and baked in an oven? ſo Chriſt, our heavenly manna, was broken on the croſs, ſcorched in the fire of his Father's wrath, that he might become the ſpiritual food wherewith our ſouls are nouriſhed unto everlaſting life.—Finally, as manna was given only in the wilderneſs, and ceaſed when the Iſraelites came into Canaan; ſo is Chriſt our ſpiritual meat, our ſacramental food, whilſt we are in the wilderneſs of this world; but when we ſhall come to the heavenly Canaan, we ſhall have no more any need of ſacramental ſupports, but ſhall behold him face to face, and be ſatisfied with his likeneſs." *And they did all drink of that ſpiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Chriſt.* Here the water out of the rock is alſo called ſpiritual drink, it being typically and ſacramentally ſo. *That Rock was Chriſt*; that is, it ſignified, repreſented, and typified Jeſus Chriſt. For as the rock gave no water before it was ſmitten with the rod of Moſes; ſo was Chriſt ſmitten upon the croſs, and out of his ſide came forth water: and as it was the rod in Moſes's hand that ſmote and broke the rock; ſo was Chriſt ſmitten with the curſe of the law, in the day when his ſoul was made an offering for ſin. In a word, as the rock yielded water, not only to them that were firſt preſent at the broaching of it, but followed them with its ſtreams, in their ſtations through the wilderneſs; in like manner, the water which guſhed out from our ſmitten Saviour, the ſweet fruits and benefits of his death, did not only belong to them who were preſent at the time and place of his ſufferings, but it doth, and will accompany all believers to the end of this world. The virtue and efficacy of our Lord's blood is now as great, as efficacious and effectual, as it was the firſt hour it was ſhed; the divinity of his perſon adds an eternal efficacy to his paſſion.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleaſed: for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs.

Although the Iſraelites were made partakers of the forementioned privileges and ſpiritual favours; though they were baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea, and did eat ſacramental meat, and drink ſacramental drink; yet it did not ſet them out of danger of God's diſpleaſure, for they were overthrown, their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs. *Learn* thence, That no external privileges or prerogatives whatſoever can exempt perſons from God's judgments, if they return not ſuitably to him for the favours and benefits received from him. The bare outward receiving of a ſacrament is not ſaving to the ſoul of a perſon: and the unworthy receiving of ſacraments, and unſuitable walking after them, do inkindle God's anger, and provoke his heavy diſpleaſure againſt perſons, even to the cutting them off by untimely death here in this world.

6 ¶ Now theſe things were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſin charged upon the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs; *They luſted*; that is, after the fleſh-pots of Egypt, and to return thither again. They had manna for forty years together, but being tied to it (though angels' food, that is, moſt excellent food) they grew weary of it. Lord! how exceedingly indebted are we to thy liberality and bounty, in that plenty and variety of creature refreſhments which thou affordeſt us? The beaſts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fiſhes of the ſea, are freely given us, not barely for neceſſity, but delight, and do all adminiſter to our ſupport and comfort. 2. How the apoſtle calls upon us to improve examples, that we may not be made examples. *Theſe things*, that is, their ſufferings, *were our examples*; they were for our caution to receive warning by them, not to walk in thoſe ſoul-defiling ways, in which they have walked, fallen, and periſhed. A wiſe Chriſtian may receive much good by obſerving the dealings of God with them that are evil, for God is unchangeable, juſt, and holy, and will not favour that in one perſon,
which

which he puniſhes in another. *Theſe things were our examples.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "O ye Corinthians, look upon the dead bodies of the Iſraelites, which are caſt upon the ſhore of the ſcriptures, for a warning to you; follow not the ſame courſe, leſt you meet with the ſame curſe; if you tread the ſame path, expect the ſame puniſhment, for God is as righteous now as he was then; he hates, and will puniſh ſin in you, as much as he did in them. *Theſe things were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they luſted.*"

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* ſome of them: as it is written, The people ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as ſome of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thouſand.

Our apoſtle being ſtill diſſuading the Corinthians from eating of things offered unto idols, and thereby from holding communion with the Gentiles in their idolatrous banquets in their idol-temples, he ſets before them the idolatry of the Jews, who ſat down to eat and to drink of the ſacrifices offered to the golden calf, and roſe up to play; that is, to dance before the golden calf, after the manner of the Heathen, this being one of their rites by which they honoured their gods. He farther adviſes them to take heed how they mix with idolaters in their feaſts, leſt they be given up to fornication as the Iſraelites were in the wilderneſs with the daughters of Moab, Numb. xxv. of whom there fell in one day, three and twenty thouſand by the immediate hand of God. *Learn* hence, That Almighty God has left many inſtances upon record, in his holy word, of the ſeverity of his juſtice upon perſons guilty of idolatry and fornication, and all other ſins, on purpoſe to warn all of their ſin and danger in the perpetration and commiſſion of them. To ſin againſt example, is an aggravation of ſin.

9 Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.

Obſerve here, A double *ſin* which the Corinthians are warned againſt, tempting and murmuring: *Neither tempt ye Chriſt,* by trying how long his patience will laſt, as the Iſraelites did, when (as the angel of the covenant) he went before them in the wilderneſs, Numb. xxi. 5, 6. Here *note*, The object or perſon, whom the Iſraelites are ſaid to tempt, *Chriſt*; which proves, (1.) His pre-exiſtence before his incarnation; the Iſraelites could not have then tempted him, had he not been then exiſtent. (2.) His divinity; he who is called here *Chriſt*, is by the Pſalmiſt called *God*, Pſal. cvi. 14. *They tempted God in the deſert.* Chriſt had not an human nature then to be tempted in, they tempted him therefore as he was God: a good argument to prove the divinity of our Saviour, made uſe of by the ancients. The other ſin warned againſt, is murmuring: *Neither murmur ye*; that is, do not repine, becauſe you are forbidden to be preſent at the idolatrous feaſts of the Gentiles in the idol-temples; neither do ye murmur, by reaſon of the perſecutions which you do or may endure, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, and the cauſe of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That to murmur at, or be impatient under, any of the providential diſpenſations of God, is both great ſin and folly. It is as high preſumption and wickedneſs to be diſſatisfied with God's works of providence, as with his works of creation; to quarrel at what God doth, is as unchriſtian-like, yea, as uncreature-like, as to quarrel at what God has made. Therefore, *murmur not, as the Iſraelites murmured. Note*, 2. A double puniſhment inflicted on the Iſraelites, for this double ſin committed; ſuch as tempted, were deſtroyed of fiery ſerpents. Numb. xxi. 6, 7. The Lord ſent fiery ſerpents among the people; the ſting and venom of thoſe ſerpents was inflaming, ſpreading, killing; much people of Iſrael died. And ſuch as murmured, were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer; that is, by the deſtroying angel in that plague mentioned, Numb. xiv. 37. Such variety of judgments has Almighty God, with which to puniſh and plague an incorrigible and unreclaimable people.

11 ¶ Now all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

That is, the hiſtory of the Iſraelites ſins and puniſhments was written and recorded by God in the holy Scriptures, for the uſe and benefit of all ſucceeding generations, and particularly for us, who live in the laſt ages of the world, to warn us to avoid the like ſin, that we may eſcape the like puniſhments. *Learn* hence, That the fall of others, whether into ſin, or under judgment for ſin, ſhould be caution and warning to us to take heed of ſinning. Here the apoſtle ſums up the moſt remarkable judgments which fell upon the Jews in their paſſage from Egypt to Canaan, and cloſes all with this application to Chriſtians; *Theſe things happened to them for enſamples*; in the original it is, *as types*; they befel them typically, that in them we may ſee how God will deal with us if we take their courſe; thoſe calamities which deſtroy ſome, ſhould inſtruct others: Many will never ſee ſin in itſelf, ſome will ſee it in the type and enſample, that is in the judgment of God upon others; and thoſe that will not ſee ſin in the laſhes of ſeverity upon others, ſhall certainly feel it upon their own backs; ſuch as will not improve examples, ſhall undoubtedly be made examples.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

Theſe words are an inference which our apoſtle draws from the foregoing diſcourſe: Seeing that ſo many who enjoyed great privileges among the Jews, were yet puniſhed greatly for their ſins; ſeeing that ſacraments are no privileges either for ſin, or from plagues: therefore, *let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed,* &c. Where *note*, 1. A great mutability to which human nature is ſubject; he that thinketh he ſtandeth, may fall: Man's condition is according to his place and ſtation: This is threefold. The firſt place is heaven; this is fixed and confirmed, a kingdom that cannot be ſhaken; the ſaints there, are ſtanding pillars, free from all poſſibility of falling. The ſecond place is hell, where ſinners are bound hand and foot; and being fallen, are without any poſſibility of riſing. The third place is this earth on which we live, where men both ſtand and fall; and the beſt are ſubject to falling, being ſons of Adam, as well as ſons of God; partly fleſh, and partly ſpirit. 2. The vigilancy required in order to our ſtanding: *Take heed:* How many thouſands have fallen by a preſumptuous confidence of their own ſtrength in ſtanding! they fell by thinking it impoſſible to fall. A Chriſtian's *motto* is *cavendo tutis*; never ſafe, but when wary and watchful. Let a Chriſtian always keep a jealous eye upon the weakneſs and inconſtancy of his nature, and with a believing eye look up to the promiſe and power of God, and he ſhall be both preſerved from falling, and alſo be preſented faultleſs and unblameable in the day of Chriſt; if ever we ſtand in the day of trial, it is fear and faith muſt enable us to ſtand.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but ſuch as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Here the apoſtle anſwers a plea which the Corinthians might probably make for their compliance with their fellow citizens, in eating things offered unto idols in their temples with them; namely, that thereby they ſhould avoid perſecution. Fear not that, ſays the apoſtle, you have hitherto been preſerved, that *no temptation has taken you, but ſuch as is common unto man:* that is, you have not yet been exerciſed with any trial but what is human, what the ordinary ſtrength and reſolution of human nature is able to bear: But in caſe you ſhould be tried with extremity of ſuffering, and that you muſt either comply with the heathen idolatry, or endure ſuffering to extremity, yet you have the promiſe of a faithful God for your ſupport in that caſe; *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted*, at any time, *above what you are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way* ſo far *to eſcape; that ye may be able to bear it.* *Learn* hence, 1. That it is a great addition to an affliction not to ſee or diſcern a way to eſcape, and get out of affliction: God is exceeding gracious in our afflictions, in that he doth not hedge us in on every ſide, and hinder all poſſibility of eſcape out of our troubles. 2. That the conſideration of God's ſtrength to ſupport us in and under our ſufferings, is a mighty encouragement to us to grapple with them reſolutely, and to bear them patiently and ſubmiſſively: If our ſufferings were intolerable, and human nature were not divinely aſſiſted to ſtand under them, we ſhould be forced to conſult our preſent eaſe and deliverance, and chuſe ſin rather than affliction; but the aſſiſtance of God makes ſuffering work eaſy.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from
idolatry. 15 I ſpeak as to wiſe men: judge ye
what I ſay.

Here our apoſtle re-aſſumes his exhortation to the Corinthians, not to meddle with the myſteries of Paganiſm, nor to eat of things offered unto idols; aſſuring them, it was no leſs than idolatry, in the account of God, to eat of thoſe things which were taken from their execrable altars, as a part and remnant of thoſe ſacrifices to idols, which were performed in the city of Corinth, with all the pomp of an abominable ſuperſtition. This participation of things offered to idols, in the idol temples, our apoſtle calls idolatry: *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, flee from idolatry.* Here *note*, That the nature of man is extremely prone to idolatry, and very ready to comply with men in their idolatrous practices. 2. That the idolatry of the Jews of old, and of Chriſtians ſince, who knew and owned the true God, and gloried in him, was, and is, far worſe than the idolatry of Pagans, who knew him not, nor ever gloried in him. *Note* farther, How our apoſtle appeals to themſelves, and leaves it to them to judge, whether they did not do very ill to be preſent at the feaſts upon the heathen ſacrifices, and eat of things offered unto idols: He leaves it to themſelves to judge, *Judge ye what I ſay.* There is a judgment of diſcretion which perſons ought to uſe in matters of religion, and not to deliver up themſelves blindfold to the conduct of their teachers. The church of Rome by denying the people this liberty, makes them ſlaves; they put out the people's eyes, to make them fit for a blind obedience. Our apoſtle was far from this practice: Let wiſe men, ſays he, judge what I ſay.

16 The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?

Theſe words are a ſpecial argument, made uſe of by the the apoſtle, to diſſuade Chriſtians from joining with the Heathens in their impure feaſts in the old temples: the Gentiles have fellowſhip with the idols in thoſe feaſts, as Chriſtians have communion with Chriſt at his holy table: So that the argument runs thus, "If believers, by communicating with Chriſt at his holy table, have real communion with him, then alſo, thoſe that do communicate with idolaters, do become partakers of communion with them in their impure feaſts: But believers do the firſt, namely, at the Lord's table they communicate with Chriſt." This he proves from the words before us, *The cup of bleſſing*, &c. Where *note*, 1. A deſcription of the Lord's ſupper, in both the parts of it, namely, the external and viſible part, bread and wine: the internal and ſpiritual part, the body and blood of Chriſt. 2. The miniſterial actions performed in this ſolemn ordinance, and they are the bleſſing of the cup, and the breaking of the bread. 3. Here is the great end and deſign of God in the inſtitution of this ordinance, namely, that believers might thereby enjoy a ſpiritual fellowſhip and communion with Chriſt their head: *Is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? Learn* hence, That one great end and deſign of Chriſt, in the inſtitution of his ſupper, was this, that believers might enjoy a ſweet fellowſhip and communion with himſelf therein.

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

The apoſtle's argument lies thus: "As Chriſtians, though many, yet by virtue of their ſociety in the ſame worſhip, are compacted together as it were into one loaf or lump; that is, into one myſtical body, in that they partake of one and the ſame ſacramental bread: ſo thoſe that communicate with idolaters, in eating things offered unto idols, are compacted together, as it were, into one body, foraſmuch as they communicate in one and the ſame ſacrifice; as many grains of corn moulded together make one loaf, and the juice of many grapes make one cup; ſo Chriſtians, though many, yet are one viſible church, one myſtical body, and declare themſelves ſo to be, by their fellowſhip together at the Lord's table."

18 Behold Iſrael after the fleſh. Are not they which eat of the ſacrifices, partakers of the altar? 19 What ſay I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in ſacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But *I ſay*, that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils.

Here another argument againſt eating things offered to idols is produced by our apoſtle, and it runs thus: "As in the Jewiſh church, all perſons that did eat of the peace-offerings, which were laid upon God's altar, did, by that act, declare themſelves members of the Jewiſh church, and that they owned the God of the Jews, to whom thoſe ſacrifices were offered; in like manner, the converted Corinthians, by eating part of thoſe beaſts which were ſacrificed in the idol's temple, did by that act declare their owning of that idol, and that idolatrous worſhip which had been there performed, and were really partakers of that idolatrous altar: Not that an idol is any thing, or that which is offered to the idol any thing, that can of its own nature pollute and defile; but the plain truth was, the Heathens were ſeduced by the devil to offer theſe ſacrifices, and they were devils whom they worſhipped; though not in their own intention, yet in God's eſtimation: And conſequently, thoſe that did eat of thoſe feaſts, are ſuppoſed to join in thoſe ſacrifices, and thereby to hold communion with devils.

21 ¶ Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

That is, "Ye cannot have communion with Chriſt and with idolaters too; your communicating with Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper is utterly inconſiſtent with communicating with devils in the idols' feaſts, for this were to do homage to two contrary Lords, God and Satan, and to profeſs ſervice to both." Here *note*, 1. A ſacramental table deſcribed; it is the table of the Lord, ſo called, becauſe he that is Lord of lords, did inſtitute it, for the remembrance of his own death. 2. An impoſſibility declared, that none can be worthy partakers at the Lord's table, that hold communion with ſin: True, idolatry is the ſin here ſpecified, or ſacrificing unto devils; but it holds true of all ſin in general, and of having fellowſhip with Satan in any of the unfruitful works of darkneſs. *Learn* hence, That no perſon can really enjoy any fellowſhip and communion with Chriſt at his holy table, who maintains correſpondence with ſin, and holds communion with Satan.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy? are we ſtronger than he?

Note here, 1. That the worſhip of God is that which he is very tender and jealous of; never was huſband ſo jealous of the chaſtity of his ſuſpected wife, as God is jealous in point of worſhip; idolatry is a provoking God to jealouſy. 2. That ſuch as worſhip idols, or are guilty of idolatrous worſhip in any kind or degree, muſt expect God a jealous avenger, and will find themſelves not ſtrong enough to contend with him. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy, by joining devils in competition with him? Are we ſtronger than he? Who knows the power of his anger? The ſtrength of God ſhould make ſinners tremble."

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Our apoſtle having, in the former part of this chapter, reſolved the caſe concerning public eating of things offered unto idols in the idol-temples, and by ſeveral arguments proved to be abſolutely unlawful; he comes now to reſolve another caſe, concerning private buying, and private eating of things offered to idols; for it ſeems to have been a cuſtom, to ſet to ſale in the market, fleſh that was ſacrificed, (the gain whereof went to the prieſts) as well as other fleſh; but firſt he anſwers an objection: Some might be ready to ſay, all things are lawful for me; that is, all meats may lawfully be eaten by me. If ſo, ſays the apoſtle, yet all lawful things are not expedient to be done, in reſpect of our weak brother; plainly intimating, That there are many things lawful in themſelves, which conſidered under ſuch and ſuch circumſtances, are very inexpedient; and ſo far as they are inexpedient, ſo far are they unlawful.

24 Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's wealth.

Theſe words may be underſtood two ways: (1.) Let no man ſeek his own, that is, only his own wealth. (2.) Let no man ſeek his own wealth, that is, to the prejudice of others, though never ſo much to his own advantage; teaching us that it is the duty of every Chriſtian, not merely to look at his own profit and pleaſure, but at the benefit and advantage of others, at that which edifies, or tends to promote holineſs in others: And that in the uſe of our Chriſtian liberty, we muſt regard rather the edification and ſalvation of others, than the gratification of ourſelves.

25 Whatſoever is ſold in the ſhambles, that eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake. 26 For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof.

Here the apoſtle reſolves the caſe, whether it were lawful to buy that meat in the market which had been offered to an idol in the temple. He determines, (1.) That it was; if it be ſold in the ſhambles, it is to be looked upon as common food, and they may freely buy it, without any ſcruple of conſcience; but how came meat to be ſold in the ſhambles, which was offered and ſacrificed in the temples of the Gentiles? *Anſ.* It is probable, that the prieſts, who had a ſhare in the beaſts that were offered unto idols, or the people, who had alſo a ſhare, returned them out of their own offerings, did bring ſuch meat to be ſold in the market: In this caſe, ſays the apoſtle, aſk no queſtions about it. *Note*, 2. He aſſigns the reaſon for it, becauſe *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof:* That is, thoſe things that are ſold for food in the market, are to be looked upon as the creatures of God, made for, and ſanctified to, the uſe of man; and therefore, you may eat of any creature which the Lord provideth for your food, without ſcruple of conſcience, when others are not ſcandalized at it, 1 Tim. iv. 4. Every creature of God is good, if received with thankſgiving.

27 If any of them that believe not, bid you *to a feaſt*, and ye be diſpoſed to go; whatever is ſet before you, eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake. 28 But if any man ſay unto you, This is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience ſake. For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof.

Our apoſtle here puts another caſe, "Suppoſe an unbeliever, an Infidel or Heathen, did invite a believer, a Chriſtian, to a feaſt of civil friendſhip in his private houſe, (not to a feaſt upon a ſacrifice in the idol-temple, which was abſolutely unlawful) what was to be done in this caſe?" He declares, they may warrantably go and eat whatever is ſet before them, without ſcruple, but would have them aſk no queſtions about the lawfulneſs of it; nevertheleſs, if the maſter of the feaſt, or any preſent at the feaſt, ſhall ſuggeſt that ſome part of the meat has been offered to an idol, in that caſe, he would have them forbear; leſt they ſhould encourage any man to idolatry; adding his reaſon as before, *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof*; that is, there is plenty and variety of other meat to be had, which God the Creator of all things, the Lord of the whole earth, has allowed us the free uſe of; ſo that we may well let the idol-ſacrifices alone. Here we ſee, that an action, lawful in itſelf, becomes ſinful, and is condemned as ſuch, when there is a breach of charity in the doing of it.

29 Conſcience, I ſay, not thine own, but of the other; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conſcience? 30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil ſpoken of for that for which I give thanks.

Here the apoſtle tells them, that they ought to abſtain from that which is lawful and indifferent in itſelf, for the ſake of another man's conſcience. This meat had not been unlawful to them, though offered to idols, had they not been told that it was ſo offered; but being made acquainted therewith, for the ſake of him that ſhewed thee that it was offered to idols, forbear eating: for why ſhould our liberty be ſo uſed by us as to be judged of, and condemned, by another man's conſcience? It is not enough that we do what is juſt and right in our own ſight, but we *muſt provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. Whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; theſe we muſt practiſe, and none but theſe.* And obſervable is the apoſtle's reaſon, why he ſhould, for the ſake of another, abſtain from eating that meat, which was lawful in itſelf, ver. 30. namely, to prevent being evil ſpoken of: *Why am I evil ſpoken of?* That is, why ſhould I cauſe another to ſpeak evil of me, for eating that meat, which I might without any prejudice forbear? for in ſo doing I ſhall certainly abuſe my liberty, grieve God, and offend the weak.

31 Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Our apoſtle concludes his whole diſcourſe with three excellent rules, to direct all Chriſtians how they ſhould govern themſelves in the uſe of their lawful liberty, as to things that are of an indifferent nature: that is, neither commanded nor forbidden in the word of God. The firſt is this, To refer all our actions in general, both natural, civil, and religious, to the glory of God; to make that our ſupreme aim, our ultimate end, in all we do, in all we deſign, in all we deſire. A Chriſtian is to perform his natural actions to ſpiritual purpoſes; and whilſt he is feeding and refreſhing his body at his own table, muſt have an eye at his ſerving God, both with ſoul and body. Farther, not only in our natural actions, but in our civil employments, in our lawful recreations; but eſpecially and above all, in our religious duties, muſt we propound the glory of God as our principal aim, our chief ſcope, our ſupreme end: This injunction, *do all to the glory of God*, is applicable to all the actions of human life.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

Here we have the ſecond rule given for ordering all the affairs of human life, Give no offence to any, neither to the unbelieving Jew, nor to the unconverted Gentile, nor to the weak members of the church of God; particularly, give no offence to theſe, by eating things offered to idols at any time, or in any place, where any may be ſcandalized; for the Jew will conſider, that you are enemies to the law and the prophets: The Gentiles will believe that your abhorrence of idols is not real, when they ſee you eat things offered unto idols before their faces; and the weak Chriſtian will be tempted by your example to revolt from the Chriſtian faith. Therefore, do nothing that may tend to the hurt, or juſt offence, either of Jew, Gentile or Chriſtian.

33 Even as I pleaſe all *men* in all things, not ſeeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be ſaved.

The laſt rule, which the apoſtle lays down, is his own practice and example, who in indifferent things accommodated himſelf to all men. *I pleaſe all men*; that is, I ſeek and endeavour to pleaſe all men, and in all things; that is, in all lawful things, and in all other things, wherein the law of God has left me at liberty; for neither in the omiſſion of any thing which God commanded, nor in the commiſſion of aught which he had forbidden, would St. Paul pleaſe any man in the world: And when he did pleaſe all men, it was for their profit and advantage, not his own; to promote their eternal ſalvation, not his own temporal intereſt. *I pleaſe all men, that they may be ſaved.* *Learn* hence, 1. That no men muſt be pleaſed by ſin, nor pleaſured in their ſins. The ſmalleſt duty muſt be preferred before the pleaſing of all men in the world. 2. We may and ought to ſeek the pleaſing of men, with ſubſerviency, and in ſubordination to the pleaſing of Almighty God. 3. That inordinate man pleaſing is fruitleſs, needleſs, and endleſs; when you have endeavoured to pleaſe moſt, how many will be diſpleaſed, when you have done your beſt? God himſelf, Jeſus Chriſt, his holy prophets, apoſtles, ſaints and ſervants, could never pleaſe the world; and can any of us expect to do it? St. Paul, though he became all things to all men, yet could ſave but ſome: The world hates godlineſs, and godly perſons, and will never be pleaſed with that which they hate; let pleaſing of God be our great buſineſs, and in ſubordination to him, endeavour to pleaſe all men for their profit, that they may be ſaved.

CHAP. XI.

BE ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.

The apoſtle had in the foregoing chapters, by many cogent arguments exhorted the Corinthians to deny themſelves the lawful uſe of their Chriſtian liberty for the benefit of their brethren; to enforce which argument he propounds to them his own example in this verſe, *Be ye followers of me, even as I follow Chriſt.* Where *note*, 1. The duty recommended to their practice; namely, to follow their ſpiritual guide: *Be ye followers of me.* It is the ſtanding duty of a people whom God honours with the enjoyment of faithful ſpiritual guides, to follow their faith, and to imitate their exemplary converſation; the graces of all Chriſtians in general, but of the miniſters of the goſpel in particular, whether living or dead, are patterns ſet forth to the world for their careful imitation; and for omiſſion herein, they muſt certainly become accountable to God. 2. With what modeſty and caution, with what reſtriction and limitation St. Paul propounds his own example to the Corinthians view; *Be ye followers of me, as I alſo am of Chriſt:* As if he had ſaid, "If at any time you find me your ſpiritual guide ſtepping aſide, and walking unanſwerably to that uniform pattern of holy and humble obedience, which the Lord Jeſus ſet both before you and me, in his own exemplary life, be ſure you decline my example, and follow not my footſteps." *Learn* hence, That the beſt of miniſters, and the beſt of men, being but men, our imitation of them muſt not be an univerſal, but a limited imitation; we muſt follow paſtors, teachers, nay, apoſtles themſelves, no farther than they follow Chriſt, their infallible Lord and maſter. *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.*

2 Now I praiſe you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered *them* to you.

This commendation muſt be reſtrained to the ſounder part of the church at Corinth, who were mindful of his precepts and inſtructions, which he had delivered to them concerning matters appertaining to the public worſhip of God; which precepts and rules for the worſhip of God he calls *traditions*, becauſe they were immediately delivered to the Church, either from the apoſtle's mouth, or by writing: This place, though produced, yet makes nothing for the unwritten traditions of the Romiſh church. Let them prove by authentic teſtimony, that their fardles of traditions were delivered from the mouth of the apoſtles, and we will receive them: *Now I praiſe you, brethren.* Here it deſerves a remark, That the apoſtle, being about to reprove certain diſorders in the church of Corinth, uſhers in his reproof for what was amiſs, with a commendation of what was praiſe-worthy among them; *I praiſe you, brethren:* Like the phyſician, who wraps his bitter pill in honey or ſugar before he gives it into his patient's mouth. It is wiſdom to intermix commendations with our reproofs, that the latter may take more place when accompanied with the former.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Chriſt; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Chriſt *is* God.

Here our apoſtle anſwers the query, and reſolves the caſe which the Corinthians had put to him, and laid before him, about church-order, and concerning the decent behaviour of men and women in church-aſſemblies. And firſt he reminds them, that a ſubordination of perſons in the church of God ought to be obſerved and kept: That as Chriſt, as Mediator, is inferior to God the Father, but is the Head and Lord of all men, as Creator and Redeemer; ſo the man is the head of the woman, and, as ſuch, ſhe muſt ſhew her ſubjection unto the man: As Chriſt, as Mediator, acts in ſubordination to the Father, ſo muſt the woman act in ſubordination to the man. The Socinians would wreſt this text, to confirm them in their blaſphemous denial of the divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. "Here, ſay they, the apoſtle declares, that *the Head of Chriſt is God:* Now the moſt high God can have no Head above him; therefore Chriſt, who hath an Head above him, cannot be the moſt high God." The modern and general anſwer is, That God is here called *the Head of Chriſt* as Mediator, in which relation he received his kingdom from him, and exerciſes it for him, and therefore is elſewhere ſtyled the Father's ſervant, *Behold my ſervant*, &c. becauſe he doth all things according to his Father's will, and with a fixed eye to his Father's glory. But the ancients reply to this objection thus: "That God is ſaid to be the Head of Chriſt, as he is the Father of the Son, and ſo the cauſe of him; and as the woman is of the ſame nature with the man, who is her head, ſo is Chriſt of the ſame nature with God the Father, who is here called his Head: *The Head of Chriſt is God.*"

4 Every man praying or propheſying, having *his* head covered, diſhonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or propheſieth with *her* head uncovered, diſhonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if ſhe were ſhaven.

By the man's *praying and propheſying*, underſtand his performing any divine offices in the church, as prayer, and expounding the ſcriptures, ſinging of pſalms, and the like. By doing this *covered*, underſtand not the natural covering of the hair, but an artificial covering by a veil, after the manner of women, which is a token of ſubjection. By *diſhonouring his head*, underſtand either, (1.) Chriſt, who in the former verſe was called *the Head of every man:* He that adminiſters in the church in holy things, repreſents Chriſt, who is the Head of the church; therefore by covering the head, he declares a ſubjection in his adminiſtration, and doth as it were make the church the head of Chriſt, inſtead of Chriſt's being the Head of the church: Or elſe, (2.) By diſhonouring the head, may be underſtood the miniſter's own head; he betrayeth his ſuperiority, and leſſeneth the honour and dignity of his ſex, by uſing ſuch a geſture in divine offices, as is a token of inferiority and ſubjection; for in that country, at that time, it was a ſign of ſubjection to have the head covered, but a ſign of power and dominion to have the head uncovered. The contrary is found with us at this day; for thoſe that have power over others now keep their heads covered, and thoſe that are inferior to others keep their heads uncovered before them, ver. 5. By the woman's praying and propheſying, is underſtood either propheſying extraordinarily, which we read the women ſometimes did both in the Old and New Teſtament, and were called propheteſſes, Luke ii. 36. Acts xxi. 9. Or elſe, By the woman's propheſying, is to be underſtood praiſing God in hymns and pſalms, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3. *They propheſied with harps, pſalteries, and cymbals, giving thanks, and praiſing the Lord*; where propheſying and praiſing the Lord are the ſame thing. By the woman's propheſying with her head uncovered, to the diſhonour of her head or huſband, is to be underſtood, her appearing unveiled in the church, open and barefaced in public; which was accounted, 1. An immodeſt, unbecoming, and unſeemly guiſe. 2. Arrogant; her being unveiled and uncovered was a token of her uſurping an undue authority over the man, and of her caſting off that ſubjection which ſhe was under by the law of her creation to him. 3. Superſtitious; it being a fantaſtical imitation of the ſhe-prieſts and propheteſſes of the Gentiles, when they ſerved their idols, and particularly when they ſacrificed to Bacchus, who uſed to have their faces uncovered, their hair diſhevelled, hanging at its full length round about their ears. Now the Corinthian women, in imitation of theſe Heathen women (for the female ſex is very fond, and exceeding prone to follow the faſhion) did caſt off their veils, diſcovered their faces, diſhonoured their heads, even their natural heads, (as well as their œconomical head, their huſband) it being then and there accounted as immodeſt a thing for a woman to appear in public uncovered, as to appear with her head ſhaven. From the whole *learn*, That God requires at the hands of all perſons, who either adminiſter unto him, or ſtand before him, a decent behaviour, and comely accommodation in his houſe, eſpecially in the acts and exerciſes of his worſhip and ſervice. For if in their habit and dreſs, ſurely much leſs in their geſture and deportment, doth he love what is unſeemly and unbecoming in any perſon. *Learn*, 2. That it is eſpecially the duty of perſons employed in divine adminiſtrations, to demean themſelves as thoſe who repreſent our Lord Jeſus, managing themſelves with a due authority and decent gravity, becoming the ambaſſadors of God. So then it is a general obſervation of decency in our outward behaviour, when worſhipping God before others, which our apoſtle here recommends as a ſpecial duty.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her alſo be ſhorn: but if it be a ſhame for a woman to be ſhorn or ſhaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, foraſmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Our apoſtle here proceeds, by many arguments, to evince and prove the woman's inferiority and ſubjection to the man, and that ſhe ought to have a covering upon her head, as a ſign and token of it. Firſt, Becauſe the image of God, that is, the image of his majeſty, dominion, and power, ſhineth forth moſt brightly in the man, therefore he ought to have his head uncovered: *Man is the image and glory of God.* But is not the woman ſo likewiſe? *Anſ.* Conſider the woman according to her ſpecifical nature, and ſo ſhe was created after the image of God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, as well as the man: but then, conſider the woman according to her perſonal relation to her huſband, and in that regard, the woman is not the image of God; becauſe dominion, which is the image of God, is the man's privilege; and ſubjection, the woman's duty: *But ſhe is the glory of the man*; that is, it is the glory and honour of man, that God hath given him ſuperiority over ſo excellent a creature as the woman; for if his dominion over the irrational creatures be his glory and honour, then what a glory and honour is it for a man to have ſo excellent a creature as the woman, a creature endued with reaſon like himſelf, ſubject to him! But as in this ſenſe the man is the glory of the woman, ſo in another ſenſe the woman is the glory of the man. She communicates with him in all his dignity, how great ſoever; whatever natural or civil excellency is in him, reflects on her; *uxor fulget radiis mariti*, the wife ſhines with the rays of her huſband's honour. And the woman being thus in a ſtate of inferiority, ſhe ought to profeſs her ſubjection to her huſband, by wearing a veil.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Another argument which the apoſtle offers, to prove the inferiority of the woman, is this, That originally the man was not made of the woman, or for the woman, but the woman was made of the man, (his rib) and for the man; that is, for his ſervice and comfort, to be an help-meet for him, and to be in ſubjection to him. Man had this prerogative, to be immediately from God; but the woman was from man, and to be adminiſtering and ſubſervient to man, and conſequently to cover her head, in token of her ſubmiſſion to him.

10 For this cauſe ought the woman to have power on *her* head, becauſe of the angels.

Moreover, for this cauſe ought the woman *to have power*, that is, a veil upon her head, as a ſign, and in token of her huſband's power, and her own ſubjection; *becauſe of the angels*, that is, ſay ſome, (1.) Becauſe of the law of ſubjection given her by the miniſtry of angels. (2.) Becauſe of the paſtors, teachers, and miniſters of the church, ſay others, who are often in ſcripture ſtyled angels. (3.) Becauſe of the evil angels, as ſome interpret it; the woman being tempted by Satan, the prince of evil angels, to commit the firſt ſin, which is a perpetual cauſe of ſhame to her and her poſterity, and which increaſed her and their ſubjection to the man; for which reaſon, the woman ought to be veiled and covered (in the church aſſemblies particularly) as a token of ſhamefacedneſs and ſubjection. (4.) The more general interpretation is, becauſe of the good angels, who are preſent in the aſſemblies of the ſaints, and eye-witneſſes of their carriage there; therefore the woman ought to do nothing indecent in the preſence of theſe holy ſpirits. And beſides, ſhe has the angels for her pattern and preſident, who cover their faces and veil their heads, in token of ſubjection to Almighty God. *Note* here, 1. That it has been a general opinion among Jews, Heathens, and Chriſtians, that good angels are more particularly preſent with us, in the places, and at the times of God's public worſhip; yea, that they are not only preſent with us, but obſervant of us, and aſſiſting to us in the performance of all religious exerciſes, eſpecially prayer; and therefore the Jews ſpeak of a particular angel, whom they call the angel of prayer. 2. That therefore all perſons, both men and women, ought to demean themſelves with all modeſty, reverence, and decency in the worſhip of God, out of regard to the angels, who are there preſent, obſerving their carriage and behaviour. True, the angels cannot penetrate into the inward devotion of the mind, which God only obſerves; but they obſerve and take notice of the outward decency of our carriage, and the reverence of our deportment. But, Lord! how little is this conſidered, and by how few among us in our religious aſſemblies! With regard to God, who ſees our hearts, we ſhould more particularly compoſe our minds to the greateſt ſeriouſneſs and ſincerity in our devotions; and with a particular regard to the holy angels, who are there preſent, we ſhould be careful alſo of our outward behaviour: But, to our ſhame be it ſpoken, there are multitudes amongſt us in our Chriſtian aſſemblies, whom neither the preſence of angels, nor the obſerving eye of him who is the Lord of angels can influence to any tolerable decency of behaviour in the houſe of prayer, where the eyes of God and angels, of miniſters and men, are upon them. Such, without repentance, muſt never expect to dwell hereafter with God and his holy angels in heaven, but take up their lodgings with the devil and his angels in an eternal hell, for whom is reſerved blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

11 Nevertheleſs, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even ſo *is* the man alſo by the woman; but all things of God.

Becauſe the apoſtle might ſeem to have been too harſh towards the woman, and leſt the man ſhould thereupon take occaſion to carry himſelf with pride and inſolence towards her, he prudently intimates the mutual help and need which both man and woman ſtand in of one another; for, ſince the creation of the firſt man, all men are by the woman. And as men have no being but by the woman, ſo the woman without the man cannot exiſt or propagate. For as at the firſt creation the woman was taken out of the man, ſo now in generation the man is of the woman, and by the woman; ſhe conceives him, brings him forth, ſuckles him, and brings him up, and all this by the wiſe diſpoſal of God, who made the woman out of the man, and by his benediction increaſeth man by the woman. From which conſiderations our apoſtle infers, that both man and woman ſhould look upon their diſtinct prerogatives as given them by God, and carry it not with pride and inſolence, but with reſpect and kindneſs each to other; and eſpecially, that the woman be in ſubjection to the man, and teſtify that ſubjection by all the ſigns of it, particularly by her being veiled and covered, which is the argument our apoſtle is here inſiſting upon.

13 Judge in yourſelves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itſelf teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God.

Note here, 1. How our apoſtle cloſes his diſcourſe, in which he had reproved the Corinthians, the men for covering, the women for uncovering their heads, and laying aſide their veils in time of religious worſhip; by an appeal to themſelves and their own judgment, concerning the matter he is ſpeaking of, and reproving them for; namely, men's praying with their heads covered, and women with their heads uncovered. *Note*, 2. How the apoſtle proceeds to blame both ſexes for another diſorder; namely, that men wore their hair like women, and that women women appeared in the guiſe of men as to their hair. Here he lets them know, that both theſe kinds of diſorders are repugnant to the inſtitution of God, and the dictates of natural reaſon: *Doth not nature itſelf teach you?* That is, (1.) The general dictates of natural reaſon. (2.) The particular law of nature, concerning the diſtinction of ſexes. (3.) Uſage and common cuſtom, which is a ſecond nature. All theſe ſuggeſt, that for men to wear their hair at full length like the women, is uncomely and unnatural in the manly ſex, but ſo to do is comely and natural in the female. *Learn* hence, That God diſallows, and even nature itſelf condemns every thing that tends to the confounding of the ſexes, which it is his will and pleaſure ſhould be viſibly diſtinguiſhed. It is a great offence to God, and contrary to one end for which apparel was given, when either the man or the woman wear apparel contrary to their ſex; and what is ſaid of apparel, their artificial covering, may be affirmed of the hair, which is their natural covering. "It is a ſhame for either ſex to wear their hair in an uncomely and indecent manner, diſagreeable to the natural modeſty of either ſex." *Note*, 3. How the apoſtle appeals to the cuſtom and practice of the churches of God in the caſes before us. The cuſtom of all the churches is againſt women's being uncovered, as an unſeemly thing. It is a known rule, *Ubi nihil certo ſtatuit ſcriptura, mos populi Dei, & inſtituta majorum pro lege tenenda ſunt:* We ought not to diſſent and differ from the cuſtom and practice of the church, in matters not poſitively determined; but the cuſtom of the church muſt ſway with us, with whoſe practice it is our duty to be as concordant as we can: *If any man will be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God.* *Learn* thence, That in things only reſpecting decency, and in compliance with which there is no violation of the command of Chriſt, the cuſtom of the church of Chriſt ſhould determine us, and be as a ſtanding rule unto us. *Learn*, 2. That it argues a contentious ſpirit, and ſavours very much of pride, in matters of little moment, to be ſingular in our practice, and to create diſturbance to the church of God.

17 Now in this that I declare *unto you*, I praiſe *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worſe. 18 For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be diviſions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.

Our apoſtle here enters upon a new argument or ſubject-matter of diſcourſe; namely, to reprove the abuſes which were crept in among them, in their adminiſtration of the holy ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. And the firſt abuſe which he blames them for, was the diviſions and factions which were found amongſt them; *I hear there are ſchiſms amongſt you:* Where we are to underſtand by ſchiſms, not a ſeparation from the unity of the catholic church, but of ſects and diviſions in the church; they did not ſeparate from the church, but they ate the Lord's ſupper ſeparately in the church, and the whole congregation did not join together in the celebration of that ordinance. Though we do not ſeparate from the communion of the catholic church, yet if we occaſion diviſion and diſſenſion groundleſly in the church, we juſtly fall under the imputation and charge of ſchiſm. *Obſerve* next, The apoſtle argues, *a minori ad majus*; he did eaſily believe there were diviſions, becauſe *there muſt be alſo hereſies among them.* Hereſies are worſe than ſchiſms, falſe doctrines more dangerous than diviſions. Hereſy is an error in the fundamentals of religion, maintained with obſtinacy. When the green wound of an error is let alone, it ſoon rankles, and quickly grows into the old ſore of an hereſy. But how comes the apoſtle to ſay, there *muſt* be hereſies? What neceſſity is there for them? *Anſ.* (1.) Negatively: there is not an abſolute neceſſity for them on God's part, or a neceſſity of his making, but a conditional neceſſity, or a neceſſity *ex hypotheſi*, which muſt needs be, if ſuch a thing be granted before: As ſuppoſing the ſun be riſen, it muſt be day. Thus here, upon ſuppoſition of the pride, vain-glory, envyings, ſtrife, and contentions, which are amongſt the members of the church; upon ſuppoſition of the craft and ſubtlety, malice and malignity of Satan, the church's grand enemy; upon ſuppoſition of God's permiſſion that Satan and wicked men ſhould act according to their corrupt affections and inclinations, hereſies muſt and will be. Farther, The reaſon here aſſigned for the neceſſity of hereſies is not caſual, but eventual; not caſual, as if the wiſdom of God did deſign there ſhould be hereſies for this end, that they who are approved of him ſhould be made manifeſt; but rather eventual, as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Hence it will come to paſs, that they who are approved will be made manifeſt."

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's ſupper.

As if he had ſaid, "True, ye Corinthians, when ye come together to one place, ye pretend to eat the Lord's ſupper; but though you eat it, yet ye do not eat it as ye ought to do; you perform the material part of the action, but you do not partake of it ſolemnly and religiouſly, according to the divine inſtitution; this therefore is not to eat the Lord's ſupper." *Learn* thence, That a duty not done as it ought to be done, is not done at all in the account of Chriſt. Sermons may be heard, and yet accounted no ſermons; prayers made, yet not made; ſacraments received, yet not received; alms given, yet not given; becauſe not done in manner and form as God required. A gracious heart will look not barely at the matter of the duty, but alſo at the manner of performance, and take care not only that he hears, but how he hears.

21 ¶ For in eating, every one taketh before *other* his own ſupper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

Here our apoſtle begins to reprove the Corinthians for the abuſes found in their love-feaſts. Theſe love-feaſts were founded on no expreſs command in holy writ, but only on the cuſtom of the church, who immediately before receiving the ſacrament uſed to have a great feaſt, to which all the poor were invited at the charges of the rich, as an expreſſion of their perfect love and charity one towards another. Now in theſe feaſts of charity, they did not obſerve due order and decency; for *every one*, that is, every party and faction, being come to the place of the aſſembly, did preſently ſit down to eat what they had brought, in the company of their own party, not minding or regarding others; whereupon this holy feaſt of charity was neither celebrated at the ſame time by all, nor with that unanimity and concord which it was deſigned to repreſent; whilſt the poor were excluded, and ſent home hungry, the rich were feaſted, and drank to ſome degree of exceſs, which is here called drunkenneſs; *one is hungry and another is drunken.* Behold what great irregularities and diſorders are here found in the church of Corinth! Who can expect a church without ſpot in this imperfect ſtate? God has left theſe miſcarriages upon record, not for imitation, but for our caution.

22 What, have ye not houſes to eat or to drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God, and ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe *you* not.

A twofold ſenſe and interpretation is given of theſe words. Some paraphraſe them thus! What! muſt you make the houſe of God the place of your feaſting? If you be diſpoſed for mirth and jollity, have you not houſes wherein you may do it with more privacy, and leſs offence? Or deſpiſe you the church of God? Do you undervalue, and thus profane and unhallow the place ſet a-part for God's worſhip and ſervice, by converting it into a common banquetting-houſe? Thus many expound it of the material church; and their opinion is favoured by the antitheſis and oppoſition betwixt church and houſes: *Have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe you the church of God? Learn,* That holy duties, pious and public, are to be performed in the church or houſe of God. Duties pious, but not public, better ſuit the cloſet than the church. Duties public, but not pious, more befit a guildhall or town-houſe, than the houſe of God. Others by the church of God underſtand the ſpiritual church, the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt, and render the words thus: "*What, have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in,* if need be, before you come? Or *deſpiſe you* thoſe poor Chriſtians, who are members of the *church* of Chriſt as well as you, and put to *ſhame them that have not* what you eat and drink, by excluding them out of your company for their poverty ſake? For ſince God adopts them into his family, and admits them unto his table, you ought not to exclude them from this feaſt of charity, which was originally deſigned for the poor's relief." *Learn,* He that deſpiſeth the poor, deſpiſeth the church of God; yea, deſpiſeth Chriſt himſelf; as he that pincheth the little toe, paineth the whole body, ſo the diſgracing the poor members of Chriſt, is a deſpiſing of the whole church. In theſe love-feaſts the poor were the moſt proper, and ſhould have been the moſt principal gueſts; but, alas! the rich gorged themſelves plentifully, whilſt the poor ſtood and looked on hungry. Yet *note,* laſtly, With what lenity and mildneſs the apoſtle reproves theſe great diſorders in the church of Corinth: *Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.* It was the firſt time he had told them of their faults, therefore he doth it gently, in hopes of amendment. *Learn* thence, That though miniſters muſt not commend, but reprove people, when they do ill, yet they muſt uſe mildneſs, eſpecially at their firſt reproving of a ſin. Some obſerve, That God ſo bleſſed the mild ſeverity of St. Paul, that the Corinthians, upon the writing this firſt epiſtle, reformed all their abuſes: which they gather from hence, becauſe no fault is taxed in the ſecond epiſtle, which was reproved in the firſt.

23 ¶ For I have received of the Lord, that which alſo I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jeſus, the *ſame* night in which he was betrayed, took bread? 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it,* and ſaid, Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the ſame manner alſo *he took* the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the new teſtament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it,* in remembrance of me. 26 For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.

Obſerve here, 1. How, the apoſtle, for reforming thoſe abuſes, which were crept into the church amongſt them relating to the holy ſacrament, reduces them to the firſt inſtitution of that ſacred ordinance, *I have delivered unto you what I have received of the Lord. Mark,* The apoſtle did receive and deliver, but not inſtitute and appoint, this venerable ordinance. Had he not received, he had wanted authority; and had he not delivered what he received, he had wanted integrity. 2. The author of this inſtitution, the *Lord Jeſus.* To inſtitute ſacraments is an act of Chriſt's regal power and royal authority. The church has no power to appoint, but only to execute and adminiſter what Chriſt appoints. 3. The time of the inſtitution, the ſame night in which he was betrayed. It is a night much to be remembered, in which he ſettles an ordinance in the church, for the confirmation and conſolation of his people to the end of the world. Lord! What an evidence was here of thy tender care and affectionate concern for thy church and people, in ſpending ſo much of that little, very little, time thou hadſt left, upon their account! 4. The ſacramental elements, or the commemorative, ſignificative, and inſtructive ſigns; and they are bread and wine, ſhadowing forth the body and blood of the crucified Jeſus. Where, *note,* St. Paul calls it bread five times over, which Chriſt calls his own body, becauſe it was a ſign and repreſentation of his body: not his real body, for then Chriſt ate his own body whilſt he was alive, his diſciples devouring that body over night, which hung upon the croſs next morning, with a thouſand ſuch abſurdities which the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation carries along with it. *Obſerve,* 5. The miniſterial actions, *the breaking of the bread, and bleſſing of the cup.* The bread muſt be broken, to repreſent the breaking of Chriſt's body upon the croſs, which comprehended all the ſufferings of his human nature, all which were conſummated in his crucifixion; and this broken bread muſt be taken and eaten by us, to intimate, that all his breakings, bruiſings, and woundings, both in ſoul and body, were for our ſins, and for our benefits, and that the ſole intention of all his ſufferings was for us. Wine alſo is poured forth, becauſe as no liquor like wine doth cheer a ſad and drooping ſpirit, in like manner nothing doth ſo glad and cheer the ſoul, as faith in a crucified Saviour. That ſpiritual life which a ſoul is raiſed to, by the death of Chriſt, is a life of the greateſt delight and joy which we can conceive. 6. The great deſign and end of this inſtitution, *Do it in remembrance of me,* or for a memorial of me; Chriſt knew how apt our baſe hearts would be to forget him, amidſt ſuch a throng of ſenſible objects as we here converſe with; and how much our forgetfulneſs of him and his ſufferings would tend to our prejudice and diſadvantage; and therefore doth he appoint this ordinance to bring him to remembrance. 7. The ſtrict mandate or charge given for the frequent celebration of this ordinance, *Do this as oft as ye drink it*; that is, Do it often. We can no more live and thrive without our ſpiritual, than we can without our corporal food; as the body muſt be often fed, ſo the ſoul muſt have its frequent repaſt. 8. The reaſon aſſigned for the frequent celebration of this ordinance: *For as oft as ye do this, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come*; that is, by frequenting this ordinance, we commemorate the death of Chriſt during his abſence from us. As the end of the ordinance was to be a ſtanding memorial, ſo the obligation that lies upon all Chriſtians to obſerve it, is perpetual; Chriſtians are by this ordinance to repreſent the ſacrificing of Chriſt for their ſins, till he came again in glory. *Learn* from the whole, 1. That the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper was inſtituted by Chriſt as a ſtanding memorial of his death and ſufferings for us. Here we ought to remember the painfulneſs of his death, the meritoriouſneſs of his death, the voluntarineſs of his death, the acceptableneſs of his death to God, and the advantageouſneſs of his death to ourſelves. And the manner how we ſhould remember Chriſt and his death in the ſacrament, is various; with judgment and underſtanding, with reverence and humility, with ſorrow and grief of heart for our ſins, yet with joy and thankfulneſs for the ſufferings of a Saviour, with faith and affiance, with love and affection, with reſolutions for a new and better obedience. 2. That the command of Chriſt lays it as a law upon, and makes it the ſtanding duty of, all Chriſtians, to commemorate his death at his holy table, *Do this in remembrance of me*. Here it deſerves our notice what kind of command this is; it is a ſovereign and ſupreme command; it is a poſitive and expreſs command; it is a permanent and laſting command; it is the command of a Saviour, yea, of a dying Saviour; it is a command of love; it is ſuch a command, as, if we duly obſerve, will be a bleſſed means to enable us to obſerve all the commands of God better. *Laſtly*, It is ſuch a command, as whoever lives in the wilful neglect of it, cannot be called a Chriſtian, but will be treated by Chriſt at the great day as an enemy and deſpiſer of his dying love. *Learn*, 3. That it is a Chriſtian's duty, not barely to do this, but to do it often; frequent communicating is a great duty. The primitive Chriſtians received every Lord's day, yea, it is believed, oftener than every Lord's day. This is agreeable to the nature of the ordinance, which is a ſpiritual repaſt, banquet and feaſt, and therefore to be received frequently. It is alſo agreeable to the author of the ordinance; it is a feaſt of God's own providing; therefore, to neglect it, is to fly in the face of God; it is agreeable to the end of the ordinance, which is, to renew our covenant, and that cannot be done too often.

27 Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this bread and drink *this* cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes, declared the original inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, he comes now to inſtruct the Corinthians in the right uſe of it; and, to excite them to a due regard in their approaches to it, he acquaints them with the great danger of an unworthy receiving of it: ver. 27. *Whoſoever ſhall eat*, &c. *Queſt.* (1.) What is it not to eat and drink unworthily? *Anſ.* (1.) To receive the ſacrament with many doubts and fears, with a weak faith, with a trembling hand, and fearful heart, all this may be, and yet the perſon not receive unworthily. (2.) The want of perfect holineſs, and a compleat freedom from ſin, doth not denominate a perſon an unworthy a receiver; for this ordinance was not inſtituted for angels, but for men; to make ſinful men good, and good men better. (3.) Backwardneſs to the duty, deadneſs and dulneſs in the duty, when involuntary and lamented, makes not a perſon an unworthy receiver. *Queſt.* (2.) What is it to eat and drink unworthily? *Anſ.* (1.) It is to receive out of cuſtom, not out of conſcience; for company's ſake, not for the command's ſake; becauſe the law of man enjoins it, not becauſe the law of Chriſt requires it. (2.) It is to receive, without ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, ſuch a prepartion of heart, ſuch reverence and devotion, as ought therein to be exerciſed; to receive without knowledge, without repentance, without faith, without reſolutions for a ſincere obedience, without ſincere reconciliation to our neighbour. *Queſt.* (3.) What is it to be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord? *Anſ.* (1.) It is an implicit approbation of the Jews act in crucifying Chriſt. (2.) It is implicitly a jeſting with the body and blood of Chriſt, a playing with the moſt tremendous things in the world. (3.) It is a crucifying the Son of God a freſh; it is to ſtab the maſter of the feaſt at his own table, whilſt he is treating us with the richeſt dainties.

28 But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

Note here, The duty required to prevent the danger of unworthy receiving, and that is the great and neceſſary duty of examination. A metaphor taken from goldſmiths, who try the truth of their gold by the touchſtone, the purity of their gold by the fire, the weight of it by the ſcale. 2. The examinant, or perſon performing this duty of examination. *Let a man*, that is, let every man. This ſtands in a double oppoſition, (1.) To our examining of others. (2.) To our reſting in another's examination of us. 3. The frequency of this act; as often as we partake of the ordinance, ſo oft we ſhould, if we have time, leſs or more, examine ourſelves. *Let him examine, and ſo let him eat*: Let him paſs through one duty to another. *Learn* hence, That it is the ſpecial duty, and ought to be the ſingular care and endeavour, of all thoſe that deſire ſafely and comfortably to approach the table of the Lord, to examine themſelves before they come; to examine their right unto it, and to examine their fitneſs for it.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.

What it is to eat and drink unworthily, we find explained before, at ver. 27. *Note* here, farther, That many perſons of honeſt hearts, but weak heads, have ſadly miſunderſtood the words of St. Paul, about unworthy receiving, thinking that ſuch an exceſs of reverence and preparation is required, that either they dare not come at all, or they come with ſo much dread and fear upon their minds, that they are more terrified than comforted. Farther, The unworthy perſon eats and drinks judgment; that is, temporal judgment will follow him in this life; and without repentance, eternal damnation in the next. Yet *note*, It is judgment to himſelf that receives; not to another that receives with him. If a wicked man's preſence at the ſacrament pollutes the ordinance to a worthy receiver, then Chriſt and his eleven apoſtles were defiled by the company of Judas at the paſſover; for at that he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's ſupper alſo. *Learn* then, That unworthy receivers of the Lord's ſupper do contract great guilt, and incur great danger to themſelves. The deſign of the apoſtle in theſe two laſt verſes, is this, that we ſhould not ſinfully omit the duty, becauſe of the command; nor careleſsly undertake it, becauſe of the threatened judgment.

30 For this cauſe many *are* weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.

For this cauſe: That is, for prophaning the ſacrament, and not diſcerning the Lord's body at the Lord's table; for not approaching it as a feaſt of love deſigned equally for the benefit of all his members, and to knit them in the cloſeſt bonds of unity and friendſhip each to other: *Therefore* it was, that many were viſited with ſickneſs and weakneſs, and ſome with death; which being called *ſleep*, ſome have charitably concluded from thence, that they were pious perſons in the main; for the death of the wicked is hardly called ſleep any where in ſcripture; and if ſo, then we learn, that the holineſs of an ordinance, or the habitual holineſs of any perſon who approaches an ordinance, will not exempt from God's diſpleaſure, and the infliction of temporal judgments here in this life, if they do not by actual preparation ſanctify the name of God in the duties and ordinance of his worſhip. Beſides an habitual, there is required an actual preparation in all thoſe that will ſafely and comfortably approach to God in holy duties; without it, we ſhall meet with a blow inſtead of a bleſſing.

31 For if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged.

That is, "If we would examine, try, cenſure, and ſentence ourſelves, and ſo come to the Lord's table, as penitent believers, with a purity of aim, and a ſincere intention, we ſhould thereby eſcape the caſtigatory puniſhments, and condemnatory ſentence of God. *Learn* hence, That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourſelves, ſo ſelf-judging in particular, before we approach the Lord's table, will preſerve us from the judgment and condemnation of God; we muſt firſt ſummon, then examine, then convict and try, then ſentence and condemn ourſelves; and all this in hopes of being abſolved and acquitted by God, acting our faith upon his free mercy, and the Redeemer's ſatisfaction.

32 But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.

Note here, 1. The nature of thoſe judgments, or afflictive evils, which do befal the children of God in this life; they are *chaſtenings*; *we are chaſtened of the Lord*. Chaſtenings belong properly to children who are wanton and ungovernable. *To be chaſtened* has a double aſpect; firſt upon our privilege, it denotes our relation as children unto God our Father. Chaſtenings are a part of his children's portion; yet, in that we are chaſtened, it taxes us with weakneſs; we are fooliſh, wanton, and unruly children, and therefore ſo long as we are here, muſt always go with a rod at our backs. Chriſt, who was alſo a ſon, was chaſtened. *The chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him*; but his were judiciary chaſtiſements; God did not chaſtiſe him as a child, but as an enemy, as a malefactor, in our ſtead; as we muſt have been chaſtened, who were enemies and malefactors. Our chaſtenings are fatherly, Chriſt's judiciary. 2. The merciful deſign of God in the chaſtenings of his children; it is to prevent their condemnation: *We are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.* When therefore at any time we are under chaſtiſement, in all we ſay or do, let us juſtify God, and condemn ourſelves, ſeeing his chaſtiſements are deſigned to prevent our condemnation.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home: that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.

Our apoſtle here concludes his diſcourſe with an exhortation to the Corinthians, to take heed for time to come, that all theſe forementioned miſcarriages may be rectified; that when they come together to eat the Lord's ſupper, and the love-feaſts, they ſhould tarry one for another, that they may all feed and feaſt together. And if any man pretend to be hungry, let him eat at home before he comes, leſt by theſe irreverent actions he brings down the judgments of God upon himſelf. *Laſtly*, he tells them, that as to other points of church order, he would determine them when he came among them: *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come:* Such unchriſtian diſorders may ariſe in the church, as will require the preſence and coming of an apoſtle to correct and reform them.

CHAP. XII.

NOW concerning ſpiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Our apoſtle begins this chapter with the reſolution of another caſe concerning the nature and right uſe of ſpiritual gifts. Some that excelled in them, were proud of them, uſing them to vain oſtentation; he therefore tells them, he would not have them ignorant as touching ſpiritual gifts; not ignorant either of their author from whence they came, the Holy Spirit of God; nor of their end and uſe, which is the benefit and edification of others. Gifts are for the good of others, but a man ſhall have the advantage and comfort of his own graces: Gifts are the gold which adorns the temple, but grace is the altar which ſanctifies the gold. Lord! how many have gone laden with gifts to hell? how many have propheſied in thy name, and yet periſhed in thy wrath? how many caſt devils out of others, who yet were caſt to the devils themſelves? how many wrought miracles, and did many wonderful works, who yet periſhed for evil workers? Lord! let me never build upon this bottom (gifts) for eternity; theſe may make me glorious in the eyes of men, but grace renders me precious in the ſight of God.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Note here, 1. How the apoſtle reminds the Corinthians of what they were in their Heatheniſh ſtate; namely, idolatrous Gentiles ſerving *dumb idols*; for though the devil ſometimes ſpake in and by the idols, yet the idols themſelves had mouths and ſpake not; and *they were carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as they were led*; that is, as they were led by their idolatrous prieſts, who had nothing of this divine Spirit amongſt them, which they, ſince their converſion from Gentiliſm to Chriſtianity, had been made partakers of. Now from this deſcription of idolaters, that they ſerve and worſhip dumb idols, we *learn*, What an abſurd and unreaſonable ſin idolatry is; the worſhipper is better than the God he worſhips; reaſonable men worſhip unreaſonable creatures; ſenſible men adore ſenſeleſs ſtocks and ſtones; and they who can ſpeak, invocate and call upon dumb idols, that can neither ſpeak nor hear. And yet how prone is the nature of man to idolatry and falſe worſhip; partly becauſe it is a worſhip of our own invention, and we are fond of what is of our own finding out and ſetting up; and partly becauſe it is external and pompous, it courts the outward ſenſes with glittering appearances; and men do naturally love and chuſe that for the object of their worſhip which may be ſeen, rather than that which is to be believed. As they walk by ſight, and not by faith, ſo do they worſhip too; an inviſible and unſeen being is neither the object of their adoration, nor election and choice.

3 Wherefore I give you to underſtand that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus accurſed: and *that* no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.

The great difference that was then in the world, was about Jeſus: Thoſe that were led away by dumb idols, were taught by Satan to blaſpheme, and ſay, upon the mention of our Saviour's name, Jeſus Anathema, Jeſus Anathema; that is, let Jeſus be Anathema, accurſed, deteſted, and deſtroyed, as the common odium of their gods. Now, when the apoſtle ſays, ſuch ſpeak not by the Spirit of God, his meaning is, that they did it by the impulſe and inſtinct of the devil, by the actings and inſtigation of the evil ſpirit, which ruled in thoſe children of diſobedience; on the other ſide, every one that believeth, calleth Jeſus Lord, and profeſſeth faith in him. Now, none, ſays the apoſtle, can do this but by the Holy Ghoſt, that is, by his help and aſſiſtance. But it may ſaid, we read in ſcripture of many who were actuated by the unclean ſpirit, that yet called Jeſus Lord, Mark i. 23. Acts xvi. 17. *Anſ.* (1.) Theſe acknowledgments of Chriſt to be Lord, were either wreſted from the devil, and were a conſiderable part of his torment, or were over-ruled by God to advance the glory of Chriſt. But, (2.) The apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſuch a calling Jeſus Lord, as is accompanied with faith in him, and ſubjection to him. There is a double ſaying that Jeſus is Lord; the one verbal, *ore tenus*, with lip and tongue only, without the conſent of the heart, or obedience of the life; the other actual, when we do with our whole ſouls own and acknowledge him, love and embrace him, obey and ſerve him as Lord, and vote for his government and dominion over us. No man thus called Jeſus Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt renewing and ſanctifying him, aſſiſting and enabling him ſo to do.

4 Now there are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit. 5 And there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord. 6 And there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh all in all.

That is, there is a great variety and diverſity of ſpiritual gifts, but it is the ſame Spirit from whence they all proceed and flow; and there are different adminiſtrations and offices in the church, but it is the ſame Lord who hath appointed all theſe offices: And there are diverſities of operations performed by theſe officers in the church, but it is the ſame God who worketh them in all. Here gifts are aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt, adminiſtrations to the Lord Chriſt, and operations to God the Father: but in all theſe, there are great diverſities both of kinds and degrees; they differ in the nature, extent and uſe. Thus it is with reference to ſpiritual gifts; but in the caſe of ſanctifying graces, it is far otherwiſe; theſe are all beſtowed jointly, or not at all: God cannot give humility to one, purity to another, charity alone to a third, becauſe there is ſuch an inſeparable union and alliance among the graces of the Spirit, (a concatenation of graces, as ſome call it) that where one really is, there all the reſt muſt be. Hence probably it is, why the whole of religion is ſometimes expreſſed by one particular duty of it, ſometimes by faith, ſometimes by hope, ſometimes by repentance, ſometimes by charity; becauſe the combination of theſe ſaving graces is ſuch, that the mentioning of one implies and includes all the reſt.

7 But the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wiſdom; to another the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit; 9 To another faith by the ſame Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another diſcerning of ſpirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will.

Note here, How the apoſtle enumerates and reckons up the ſeveral ſorts and kinds of ſpiritual gifts, which were at that time plentifully poured forth upon the miniſters and members of the church of Chriſt, which begat aſtoniſhment and admiration; and of theſe extraordinary gifts, our apoſtle reckons up nine ſorts or kinds, which were found in the primitive church in his days, as they here follow:

(1.) One had *the word of wiſdom*; that is, the revelation of the goſpel which is here called the manifold wiſdom of God: This was the gift of the apoſtles; to whom the extraordinary meaſures of divine wiſdom were firſt given, to reveal the myſteries of the goſpel to the Pagan world. (2.) Another had *the word of knowledge*; that is, a ſpecial ability to interpret the myſtical ſenſes and veiled meanings of the ſcripture, and alſo to foretel future things. Thus St. Paul told the centurion before the ſhipwreck, that not a man in the ſhip ſhould be loſt, Acts xxvii. and Agabus foretold the famine, and St. Paul's impriſonment, Acts xi. (3.) To another *faith*, by this ſome underſtand ſupernatural courage and confidence, with which God did endow them, when he called to extraordinary ſufferings or ſervices; accordingly we read in the Acts of the apoſtles, with what invincible courage and reſolution poor men appeared before the Jewiſh and Heathen tribunals, and with what aſtoniſhing preſence, both of body and mind, they bore the name of Jeſus before the kings and people of the earth. Others by faith here, underſtand a miraculous faith, that is, a ſupernatural confidence, and firm aſſurance, wrought by the holy Spirit in the minds of ſome, in the apoſtles' time, by which they were certain, that they could do ſuch and ſuch a miracle before they undertook to do it; and the greateſt apoſtle durſt never undertake to do a miracle, but when he was aſſured by the Spirit that he could do it; and indeed it was requiſite for Almighty God, by ſome ſecret preceding impreſſion of mind, to let the teachers of the goſpel know when he would aſſiſt them in working miracles, leſt they ſhould attempt to work when they could not, and ſo diſcredit Chriſt's doctrine, their own authority, and diſhonour the name of God; and therefore, it is *obſervable*, That *the gift of faith* here, is ſet immediately before the gift of healing, and working miracles, becauſe it conſiſted in an antecedent impulſe to both. (4.) The next miraculous gift, is the gift of healing, that is, a power of curing all diſeaſes, both of body and mind, without the help of phyſic, through the alone name of Jeſus Chriſt. (5.) The gift of miracles, under which is comprehended the power of ſilencing and caſting out devils, inflicting diſeaſes and death on the bodies of incorrigible ſinners, as on Elymas and Ananias; alſo the more wonderful power in raiſing the dead. (6.) The gift of propheſy, that is, 1. The prediction or foreknowledge of things to come. Thus Agabus foretold by the Spirit, a famine, Acts xii. and this gift was ſometimes exerciſed by foretelling who would be fit perſons to do God ſervice in the church; thus, 1 Tim. i. 18. and ch. iv. 14. *According to the foregoing prophecies concerning thee, neglect not the gift that was given thee by prophecy.* 2. Others, by *prophecy*, underſtand preaching and expounding ſcriptures by divine inſpiration, praiſing God by inſpired hymns and pſalms, and alſo praying unto him in public aſſemblies by inſpired prayers; for in the apoſtles' time, there was a miraculous gift of preaching, praying, and ſinging, in which the Spirit did, in an extraordinary manner, aſſiſt ſome perſons, which, with other extraordinary gifts, is long ſince ceaſed. (7.) The gift of diſcerning of ſpirits, that is, either, firſt, a power of quick and ſure diſcerning, whether men, pretending to the Spirit, ſpake from God, or not; or a ſupernatural ſagacity to diſcern between the impulſes of fanatical ſpirits, and divinely inſpired perſons. Or, ſecondly, A ſpirit of diſcerning, whether ſuch or ſuch perſons be beſt qualified for ſuch an office in the church, and accordingly, chuſing them out for that work. Thus, Acts xiii. 2, 3. the holy Spirit in the prophet, ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them. Or, laſtly, By this power of diſcerning ſpirits, the apoſtles could tell very much of the inward purpoſes of men's hearts and thoughts; ſo Peter diſcerned the heart of Ananias, and the thoughts of Simon Magus. (8.) The gift of tongues, that is, an ability to ſpeak divers languages, unlearned and untaught. To which was added, (9.) The gift of interpreting thoſe languages; for theſe two gifts did not always go together; Some could ſpeak divers languages, that could not interpret them; others could interpret them, that could not ſpeak them: For, ſay ſome, the gift of ſtrange tongues was uſually accompanied with ſuch ſtrange raptures, that the perſon affected, could not uſe his underſtanding in an ordinary way, ſo as to interpret and explain his own inſpirations in the audience to which he ſpoke; which was the reaſon why the Spirit did uſually reveal to others, who ſtood by, and underſtood not the inſpired languages, the matter which was ſpoken. Thus are the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the holy Spirit, enumerated by the apoſtle, which were beſtowed upon the primitive church, whoſe infant ſtate required all this extraordinary aſſiſtance; but as the church grew up, Almighty God, like a wiſe nurſe, weaned her by degrees from theſe miraculous gifts, till at laſt, arriving at her full ſtature, he left her, as parents leave their children when grown to be men, to ſubſiſt without theſe extraordinary helps and ſupplies.

12 ¶ For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: ſo alſo *is* Chriſt. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Here our apoſtle acquaints us, that the intent and deſign of God, in giving theſe various gifts, was the profit and edification of his church, which he compares to a body that has many members; for though that one Spirit which diſtributes the gifts, could have given them all to the ſame perſon, yet to maintain a mutual dependance, and a charitable ſerviceableneſs of the members, one among another, he gave to one, one gift; to another, another; by which means one member of the church would be obliged to take care of the reſt. Behold here, how the wiſdom of God has ordered the ſtate of the church, like that of the natural body, to which the apoſtle elegantly compares the body of Chriſt, which is his church: *As the body hath members, ſo alſo has Chriſt*; that is, the church of Chriſt. Now, having aſſured them, that they were indeed members of one body, he tells them what it was that made them ſo, ver. 13. *For by one Spirit*, ſays he, *we are baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and have been made to drink into one Spirit*: that is, by being baptized, we are all made members of the body of Chriſt, and united one to another, under him the Head; and this, *whether we be Jews or Gentiles*, bond or free, we are all one in Chriſt, who by baptiſm were admitted into his church: And this union of our's, one with another, is teſtified and delared by our communion at the Lord's table, which is here called, *a drinking into one Spirit*. And whereas by baptiſm we are ſaid by one Spirit to be baptized into one body, and at the Lord's ſupper, are ſaid to drink into one Spirit; we *learn*, That the grace of the holy Spirit was given in baptiſm and in the Lord's ſupper, to all the faithful, who do not receive unprofitable ſigns, but the quickening grace and Spirit of God, to make them living members of that one body.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the eye, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? if the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the ſmelling?

Our apoſtle here elegantly compares the ſtate of the myſtical body, the church, with that of the natural body: As the natural body is one, ſo is the myſtical body; as the natural body is informed and animated with one ſpirit or ſoul, ſo the myſtical body, the church, is animated by one and the ſame Spirit, received from our ſpiritual Head, Chriſt Jeſus, and communicated to all the members of his body, to give them life and motion: As the members of the natural body are not alike, but ſome ſuperior, and others inferior, in excellency, yet all of indiſpenſible uſe; (for the wiſe God hath created no member of man's body in vain, but deſigned all for the mutual help and benefit of one another) in like manner is it in the church, the myſtical body; there are different gifts, different offices; ſome are ſuperior and more excelling in gifts, others are of meaner abilities, yet all conduce to the good of the whole: One of inferior gifts muſt not account himſelf uſeleſs; (for every one that cannot be excellent, may yet be uſeful) for if ſo, what would become of the church? Therefore, there muſt be different gifts and offices, for different uſes: But every one muſt employ his gift, and perform his office according to the nature of it, for the ſervice of the whole. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſeveral men have their ſeveral gifts, as it pleaſeth the gift-giving Spirit to give unto them. 2. That ſuch as have the meaneſt talent, either of gifts or graces, ought not to eſteem themſelves, or be eſteemed by others, as uſeleſs or unſerviceable; but to employ their talent, though ever ſo ſmall, for the ſervice and benefit of the whole church.

18 But now hath God ſet the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleaſed him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the foot, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more, thoſe members of the body which ſeem to be more feeble are neceſſary.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Whereas our wiſe Creator, who made the body of man, has appointed all the members of that body for divers uſes and offices, and alſo appointed the order in which every member ſhall ſtand; that the head ſhall be uppermoſt, to guide the body, the foot lowermoſt, to bear the body: In like manner, our gracious Redeemer has appointed to the ſeveral members of his church, diſtinct offices in his church. And as the principal members of the body, the eye and hand, do need the leſs principal; ſo the rulers, paſtors, and wiſeſt members of the church, do need even thoſe weak and inferior Chriſtians, whom the world makes ſmall account of. The eye, the man of great underſtanding cannot ſay to the hand, the perſon employed in leſſer ſervices, I have no need of you; nor again the head, that is, the perſon placed in the higheſt dignity in the church, cannot ſay to the feet, the perſon employed in the loweſt offices of the church, I have no need of you. Therefore the ſuperior members of the church muſt not pride it over the inferior, nor the moſt knowing Chriſtians deſpiſe the leſs knowing, as unuſeful and unprofitable, but, as fellow-members, jointly endeavour the mutual benefit and advantage of one another.

23 And thoſe *members* of the body which we think to be leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comelineſs. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25 That there ſhould be no ſchiſm in the body; but *that* the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another. 26 And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in that elegant compariſon betwixt the members of the body natural and the body myſtical; ſhewing, that as there are ſome members in the natural body that are leſs honourable, and ſome that are more honourable; and whereas we put more abundant honour upon the leſs honourable members by a decent covering, and modeſt adorning them; but upon our comely parts, ſuch as the face, we put no covering, being comely enough of itſelf, and lacking no artificial beauty; in like manner all the members of the myſtical body ought to be inſtructed, that the meaneſt offices in the church, and the meaneſt members of the church, who have leaſt gifts, are as well of that ſpiritual body, the church, as thoſe that have more excellent offices and gifts; and as the meaner muſt not envy the more excellent, ſo neither muſt the more excellent deſpiſe the meaner, but put a due value and reſpect upon one another. For practiſing of which duty, a double reaſon is here aſſigned; (1.) That there may be no ſchiſm in the body, but the members have the ſame care for, and regard to one another; if the members of the natural body ſhould ſtrive among themſelves, the whole body would come to ruin by ſchiſm, ſo great miſchief would ariſe to the church, the myſtical body, by diviſions and diſſenſions amongſt the particular members of it. (2.) Becauſe there ought to be a ſympathy between the members of the myſtical body, as there is betwixt the members of the natural body. There is a fellow-feeling with each other, both of joy and grief, in and among the natural members; they all rejoice and mourn with one another; if one member be pinched, the whole body is pained. Thus all the myſtical members of Chriſt's body, the church, ought to have the ſame common intereſt, the ſame common concern, the ſame common care, and the ſame mutual ſympathy with each other, both in weal and wo.

27 Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.

Our apoſtle having thus finiſhed his elegant and excellent compariſon between the members of the natural, and thoſe of the myſtical body; he comes now to make a particular and cloſe application of it to the believing Corinthians, whom he acknowledges to be a part of the myſtical body of Chriſt; and that it is their duty to carry themſelves towards their fellow-members, as the members of the body natural do towards each other, who are evermore ſolicitous for the good of one another. Now, ſays he, *Ye are the members of Chriſt*; as if he had ſaid, Thus muſt it be with you who are the ſeveral members of Chriſt's church, which is his body. From the whole of this compariſon, with the apoſtle's application of it, we *learn*, 1. That as there can be no natural body without divers members, ſo no myſtical body without diverſity of gifts and offices. 2. That as the moſt inferior members of the natural body are as truly members as the moſt noble, and as neceſſary and ſerviceable to the body as the other, ſo are inferior Chriſtians as much the members of Chriſt's body, and in their place as uſeful and neceſſary as other members of the church, which are more excelling in ſpiritual gifts. 3. That all the members of the natural body are placed and diſpoſed according to the wiſdom of Almighty God; in like manner, the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, are, by the unerring wiſdom of God, placed in that ſtation and condition in the church, in which he has ſet them, and accordingly, they ought to be ſatisfied with it, and endeavour to be uſeful in it. 4. That as there is no diviſion in the members of the natural body, but all the members take care of, and are employed for the good of the whole; ſo ought matters to be managed in the body myſtical, that there be no diviſions, nor ſeparate intereſts in it, but they ſhould mutually regard the common intereſt of one another, ſympathizing, ſorrowing, and rejoicing together. O happy! when the intereſt of all parties, and private concernments, ſhall give place to public intereſts.

28 And God hath ſet ſome in the church, firſt apoſtles, ſecondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diverſities of tongues.

Our apoſtle having, in the beginning of the chapter, reckoned up the divers gifts, which God had variouſly beſtowed upon the church, here in the cloſe of the chapter, he reckons up the particular officers that he thought fit to place in his church. (1.) *Apoſtles*; perſons ſent forth immediately by Chriſt to lay the foundation of Chriſtian churches, and upon whom the care of all the churches lay. (2.) *Prophets*; or perſons immediately inſpired with the knowledge of future things. (3.) *Teachers*; ſuch as labour in the word and doctrine, either as itinerary preachers, going from place to place, or as ſettled fixed miniſters in the church, expounding the ſcriptures to the people. (4.) *Miracles*; that is, ſome perſons endued with an extraordinary power to work miracles for convincing infidels, and confirming believers. (5.) *Gifts of healing*; ſuch perſons as had a power conferred upon them to heal diſeaſes, without the help of phyſic, in an extraordinary way. (6.) *Helps*; deacons, which took care of the poor, and aſſiſted the church in the diſtribution of her charity: and alſo aſſiſted in holy things, particularly, in baptizing and adminiſtering the Lord's ſupper. (7.) *Governments*; the rulers of the church and ſpiritual guides. (8.) *Diverſities of tongues*; that is, perſons enabled to ſpeak divers languages, in order to the farther ſpreading of the goſpel, without the help of ſtudy. Behold here the wiſdom of God in this various diſtribution of gifts and offices in his church; all which, as they are deſigned by him, ſo ought they to be managed by her, for the general good of the whole, without either pride or haughtineſs on the one hand, or envy and emulation on the other.

29 *Are* all apoſtles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healings? do all ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret?

The force of the apoſtle's argument lies thus: As the natural body, to which he had before alluded, cannot be all eye, nor all ear, nor all hand, nor foot; in the like manner, in the myſtical body, the church, all cannot govern, propheſy, teach, work miracles, heal diſeaſes; but one has this gift, and another that; one has this office in the church, and another that; all which are to be employed and improved for the common good of the church, and mutual benefit of each other.

31 But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts. And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.

He concludes the chapter with this advice, that they covet and deſire *the beſt*: that is, the moſt uſeful and excellent gifts, the moſt beneficial and edifying gifts, ſuch as are moſt advantageous to the church; yet withal intimating to them, that though there be an excellency in gifts, yet there is a greater excellency in grace, particularly in the grace of love. Charity or love to God and our neighbour, is more excelling than a load of gifts, though very extraordinary, though ſupernatural and miraculous. *Yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way*: that is a more excellent way of miniſtering to the welfare of the church, and of edifying your own ſouls, even by true Chriſtian love one towards another. *Learn* hence, That as the ſanctifying graces of the holy Spirit are more excelling than the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, ſo it is the Chriſtian's duty to be much more covetous and deſirous of them; for when gifts vaniſh away, the habits of grace ſhall never fail, but abide for ever, particularly the grace of love, which ſhall not only accompany us to heaven, but in heaven; where, from a ſmall and little ſpark, it ſhall be improved to a ſeraphic and never-failing flame.

CHAP. XIII.

Our apoſtle proceeds in this chapter to ſet forth the tranſcendent excellency of the graces of the holy Spirit, above the moſt exalted and admired gifts; and in particular, the excellency of the grace of charity, that is, the unfeigned love of God and our neighbour; which virtue he likewiſe perſuaſively enforces in the following chapter.

THOUGH I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.

Here our apoſtle begins a compariſon between gifts and graces, and ſhews how much more excelling and deſirable the ſaving graces of the Spirit are, than all thoſe pompous and miraculous gifts, in which there is no real excellency, and nothing for which we ſhould deſire them, but only upon the ſcore of uſefulneſs and ſerviceableneſs to the church: And this he inſtances firſt in the gifts of tongues, *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels*, &c. that is, though I had the gift of tongues, or ſpeaking divers languages in the higheſt meaſure, and moſt exalted degree; could I preach and pray like an angel, diſcourſe and talk beyond the rate of any mortal man, and have not the grace of love and charity, alas! what is all this to God, who is not taken with a noiſy ſound, as children are with a muſical inſtrument? Behold here, that the tongues of men or angels could have ſaid nothing more plain or emphatical, to ſhew how much more excellent the ſaving graces of the Spirit are than miraculous gifts, which commend us not to God, render us not like God, nor any ways qualify us for the enjoyment of him, giving us no intrinſic worth, or inherent excellency. They only proclaim God's goodneſs towards us, but are no ways evedential of any goodneſs in us towards him. Gifts are like the gold which adorns the temple, but grace is like the altar which ſanctifies the gold.

2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Farther, Suppoſe I had the ſpirit of prophecy, and could ſpeak, by inſpiration, of things preſent, and things to come, and could underſtand deep and difficult points in God's word and works, what is this more than Balaam had? And ſuppoſe I have all faith, that is, the higheſt degree of miraculous faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, yet this ſevered from charity, or the predominant love of God and our neighbour, is all nothing. And *I am nothing*, that is, nothing worth in the ſight of God. *Note* here, That miraculous faith may be ſevered from charity, but juſtifying faith cannot, which always worketh by love; and wherever that grace is found, it gives value and acceptance to all other graces. Faith without charity, is but a dead aſſent; hope without charity, is but like a tympany, the bigger it grows, the more dangerous it proves; and the moſt diffuſive alms-giving, without love, is but a ſacrifice to vanity.

3 And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Note here, 1. That alms may be given without true love to God, or our neighbour, for God's ſake; they may be given out of mere natural pity to the poor, out of a deſire to be well thought of, and well ſpoken of by men, out of an opinion of merit, and obliging God, or from ſome other cauſe, which includes not love either to God or man: and wherever they are thus given, they profit nothing to ſalvation. The Greek word for feeding the poor here, ſignifies to divide victuals in ſeveral pieces, and ſo diſtribute it among the poor. Lord! what a conſideration is this, that a man may do all the external works of mercy, even the higheſt and moſt tranſcendent works, and yet want true love to God and his neighbour. 2. That as alms may be given, ſo martyrdom may be undergone without charity. *If I give my body to be burned*; that is, if I have ſo much fortitude and courage as to lay down my life for Chriſt and his truth, which is ſuch an high expreſſion of my obedience to him, as angels are not capable of performing, yet without charity, burning is but a vain-glorious blaze; and inſtead of ſealing the truth with our blood, we ſeal but our own ſhame and folly. 3. The apoſtle ſays not, If I be burnt, perſecuted, and put to death by others; but, if I give myſelf to be burned, if I voluntarily and freely offer up myſelf, not to impriſonment only, but to death itſelf, yea to the moſt terrible kind of death, *burning*; yet if all this be not from a right principle, and ſincere end, if all this be without true love to God and his glory, church, and truth, it will avail nothing to ſalvation. *Learn* hence, That no kind of external ſufferings, though ever ſo grievous, either for the truth of Chriſt indeed, or for that which a man's conſcience judges to be the truth of Chriſt, is a ſure and infallible ſign of a gracious ſtate; a man may ſuffer for truth, but not for truth's ſake, only for intereſt's ſake; he may ſuffer from a natural ſtrength and ſtoutneſs of ſpirit, and not from a ſpiritual fortitude wrought in him by the Spirit of God. Ah, Lord! how miſerable is it to be burnt with fire here for Chriſt, and to hear him ſay afterward, *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire!* It is indeed a great matter to ſuffer for Chriſt, but it is much greater to ſuffer with ſuch a diſpoſition of heart as Chriſt requires.

4 ¶ Charity ſuffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up,

Here the apoſtle entereth upon the deſcription and commendation of the grace and duty of charity, and declares ſeveral excellent effects and properties of it; namely, *It ſuffereth long, and is kind*; that is, the charitable man is kind to all, patient towards all; he can bear injuries and reproaches very long, without either deſiring or endeavouring to revenge them. *It envieth not*; that is, he envieth neither the power, nor profit, nor preferment, nor applauſe, nor precedency of any man; but is well pleaſed with the happineſs of every man, and laments their misfortunes. *Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up*; that is, it ſuppreſſes all ſelf-applauding and admiring thoughts, all arrogancy in aſſuming to ourſelves, and undervaluing of others.

5 Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil;

That is, charity, or true love to our neighbour, will reſtrain us from all uncomely deportment towards him; it will not ſuffer us to do an ill or indecent thing to any one; it breaks not forth into violent and ungovernable paſſions upon any provocations, how juſt ſoever, how great ſoever. *Seeketh not her own*; that is, her own praiſe, profit, or pleaſure; it ſeeketh it not inordinately, it ſeeketh it not injuriouſly, either in the neglect of others, or to the hurt of others. Charity is not ſelfiſh, but generous. *It is not eaſily provoked*; that is, charity is not provoked readily to think, ſpeak, or act unduly, by ſmall injuries or occaſions, but beareth, forbeareth, and forgiveth. *Thinketh no evil*; that is, of any perſon groundleſly, but conſtrues and interprets every thing in the beſt ſenſe; for lightly to take up an evil report of our neighbour, to think or ſuſpect, much more to believe and report any evil of him, without ſufficient evidence againſt him, is a violation of the law of charity.

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Charity rejoices not in any evil done, either, (1.) By ourſelves in the commiſſion, or after contemplation of it; or, (2.) By others. Lord! how ſad is it when it becomes matter of mirth and ſport, to ſee another ſtab at once the Chriſtian name, and his own ſoul! Or, (3.) It rejoices not in any evil done to others; charity ſuffers no man to be pleaſed or delighted with any deceit or falſhood ſpoken of, or done to others, or with any ill ſtories, or malicious inſinuations concerning them, or in any calamity befalling them. *But rejoiceth in the truth*; that is, (1.) Charity is ſo far from rejoicing, either in the falls or misfortunes of others, that it rejoices when the truth and innocency, the righteouſneſs and equity, of any perſon or cauſe is made manifeſt: A good man rejoices when he ſees any ſuſpected for, or charged with iniquity, upon due examination, cleared and acquitted. Or, (2.) *Rejoiceth in the truth*; that is, in men's loving truth, doing juſtly, and living righteouſly, according to the rule of truth, the goſpel. O! what a complacency and inward pleaſure doth it beget in a good man's mind, when he beholds truth and righteouſneſs, piety and goodneſs, prevailing in the world?

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity or love has ſtrong ſhoulders to bear wrongs and injuries with patience, though very hard and grievous to be born; without returning evil for evil, it will enable us to forbear one another in love, and not ceaſe to be kind, notwithſtanding provocations. *Believeth all things*; that is, charity inclines a man to believe the beſt of his neighbour, till the contrary appears; it interprets every thing in the beſt ſenſe, and makes the faireſt conſtruction of every man's caſe and condition: Not that a charitable man is a credulous man, and can believe whatever he pleaſes; but he believeth all things, ſo far as either reality or probability, ſo far as truth, or appearance of truth, will encourage him to do it. A charitable man is very willing to believe that things are meant as they are ſpoken, and intended as they are done. O! how uncharitable then, and unjuſt are they, who believe all is ill, when they know nothing ill; and think and ſpeak ill of them, in whom they never ſaw any thing but what was good? It is not ſufficient that we do not judge our neighbour maliciouſly, but we muſt not judge him ignorantly; it is an injurious and unworthy jealouſy, when a perſon's actions are fair, to ſuſpect his intentions. *Hopeth all things*; that is, it is the genius of charity, and the character of love, to hope the beſt of perſons and things, ſo far as there is any ground of hope; yea, though they carry in them ſome cauſe and colour of ſuſpicion: It inclines us ſtill to hope the beſt concerning men's intentions and actions: and if our brother be bad at preſent, not to deſpair of his amendment, but endeavour his reformation, by all proper means. *Endureth all things*; that is, it puts up wrongs and injuries, without deſiring, much leſs endeavouring to revenge them; it cauſes us to endure provocation with much patience, and extinguiſhes all inclinations to revenge. Some will conceal their anger, but ſeek revenge; their malice is like ſlow poiſon, that does not diſcover violent ſymptoms, but deſtroys life inſenſibly: Others have ſuch fierce paſſions, that they ſtrike fire out of the leaſt provocations; they inflame their reſentments, by conſidering every circumſtance that will exaſperate their ſpirits: *but charity beareth all things, endureth all things.*

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* propheſies, they ſhall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether *there be* knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away. 9 For we know in part, and we propheſy in part.

Charity never faileth. Holy love is an everlaſting quality and employment; it ſhall not fail at death, as other graces do, but be perfected at death: Repentance ſhould accompany us to the gates of heaven, but repentance ceaſes for ever in heaven, for no need of repentance where there is entire innocence: Faith is ſwallowed up in viſion, and hope in fruition; but love is then and there in its exaltation. Thus *charity never faileth*, but all other gifts will fail; propheſying, languages, ſciences, and all artificial knowledge, will ceaſe for ever; knowledge itſelf in heaven ſhall vaniſh away: But how vaniſh? The meaning is, that ſuch knowledge as we have now, ſhall vaniſh then; that imperfect knowledge we have now, will ceaſe, and be uſeleſs then; our preſent knowledge is attained with much labour and ſtudy, but it ſhall be no more difficult to know in heaven, than it is for the eye to open and ſee: The beautiful face of truth ſhall in a moment be unveiled to us in heaven, and the curtain drawn away by the hand of God, which interpoſed between us and the light. Again, knowledge of ſo imperfect a degree, as now it is of, ſhall vaniſh away: Here we know what we know by divine revelation, but in part; and we propheſy by inſpiration but in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.

As the imperfect twilight is done away by the opening of the perfect day; ſo at death, when that which is perfect takes place, then that which was imperfect ſhall be done away. Bleſſed be God for the hopes of that bleſſed place and ſtate where all imperfections ſhall ceaſe, eſpecially the imperfection of our knowledge. Alas! here all that we know, either of the word or works of God, is but a part, a little part; and bleſſed be God, this perfect ſtate doth not ſucceed the imperfect one, after a long interval, (at the reſurrection and re-union of the body), but the imperfect ſtate of the ſoul immediately is done away by the coming of the perfect one; the glaſs is laid by as uſeleſs, when we come to ſee face to face, and eye to eye. O happy and vaſt difference between the Chriſtian's preſent and future ſtate! True, he now begins to know, he knows in part here; but verily, what he here knows, is little of that he ſhould know, little of that he might know, little of that others know, little of that he deſires to know, and little of that he ſhall know, when he comes to heaven: then all imperfections *ſhall be done away, when that which is perfect is come.*

11 When I was a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.

Here the apoſtle compares the Chriſtian's imperfect ſtate of knowledge and holineſs in this life, to a ſtate of childhood, his perfect ſtate of holineſs and happineſs in heaven, to a ſtate of manhood. As a child conceives, thinks, and ſpeaks of things ſuitable to his childiſh ſtate; but when he comes to manly perfection, and to the full uſe and exerciſe of his reaſon, he then puts away childiſh conceptions and things: Thus it is with the beſt of us in this life, like children we conceive and think, we diſcourſe and ſpeak of ſpiritual things in a confuſed and imperfect manner; but when we arrive at our ſtate of manly perfection in heaven, we ſhall have knowledge and all other graces perfected. *Learn* hence, That Chriſtians muſt ſtay for perfect knowledge, till they come to maturity and ripeneſs of age; children muſt not expect to know what men know: Solomon's knowledge on earth, ſo famouſly celebrated, will be but ignorance, compared with the knowledge and enlargements which the ſaints have in heaven; there, in natural things they ſhall be exact philoſophers, in ſpiritual things complete divines: all dark ſcriptures ſhall be clear to them, all the knotty intrigues of providence wiſely reſolved: In a word, there they ſhall know God himſelf perfectly, though they can never know him to perfection.

12 For now we ſee through a glaſs, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, Now in our minority we ſee divine revelations, as the prophets did of old in a dark enigmatical manner, and by ſymbolical repreſentations of things upon the fancy, as in a glaſs; but then in the adult ſtate of the church we ſhall ſee them after the Moſaical manner, in a way more accommodate to human nature, and as it were face to face; we ſhall ſee clearly, immediately; not by reflection, but by intuition. Theſe adverbs, *now* and *then*, diſtinguiſh the two-fold ſtate of gracious ſouls; and ſhew what they are whilſt confined to the body, and what they ſhall be when emancipated and freed from the body, that clog of mortality which now hangs upon them. *Note* here, 1. That our imperfect knowledge of God is ſet forth by ſeeing in a glaſs, becauſe it is a weak and imperfect viſion; a glaſs gives but a weak and languid repreſentation of the face that is ſeen in it; and becauſe it is a vaniſhing and tranſient viſion, a man having looked in a glaſs, preſently forgets what he ſaw there; and becauſe it is no immediate ſight, but *mediante ſpeculo*, by the glaſs of his word and ordinances we ſee and underſtand ſomething of God's nature and will; though after all our ſearchings here to find out what God is, we rather know what he is not, than are able to declare what he is. 2. That ſuch as have ſeen God here, as in a glaſs, in the glaſs of his ordinances and providences, in the glaſs of his word and works, ſhall ſee him face to face, and fix their eye upon him in heaven to all eternity: When once the pious ſoul is unſheathed from the body, it gliſters glorioully; as ſoon as the cage is open, this bird ſoars aloft, and ſings melodiouſly. It is death's office to beat down the partition-wall, a groſs earthly body; and then the glorified ſoul ſhall have a clear and perfect viſion, an immediate and poſſeſſive viſion, a ſatisfying and ſoul-transforming viſion, a permanent and eternal viſion of the holy and bleſſed God, which the apoſtle here calls *ſeeing face to face*. 3. How St. Paul, in the latter words of the verſe, gives us a plainer expreſſion of that which before he had ſpoken more darkly and obſcurely: *Now I know in part, but then I ſhall know even as I am known.* Where *note*, How the apoſtle changes the perſon; before it was, *we ſee through a glaſs darkly*; here it is, *I know in part.* He had included himſelf before, in the word *we*; but he doth it more apparently in ſaying *I. Now I know in part.* When ſo great an apoſtle acknowledges the imperfection of his knowledge, who can, who dare, boaſt of the largeneſs of his underſtanding? *Note* farther, The apoſtle's ſaying, *Now I know*, intimates, that he had begun his acquaintance with God here, which he expected ſhould be improved and perfected in heaven; he that knows not God in part here, ſhall never know him face to face in glory: Heaven is a place of perfection indeed; but nothing is perfected there, that was not begun here; no knowledge, no holineſs, will be conſummated there, which did not commence and begin here. 4. When the apoſtle ſays, We ſhall know even as we are known; he means, that we ſhall know God as really and truly, though not ſo fully and comprehenſibly as he knows us; we ſhall know him in his nature and attributes; then and there will his wonderful clemency be ſweetly diſplayed, his exact juſtice viſibly demonſtrated, his perfect wiſdom clearly unfolded, all the knotty intrigues of providence wiſely reſolved, all the myſterious depths of divine counſels fully diſcovered, to the delightful ſatisfaction of the admiring and adoring ſoul, who ſhall then ſee as it is ſeen, and know as it is known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe *is* charity.

The deſign of the apoſtle in theſe words is, (1.) To inform the Corinthians, that the ſanctifying graces of faith, hope, and charity, are far to be preferred before all the forementioned extraordinary gifts of propheſy, miracles, tongues; healing the ſick, and raiſing the dead, not excepted. The leaſt degree of ſanctifying grace from the Holy Spirit, is to be preferred, with reſpect to ourſelves, before the largeſt meaſure of extraordinary gifts, which are wholly for the good and benefit of others. (2.) As our apoſtle had compared gifts and graces together before, ſo he compares graces amongſt themſelves now. Faith, hope, and charity, are ſet in competition, and the preference given to the laſt; partly with reſpect to its preſent excellency, for charity is the end to which faith and hope are but the means; and partly with reſpect to its future duration; faith and hope will vaniſh with this life: Faith will end in ſight, and hope in enjoyment; but charity will never be out-dated, but laſt and flouriſh when we come to heaven, and be a ſpecial ingredient in, and a conſiderable part of our happineſs there, which conſiſts in the rapturous contemplation of divine love, in loving, praiſing, admiring, and adoring God, our great Creator, and in loving all whom he loves, and that eternally. *Learn*, 1. That faith, hope, and love, are abiding graces; they do and muſt keep houſe, not only in the church-militant in general, but in the ſoul of every member of the church-militant in particular. 2. That of all theſe graces, charity is the greateſt and moſt excellent. (1.) In regard of its extent, reaching to God, angels, and men. (2.) In regard of its uſe, extending to the good of others; whereas faith and hope are particular and private graces. (3.) In regard of perfection, as rendering us more like to God. (4.) In regard of duration; farewel faith and hope, when we come to heaven; but welcome love: Therefore, *the greateſt of theſe is charity*.

CHAP. XIV.

FOLLOW after charity, and deſire ſpiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may propheſy.

Note here, 1. The apoſtle propounds to the Corinthians a threefold object, *charity*, *ſpiritual gifts*, and *propheſy*; charity has the precedency and pre-eminency; the apoſtle not only prefers it before all other gifts, but before the moſt uſeful and excellent graces, even faith and hope; for ſervice and benefit to the church of God it exceeds them all. Next he mentions *ſpiritual gifts*, ſuch were the gift of tongues, the gift of miracles, the gift of healing, and, laſtly, *propheſy*; by which we are to underſtand an ordinary ſet courſe of preaching, interpreting, and opening the holy ſcriptures, which contain a revelation of God's mind and will. 2. A threefold act recommended, anſwerable to a threefold object propounded. An act of proſecution: Διωκετε, perſecute and *follow after* charity as cloſe as your perſecutors purſue and follow after you: It imports a moſt earneſt, vigorous, and vehement purſuit. An act of emulation: Ζηλȣ͂τε, *Deſire earneſtly ſpiritual gifts*. An act of election and choice: *Chuſe rather that ye may propheſy*, or clearly underſtand the mind of God yourſelves, and have an ability to expound and explain it to others; this will bring moſt glory to God, moſt profit it to his church, and moſt comfort to yourſelves.

2 ¶ For he that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man underſtandeth *him*; howbeit in the Spirit he ſpeaketh myſteries. 3 But he that propheſieth ſpeaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Here *note*, 1. That the gift of tongues, or ſpeaking divers languages, was greatly valued and much deſired by ſome in the church at that time; probably for this reaſon, becauſe the apoſtles were very eminently endowed with this gift, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon them in the ſhape of cloven tongues: But yet the gift of propheſy, that is, of underſtanding and interpreting God's will, was clearly the more valuable and deſirable accompliſhment; for though ſpeaking with tongues created more admiration, and conciliated greater veneration to the ſpeaker, yet propheſying was by far the moſt excellent gift, and tended moſt to the edification of the church: It is far better to *do good*, than to appear *great*; that is moſt valuable and excelling, which is moſt advantageous and edifying. 2. How the apoſtle enters upon a compariſon between the gift of ſpeaking in an unknown tongue, and propheſying or ſpeaking plainly to the church's benefit and comfort: *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue*, that is, *in a language not underſtood*, not explained or interpreted, he ſpeaketh not unto men; that is, not to the underſtanding of men, for none underſtand him; but to God only, he alone underſtands him: And though in the Spirit he ſpeaks myſteries, or the deep things of God, yet all this is not to edification, becauſe not underſtood by the church. Whereas, *he that propheſieth*, that is, he that intelligibly openeth and applieth the word of God to his auditors in the congregation, what he ſpeaks conduces exceedingly to their edification and conſolation. Here *note*, That the apoſtle not only diſlikes, but plainly forbids preaching, praying, and all other offices, being performed in the church in a language not underſtood: So that the practice of the church of Rome in their Latin prayers, is a flat contradiction to this whole chapter, and to the practice of the primitive church, Acts iv. 24. who lifted up their voice with one accord, and offered up a reaſonable ſervice to God: The prayers of the Jewiſh church were made in the Hebrew tongue; and God gave the gift of tongues to the Chriſtian church, that the apoſtles might eſtabliſh the worſhip of God in every nation, in their own language.

4 He that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, edifieth himſelf; but he that propheſieth, edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all ſpake with tongues, but rather that ye propheſied: for greater *is* he that propheſieth than he that ſpeaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. 6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you ſpeaking with

tongues, what ſhall I profit you, except I ſhall ſpeak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by propheſying, or by doctrine?

Note here, 1. Another argument uſed by the apoſtle, to prove the gift of propheſying, that is, of interpreting the holy ſcripture, to be far more excellent than the gift of tongues, ſeparated from the gift of interpretation: He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue, edifies none but himſelf, becauſe none but himſelf underſtands it; but he that teacheth, inſtructeth, and exhorteth others, edifieth the church, or the whole aſſembly that he ſpeaks in. 2. The apoſtle wiſhes they all had the gift of tongues, becauſe they were ſo very covetous and deſirous of them; though, alas! rather for their own oſtentation than the church's edification: yet he rather deſires with Moſes, *That all the Lord's people were prophets*; that is, directed and aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, to deliver plainly and perſuaſively the will of God to men; for he is the *greateſt* in the church, who is moſt edifying; and he that propheſieth, edifieth more than he that ſpeaketh all languages uninterpreted. 3. He amplifies this, by inſtancing in his own perſon: *If I come to you ſpeaking with tongues.* As if he had ſaid, I wonder whether *what* you ſo admire in others would pleaſe you in me: Suppoſe that I, whom God has eminently endowed with the gift of tongues, ſhould come and ſpeak to you in the Arabian language, what good would it do you? What would you be the wiſer or better for me, ſhould I make known to you ſome revelation which I immediately received from God, or open to you ſome truth which you knew not before, or urge you to ſome needful duty, or doctrinely expound to you the matters of faith and obedience recorded in the goſpel, if either myſelf or ſome interpreter did not make what I ſay intelligible to you, what will it profit you? To deliver the mind and will of God plainly and perſuaſively to the church's benefit and edification, is much more acceptable to God, profitable to man, and comfortable to ourſelves, than to ſpeak with the tongue of men and angels, in a language not underſtood, or not heard.

7 And even things without life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they have a diſtinction in the ſounds, how ſhall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle? 9 So likewiſe ye, except ye utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? For ye ſhall ſpeak into the air.

Our apoſtle here proceeds to illuſtrate his former arguments, by a ſimilitude taken from muſical inſtruments; the one uſed in peace, to wit, the harp; the other in war, to wit, the trumpet; as they are uſeleſs, if by diſtinction their ſignification is not perceived; for if a man hears not, or underſtands not the ſound of the harp or trumpet, he cannot prepare himſelf either for the dance or for the battle; ſo if perſons in the church do not ſpeak intelligibly, they will nothing edify; it is like beating the air, all in vain, and to no purpoſe.

10 There are, it may be, ſo many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without ſignification. 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a barbarian; and he that ſpeaketh *ſhall be* a barbarian unto me. 12 Even ſo ye, foraſmuch as ye are zealous of ſpiritual *gifts*, ſeek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Here the apoſtle tells them, That there may probably be as many voices or languages in the world, as there are nations: and every nation underſtands its own language, and commonly no other: Now, ſays the apoſtle, if he that has the gift of tongues, ſpeak to you in a language which ye underſtand not, will he not be a barbarian unto you? And if you talk to him in a language he underſtands not, will you not be barbarians unto him? Verily, it will be juſt as if two men of two different countries ſhould talk to one another, and neither underſtand a word of each other. He farther adds, that ſeeing they were ſo very deſirous of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, they ſhould ſeek thoſe gifts eſpecially, by which the church may receive edification and advantage: *Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.* Here *note*, 1. The noble end which St. Paul directs them to propound in what they deſire and deſign, namely, *The edifying of the church.* The church's edification ſhould be the ſcope of all her members, eſpecially of all her miniſters wiſhes and prayers, enterprizes, and endeavours: Our firſt care ſhould be, to lay a right foundation, namely, the doctrine of redemption and ſalvation, by the meritorious undertaking of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, the eternal Son of the Father: Our next care, that our ſuperſtructure be anſwerable to our foundation; this being ſolid and ſubſtantial, that muſt be ſo too; acquainting perſons with the whole will of God, and the whole duty of man. 2. The operation to be performed, and the means to be uſed, in order to this noble end: *Seek that ye may excel:* that is, paſſionately deſire and endeavour that you may, by the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit be eminently qualified for edifying and building the church of God: *Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Learn* hence, 1. That the edifying of the church, and the improvement of its members in knowledge, faith and holineſs, is, and ought to be, the great end which the miniſters of God propound to themſelves in the uſe of their gifts, and diſcharge of their office. 2. That the edifying of the church being the proper office of the miniſters of Chriſt, they ſhould ſtudy *to excel* in all gifts and graces conducing thereunto, by ſuch means and methods as are proper for that end; namely, by fervent prayer to God for divine illumination and knowledge, by reading the ſcriptures with great attention and application of mind, by ſtudying other authors in order to that end, by deep meditation, by judicious, zealous, and laborious preaching, but eſpecially by holy living. There ought to be a conſecration of our lives, as well as of our perſons, to the ſervice of God and his church; in this manner, eſpecially the meaneſt of her miniſters may *ſeek that they may excel to the edifying of the church.*

13 Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray

in an *unknown* tongue, my ſpirit prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo: I will ſing with the ſpirit, and I will ſing with the underſtanding alſo.

Note here, How ſtrongly the apoſtle pleads the neceſſity for all public worſhip, particularly preaching or propheſying, praying and ſinging, to be performed in a language known and underſtood by all the congregation: *Let him that ſpeaketh*, preacheth, or teacheth, in an unknown tongue, in which he cannot edify others, pray for the edifying gift of interpretation, that others may be edified as well as himſelf; otherwiſe, when we pray in an unknown tongue, our ſpirit prayeth, that is, our own gifts are exerciſed; but our underſtanding is unfruitful, that is, unto others: If we ſatisfy ourſelves, we cannot edify them. He reſolves therefore to pray with the Spirit, and to ſing with the Spirit, that is, with a ſtrange tongue miniſtered to him by the Spirit; yet to pray with underſtanding alſo, that is, to pray ſo as others may underſtand him, and join with him, and be edified by him. *Learn* from hence, Both the impiety and abſurdity of the church of Rome, in appointing their public offices to be performed in Latin; a language which the common people in France, Spain, Germany, yea, in Italy itſelf, do not underſtand; for the Latin tongue is not now the mother-tongue of any nation under heaven: And the council of Trent thunders out an *anathema* againſt thoſe that ſay, the maſs ought to be celebrated only in the vulgar tongue. Lord! what is, if this be not, to offer the ſacrifice of fools? How can this be a reaſonable ſervice, which is no better than a ſinful taking God's name in vain? How can their hearts and tongues go along together, who underſtand nothing which their tongues utter? They neither know the God they pray to, nor yet the mercies which they pray for. Lord, pity the miſerable ſouls in their communion, who erect an altar, and offer up *unknown prayers*, to an *unknown God*.

16 Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt? 17 For thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God, I ſpeak with tongues more than ye all. 19 Yet in the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an *unknown* tongue.

Our apoſtle ſtill goes on, arguing, that public prayers ought to be made in a language underſtood by them that pray. His argument is this, The heart ought to conſent to, and agree with, the ſupplications and prayers preſented unto God, and to teſtify its conſent by ſaying, *Amen*; but, ſays the apoſtle, no man can ſay *Amen* to that which he doth not underſtand, nor be edified by that which cannot be underſtood. For at cloſe, he tells them, That Almighty God had given him the gift of ſpeaking more languages than all of them put together, that ſo as an apoſtle, he might plant and propagate the Chriſtian faith in and throughout all nations; yet he declares he had rather ſpeak a few words to the inſtruction and edification of his hearers, than a multitude in a language not underſtood: The faithful miniſters of Chriſt have ſuch a regard to the end of their miniſtry, which is the communicating of divine knowledge to the underſtandings of their people, that they had much rather *they* ſhould be edified and profited, than their own parts and gifts applauded and admired.

20 Brethren, be not children in underſtanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in underſtanding be men.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, My brethren, be not like children in underſtanding, who prefer gay and gaudy things, which make a fine ſhew, as the gift of tongues does, before things more uſeful. Thus, do not you chuſe what beſt pleaſeth you, but what moſt profits others. I would have you indeed, in ſome reſpects, to be as children, namely, in innocency and harmleſſneſs, in freedom from malice, and all kind of wickedneſs; but in underſtanding be and act as men, as perſons of mature judgment, who know what is fitteſt to be ſpoken and beſt to be done. To be like children in the innocency of our actions is a virtue, but to be like them in the impotency and weakneſs of our underſtandings, is a reproach: *In underſtanding be men.*

21 In the law it is written, With *men* of other tongues and other lips will I ſpeak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, ſaith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a ſign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but propheſying *ſerveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Note here, How our apoſtle, to take the Corinthians off from their fond admiration of the gift of tongues, tells them, *That in the law*, that is, in the writings of the Old Teſtament, particularly in Iſa. xxviii. 11. it is declared, That becauſe the people of Judah would not be inſtructed by the plain preaching of the Lord's prophets, therefore he would cauſe them to be ſpoken to in an unknown language; namely, by outlandiſh enemies and armies, whoſe language they ſhould not underſtand: From whence he infers, that ſtrange tongues were not given for a ſign of any good to believers, but they were given as a token rather of God's diſpleaſure to unbelievers; inſomuch, that by the juſt judgment of God, their ignorance by this means would be the more increaſed; But the gift of prophecy ſerveth not only for the converſion of unbelievers, but for the edification of believers alſo; therefore, prophecy or preaching intelligibly is to be preferred in the church before ſpeaking with tongues.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues, and there come in thoſe that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not ſay that ye are mad? 24 But if all propheſy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is

judged of all. 25 And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt; and ſo falling down on *his* face, he will worſhip God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

To convince the Corinthians that prophecy was far more excellent than the gift of tongues, the apoſtle here argues from the abſurdity of ſpeaking in the congregation with a ſtrange tongue uninterpreted; *Will they not ſay ye are mad?* And from the utility and advantage of ſpeaking in a language underſtood, it convinceth and converteth ſinners; *He is convinced of all, he is judged of all:* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, When the church meets together, if all that ſpeak ſhould ſpeak in a ſtrange tongue, what will an ignorant or unbelieving perſon coming into the congregation think or ſay? Will he not apprehend you to be mad-men? Whereas, if all that ſpeak do prophecy and interpret ſcripture to the edification of the church, in ſuch a caſe, if an unbeliever comes in, he is convinced, diſcovered, judged by all them that propheſy, and the ſecrets of his heart are made manifeſt to himſelf; and ſo falling down, he will adore God, the ſearcher of the heart, and report from his own experience, that God is in or among you of a truth. Where *note*, Whence propheſying or preaching of the word has its convincing power, and converting efficacy, namely, from that God who is preſent in and with his own word; *God is in*, or with, *you of a truth.* When Almighty God quickens the word with his own Spirit, and clothes it with his own power, when he bids it go in his might, and prevail in his ſtrength, the ſtrongeſt holds of ignorance and unbelief, of obſtinacy and rebellion, fall to the ground like the firſt ripe figs ſhaken with the wind; when the unlearned or ideot comes into the aſſembly of the ſaints, *he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, he falls down and worſhips.* What is it that works this ſudden change? Not the preaching of men, but the power of God: *He will report that God is in you of a truth:* The arm of grace in the miniſtry of the word is victorious and invincible: The efficacy and ſucceſs of the word depends not on the parts of a man, but the power of God.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a pſalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

From this verſe to the end of the chapter, the apoſtle lays down particular precepts for the preſervation of decency and good order in the church of God; and firſt, he adviſes, when they came together into the public aſſemblies, that *if any of them had a pſalm* or hymn ſuggeſted to them by the Spirit of God, to his glory, and the church's edification, or had a *doctrine*, either for inſtruction or conſolation, or had a ſtrange *tongue*, or the gift of *interpreting tongues*, let it be how it will, he exhorts that all be done ſo as may moſt and beſt tend to the benefit and edification of the church, which is the true end of church aſſemblies. The great end, deſign, and aim, which thoſe who adminiſter in holy things ought to propound to themſelves in all their public adminiſtrations, is the church's edification, the people's growth aud improvement in knowledge, faith, and holineſs: *Let all things be done to edifying*; that is, let all your public offices be ſo performed, and in ſuch a manner, as may beſt conduce to the end for which they were deſigned.

27 If any man ſpeak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two or at the moſt *by* three, and that by courſe; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the church; and let him ſpeak to himſelf and to God. 29 Let the prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace. 31 For ye may all propheſy one by one, and that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the *author* of confuſion, but of peace, as in all churches of the ſaints.

Our apoſtle's next advice for the church's edification, is this, That ſuch as had the gift of tongues ſhould not ſpeak all together, but two or three ſucceſſively one after another; and that one interpret what was ſo ſpoken, to the benefit and edifying of the church. But if there were no interpreter preſent, let him, ſays the apoſtle, that only ſpeaks with tongues, keep ſilence in the church; and let him only ſpeak mentally to himſelf, and to God in prayer and thankſgiving. The ſame advice he gives to them that *propheſied*; to wit, that only two or three of them ſhould *propheſy* ſucceſſively, in order to the church's edification, and that the reſt of the prophets ſhould ſit ſtill and judge, examining their doctrine by the rule of the word: For ſays he, *the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets*; that is, the doctrines which the prophets deliver, are apt to be judged and examined by other prophets, whether they be agreeable to the word of God or not; or the inſtinct by which the prophets pretend to be moved at that time to propheſy, is ſubject to the judgment and cenſure of other prophets, who are endowed with the ſame gift. And thus he declares, that all that are prophets, and prophetically inſpired, may propheſy, provided it be done orderly and ſucceſſively, without occaſioning diſorder and confuſion in the church, and ſo managed, as to anſwer the great end of the inſtitution; namely, the inſtruction, edification and conſolation of the church. *For God is not the author of confuſion, but of peace:* Confuſion is ſo far from being of divine inſpiration, that it is hateful to God, who requires that peace and order ſhould be kept and maintained, not only in the church of Corinth, but in all the churches of the ſaints. That which breaks order, breaks peace; for there can be no true peace without order; and God is not the author of diſorder and confuſion in the churches, but of peace. Here, by the way, let us obſerve and note, that ſpeaking and preaching in the public aſſemblies is limited all along by the apoſtle to the prophets: *Let the prophets ſpeak*; not the common people, they were to ſit by, it was no part of their buſineſs to ſpeak, but to examine what was ſpoken, by the rule of the word. The authoritative preaching of the gifted brethren, at the call of a private congregation, was no more permitted by St. Paul, than his ſuffering of women to ſpeak in the church: None but prophets, or perſons in office appointed for the work of preaching, were ever ſuffered to undertake it in the primitive times, and downwards, till very lately. Let ſuch as firſt gave, and ſtill give, encouragement to the contrary, conſider how they will anſwer it at the bar of God, who is not the author of ſuch confuſion and diſorder, but of peace.

34 Let your women keep ſilence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as alſo ſaith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them aſk their huſbands at home: for it is a ſhame for women to ſpeak in the church.

A farther rule is here given by the apoſtle for maintaining decency and order in the public aſſemblies; namely, that the women ſhould never preſume to ſpeak or utter any thing as public teachers in the congregation; no, nor ſo much as aſk any queſtion publicly: Almighty God having, by his law, made ſubjection (not public inſtruction) their duty, of which ſilence is a token. Here *note*, That it is not the women's ſpeaking in the public aſſemblies, when they join with the congregation in ſinging of pſalms and prayer, but their ſpeaking by way of teaching and propheſying, that is here forbidden. *Note* farther, That the means of inſtruction were not denied the women; at home they might put forth queſtions to their huſbands for their own information and ſatisfaction; but to do any thing like this publicly, was a ſhame, or indecent thing, both to the church, the huſband and herſelf. Still *obſerve*, How the God of order calls for order, and delights in decency, eſpecially in places where his religious worſhip is celebrated. He has unworthy thoughts of God, that thinks him either a patron of, or pleaſed with, any diſorder, either in civil affairs, or religious ſervices.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himſelf to be a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Theſe words are looked upon by interpreters as a ſmart reflection upon ſome of the miniſters and members of the church of Corinth; who, from a high opinion which they had of themſelves and their own management, would not ſubmit to the foregoing precepts, canons and rules, for order and decency in the church of God. What, ſays the apoſtle, do you think that you have all the word and will of God? Doth all knowledge of ſcripture, and reſolution of doubts reſt in your breaſts, and flow out of your lips? Conſider, you are not the firſt church that was planted (Jeruſalem was before you) the goſpel was ſent to you, it did not come out firſt from you. Whence *learn*, That all kind of ſcorn is not always uncomely: men are apt to over-rate themſelves and to overvalue their own abilities, as if they had engroſſed all knowledge, that all muſt borrow from their ſtore, and light their candle at the torch. Now in that caſe, we may, without breach of charity, or blemiſh of holineſs, check pride with deriſion; and ſpeak them below men, who ſet up themſelves above men. *Obſerve* next, The apoſtle affirms, That theſe rules for order and decency which he had given them, were from the Lord; and he expected and required, that thoſe who eſteemed themſelves prophets, ſhould obſerve and obey them as ſuch: But if men will be ignorant, and obſtinate in their ignorance, be it at their peril, and let them look to it, do not you regard them: *If any be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to propheſy, and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

For a cloſe of the whole, he exhorts them earneſtly to endeavour after the gift of propheſying, and not to forbid the uſe of the gift of tongues, provided the formentioned rules and directions before given be obſerved; that ſo in their public aſſemblies all things relating to religious worſhip be performed with that becoming gravity and decency which may moſt and beſt conduce to the glory of God, and the church's edification. *Learn* hence, 1. That the whole church in general, and every individual member of it in particular, ought to perform all the duties of God's worſhip in a decent and orderly manner. 2. That it is the duty of church governors to take care that order and decency be enjoined and obſerved in the church of God, to the edification of all the members of it. 3. That they only have authority to make church-orders, whom the Lord has made church-governors. 4. That ſuch orders as relate to real decency in the worſhip of God, made and confirmed by the governors of the church, ought to be obeyed and conformed to by the members of the church, for conſcience ſake, that all things may be done decently and in order.

CHAP. XV.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this chapter, is to eſtabliſh the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, which ſome in the church of Corinth *at that time denied.*

MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the goſpel which I preached unto you, which alſo ye have received, and wherein ye ſtand; 2 By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.

Note here, 1. The ſubject-matter of St. Paul's preaching to the Corinthians, it was the goſpel; *I declare unto you the goſpel which I preached*; and particularly the doctrine of the body's reſurrection, which was a great point of that goſpel which he had preached and delivered to them. 2. The obedience which many, if not moſt of the Corinthians had given to the doctrine of the goſpel; they heard it, believed it, and embraced it as the truth of God: *which goſpel ye received, and wherein ye ſtand*; that is, the beſt and greateſt part of you are firm to your former profeſſion, though ſome are fallen away. 3. The bleſſed effect which the goſpel had upon thoſe who did believe and receive it: *By it they were ſaved*; that is, put into a ſalvable ſtate, brought into the right and only way that leads to ſalvation. The goſpel reveals the object, *ſalvation*; it directs loſt man which way to arrive at it, aſſures him it is attainable, and inclines and encourages him ſeriouſly to endeavour after the attainment of it. 4. The condition annexed and required on our part, in order to the obtaining that ſalvation which the goſpel diſcovers unto us, and that is perſeverance; for that is implied in *our keeping in memory what we have received: Ye are ſaved if ye keep in memory.* If we do not ſtedfaſtly cleave to the goſpel, and to this grand doctrine of it, the *reſurrection*, our hearing is vain, our believing is vain, our hopes of ſalvation are vain: *By the goſpel we are ſaved, if we keep it in memory*, and practiſe it; otherwiſe *we have believed in vain.*

3 ¶ For I delivered unto you firſt of all that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day according to the ſcriptures: 5 And that he was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve. 6 After that he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep. 7 After that he was ſeen of James; then of all the apoſtles.

Obſerve here, The apoſtle's fidelity, 1. In delivering nothing to the church but what he had received: *I delivered to you firſt of all that which I alſo received*: either mediately by Ananias, or by immediate revelation from Chriſt himſelf. 2. The principal and fundamental doctrines or articles of faith, which the apoſtle in his preaching had inſiſted upon amongſt them, namely, the death, the burial, and the reſurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *That he died for our ſins:* That is, a voluntary ſacrifice for our ſins, to make an atonement for ſin, as the prophets Iſaiah and Daniel had long foretold. *And that he was buried:* The dead body of our bleſſed Redeemer was decently buried by a ſmall number of his own diſciples, and continued in the ſtate of the dead, and under the power of death, for a time. That he was buried is a demonſtration of the certainty that he died. *And that he roſe again the third day, according to the ſcriptures:* Chriſt, though laid, was not *loſt* in the grave, but, by the omnipotent power of his Godhead, revived, and roſe again from the dead the third day, to the conſternation of his enemies, and the conſolation of all believers. 3. How the apoſtle proves the truth and verity of Chriſt's reſurrection, by ocular demonſtration: He is riſen, becauſe he was ſeen alive after his paſſion; firſt of Peter, next of the whole college of apoſtles, which formerly conſiſted of twelve; then of five hundred brethren at once in Galilee, whereof ſome were then alive to teſtify it; after which he was ſeen of James, and then of all the apoſtles. Theſe were all holy perſons, who durſt not deceive, and who confirmed their teſtimony with their blood. So that no article of faith, no point of religion is of more confeſſed truth, and infallible certainty, than this of our Lord's reſurrection; and bleſſed be God it is ſo, ſeeing the whole weight of faith, hope, and ſalvation, depends upon Chriſt as riſen from the dead. Behold how great a weight the ſcripture hangs upon this nail; thanks be to God, it is a nail faſtened in a ſure place. Our Lord's reſurrection is his church's conſolation.

8 And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due time.

As Chriſt was ſeen of St. Paul laſt of all the apoſtles, ſo it is probable he was ſeen laſt by him of all perſons: We read not of any that ſaw Chriſt after St. Stephen and St. Paul, who here reckons himſelf among thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of the riſen Jeſus: *Laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo.* *Note*, farther, The great humility of St. Paul, in ſtyling himſelf an untimely birth, or a perſon *born out of due time.* But in what ſenſe doth he mean that he was born out of due time? *Anſ.* (1.) Negatively; not that he was as to ſpiritual birth born too ſoon, but rather too late. Alas! he had been too long a proud Phariſee, a formal profeſſor, a fiery perſecutor. In this ſenſe, he was no abortive, or born out of due time, but rather born too late than too ſoon. But poſitively he calls himſelf an abortive, or untimely birth, (1.) Becauſe he was the laſt of the apoſtles that was called; the reſt were called by Chriſt whilſt here on earth. Paul was called by Chriſt from heaven after his departure from earth to heaven. (2.) Becauſe of the ſuddenneſs and violence of his converſion. An abortion is occaſioned by ſome ſudden ſurprize, ſome ſtrain, or violent motion. St. Paul's converſion was a wonderful, violent converſion, out of the ordinary way and courſe; he was ſmitten from his horſe to the ground, and lay as one dead in his paſſage to his new life. (3.) Becauſe abortive children are leſſer, weaker, and more imperfect children than thoſe of full growth. As an abortive child is the leaſt of children, ſo he reckons himſelf the leaſt of the apoſtles, and ſtiles himſelf ſo in the next verſe, where he thus ſpeaks:

9 For I am the leaſt of the apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was beſtowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore, whether *it were* I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed.

Note here, 1. The profound humility of this great apoſtle, and how low he was in his own thoughts, he calls himſelf *the leaſt of the apoſtles*; nay, *not meet* or worthy to be called an apoſtle, becauſe he had perſecuted the church of Chriſt with ſo much fury and fierceneſs. Elſewhere he ſtyles himſelf, *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*: Not that any thing can be leſs than the leaſt; but the original being a double diminutive, his meaning is, that he was as little as could be. O admirable humility! the more we know of God and ourſelves, the more humble apprehenſions we ſhall have of ourſelves; a good man's thoughts are always loweſt of himſelf; the more holineſs any man has, the more humility he has. Humility is a great evidence of our holineſs, it being indeed a great part of our holineſs. 2. How the apoſtle aſcribes all that he was, wherein he differed from others, to the grace of God: *By the grace of God I am* *what I am.* As we receive our natural being from the power of God, ſo we derive our ſpiritual being from the grace of God; if I forbear what is evil, it is from reſtraining grace; if I follow what is ſpiritually good, it is from ſanctifying grace: Therefore, *not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy grace be the praiſe.* Note, 3. The bleſſed fruit which the grace of God produced in St. Paul; it cauſed him to labour, (grace is an active principle) to labour abundantly, to labour more abundantly than all the apoſtles; not more than all of them put together, but more than any one of them that were his fellow apoſtles, ſeparately conſidered. Such as receive moſt grace and favour from God, are holily ambitious to do the utmoſt ſervices for God. 4. Leſt he ſhould ſeem to be too aſſuming, and to arrogate any thing to himſelf, he adds, *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* Behold how the apoſtle aſcribes the fruit of all his endeavours to the grace of God, to the influences and aſſiſtances of the holy Spirit of grace, exciting him, aſſiſting him, working in him and with him, and ſucceeding of him in all his enterprizes and undertakings, for the glory of God, and the good of ſouls: *I laboured, yet not I,* but divine grace that went along with me. 5. The inference which the apoſtle draws from the whole: *Therefore, whether it were I, or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed*; that is, whether it were I, or any other of the apoſtles, who laboured moſt in the preaching of the goſpel, the doctrine is the ſame, namely, That Chriſt died for our ſins, roſe again, and will raiſe us. This is the doctrine which we apoſtles preached, and which you Corinthians believed and received; therefore why ſhould any of you now ſtagger in the faith, and diſbelieve the reſurrection of the body, which is a blow made at the root of Chriſtianity? Alas! what have we to carry our ſpirits through all the rugged paſſages and croſs diſpenſations of this life, but only *our hopes in reverſion, only our hopes of a glorious reſurrection, and bleſſed immortality?*

12 ¶ Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you that there is no reſurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen. 14 And if Chriſt be not riſen, then *is* our preaching vain and your faith *is* alſo vain. 15 Yea, and we are found falſe witneſſes of God; becauſe we have teſtified of God that he raiſed up Chriſt; whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not. 16 For if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed. 17 And if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your ſins. 18 Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.

Our apoſtle having aſſerted and proved the reſurrection of Chriſt by ocular demonſtration, by a plentiful teſtimony of thoſe who ſaw him after he was riſen; and withal informed them, that this was the doctrine of the goſpel which both he and the reſt of the apoſtles had with one conſent preached to them, he from hence infers the certainty and neceſſity of our reſurrection. And becauſe ſome in the church of Corinth were tainted with the wicked opinion of the Sadducees, who ſaid there was no reſurrection; therefore to ſtrangle this monſtrous opinion amongſt the Corinthians in the birth, he ſhews the abſurdity of it in theſe verſes before us. His firſt argument runs thus: If there be no reſurrection of the dead, then Chriſt the Head is not riſen; for if the Head be riſen, he will certainly raiſe up his members. Chriſt's reſurrection is the cauſe, the pattern and archetype of ours: He did not only raiſe his body from the grave, but his church with him: For indeed Chriſt is not perfectly riſen, till all his members are riſen with him, and raiſed like him. True it is, that Chriſt's perſonal reſurrection was perfect when he aroſe; and it is as true, that all believers ariſe repreſentatively when Chriſt aroſe: But till all believers aroſe perſonally, the reſurrection of Chriſt has not received its utmoſt perfection. His next work is, to prove the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, from the manifold abſurdities, which would follow upon the denial of it; as, namely, (1.) If Chriſt be not riſen, then the apoſtles' preaching was vain, and their belief of it was vain alſo. *Our preaching is vain*; that is, we who in our preaching have ſo ſtrongly aſſerted Chriſt's reſurrection, as an infallible argument of the divinity of his perſon and doctrine, have taught you a vain and idle dream. *And your faith in Chriſt*, as riſen from the dead, is no better than a fancy: *vain alſo*; ſeeing the object of it faileth, Chriſt as riſen from the dead. (2.) If Chriſt be not riſen, then *we are found falſe witneſſes of God*; that is, then St. Paul himſelf, and the other apoſtles, had given a falſe teſtimony of God to the world, in affirming that God the Father had raiſed up Chriſt the Son from the dead; which he did not do, if there be no reſurrection of the dead. To be falſe witneſſes for men, is a ſin of no common guilt; but to bely God, and be falſe witneſſes for God, is a ſin of an aggravated guilt, which the holy apoſtles could not be ſuppoſed to be guilty of. Again, (3.) If Chriſt be not raiſed from the dead, *then we are yet in our ſins*; that is, under the guilt of our ſins, and liable to condemnation for our ſins: we are not juſtified and abſolved from them, unleſs Chriſt has expiated the guilt of them; and this he has not done, if he be not riſen, but remains himſelf under the power of death; for he was raiſed again for our juſtification. Farther, (4.) If Chriſt be not riſen, then *they which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed*; that is, the dead ſaints in general, and the holy martyrs and ſufferers for Chriſt in particular, *who are fallen aſleep, are periſhed* utterly, and loſt finally, if there be no reſurrection; martyrs will then be great loſers, and martyrdom great folly. Laſtly, Then Chriſtians *are of all men moſt miſerable.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, As thoſe martyrs were errant fools, and periſhed as ſuch, who laid down their lives for Chriſt, if they have no hopes of a reſurrection, when they ſhall take them up again; ſo we Chriſtians that ſurvive, are the wretchedeſt creatures upon earth, who undergo all the ſufferings and hardſhips of this life, and deny ourſelves many comforts and advantages which we might enjoy. If after this mortal life we have no hope, who would care to do well, or who would fear to do ill? Were this believed, none would live ſo fleſhly and ſenſual a life as thoſe that do not believe the reſurrection of the fleſh; and none would be ſo miſerable in this life, as the holy ſelf-denying Chriſtian, had he not an hope after death of a glorious reſurrection. *Learn* hence, That true Chriſtians would be more unhappy than any other men, if their happineſs were confined to this life only: *We are of all men moſt miſerable.* We Chriſtians are more miſerable than other mortals; and we apoſtles and miniſters more miſerable than other Chriſtians, who, like beacons upon the tops of mountains, ſtand open continually to all ſtorms and tempeſts raiſed againſt us by men and devils.

20 But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, *and* become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.

Note here, (1.) The reſurrection of Chriſt declared; *Now is Chriſt riſen from the dead.* (2.) Our reſurrection from his, inferred and inſured; he aroſe *as the firſt fruits of them that ſlept.* The term of firſt-fruits is metaphorical, alluding to the oblation of the firſt-fruits in the Levitical law, Lev. xxiii. 9. Theſe were offered, both as an acknowledgment that the whole crop was God's, and as a pledge and aſſurance of their enjoying the whole crop from God, and as a mean by which the whole crop was conſecrated and ſanctified to their uſe. As ſure as the whole harveſt follows the firſt-fruits, ſo ſhall the ſaints reſurrection follow the reſurrection of Chriſt, as an effect follows its proper cauſe: For Chriſt's reſurrection is the meritorious cauſe, the efficient cauſe, and the exemplary cauſe of our reſurrection; and as it is the cauſe, ſo is it the pledge, the earneſt, and the full aſſurance of ours. 3. Chriſt is called the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept; that is, the firſt-fruits from the dead of them that ſlept; not as if Chriſt were abſolutely the firſt that was raiſed from the dead, for we read of one raiſed by Elijah, and another by Eliſha, and of Lazarus raiſed by Chriſt: But theſe were ſo raiſed as to die again; they were not raiſed to a life of immortality: But now Chriſt was the firſt that aroſe never to die more; the firſt that aroſe by his own power, the firſt that aroſe to give others a pledge and aſſurance of their riſing after him, and of their riſing like unto him: Chriſt's reſurrection is the cauſe, the pattern, the pledge, the aſſurance of the believers' reſurrection.

21 ¶ For ſince by man *came* death, by man *came* alſo the reſurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

Here *note*, That our apoſtle, to prove Chriſt's reſurrection to be the cauſe of our reſurrection, makes a compariſon betwixt Adam and Chriſt, whom he repreſents as two originals and fountains, the one of death, the other of life: As by Adam's ſin all that are partakers of his human nature die a natural death; ſo all that are partakers of Chriſt's divine nature, all that are his ſpiritual ſeed and offſpring, ſhall be raiſed and made alive by him; for the expreſſions, *in Adam*, and *in Chriſt*, do denote a cauſality in both, the one of *death*, the other of *life*; as the death of all mankind came by Adam, ſo the reſurrection of all mankind comes by Chriſt; the wicked ſhall be raiſed by him *officio judicis*, by the power of Chriſt as their Lord and Judge; the righteous ſhall be raiſed *beneficio mediatoris*, by virtue of their union with him as their Head.

23 But every man in his own order: Chriſt the firſt-fruits, afterward they that are Chriſt's at his coming. 24 Then *cometh* the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he muſt reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Here our apoſtle anſwers an objection. Some might ſay, If Chriſt's reſurrection be the cauſe of the believer's reſurrection, then why did not all believers riſe when he aroſe? The Head being riſen, why did not all the members riſe with him? He *anſwers*, No; God had appointed an order which muſt be obſerved; and this order was, that Chriſt ſhould be the firſt-fruits of the harveſt; that he ſhould riſe firſt from the dead, and then they that are Chriſt's at his coming to judgment ſhall riſe after him. And *then cometh the end*; that is, the end of the world, when Chriſt *will deliver up his kingdom to God the Father.* What kingdom? his mediatorial kingdom, which, as Mediator, he received from his Father; not his natural and eſſential kingdom, which, as God, he had with his Father from eternity; this ſhall never be delivered up, for of *this his* kingdom there ſhall be no end; but at the end of the world, Chriſt having ſubdued all his and his church's enemies, and put down all rule, authority, and power, both in the world and in the church, he ſhall deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to his Father, and reign no longer as Mediator, and as deputed by his Father; but he ſhall ſtill reign, eternally reign, as God equal with the Father: For his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion endureth to eternal ages. Here *note*, That when our apoſtle is ſetting forth the order in which the ſaints ſhall ariſe, he ſays nothing of a firſt and ſecond reſurrection, nothing of a firſt and ſecond coming of Chriſt to judgment; one to reign on earth a thouſand years, and a ſecond to judge all the world. Mention is here made of a general reſurrection, when all the ſaints ſhall be raiſed together, but not a word of ſome being raiſed before the reſt to reign with Chriſt a thouſand years.

26 The laſt enemy *that* ſhall be deſtroyed is death.

Note here, 1. What ſin has ſubjected the human nature to, and that is death; ſin brought mortality into our natures, and the wages of ſin is death. 2. That death is an enemy to humanity, an enemy to the whole race of mankind, both to body and ſoul, to the righteous and wicked; to the body, by turning *that* which is the glory of the creation, in a moment, into rottenneſs and putrefaction; to the ſoul, by occaſioning its ſeparation from the body, towards which it has ſo ſtrong and affectionate an inclination and deſire, as its old companion. Death is alſo an enemy to the righteous, as it blunts the edge of his deſires after heaven, and abates that joy which he ſhould have in the believing thoughts and apprehenſions of heaven; and it is an enemy to the wicked, as it is a paſſage to everlaſting miſery, by their falling immediately into the hands of the living God, from whoſe mouth they receive a final ſentence to depart accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. 3. That this enemy is the laſt enemy: It is ſo to the children of God; when they have overcome death, they have overcome all their enemies at once, and eſpecially their worſt enemy, ſin, which they could never overcome before fully. Bleſſed be God, though death came into the world by ſin, yet ſin ſhall go out of the world by death. *Note* 4. This laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, by loſing its ſting that it cannot annoy, by loſing its terror that it cannot amaze, by loſing its power that it cannot deſtroy; and by loſing its very being, it ſhall be finally aboliſhed and deſtroyed by a reſurrection from the dead. *Note* 5. The deſtroyer of death, this laſt enemy, is Chriſt, Hoſea xiii. 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death.* Chriſt has conquered death meritoriouſly by his ſatisfaction, victoriouſly by his reſurrection. 6. The ſcope and drift of the apoſtle's argument in this aſſertion, and that is, to prove the neceſſity of his reſurrection; the argument lies thus, Chriſt muſt reign till all his enemies are deſtroyed, but death is one of theſe enemies, the laſt of them which keeps the believer's body from union with his ſoul, and from communion with Chriſt, therefore death muſt be deſtroyed; and there is no other way to deſtroy death but by a reſurrection from the dead, which is the truth our apoſtle ſtrongly proves through this chapter.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he ſaith all things are put under *him, it is* manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Our apoſtle here proceeds in the argument which he begun at the 24th and 25th verſes, that Chriſt muſt continue as Mediator to reign till all things are ſubject to him, and all enemies ſubdued by him: This the apoſtle here proves, becauſe God the Father has put all things, and all perſons, under his Son's feet, as Mediator, himſelf only excepted; God the Father having reſerved to himſelf his own ſovereign empire, and ſupreme authority; he being excepted from this ſubjection himſelf, who gave it to his Son. And when all things ſhall be thus ſubdued to Chriſt, then his mediatorial kingdom ſhall be delivered up to his Father from whom he did receive it; yea, the Son himſelf, as Mediator and Head of the church, ſhall be ſubject to the Deity, that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, may be all in all, by a full communication to, and intimate union with the ſaints. *Learn* hence, 1. That the mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt was given to him by God the Father, as a reward for his ſufferings, Phil. ii. 8, 9. *He became obedient to the death, wherefore God hath highly exalted him.* 2. That this mediatorial kingdom was given to Chriſt only according to his human nature; ſeeing the human nature only ſuffered, and the divine nature is capable of no ſuch exaltation or new dominion, he was thus exalted, *Becauſe he was the Son of man,* John v. 27. *Learn,* 3. That during the continuance of the mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt, the Father judges no man, but commits all judgment unto his Son, giving him full power and authority to puniſh and reward according to his own wiſdom, will, and pleaſure; and, as Lord of all, he gives laws to all. 4. That this mediatorial kingdom, Chriſt ſhall certainly lay down; when all things are ſubdued unto him, the exerciſe of his kingly power ſhall ceaſe then; and as Chriſt is now all in all with relation to his church, the Godhead then will be all in all; and Chriſt himſelf, *as man,* will be ſubject to his Father, as well as ſaints and angels are ſubject to him. From thoſe words, *God ſhall be all in all,* we *learn,* That all the ſaints ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied in heaven, with the fruition of the Deity alone; there is enough to God alone eternally to fill and ſatisfy all the bleſſed ſouls in heaven, without the addition of any creature comfort. God is compleat ſatisfaction to his children in the abſence (I muſt not ſay want) of all other enjoyments; we ſhall want none of them at our journey's end, for there God will be all in all; as in heaven we ſhall ſee God, ſo we ſhall there eye nothing but God.

29 Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

Expoſitors do vary exceedingly in the ſenſe and interpretation of this difficult text; ſome underſtand it of a ſacramental, ſome of a funeral, and ſome of a metaphorical baptiſm or waſhing. Thoſe who underſtand it of a ſacramental baptizing, ſay, That the *baptized for the dead,* are thoſe who are baptizeed upon the article of the reſurrection of the dead, and conſequently in hope of the reſurrection: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, As for thoſe among you in the church of Corinth, who are baptized perſons, and yet deny the reſurrection of the dead, I would demand of them why they have in their baptiſm made a profeſſion of believing the article of the reſurrection? Why were they baptized in this faith, if they now renounce it? To be a baptized Chriſtian, and yet deny the reſurrection, is a flat and plain contradiction. Others underſtand it of a funeral waſhing of the dead corpſe, in order to burial; and they ſay this was done in the belief and expectation of the dead body's riſing again. As if he had ſaid, If the dead corpſe ſhall never riſe more, to what purpoſe do you waſh them? Do men give reſpect where there is no hope? Others will have a metaphorical and allegorical baptiſm here intended, namely, afflictions, perſecutions, and martyrdom: As if he had ſaid, If there be no reſurrection of the dead, what benefit will accrue to thoſe that ſuffer perſecution, and death itſelf, for profeſſing and defending the reſurrection of ſome that are dead, namely, Chriſt Jeſus, whoſe reſurrection is paſt; and of the ſaints, whoſe reſurrection is to come? Some, laſt of all, render the words thus: Moreover, what ſhall they do that are baptized, for the ſake of the dead? If the dead are not raiſed at all, why are they therefore baptized for the ſake of the dead? As if the apoſtle had ſaid, What ſhall they do which are baptized for the ſake of the holy ſaints and martyrs deceaſed? Is it not by reaſon of them, that they take up the profeſſion of Chriſtianity? Yes ſurely; the ſight of the holineſs of their lives, and of their courage and conſtancy at their deaths, has ſtirred up many to eſpouſe the ſame holy religion, and to admit themſelves into it, by the ſacrament of baptiſm. The death of an eminent ſaint made a great number of diſciples in thoſe days, and the blood of an holy martyr baptized whole cities: Now, to what purpoſe is all this, *If the dead riſe not at all.*

30 And why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I proteſt by your rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I die daily.

Our apoſtle is ſtill arguing for the belief of the reſurrection of the dead, and ſeems to ſpeak here after this manner: What folly would it be in us Chriſtians, to chuſe a religion that expoſes us continually to death and danger? Why ſhould we run the hazard of the loſs of eſtate, liberty, and life itſelf, if there be no reſurrection in order to a retribution, when our courage and conſtancy for Chriſt and his holy religion ſhall be acknowledged and rewarded? *Why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour?* Intimating, that it would be the greateſt folly and madneſs, to ſuffer the worſt of evils, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, if all our hopes periſh in the grave. He adds farther That as to himſelf, *he died daily*; that is, was continually expoſed to death, in danger of it, in expectation of it, and in a preparation for it; which he would never have been, if he had not an expectation of a glorious reſurrection, when all his ſufferings and ſervices ſhould be rewarded. And to confirm the truth of what he ſaid, he binds it with a ſolemn proteſtation, *I proteſt by your rejoicing, which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I die daily*; that is, either I proteſt by all that joy which I have in your converſion to Chriſtianity, and by all that rejoicing which is found with me for the ſucceſs of my miniſtry among you; or elſe I proteſt by all that rejoicing which I have in common with you and all Chriſtians under the heavieſt ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, that I live continually a dying life, perpetually in expectation of death, and preparation for it.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.

The apoſtle had mentioned his ſufferings in general in the former verſes, to teſtify his belief and hope of a future reſurrection. Here he relates one particular kind and manner of ſuffering; namely, his *fighting with beaſts at Epheſus:* To what purpoſe had he that mighty ſtruggle there, and ran ſuch a hazard of his life as that was, if he had no hope of a better life after this, no expectation of a bleſſed reſurrection? *If I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus*, &c. A twofold interpretation is given of theſe words: Some underſtand them literally and properly, that he did really combat with wild beaſts; it being uſual in thoſe times of perſecution, under Heatheniſh powers, to caſt Chriſtians to wild beaſts: The common cry then was, *Chriſtianos ad leones*; Away with the chriſtians to the lions. But ſome object againſt this interpretation, That the apoſtle being a freeman of Rome, had no ſuch indignity offered to him; that in the acts of the apoſtles, St. Luke gives no relation of it; and that the apoſtle himſelf, in the catalogue he gives of his ſufferings, 2 Cor. xi. makes no mention of it, unleſs it be comprehended under thoſe general words, *In deaths often.* Others therefore underſtand the words in a metaphorical ſenſe, *I have fought with beaſts*; that is, with ſavage men, with men like beaſts in their manners and conditions. And thus ſome refer this conflict to Acts xix. where we read of his conteſt with Demetrius, and the ſilverſmiths, about Diana's temple at Epheſus. Others refer it to Acts xiv. when he was ſtoned at Lyſtra, and left for dead. But whether we underſtand it literally or figuratively, the force of the argument lies thus: If I have undergone ſuch deaths and dangers at Epheſus as I have done, and expoſed my life to the utmoſt hazard, in hopes of an happy reſurrection, what profit is all this to me, if there be no reſurrection? what got I by ſuch hazards and hardſhips, if there be no life to come? Nay, if matters be ſo, it is more reaſonable to ſay, *Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.* Verily then, ſenſual fools are the wiſeſt men; and they have the beſt of it, that gratify their appetites and brutiſh deſires, expecting they ſhall ſhortly die, and there will be an end of them. *Learn* hence, 1. That faith in the reſurrection to a future life, encourages us againſt all the troubles and afflictions of this preſent life; the hope of future good, is a powerful ſupport under the preſſure and burden of preſent evil. 2. That upon ſuppoſition that there is no happineſs beyond the grave, a life of ſenſual pleaſure is not abſurd: The epicure's ſong (*Ede, bibe, lude, poſt mortem nulla voluptas*; *Eat, drink, and play, while it is day, for after death no man ſhall breathe*) ſeems not unreaſonable.

33 Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. 34 Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not. For ſome have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak this to your ſhame.

Here the apoſtle adviſes them to take heed of being corrupted in their manners by ſuch wicked principles as epicures would be ready to inſtil into them. Ill words draw perſons on to ill deeds; therefore, ſays he, look to your communication and diſcourſe, take heed of debauching your morals by evil communications; and he backs this exhortation with a forcible motive, becauſe that ſuch ſenſual principles and lewd opinions ſhew that men's conſciences and reaſon are in a deep ſleep, and that a ſottiſh ſtupidity has benumbed them: So much is implied in the next words, *Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not.* Here *note*, 1. That ſin is frequently in ſcripture compared to ſleep, and very fitly, becauſe ſinners apprehend things no better than men aſleep; all their apprehenſions of God and Chriſt, of heaven and hell, of eternity and a life to come, are ſlight and hovering notions, wild and uncertain gueſſes; and the moſt ſubſtantial realities are with them but mere fancies. Again, he that is aſleep, is void of all care and fear, full of forgetfulneſs, unapprehenſive of dangers; ſuch is the ſinner, whilſt he continues aſleep in ſin, ſecure but not ſafe. 2. That repentance is the ſoul's awaking out of the ſleep of ſin: The ſoul rouſes up, apprehends, and conſiders its danger, whilſt there is a poſſibility to eſcape it, and accordingly, by repentance, flies from the wrath to come. 3. That it is not enough that we awake from ſin, but we muſt awake to righteouſneſs; we muſt not only eſchew evil, but do good; for a negative holineſs ſaves none; the poſitive fruits of holineſs towards God, and righteouſneſs towards our neighbour, muſt be brought forth by us, and the duties of both tables be obſerved of us;

this will be an argument of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion: The want of this, the apoſtle tells the Corinthians here, argued them not to have the true knowledge of God, which was really matter of ſhame to them, conſidering the means and advantages enjoyed by them: *Some have not the knowledge of God, I ſpeak this to your ſhame.*

35 ¶ But ſome man will ſay, How are the dead raiſed up; and with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except it die. 37 And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may chance, of wheat, or ſome other *grain.* 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him, and to every ſeed his own body.

Our apoſtle having fully proved the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, in the foregoing part of the chapter, comes next to anſwer the objections that might be made againſt the body's reſurrection. And, firſt, That it ſeems impoſſible that the dead ſhould riſe: To this he anſwers, That it is as poſſible for the dead to riſe, as it is for corn ſown in the earth to be quickened after it dies in the earth; corn ſown rots and dies, yet doth not periſh by dying, but riſes up green and freſh. Thus, the body ſown in the grave is not loſt; though the parts of the body by death are diſſolved, yet they are not annihilated; they are ſcattered, but they are not periſhed: They loſe not their entity, when they part with their relation to humanity; whatſoever we loſe at death, is not loſt to God; his knowledge is infinite, and his power unlimited; it is as eaſy for God to raiſe our bodies out of the duſt, as to make them at firſt out of nothing: Therefore, Chriſt told the Phariſees, who denied the reſurrection, That they *erred, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God,* Matt. xxii. 29. The next objection againſt the body's reſurrection, is this: Who, ſay the objectors, can deſcribe with what bodies the dead ſhall ariſe? Our apoſtle's anſwer is to this effect, That our bodies ſhall ariſe the ſame in ſubſtance, though not in qualities; as corn ſown is raiſed in ſubſtance and kind the ſame, but divers in qualities, coming up with blade and ear, and corn in it, it does not riſe in the ſame figure in which it was ſown, but it ariſes in the ſame nature in which it was ſown: That which was ſown wheat, ariſes wheat. Thus our bodies ſown in the grave, ſhall ariſe ſubſtantially the ſame, but different in qualities. Here *note,* That thoſe who did not believe the reſurrection of the body, judged it not only an impoſſible thing, but an unworthy thing, for God to raiſe the dead; they looked upon the body as the ſepulchre and priſon of the ſoul, and accounted it the ſoul's chiefeſt happineſs to be delivered from the body, eſteeming it a real puniſhment to the ſoul to be again reunited to ſo great a clog as the body is. Therefore to this objection the apoſtle returns a ſatisfactory anſwer, by ſhewing the happy change which ſhall paſs upon the raiſed body; declaring, That though it ſhall ariſe the ſame body in ſubſtance, yet vaſtly different in qualities; of a mortal body ſown, it ſhall riſe a ſpiritual body; of a vile body, be made a glorious body.

33 All fleſh *is* not the ſame fleſh: but *there is* one *kind of* fleſh of men, another fleſh of beaſts, another of fiſhes, *and* another of birds. 40 *There are* alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtial: but the glory of the celeſtial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terreſtial *is* another. 41 There is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars; for *one* ſtar differeth from *another* ſtar in glory. 42 So alſo *is* the reſurrection of the dead. —

St. Paul here proceeds farther to anſwer the queſtion which the philoſophers at Corinth put, namely, With what bodies do perſons come forth out of the grave? He tells them, they ſhall be vaſtly different in qualities from what they are at preſent; and this he illuſtrates by a ſimilitude. As, ſays he, there is a difference in bodies here below, ſome more excellent, as the fleſh of men, others leſs excellent, as the fleſh of beaſts and birds, and as there is a difference between celeſtial and terreſtial bodies, yea, a difference between celeſtial bodies among themſelves, one excelling another in glory, as the ſun excels the moon, and one ſtar excels another; ſo will it be in the reſurrection, the bodies that riſe will vaſtly differ from thoſe that died. Here *note,* That all this is to be underſtood of the reſurrection of the righteous, ſince it is their bodies alone that ſhall undergo this happy change, which in the next words the apoſtle deſcribes.

— It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption: 43 It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: It is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power: 44 It is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body. —

Here the apoſtle gives a fourfold inſtance of the body's differing qualities in the reſurrection, *It is ſown in corruption,* that is, it is here a frail, mortal body, ſubject to putrefaction, but when raiſed, ſhall be *incorruptible,* that is, never more ſubject to death or diſſolution. It is here a vile body, ſubject to deformity and diſhonour, and when ſown or laid in the grave, is loathſome and unlovely; but ſhall be *raiſed in glory,* a bright and beautiful body, ſhining like the ſun in the firmament of the heavens. It is thought we ſhall riſe in full and perfect age, in full ſtrength, activity, and vigour; and whereas our bodies now move heavily, they ſhall then aſcend and deſcend like angels. Again, *It is ſown in weakneſs;* that is, it is ſubject to weakneſs by labour, to decays by age, to impotency and waſtings by diſeaſes; and when it dies, it appears an impotent piece of clay. But it ſhall be *raiſed in power* by God's power; it ſhall be raiſed a powerful body; no more impotent, weak, or feeble; but ſtrong and active, vigorous and nimble; never ſubject more either to wearineſs or weakneſs. Laſtly, *It is ſown a natural body,* an animal body, a body ſuited to this lower ſenſible ſtate, in which we live at preſent; and when it dies, it is ſown in the grave, like the body of a beaſt. But it ſhall be *raiſed a ſpiritual body. Mark,* He doth not ſay it ſhall be changed into a ſpirit, but into a ſpiritual body; a body it ſhall remain ſtill, but ſpiritualized. It is probable that our bodies will then be ærial and thin and light, more ſuited to the nature of the ſoul, as active as fire, as fine and thin as the air. More particularly, *note* here, That the raiſed body will be a ſpiritual body in a threefold reſpect. (1.) As it ſhall always be ſubject and ſerviceable to the ſpirit. Here the ſoul is ſubject to the body: the ſoul muſt go the body's pace; but at the reſurrection the body ſhall be everlaſtingly ſubject to the ſoul or ſpirit, and for that reaſon is called a ſpiritual body. (2.) It may be called a ſpiritual body, in regard of the great ſtrength and activity with which the body ſhall be then endowed; ſpirits are ſtrong, and ſo is every thing that is ſpiritual. The devil is called a ſpiritual enemy, becauſe he is a powerful enemy. Thus our ſpiritual bodies will be ſtrong bodies; and ſtrong had they need to be, that they may be able to bear *that exceeding weight of glory*, as the apoſtle calls it, 2 Cor. iv. 17. which would cruſh our bodies under it, were they not made ſtrong to bear it. (3.) It is called ſpiritual, becauſe it will then need no natural help to ſupport it, as meat, drink, ſleep, and clothing. We ſhall want theſe no more than the angels want them, being immediately ſupported by the power of God, as they are. Thus it is ſown a natural body, but raiſed a ſpiritual body; not attenuated into a ſpirit, but ſtill a body; a real, but ſpiritual body. The body after the reſurrection ſhall be true fleſh, but ſpiritualized, rarified, and refined; it ſhall not loſe any perfections which it had, but gain many perfections which it had not. Hail, happy day, when ſoul and body ſhall be re-united, and the happineſs of both completed! How will the ſoul then bleſs God for that body which was here its inſtrument and aſſiſtant in the ſervice of God! And how will the body then bleſs God for ſuch a ſoul, which was ſo careful to ſecure an intereſt in that happineſs which it was created for, and made capable of! Then will full glory be poured into the ſoul; and when it is a ſecond time married to the body, it ſhall have a greater degree of glory than ever it had.

—There is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body. 45 And ſo it is written, The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam *was made* a quickening ſpirit. 46 Howbeit that *was* not firſt which was ſpiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is ſpiritual. 47 The firſt man *is* of the earth earthly: the ſecond man *is* the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthly, ſuch *are* they that are earthly: and as *is* the heavenly, ſuch *are* they alſo that are heavenly. 49 And as we have born the image of the earthly, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle draws a parallel between the *two* Adams, the firſt man and Chriſt; they were two roots and diſtinct fountains, from whence all life did ſpring and flow; all natural life from the firſt Adam, all ſpiritual life from Chriſt the ſecond Adam: *The firſt Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit.* 2. The apoſtle compares the animal life we live by the union of our ſouls and bodies, with the ſpiritual life we live by the union of our ſouls with Chriſt. In point of dignity and real excellency, the ſpiritual life is far before the natural; but in point of priority the natural life is before the ſpiritual: *Firſt that which is natural, and afterwards that which is ſpiritual.* 3. What the pedigree and original of man was and is: *He is of the earth earthly.* Earth is the original of man, the matter out of which his form was produced. Hence the earth is called *his earth*, Pſ. cxlvi. 4. *His breath goes forth, and he returneth to his earth.* 4. As believers have born in their bodies here on earth the image of the firſt Adam, ſo in the reſurrection their bodies ſhall bear the image of the heavenly Adam, that is, be changed into the likeneſs of Chriſt's glorious body. This is the higheſt degree of dignity and honour that an human body is capable of. Thoſe bodies which in their firſt formation were of duſt and clay, and which in their diſſolution are no better than a lump of corruption, when the grave delivers them back again, ſhall be ſhining and excellent fabrics, *bearing the image of Chriſt the heavenly Adam.* Then will the ſaints bodies be abſolutely and everlaſtingly freed from all natural infirmities, from all accidental deformities, from all wants and neceſſities; and ſhall never more be ſubject to death, that formidable adverſary of human nature. O bleſſed hour! when both ſoul and body ſhall live immediately upon God, and act freely and delightfully for God, and be for ever ſatisfied in the full fruition and final enjoyment of God.

50 Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

By fleſh and blood here, we are to underſtand our bodies in their preſent, natural, corruptible and mortal ſtate. Such fleſh and blood as ours is at preſent, unchanged and unclothed with its heavenly body, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; that is, it cannot poſſibly enter into heaven, and bear the weight of that glory which will there be put upon it. *Corruption*, or nature ſubject to corruption, *cannot inherit incorruption*; that is, our corruptible bodies cannot enter into an incorruptible heaven. *Note* here, Another argument produced by the apoſtle, to prove the neceſſity of the reſurrection, or of raiſing and new-moulding the body in a ſpiritual condition; becauſe our natural body, till it be made ſpiritual, cannot bear the preſence of God in heaven; it muſt be fitted for that glorious place and ſtate, before it be brought into it; by a change of qualities it muſt be ſpiritualized, purified and immortalized, or it can never bear that weight of glory which is prepared for the ſaints in that glorious kingdom.

51 ¶ Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump. For the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.

Here our apoſtle anſwers a third objection: Some might ſay, What ſhall become of thoſe who ſhall be found alive at Chriſt's coming? He anſwers, they ſhall not die or ſleep, but yet ſhall undergo a change as well as thoſe that riſe from the dead; theſe ſhall have fleſh and blood changed into ſpiritual bodies, as well as they, and of mortal be made immortal, and of corruptible be made incorruptible, and all this in a moment of time. Chriſt's powerful voice will be like a trumpet, calling men together, and the dead ſhall be raiſed and living ſaints changed into an incorruptible ſtate.

53 For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal *muſt* put on immortality.

Obſerve here, The identical expreſſions uſed by the apoſtle: He doth not ſay, corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and mortal muſt put on immortality, but *this* corruptible, and *this* mortal, to ſhew the identity and ſameneſs of it. I believe the reſurrection of *this* body, ſaid the primitive Chriſtians. Every man at the reſurrection ſhall receive the ſame body that now he hath, and be the ſame perſon that now he is. Though he be not in every conſideration what he was, yet ſhall be who he was. If the ſame body that falls be not raiſed, it is not a reſurrection, but a new creation. Indeed it is both unreaſonable and unjuſt, that a perſon ſhould ſin in one body and ſuffer in another; or ſerve God in one body and be glorified in another. Job was clear in the belief of this, chap. xix. 26, 27. *In my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, and mine eyes ſhall behold him. I ſhall ſee God*, this points out the reality of the reſurrection; *and with theſe eyes behold him*, this denotes the identity of the reſurrection, that the ſame body ſhall riſe again. The reſurrection is not a creation of new bodies, but only a reſtitution of the old ones.

54 So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy ſting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

Here *obſerve*, 1. The happy condition of believers in the glorious morning of the reſurrection, when their corruptible bodies ſhall be made by the power of Chriſt incorruptible and immortal: *Then ſhall death be ſwallowed up in victory*; that is, be overcome for ever, never to deſtroy or hurt any more, or to have the leaſt power over the body for ever. The conqueror of all fleſh is now fully conquered, and the ſpoiler of mankind finally ſpoiled. O death! thou wert once a victorious conqueror, an univerſal conqueror, ſlaying not thy thouſands and ten thouſands only, but beyond number; from the infant to the aged, from the dunghill to the throne, ſparing neither age nor ſex, neither great nor ſmall, neither ſacred nor profane: But the Captain of our ſalvation having entered into the grave, the territories of death, the king of terrors, has there encountered, diſarmed and deſtroyed this victorious conqueror; *death is ſwallowed up in victory*. Some read it, Death is ſwallowed down, death is drank up at a draught: Chriſt called his ſufferings, by which he obtained victory over death, *a cup*; and as death is drank up, ſo mortality is ſwallowed up, 2 Cor. v. 4. Bleſſed be God, beyond the grave there is neither death, nor any thing like death, neither death nor mortality. The one is aboliſhed, the other *ſwallowed up of life*. *Obſerve*, 2. How the apoſtle, in the name of all believers, triumphs, and holily inſults over death, the laſt conquered enemy. He laughs at it to the very face with a pious ſcorn and holy deriſion: *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?* As if a man having diſarmed his enemy, ſhould ſay, Now, Sir, where's your ſword? where's your piſtol? Thus the believer: O death, thou thoughteſt to pierce, to pain, to poiſon us with thy ſting; but *where is now thy ſting?* Thou thoughteſt thyſelf a conqueror, but behold thou art conquered. Where is now thy victory? Bleſſed be God for theſe ſongs of victory and triumph, which the Captain of our ſalvation has put into the mouths of all thoſe that fight under his exalted banner.

56 The ſting of death *is* ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin *is* the law.

Note here, 1. Death has its ſting. A ſting has a threefold property; to pierce, to pain, and to poiſon: All which were applicable unto death. 2. Death's ſting is ſin, or death has its ſting upon the account of ſin. Sin, like a ſting, pierces; it pierces us in its guilt, it pierced Chriſt in its puniſhment. The ſoul, which no weapon can reach, ſin can wound. As a ſting, it paineth as well as pierceth: Judas was ſo pained with it, that in the height of horror, he hanged himſelf, in hopes of eaſe. And as a ſting it poiſoneth; ſin is a deadly poiſon, pleaſant in the mouth, bitter in the belly, baneful in the end. So ſtrong a poiſon is ſin, that nothing could expel it but the blood of Chriſt. 3. Death comes to a believer without a ſting. Behold! Chriſt became obedient unto death, that he might unſting death. Death ſhot its ſting unto our Saviour's ſide, there left it, and there loſt it: It is not now unto any of his members an hurting, but an healing ſerpent; there is now no venom, no malignity in it. 4. That as ſin is the ſting of death, ſo the ſtrength of ſin is the law. Not as if the law did encourage a man to ſin, or ſtrengthen him in ſinning; for it prohibits ſin under the ſevereſt penalties, and condemns the ſinner to the pit of hell: But the law gives life, or adds ſtrength to ſin. (1.) By the curſe and obligation of it, binding the ſinner under the guilt of ſin to the judgment of the great day. Thus the law ſtrengthens ſin, by putting into it a condemning power. (2.) By the irritation of the law: Sin takes occaſion by the law, and by the commandment becomes exceeding ſinful; when luſt finds itſelf reſtrained, then like a river that is ſtopt, it riſes and foams, and rebels againſt the law of the mind, and fetches in all its force to reſcue itſelf from that ſword which heweth it in pieces. (3.) By the conviction and manifeſtation of the law, laying ſin open to the conſcience of the ſinner, and ſhewing him, that God is all eye, to ſee, and all fire, to conſume, every unclean thing. Thus the law gives ſin its ſtrength, and death its warrant, to arreſt and execute us. Ah, wretched and miſerable ſinner! upon whom, together with death, the weight of ſin and the curſe of the law fall together; which woundeth deep, and preſſeth low, even to the loweſt hell, unleſs thou canſt ſay truly, what the apoſtle doth triumphantly, in the next verſe:

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory —

Over ſin, death and the law.

—Through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

That is, through the death and reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* here, 1. An enemy encountered, death; death, armed by ſin, and ſtrenthened by the law. This is often a ſurpriſing enemy, an amazing enemy, a ſpoiling and deſtroying enemy, an inevitable and unavoidable enemy. 2. Victory over this enemy declared; the deſtruction of death, as to its terror and power: Death is overcome. But how? *Non ut ne ſit*, but *ut non obſit*; not that it ſhould not be, but that it ſhould not hurt. Death has loſt its ſting, that it cannot annoy; it has loſt its terror, that it cannot amaze; it has loſt its power, that it cannot deſtroy. 3. The victors or conquerors over this enemy, who are firſt Chriſt, and then all that are Chriſt's, all that harveſt of which Chriſt is the firſt fruits. 4. The triumph proclaimed, *Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory.* From the whole *learn*, That all believers are victorious over death, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They may triumph over death through Chriſt, becauſe he has diſarmed it by his death and ſatisfaction, he has deſtroyed it by his reſurrection; and Chriſt's victories become the believers', by participation and communion with him. As they communicate with him in the value of his ſatisfaction, ſo they communicate with him in the virtue of his reſurrection. Let us therefore triumph with the apoſtle, and ſay, *Thanks be to God*; with the prophet, *awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt.* Thus victory was won by Chriſt, it was worn by us; it was dear to Chriſt, it is cheap to us: We overcome, but it is by the blood of the Lamb. Let us therefore, living and dying, ſay, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Here our apoſtle concludes this chapter, and cloſes his diſcourſe on this great ſubject, the doctrine of the body's reſurrection, with an exhortation to duty. *Be ye ſtedfaſt*: that is, in the faith of the goſpel in general, and in the belief of this particular article of our Chriſtian faith, the reſurrection of the dead. *Unmoveable*; that is, be not moved by any temptations or tribulations, either from the faith and hope of the goſpel, or from obedience to the goſpel. Let not fear of the croſs of Chriſt make you weary of the yoke of Chriſt: *Always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Here *note*, That the more ſteady and ſtedfaſt any man is in the belief of a bleſſed reſurrection, the more forward and zealous, the more active and induſtrious will he be in the ſervice of the work of God. *Foraſmuch as your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*: that is, your painfulneſs in the ſervice of God ſhall be plentifully recompenſed by him at the reſurrection of the juſt. Where *note*, 1. The nature and quality of the ſervice or work of God declared; it is a *labour*; the vaſt circumference of a Chriſtian's duty makes it ſo; the curious and exact manner in and after which every duty muſt be performed makes it ſo: But the greater their labour is on earth, the ſweeter will their reſt be in heaven. 2. The reward that ſweetens this labour; *It ſhall not be in vain*, there is the tranſcendency of the reward: *Foraſmuch as ye know*, there is the certainty of it. The Chriſtian's ſervices for Chriſt ſhall be certainly and tranſcendently rewarded by Chriſt in another world. His labour is finite, his reward is infinite. There is no more proportion between a Chriſtian's labour and reward, than betwixt time and eternity. O infinite glory, the reward of our poor labour!

CHAP. XVI.

Our apoſtle in this concluding chapter of his excellent epiſtle, gives the Corinthians *ſeveral uſeful directions for their performance of ſome needful duties; and then ſhuts up the whole with particular ſalutations to them.*

NOW concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye. 2 Upon the firſt *day* of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as *God* hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomſoever ye ſhall approve by *your* letters, them will I ſend to bring your liberality unto Jeruſalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go alſo, they ſhall go with me.

The firſt duty which the apoſtle here directs the Corinthians to, is the making a collection for the poor; and particularly, for them at Jeruſalem, who were now in great ſtraits, by reaſon of a famine which was then and there amongſt them, as ſome expoſitors affirm. He adviſes, that on the Lord's day, every one ſhould lay ſomething by, as God had proſpered him, that there might be no need of farther collections when he came: And that the charity might be diſtributed according to their pious intentions, he tells them, they ſhall ſend it by meſſengers of their own; and that if they judged it meet and needful, he would accompany the bearers of their charity, and aſſiſt in the diſtribution of it. Here *note*, 1. The great duty which the apoſtle directs unto, *care of, and proviſion for*, the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem. To relieve the poor members of Chriſt, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffer for his name's ſake, is a neceſſary, yea, important duty. We evidence our love and affection to the Head, by our pity and compaſſion to the members. The charitable contributions of ſuch churches as are in and under better circumſtances, towards thoſe that are in worſe, eſpecially if in want, *is an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable and well pleaſing unto God*, Phil. iv. 18. *Note*, 2. The time when he adviſes them to make this charitable collection for the poor, *Upon the firſt day of the week*, which was the day of their public aſſemblies, the day upon which our Lord roſe again from the dead. Divines, both ancient and modern, do from hence argue for the change of the ſabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt day of the week: It is evident that this was the day on which the Chriſtian churches conſtantly aſſembled, to perform their religious worſhip, and read the ſcriptures, to preach the word, and celebrate the Lord's ſupper; and it was called by them the Lord's day. Upon this day the apoſtle orders the collections to be made for the poor; and all chriſtians, in compliance with this precept, did offer their alms upon that day. *Learn* hence, That works of charity and mercy, though needful and acceptable every day, yet are the proper duties of the Lord's day, that being a day ſeparated and ſet apart for ſacred works, of which charity is a ſpecial part. Add to this, that the day itſelf doth contain a ſpecial motive in it to excite and enlarge our charity, it being the day in which we were begotten to a lively hope, through the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, of an inheritance incorruptible, and the day upon which we partake of our Lord's precious body and blood. We having therefore received ſpiritual things ſo plentifully from Chriſt, ought to be the more ready to impart of our temporal things to diſtreſſed chriſtians. 3. The apoſtle bidding every one to lay by ſomething of his ſtore for the relief of others, intimates to us, that God has given unto every one of us a ſpecial, proper, and perſonal right to what we do enjoy. To have all things common, would run all things into confuſion. The apoſtle directing the Corinthians here to conſtant uſe of their charity every Lord's day, in making collections for the poor, doth ſuppoſe that they had ſomething of their own to give. Almighty God doth keep up the eighth commandment in full force and ſtrength, as a fence and hedge about the worldly eſtates of men; and he that goes about to break this hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him. If there be no ſuch thing as property, how ſhall we exerciſe charity? 4. The rule which St. Paul directs the Corinthians to obſerve and follow in the diſtribution of their charity, namely, to lay by in proportion for others, as God had bleſſed and proſpered them. The good which we do, muſt be proportionable to what we receive. God will not accept of a little, when he has given us an ability to do much; we muſt always relieve the wants of others as we are able, and ſometimes above what we are able. Such as have ability ought to abound in all kinds of charity; they are to add charity to charity, one way of charity to another, and one work of charity to another; otherwiſe, though they may do a good work, yet they are not rich in good works; *Let every one lay by in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him.* 5. How deſirous the apoſtle was that the Corinthians ſhould receive all poſſible ſatisfaction in the prudent diſtribution of their collected charity. He propoſes to them to chuſe meſſengers of their own to carry their contributions; he proffers to give them letters of recommendation to the ſaints at Jeruſalem; nay, if need require, and they deſire it, he is ready to go himſelf upon this charitable errand. So ready are the miniſters of God, upon all occaſions, to contribute their utmoſt endeavours to promote the charitable relief of the poor members of Jeſus Chriſt.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I ſhall paſs through Macedonia. For I do paſs through Macedonia. 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whitherſoever I go. 7 For I will not ſee you now by the way; but I truſt to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Epheſus until Pentecoſt. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adverſaries.

Obſerve here, St. Paul acquaints them how he had laid his buſineſs, ordered his ſtay and ſtation where he was, and deſigned afterwards to come and winter with them, and not to ſee them in his paſſage only. From whence we *learn*, That a wiſe contrivance of our own buſineſs, of our courſe of labour, and of what we deſign to do, is very lawful, provided it be done with ſubmiſſion to the will of God. The apoſtle declares what he had in his intentions contrived, whither to go, where to ſtay, how long to continue; but adds, *If the Lord permit.* All was with ſubmiſſion to the wiſdom and will of God. Farther, he informs them of his preſent intention to ſtay at Epheſus till Pentecoſt, becauſe God had opened there unto him a great door for the propagation of the goſpel, and had abundantly bleſſed his labours to the good of many. But there were *many adverſaries* of the truth there, which made his ſtay longer at Epheſus both neceſſary and unavoidable. *Learn* thence, That the great ſucceſs of the goſpel is uſually attended with many adverſaries, and great oppoſition. The devil ſtirs up all the rage and fury he can againſt the profeſſors, but eſpecially the preachers of the goſpel: But where the devil is moſt angry, we may hope we have done moſt good; and that ought to encourage us to ſtay in our place, though our difficulties are many, and our diſcouragements great. *But I will tarry at Epheſus*, &c.

10 ¶ Now if Timotheus come, ſee that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I alſo *do.* 11 Let no man therefore deſpiſe him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

Note here, 1. Though Timothy was a young miniſter, and St. Paul an aged apoſtle, yet doth he beſpeak the church to pay reſpect unto him as to himſelf, he being a miniſter of the goſpel as well as himſelf, though far inferior to him in years and abilities. None of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt are ambitious to engroſs all reſpect from the people to themſelves, but content, yea, deſirous, that all their fellow-brethren ſhould ſhare with them therein; for all men pretend to a ſhare in reputation, and do not love to ſee it monopolized by a ſingle perſon; and every wiſe and good man rejoices when that reſpect is given to others, which is juſtly due and payable to their worth and merit. 2. How affectionately this aged apoſtle recommends Timothy to the church's tender care, as well as to the deſerved reſpect: *See that he may be without fear:* that is, without fear of diſturbance from the factions that were amongſt them at Corinth; ſee that he be not expoſed to any trouble or danger from any party whatſoever. *Let no man deſpiſe him*; either becauſe of his youth, or his bodily weakneſſes and infirmities, or for any other cauſe whatſoever. *But conduct him forth in peace*, bring him on his way towards me, and provide for the neceſſities of his journey. O! how happy is it when the miniſters of Chriſt are thus careful of, and ſolicitous for the welfare of each other, as St. Paul here was for Timothy!

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly deſired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time.

Here again *obſerve*, 1. How reſpectfully this great apoſtle ſpeaks of Apollos, an inferior miniſter in the church of Corinth, *Our brother Apollos.* Nothing better becomes the governors and paſtors of the church, than humility and condeſcenſion, ſincere love and affection, a due deference and regard towards thoſe who are under-labourers in our Lord's vineyard, to own and treat them as *brethren*, co-workers and fellow-helpers with them. God has not made his miniſters lions to tear one another, nor bulls to gore each other; but ſhepherds to watch over, and nurſes to cheriſh one another: *Our brother Apollos.* 2. How St. Paul, though a dignified perſon, a great apoſtle, left Apollos, an inferior miniſter of the goſpel, to judge for himſelf, whether he had beſt go to Corinth, or forbear: *I deſired him to come to you, but his will was not to come:* He did not ſuſpend him, or ſilence him for not obeying the voice of an apoſtle, but lets him take his choice. There may be, and ſometimes are, particular caſes and circumſtances relating to ourſelves and our people, (as about going from them, or continuing with them) which none can adjuſt and determine ſo well as ourſelves. Perhaps Apollos here had greater and ſtronger reaſons for his refuſing, than St. Paul had for his requeſting him to go to Corinth: However, the great apoſtle only deſired him to go; not cenſuring him for his denial, but leaving him to the determination of himſelf, whoſe *will was not at all to come to them at that time.* 3. What might probably be the reaſon why Apollos had no inclination to go to Corinth at this time, no, not at the ſolicitation of St. Paul himſelf: Perhaps it was becauſe he would not encourage or give the leaſt countenance to a faction which was not there begun under the authority of his name, 1 Cor. i. 12. Some ſaid, *I am of Apollos.* A pious and prudent miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt ſeeks not his own applauſe, or his people's admiration; but what he does is with a ſpecial reſpect to their edification in holineſs, for preſerving unity and promoting love among each other. Afterwards, when St. Paul had by his epiſtle allayed thoſe heats, and healed thoſe diviſions which prevailed amongſt them, we find Apollos did return to Corinth, and was no doubt very acceptable to them, and ſerviceable amongſt them.

13 ¶ Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong.

Three duties are here exhorted to, namely, watchfulneſs, ſteadfaſtneſs in the faith, and holy fortitude and courage. (1.) Watchfulneſs, a neceſſary and daily duty; we cannot be ſafe one moment without it; ſomething we muſt watch over, ſomething we muſt watch againſt, and ſomething we muſt watch for. We muſt watch over our thoughts, our words, our actions; we muſt watch againſt all ſin, all appearance of ſin, all temptations to ſin, all occaſions of ſinning; we muſt watch for all opportunities of glorifying God, all opportunities of doing good to others, all opportunities of receiving good from others. (2.) Steadfaſtneſs in the faith: Perſeverance in the faith of Chriſt, and ſteadfaſtneſs in his holy religion, is the great and indiſpenſible duty of every Chriſtian that has a due regard to his ſoul's ſalvation: *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith.* (3.) Chriſtian fortitude, and holy courage; *Quit yourſelves like men, be ſtrong:* Where we have the Chriſtian's ſpiritual enemies ſuppoſed and implied, ſin, Satan, and the world; and his duty declared, and himſelf encouraged to play the man, in oppoſing, or contending with, and ſtriving againſt them. Verily a Chriſtian, above all men, needs courage and reſolution; he can do nothing as a Chriſtian, but it is an act of valour; it requires much more courage to be a Chriſtian, than to be a captain. Alas! how many of the valiant ſword-men of the world have ſhewed themſelves mere cowards, who have come out of the field with victory, and banners diſplayed, but after all lived and died ſlaves at home, ſlaves to their baſe luſts! It requires more proweſs, more bravery and greatneſs of ſpirit to conquer ourſelves, than to command an army of men: Therefore, *quit ye like men, be ſtrong.*

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

Our apoſtle having in the beginning of this epiſtle reproved the Corinthians for their uncharitable ſchiſms and unchriſtian diviſions, he concludes his epiſtle with this excellent rule of advice, To do all things in love, one for, and one towards another. Where a true principle of Chriſtian charity prevails amongſt the members of a church, it will caſt out ſelfiſhneſs, pride, envy, and diviſion, and keep them from raſh cenſuring, deſpiſing, and abuſing one another, and alſo from ſeparating from the communion of each other. The ſum of all the commandments, both towards God, and towards our neighbour, is love; it is not praying, hearing, or receiving at the Lord's table, which is the fulfilling of the commandment, but when theſe duties are done in love; and we may do many things commanded towards men, yet if we do them not in love to men, we do nothing as the Lord commanded; therefore, *let all things be done with charity.*

15 I beſeech you, brethren: ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that it is the firſt-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints: 16 ¶ That ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that helpeth with *us* and laboureth.

Note here, 1. The honourable mention which St. Paul makes of Stephanas and his houſe; they were the firſt-fruits of Achaia; that is, the firſt there converted to Chriſtianity. It is a great honour to be in Chriſt before others: Happy they that come in at the call of Chriſt, even at the laſt hour; but thrice happy thoſe that come in at the firſt, who are the firſt ripe fruits unto God. 2. What good proof and evidence Stephanas gave of the ſincerity of his early converſion: *He addicted himſelf to the miniſtry of the ſaints*; that is, he was very forward to aſſiſt the poor ſaints with his eſtate and labour. There is no better evidence of our intereſt in Chriſt, than an entire affection, and operative compaſſion towards all our fellow-members in Chriſt for grace's ſake. 3. The great deference and regard, the ſpecial reſpect and honour which was due, and is here commanded to be paid, to Stephanas, for his miniſtering to the poor ſaints that were in want: *Submit yourſelves unto ſuch:* that is, give reverence and honour to them, and to all ſuch as are like unto them, who laboured with the apoſtle in the furthering of the goſpel.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have ſupplied. 18 For they have refreſhed my ſpirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are ſuch.

It is very probable that the faithful in the church of Corinth did ſend theſe three perſons, namely, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, to St. Paul, at this time at Epheſus, to acquaint him with the ſtate of the church, the rents and ſchiſms that were amongſt them; and to deſire the interpoſure of his authority, and the exerciſe of his apoſtolical power, in order to the healing of thoſe unhappy breaches. Now, ſays the apoſtle, I was glad of the coming of theſe men, whom you ſent with letters of inquiry to me; for that account of your affairs which was lacking on your part in your letter, they have ſupplied: I am glad, I ſay, for they have refreſhed my ſpirit with their preſence and diſcourſe, and will at their return refreſh yours alſo; therefore *acknowledge ye them that are ſuch*, own their ſervices, and honour them for the ſame. There is a tribute of double honour, reſpect and reverence, due and payable to ſuch as labour in the church's ſervice, even unto wearineſs, and are willing to ſpend and be ſpent in ſuch ſervices as they are capable of, for the benefit of the church in general, or any member thereof in particular.

19 The churches of Aſia ſalute you. Aquila and Priſcilla ſalute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their houſe. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiſs. 21 The ſalutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.

Here our apoſtle cloſes his epiſtle with ſeveral ſalutations to the Corinthians, from the churches of Aſia, from Aquila and Priſcilla, and from the church in their houſe; that is, from their Chriſtian family, or from the Chriſtian aſſembly which uſed to meet in their houſe for the worſhipping of God. Happy that family-governor, who has a church in his houſe, with Aquila and Priſcilla; who worſhips God with all his houſe, as did Cornelius; who with his houſhold ſerves the Lord, as did Joſhua; who commands his children and his houſhold after him, as did faithful Abraham. 2. The nature and manner of this ſalutation; *They ſalute you in the Lord*; that is, with a ſpiritual affection, for the grace of God that is in you, and wiſhing you an overflowing ſtream of ſpiritual bleſſings from Chriſt the fountain. Next, he wills them to ſalute one another with an holy kiſs, a kiſs of peace and charity, with which Chriſtians in thoſe times. and according to the cuſtom of thoſe countries, uſed to ſalute one another; this was not then a wanton, but an holy kiſs, in which they had chaſte and holy thoughts; yet afterwards, the piety and purity of the church degenerating and declining, it was thought fit and convenient to lay this kiſs of charity aſide, which was uſed in the public aſſemblies at the celebration of the holy communion. That which is innocent in itſelf, and pious in its firſt intendment, may in time fall under ſuch abuſe, as to cauſe it to be wholly laid aſide. Laſtly, He adds his own ſalutation with his own hand. It is generally believed, that the apoſtle employed ſome perſon to write his epiſtles over, which he ſent abroad unto the churches; yet that he might prevent fraud and forgery, and that they might know which were his own, he uſed to ſubſcribe his ſalutation and apoſtolical benediction with his own hand, which was well known unto them.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema, Maran-atha.

That is, If any man do either oppoſe Chriſt and his goſpel, or apoſtatize and backſlide from his holy profeſſion, and thereby diſcover he had no ſincere love for Chriſt, let him be accurſed till the Lord comes to judgment; and when he comes to judgment, let him without repentance lie under a dreadful, yea, an eternal curſe. *Note* here, How that thoſe who do not ſincerely love our Lord Jeſus, are under the heavieſt and bittereſt of divine curſes. *Obſerve*, 1. The ground or cauſe of this curſe; the not loving of Jeſus Chriſt: He doth not ſay, If any man hate Chriſt, or reproach and blaſpheme him, or perſecute and injure him; but, if he doth not love him. The bare want of this affection to Chriſt, is enough eternally to ſeparate us from Chriſt. 2. The nature of this curſe: *Let him be anathema, Maran-atha.* The apoſtle pronounces the curſe in two languages, Greek and Syriac, to denote both the vehemency of his own ſpirit in ſpeaking, and the certainty of the thing ſpoken; or perhaps to ſhew, that men of all nations and languages, who love not Chriſt, are under a curſe, and that they are deſervedly curſed among all nations. The Greek word, *anathema*, ſignifies, *execrable*; the Syriac word *Maran-atha*, is a compound of *Maran*, *Lord*, and *Athan*, *he cometh*. Theſe words were uſed anciently in the moſt dreadful ſentence of excommunication; as if they had cited the perſon to the tribunal of Chriſt, at his coming to judge the world, or left him bound under the curſe of that ſentence until the coming of Chriſt. 3. The extent of this curſe: *If any man*; as if he had ſaid, Let him, be who he will, that loves not Chriſt, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, rich or poor, young or old, prince or peaſant, king or beggar, who have opportunities to know Chriſt, and yet do not love him, let him be accurſed by him to eternal ages; let him be fully ſeparated from the ſociety of Chriſtians here in this world, and from all fellowſhip and communion with Chriſt finally in the world to come. The ſum is, That thoſe who love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, much more thoſe who wilfully hate and oppoſe him and his holy laws, are accurſed perſons in this life, and devoted to deſtruction here; but when our Lord ſhall come to judge the world at the laſt and great day, they ſhall be accurſed more openly and ſolemnly; when they ſhall ſtand before that impartial Judge of the world, they ſhall receive from his mouth a final malediction, an irreverſible execration, which ſhall be immediately ſucceeded with the anguiſh and torments of eternity.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. 24 My love *be* with you all in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

Note here, Our apoſtle's valediction; it is a benediction: He takes his farewel of them with prayer for them; *The grace*, or gracious favour, *of Chriſt be with you*, and multiply all bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, upon you: I am ſure I love you all in Chriſt Jeſus, and for his ſake. Happy it is when miniſters can take their farewel of their flocks in this manner, with fervent ſupplications for them, and with ſolemn, yet ſerious proteſtations of the fervour of their love, and the ardency of their affection towards them. *Amen.*

THE
SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE
CORINTHIANS.

The occaſion of St. Paul*'s writing this ſecond epiſtle to the* Corinthians, *was to vindicate his perſon from divers imputations which were charged upon him by the falſe apoſtles, and to defend his miniſtry and apoſtleſhip againſt ſome that ſought to bring both* himſelf *and* that *into diſgrace and contempt: Such miniſters as ſtudy,* and ſeek that they may excel to the edifying of the church, *muſt expect to encounter with the violent oppoſition,* and *virulent imputations of men of perverſe minds, who either cannot, or will not, do ſo well themſelves.*

Our great apoſtle here was charged by the falſe apoſtles with inconſtancy, *in promiſing to come to* Corinth, *and not coming; with* pride and imperiouſneſs, *with* vanity and vain-glory, *in reference to the inceſtuous perſon; they repreſenting him as contemptible in his perſon, as deſpicable in his miniſtry. He therefore confutes, yea, confounds his adverſaries by a new and unuſual way of arguing; namely, by boaſting of his ſufferings, glorying in them, and giving a large catalogue and long inventory of them; he diſplays his calamities, blazons his croſſes, vindicates his perſon and authority from contempt, clears himſelf from the charge and imputation of levity and vain-glory, by rehearſing the good ſervices he had done, and the ſufferings he had undergone, for the ſake of* CHRIST, *and his holy religion. Whence* we learn, *That it is neither unchriſtian or unſeemly to enlarge upon our own actions and ſufferings, when there is a great and neceſſary occaſion ſo to do, namely, when the glory of* GOD, *the credit of our holy religion, and a juſt vindication of our own integrity and innocency, doth require it, and call for it.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the ſaints which are in all Achaia: 2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The writer of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, *Paul*; by his office, *An apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; with the manner how he obtained this office of an apoſtle, namely, *by the will of God*; it was not man, but God that called him to the apoſtleſhip. It is of great concern and conſequence both to miniſters and people to be fully informed, and thoroughly ſatisfied, of that divine call, which their ſpiritual guides have to come amongſt them; that the miniſters may be able to ſay, "We come to you in the name of the Lord;" and the people may be able to reply, "We receive you as ambaſſadors from the Lord unto us." *Paul an apoſtle by the will of God*. 2. A perſon conjoined with St. Paul in the writing of this epiſtle, and he is alſo deſcribed two ways; by his name, *Timothy*; by his relation, *our brother*. Where *note*, The great humility and condeſcenſion of St. Paul, that though far ſuperior to Timothy in years, and more tranſcendent in office, and more eminent in grace, yet he doth not aſſume and arrogate *all* to himſelf, but makes another ſit, as it were upon the throne with him; ſo humble and condeſcending was this holy man to one ſo far inferior to him, both in office and grace. *Note* alſo, The happy advantage of Timothy in being with St. Paul, and having the happy privilege of being inſtructed and directed by ſo great an apoſtle; happy was it for young Timothy, that ever he came into old Paul's family. *Learn* thence, That it is an happy advantage to ſuch who in their younger years are dedicated to, and deſigned to be ſet apart for the work of the miniſtry, to be under the inſpection and care, the guidance and conduct of thoſe who are more aged, and better experienced than themſelves: *Paul an apoſtle, and Timothy our brother.* 3. The perſons to whom this epiſtle is written and directed, *To the church of God which is at Corinth:* Corinth was a city famous for wealth and riches, but moſt infamous for lewdneſs and uncleanneſs; here was a temple dedicated to Venus, where were a thouſand virgins ſet apart to be proſtituted to the luſts of men; ſo that the Greek, *to Corinthize*, is as much as to be laſcivious and unchaſte; and after many of them were converted to Chriſtianity, yet did the ſin of uncleanneſs ſo much abound amongſt them, that the apoſtle doth induſtriouſly ſet himſelf againſt it, and warns them of the ſin and danger of it, in both his epiſtles wrote unto them. However, as bad as Corinth was, God told Paul, Acts xvii. that he had much people in that city; and accordingly, he ſpent a year and a half amongſt them, in preaching to them, in converting and confirming of them. *Learn* thence, That even amongſt the moſt profane and unlikelieſt people upon earth, God may, and ſometimes doth, gather a church unto himſelf. See what monſters of men theſe Corinthians were, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Whoremongers, adulterers, effeminate, abuſers of themſelves with mankind*; and he tells them, not only ſuch perſons, but alſo, *ſuch things* were ſome of them, *but now waſhed*, &c. O the ſovereignty and wonderful efficacy of the grace of God, in cleanſing ſouls, more black than ever was Ethiopian's face! Though man cannot, yet God can, and ſometimes does cauſe figs to grow on thorns, and grapes on thiſtles. 4. Our apoſtle's ſalutation of, and prayer for this church at Corinth: *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *note*, 1. The mercies and bleſſings prayed for, grace and peace, ſpiritual bleſſings, and comprehenſive bleſſings, 2. The original cauſe and ſpring from whence thoſe bleſſings flow, from God the Father, and from Jeſus Chriſt; from the Father as the fontal cauſe, and from Chriſt as the procuring cauſe, the diſpenſer of theſe bleſſings. A good argument to prove the divinity of Chriſt: He that can diſpenſe grace and peace, of, and from himſelf, is God; but Chriſt doth this, therefore he is God: *Grace be to you, and peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

3 ¶ Bleſſed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God.

Note here, 1. The ſeveral gracious and comfortable titles which the apoſtle gives to Almighty God: He ſtyles him, (1.) *The Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo he is by nature; and Chriſt his Son by eternal and ineffable generation: For as the words, *our Lord*, aſcribed here to Chriſt, do not exclude the Father from being Lord; ſo the word, *God*, aſcribed here to God the Father, excludes not Chriſt from being our God; and as God is the Father of Chriſt, ſo he is a Father in him to all that have union with him. (2.) *The Father of mercies*; a moſt amiable and comfortable relation; not the Father of mercy, or a merciful Father barely; but the Father of mercies, in the plural number, to denote the greatneſs and multitude of his mercies, and that all mercy flows from him only and freely, as ſtreams from an overflowing and never-failing fountain. (3.) *The God of all comfort*; becauſe by giving his holy Spirit, the Comforter, he is the author of all that conſolation which is conferred upon us. 2. The duty here performed by the apoſtle, that of bleſſing God, or thankſgiving; *Bleſſed be God*, &c. *Learn*, That bleſſing and praiſing God for all mercies, but eſpecially for ſpiritual mercies, is a duty which all the people of God ought eſpecially to be careful of, and abounding in; the more you bleſs God, the more you ſhall have cauſe to bleſs him; he will multiply bleſſings upon you for your thankfulneſs to him. 3. The particular favour which the apoſtle bleſſes and praiſes God for; namely, for *comforting* his children *in all their tribulations*. *Learn* hence, That as God is the only comforter of his people at all times, ſo he is their beſt comforter in the worſt of times. There is no tribulation or affliction that the people of God can fall into, but God can and will comfort them therein: *Bleſſed be God who comforteth us in all our tribulations.* 4. The gracious end and merciful deſign of God in comforting his ſaints and ſervants, in and under all their preſſures, tribulations, and afflictions; it is, *That they may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themſelves have been comforted of God.* *Learn* hence, That God doth often exerciſe many of his miniſters, and ſome of his particular ſaints and ſervants, in a very exemplary manner, with trials and afflictions, for this great end amongſt others, that they may be experimentally able to inſtruct and comfort ſuch, who either are or may hereafter fall into the ſame diſconſolate condition with themſelves; none ſo fit to adviſe and counſel, to inſtruct and comfort a ſuffering ſaint, as an afflicted miniſter or chriſtian, who have, together with their afflictions, experienced the favour of divine conſolations: *That we may comfort others, as we ourſelves have been comforted of God.*

5 For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.

Note here, 1. That the ſaints ſufferings are called the *ſufferings of Chriſt*. The head ſuffers in the members, becauſe the members ſuffer for the ſake of the head. 2. That the ſaints ſufferings in the cauſe, and for the ſake of Chriſt, are ſometimes overflowing and exceſſive ſufferings, *the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us.* 3. That as a Chriſtian's ſufferings are for Chriſt, ſo are their comforts and conſolations from him; yea, their comforts do bear ſome proportion to their ſufferings: As our ſufferings abound, *ſo our conſolation abounds by Chriſt.*

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "What ſufferings ſoever I have met with in my miniſterial office, you have the benefit of them, and ſpecial advantage by them; and therefore you ought not to deſpiſe me upon the account of my ſufferings, (as do the falſe apoſtles, and would have you do) but you ought the more to honour me for them, and be encouraged yourſelves by them; and when I am comforted, it is beneficial for your conſolation, inaſmuch as you may confidently expect the ſame relief." *Learn* hence, That the ſufferings and afflictions, which we endure for Chriſt, do not only turn to our own good, but redound greatly to the good and benefit of the church of God, and conſequently ſhould not diſanimate or diſhearten our fellow chriſtians, but rather be matter of comfort or conſolation to them; *If we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation:* He adds, *If we be comforted, it is for your conſolation alſo:* Thereby plainly intimating to us, that Almighty God doth by all his diſpenſations, both of mercy and correction, promote and carry on the ſalvation of his own children and people.

7 And our hope of you is ſtedfaſt, knowing that as you are partakers of the ſufferings, ſo *ſhall ye be* alſo of the conſolation.

Here St. Paul tells the body of the Corinthians that he had a good hope concerning them, that as they had endured ſufferings for Chriſt, ſo they would ſtill endure them; aſſuring them that they ſhould ſhare no leſs in conſolation than they did in affliction. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as ſuffer for Chriſt, or own thoſe that ſuffer for him, ſhall be intereſted in all that joy and conſolation which ſuch ſufferings and ſufferers ſhall receive from God: *As you are partakers of the ſufferings, ſo ſhall you be of the conſolation alſo.*

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life.

Obſerve here, 1. That it is of no ſmall benefit and advantage, but of excellent uſe to us, to know what are the troubles and afflictions which do befal the ſervants of God for righteouſneſs ſake: *We would not have you ignorant of our trouble.* 2. How preſſing the troubles and afflictions were which this apoſtle underwent: *They were out of meaſure, above ſtrength, and even to the deſpairing of life.* Thence *note*, That God may, and ſometimes does exerciſe his ſervants with ſuch extreme and preſſing trials, that all their own natural ſtrength is unable to ſupport them under them, or carry them through them.

9 But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead.

Obſerve here, The great and eminent danger which the apoſtle was in; his very life was in a hazard, nay, even deſpaired of; he looked upon himſelf as a dead man: But when he had thus ſentenced himſelf, a divine power, which wrought above all his thoughts and rational conjectures, reprieved him, and revived him. Hence *learn*, That the Almighty power of God ſometimes works beyond all creature expectations, beyond all human probabilities, beyond all rational conjectures, to help and deliver his people in hopeleſs and helpleſs troubles.

10 Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver *us*.

Note here, The deliverer, God, the delivered, St. Paul and the ſaints that were in Aſia with him; the deliverance itſelf, or the eminent and impending evil delivered from, *death, great death, ſo great a death.* *Learn*, 1. That in times of great and eminent danger, God, and God alone, is the immediate deliverer of his children and people. 2. That it is the property of a gracious heart, to magnify and enhance the deliverance of a gracious God: *He hath delivered us from ſo great a death*, &c. 3. That paſt and preſent experience of God's power and goodneſs towards his people, may and ought to encourage them to truſt in him for time to come; former experience ought to encourage us to future dependance; when we can ſay, God hath delivered, and doth deliver, let our faith add, *In him we truſt, that he will yet deliver.*

11 You alſo helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *beſtowed* upon us by the means of many perſons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Our apoſtle having commemorated the goodneſs and power of God in former deliverances, and expreſſed his aſſurance of preſent and future deliverances, doth in this verſe excite and exhort the faithful at Corinth to help and further him with their prayers; *You alſo helping together by prayer for us.* Where *note*, The humility of the apoſtle, in deſiring the people's prayers for himſelf. Such as are moſt eminent in gifts and office, yea, and in grace too, do really want, and heartily deſire the help and benefit of their prayers, who are far inferior to them in the church of God. And verily, the people do owe unto their ſpiritual guides, as a debt of ſervice, their earneſt prayers for them; herein they are not only ſerviceable to them, but kind to themſelves. *Note*, farther, The great reaſon why St. Paul was ſo deſirous of the Corinthians' prayers, that deliverance and mercy being obtained thereby, *praiſe* and *thankſgiving* might be rendered to God on his behalf. *Learn*, That when by prayer any mercy is obtained by us, it is our duty, by praiſe and thankſgiving, to acknowledge the ſame to

God. What is obtained by prayer, ſhould be owned by thankfulneſs; God forbid we ſhould be clamorous in aſking favours, and dumb and tongue-tied in returning thanks.

12 ¶ For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

Note here, 1. That though St. Paul did not put confidence and truſt in his ſincerity and chriſtian grace, yet he did rejoice, and holily glory in the evidence of his grace, and in the teſtimony of a ſincere and upright conſcience; *Our rejoicing is this.* *Learn* hence, That an holy glorying and rejoicing in the graces of God, which, upon good and ſufficient grounds we find evident in ourſelves, is lawful and allowable. A chriſtian may and ought to rejoice, not only in the confidence of Chriſt's merits, but alſo in the conſcience of his own ſincerity. *Note*, 2. The particular grace evidenced, which the apoſtle took comfort in; *His ſincerity* and *godly ſimplicity*; that is, his uprightneſs both of heart and life, his freedom from guile and hypocriſy. Thence *obſerve*, That the conſcience of ſincerity is ſuch a crown of rejoicing, as will ſupport a chriſtian's ſpirit under and againſt the greateſt difficulties which may ariſe in any condition. This ſincerity diſcovers itſelf in its acting by a right rule, from a right principle, and to a right end; and it ſupports a man's ſpirit in the duty of prayer, under ſlander and reproach, in the dark night of affliction, in the diſconſolate hour of death, and at the dreadful day of judgment. *Note*, 3. That it is not a ſingle act of ſincerity, but a conſtant courſe of upright walking, that our apoſtle rejoiced and took comfort in; *We have had our converſation in the world in all ſimplicity and godly ſincerity.* It is not a ſingle action, but a ſeries of good actions, that adminiſters comfort: As God doth not judge of our ſtate and condition by a particular action, no more ſhould we, but by the general bent of our reſolutions, and the conſtant courſe and tenor of our converſations: *Our rejoicing is this*, &c.

13 For we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge, and I truſt ye ſhall acknowledge even to the end;

The apoſtle having aſſerted his own ſincerity and upright converſation in the former verſe, he doth in this verſe make his appeal to the conſciences of the Corinthians for his juſtification. It is a good demonſtration of our uprightneſs, when we can not only appeal to God as touching our ſincerity, but dare appeal to the conſciences of men; for if, through prejudice, they will not with their mouths vouch our integrity, yet ſecretly with their conſciences they cannot but bear witneſs to it. *Note*, 2. The apoſtle's having declared, that he had his teſtimonials, not only from his own conſcience, but from their's alſo; he adds, that he truſted this would hold and continue even to the end; that is, to the end both of his and their lives. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "My converſation hath hitherto been acknowledged by you to be ſincere and upright; and I hope, as you ſhall never ſee it otherwiſe by me, ſo you will perſevere and continue in your good opinion and right judgment concerning me, to the end of your and my life."

14 As alſo ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

Note here, 1. The great trial which St. Paul met with from the Corinthians, whoſe ſpiritual Father he was; though he had ſerved them with great faithfulneſs, yet they did *acknowledge him but in part.* There was a time when he was high in their eſteem; Who but Paul? None but he: But now a great part leave him, and admire others. *Learn* hence, What great levity, fickleneſs and inconſtancy may be found in good men in general, and what great mutability and changeableneſs of affection in particular to their miniſters and ſpiritual guides, though never ſo ſincere and faithful. Although St. Paul, with a laborious diligence, and divine ſucceſs, had planted and propagated the Chriſtian faith amongſt them, yet now, not only his perſon, but his very office, falls under contempt by many of them. None more than miniſters do experience this truth, that nothing is ſo mutable as the mind of man: Though miniſters are the ſame, and their meſſage the ſame, though they continue burning and ſhining lights, though they burn out, and conſume life, health, and eſtate, among and for their people, yet it is only for a ſeaſon, for an hour, for a ſhort time, at their firſt coming amongſt them, that they rejoice in their light: *You have acknowledged us in part.* *Note*, 2. That notwithſtanding the contempt caſt upon St. Paul by ſome in the church at Corinth, yet there were others among them who did greatly rejoice in him, and bleſs God for him, and he for them! *We are your rejoicing, and ye are ours*, as being converted by us; and I truſt we ſhall be a farther joy and mutual rejoicing each to other in the day of our Lord Jeſus. *Learn* hence, What unſpeakable rejoicings and joyful congratulations there will be in the day of Chriſt between laborious faithful miniſters and their believing obedient hearers. "Lord! (will the Chriſtian ſay) this was the bleſſed inſtrument under God, of my happy illumination and converſion; by the bleſſing of thy Spirit upon his miniſtry, my ſoul was begotten unto Chriſt." But, on the other hand, if we be ignorant or lazy, unſkilful or unfaithful, in our office, our people will come in againſt us as ſwift witneſſes in the day of Chriſt: And, Lord! what an intolerable aggravation will it be of our miſery in hell, to have any of our people thus upbraiding us! "O cruel man! that ſaweſt my ſoul in danger, but never dealt plainly and faithfully with me; the ſame time that we ſpent together in ſin and vanity, in ſenſual mirth and jollity, might have been inſtrumental to ſave us both from this place of torment." Let miniſters conſider themſelves as witneſſes for God, and their people as witneſſes for or againſt them; and, under that conſideration, ſo ſtudy, preach, and pray, ſo live, walk, and act, that they may, with this great apoſtle, take God to record, that they are free from the blood of all men.

15 ¶ And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a ſecond benefit;

Note here, 1. The apoſtle's ſteady purpoſe, and fixed reſolution to come and ſpend ſome time amongſt the Corinthians: *I was minded to come unto you.* Where a faithful miniſter has good hopes and confidence of doing good amongſt a people, there is great encouragement for coming to them, and abiding with them. When the miniſters of Chriſt find that God has farther converting work, or edifying work for them to do in a particular place amongſt his people, they will not, they muſt not, yea, they dare not forſake them for outward advantages. 2. The end of St. Paul's purpoſe and reſolution to come unto them, *That they might have a ſecond benefit.* The firſt benefit was their converſion, the ſecond benefit was their confirmation; confirmation in the faith, and reformation, both in life and manners. It is not ſufficient, that by our miniſtry we plant a church, and gather a people out of the world by external and viſible profeſſion; but there is farther need of daily induſtry, and continual care, to water what we have planted, to cultivate and dreſs that corner of our Lord's vineyard, which is under our particular inſpection and care. O that our people had hearts to cry out, and ſay, Lord, not the firſt time only, but the ſecond, yea, all my life; make me partaker of this benefit.

16 And to paſs by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way towards Judea.

Note here, 1. How the heart of this holy apoſtle was carried forth in the ſervice of God and ſouls, and how accordingly he orders all his journies from one place to another and determines his continuance and ſtay, longer in one place than another, as the glory of God, the advantage of the goſpel, and the church's neceſſities did require: *I deſign to paſs by you into Macedonia,* &c. It is the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, not only to lay out themſelves for the glory of God, and the good of ſouls, but to project, forecaſt, and contrive how they may do it in the moſt advantageous manner, for the furtherance of the goſpel. Yet, *note,* 2. The difference between this extraordinary apoſtle then, and ordinary paſtors of the church now. The apoſtles had an univerſal commiſſion to plant churches in all places; they were to be in conſtant travels up and down the world, itinerary preachers from place to place: But the office of an ordinary paſtor now is, to watch over a particular flock, and to keep conſtant reſidence amongſt them. Yet though by actual relation he is tied and bound to a particular flock, he is, by habitual and aptitudinal diſpoſition, a miniſter of the univerſal church, and a debtor to the public good thereof. He is firſt made a miniſter in the univerſal church, and then a paſtor of a particular congregation: And accordingly, though he ſeeks the intereſt of his own flock firſt, yet it is his duty, by prayer, by ſtudy, by preaching, by writing, by all other edifying ways and methods, to promote the univerſal good and benefit of the whole church of Chriſt, according to his power, both far and near.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I uſe lightneſs? or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh, that with me there ſhould be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

Here our apoſtle begins to make his apology and defence for himſelf, for changing his purpoſe in coming to Corinth according to promiſe, and to free himſelf from the imputation of levity, inconſtancy, and falſhood, caſt upon him by his back friends, the falſe apoſtles, for promiſing to come to Corinth, and not performing it; for they aggravated the matter ſo far, as if he were one that ſaid and unſaid, one that took no care about keeping his word; and thence inferred, that no regard was to be had to any thing that he delivered. "He that is not to be relied upon, ſay the falſe apoſtles, in his ordinary promiſes, how can you depend upon what he ſays to you in his preaching?" Hence *learn,* That lightneſs and inconſtancy is a great ſin and reproach in any, but eſpecially in the miniſters of the goſpel, who yet are often charged with it, when they are in no degree guilty of it. *Note,* 2. As our apoſtle frees himſelf from the charge of inconſtancy, ſo from the ſuſpicion of acting for worldly advantage: *The things which I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh?* that is, for carnal ends or ſecular intereſt, that with me there ſhould be now, Yea, yea; and anon, Nay, nay. Behold here! what truth and ſteadineſs was found in and with our holy apoſtle; how his words and intentions, his tongue and his heart, his pen and his purpoſe were one, namely, in reality to come unto them, though he was providentially hindered and obſtructed. Here let us remark and *note,* What little things the men of the world will take advantage from, to vilify and leſſen the reputation of God's faithful ſervants, eſpecially his miniſters. How many perſons might have promiſed to be in ſuch a place, at ſuch a time, and have failed, without being reproached for breach of promiſe? The world would have been ſo charitable to another perſon, as to have excuſed it; by ſaying, "The man ſpake according to his preſent intention and reſolution, but was hindered by the providence of God;" but if Paul fails in a tittle, he muſt be loaded preſently, upbraided for his inconſtancy, or which is worſe, charged with playing faſt and looſe for ſiniſter ends, and worldly advantages. Lord, give thy ſervants, eſpecially thy miniſters, wiſdom to walk with exactneſs and circumſpection before the men of the world, who are their watchful obſervers, and bold cenſurers, that they may cut off all occaſion from them that ſeek occaſion againſt them.

18 But *as* God *is* true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

By the *word* here, ſome underſtand St. Paul's promiſe to come to Corinth, that he did very ſeriouſly intend to come unto them; as if he had ſaid, "As God is true to his promiſe, ſo has he taught me to be true to mine." Others underſtand by the *word,* St. Paul's preaching, that his doctrine was not mutable and changeable, but always the ſame. Here *note,* How ready and forward the adverſaries of religion are, from any real or ſuppoſed imperfections in the miniſters of God, preſently to blame and burden their miniſtry, to charge their private errors and miſtakes upon their doctrine. There is a mighty propenſity, and great forwardneſs in bad men, to caſt all the imperfections of the miniſters of the goſpel upon their miniſtry and doctrine. The devil is glad of an opportunity, by the failings of preachers, to bring the doctrines they preach either into doubt or diſeſteem. But though it be a great reproach for a miniſter to be mutable and contradictory in his doctrine, yet the wicked world do often accuſe them of it, and charge them with it, when there is not the leaſt occaſion for it: *Verily, as God is true, our word was not Yea and Nay.*

19 For the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Sylvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

This verſe contains a new argument for the conſtancy and immutability of St. Paul's doctrine, drawn from the ſubject matter of his preaching; namely, *Jeſus Chriſt.* As Chriſt is always one and the ſame, whom himſelf and other miniſters did preach, ſo is our doctrine one and the ſame alſo. *Note* here, 1. The ſubject matter of St. Paul's preaching, what was the ſum of his own and his companions ſermons, (Sylvanus and Timotheus,) it was not his own imaginations, or the Jewiſh rites and ceremonies, but Chriſt in his nature and offices: *The Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, was preached among you by us. Note,* 2. The happy unity and accord, which was found among all theſe miniſters, St. Paul, Sylvanus and Timotheus, in preaching Chriſt. O bleſſed agreement! when all the miniſters of God with one conſent conſpire and agree to advance and extol our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 3. That the courſe of St. Paul's and his aſſiſtants preaching, was, like the great ſubject of their preaching, *Chriſt Jeſus,* fixedly and unchangeably the ſame; not *yea* at one time, and *nay* at another. *Learn* thence, That it is a proper note of God's truth, and the true preachers thereof, that they are always one and the ſame, always yea, and not yea and nay; there is no change or contrariety in their doctrines.

20 For all the promiſes of God in him *are* Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Our apoſtle had proved in the foregoing verſe the conſtancy of his own doctrine, which he preached from the immutability and conſtancy of Chriſt, the ſubject of it. Here he proveth Chriſt to be unchangeable, in that all the promiſes which God hath made to us, are fulfilled both in him and by him. *All the promiſes of God in him are Yea and Amen;* that is, verified and fulfilled in him, and confirmed by him to us. *Learn,* 1. That God has made promiſes, many promiſes to his people. 2. That all the promiſes which God has made to his people, are made in Chriſt, and ratified by him. Chriſt acts the part and office of a ſurety; he undertakes, and engages for God, that all which he hath promiſed ſhall be made good to us. 3. That the promiſes made by God, and ratified and confirmed in Chriſt, do all tend to the glory of God. They ſhew the ſovereignty of his grace, in making promiſes to his creatures of mercy, who deſerved nothing but flaming vengeance, and implacable fury. They ſhew the amplitude of his grace; for if grace did not flow abundantly from the heart of God towards us, we could never have received ſo large a ſtock of promiſes from him. Let us then glorify God, by ſetting a juſt value upon his promiſes, as the unchangeable aſſurance of his love and grace.

21 Now he which eſtabliſhed us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, *is* God: 22 Who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.

In theſe two verſes we have four very great and noble privileges, which the apoſtle declares God had conferred upon the Corinthians; namely, his eſtabliſhing, anointing, and ſealing of them, and giving the earneſt of his holy Spirit to them. Firſt, their eſtabliſhment; *He which eſtabliſhed us with you is God. Learn* thence, That a people's eſtabliſhment in the doctrine of the goſpel, and in the faith of the promiſes, is alone the gracious work of God. We are naturally like reeds ſhaken with every wind; it is the eſtabliſhing grace of God that makes us pillars in the church. Again, ſecondly, Their anointing, this is from God; the ſanctifying grace of God is often in ſcripture compared to oil, in regard of its effects. It refreſheth the weary, it healeth the wounded, it comforts the heart, it beautifies the face, it ſtrengthens the limbs. Such internal virtues and excellencies hath the ſanctifying grace of God in the hearts of the people. Thirdly, Their ſealing; *Who hath alſo ſealed us.* God's ſealing of his children doth imply his high valuation and eſteem of them; what is ſealed is eſteemed very precious: It implies their ſafety and ſecurity; what is under ſeal, is not in danger of being loſt. Again, Sealing doth imply ſecreſy and privacy; that which is ſealed is ſecret and hidden; it is the new name, which none knows but he that receiveth it. Finally, Sealing is for confirmation; contracts and bargains among men are confirmed by hand and ſeal. Thus the graces of the Spirit, which ſanctify us, do alſo witneſs and ſeal to us the aſſurance of God's love and ſpecial favour in Chriſt. The fourth privilege here conferred by God upon the Corinthians, is *his giving the earneſt of his Spirit* in their hearts: Grace wrought in the heart here, is a ſure earneſt of glory hereafter; there is a great deal of difference between a ſhilling, a ſingle piece of money, and a ſhilling that is an earneſt of a greater ſum. It is joy to find grace in the ſoul as grace mortifying our corruptions; but it rejoices much more to look upon grace as an earneſt of glory, as the firſt-fruits which inſure the full crop.

23 Moreover, I call God for a record upon my ſoul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

In theſe words, our apoſtle doth aſſure the Corinthians, in a very ſolemn manner, that it was not any inconſtancy or carnal reſpect in himſelf that made him delay his coming to them, but it was purely to ſpare them, as being unwilling to come with his rod among them, and to uſe ſeverity upon them. Here obſerve the apoſtle's manner of ſpeech, it is by way of adjuration; *I call God to record upon my ſoul.* The words are an aſſertory and execratory oath, wherein God is called to witneſs the truth of what he ſaid. *Learn* hence, That it is lawful for Chriſtians under the goſpel to ſwear upon a neceſſary and great occaſion. But what great occaſion was here for St. Paul to do it? *Anſ.* Very great; the falſe apoſtles did accuſe him for a vainglorious and inconſtant man. This accuſation did redound to the diſcredit of his miniſtry, the diſhonour of the goſpel, the deſtruction of the church; therefore he ſolemnly proteſts, that no inconſtancy or worldly motives did cauſe him to delay his promiſe; but a wiſe and ſpiritual conſideration of their good, a willingneſs to ſpare them, and an unwillingneſs to uſe ſeverity upon them. Hence *learn*, That the miniſterial power which God giveth the officers of the church, ought to be managed with much holy prudence, and Chriſtian commiſeration: The end of their power ſhould always be in their mind, which is edification and not deſtruction.

24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye ſtand.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Though we have a miniſterial power, yet we have not a magiſterial dominion over you, to treat as we pleaſe the profeſſors of the goſpel, or to puniſh thoſe that walk not according thereunto." *Learn* hence, That though Chriſt has inveſted the officers of the church with a miniſterial power, yet they have not thereby any dominion over the faith of believers: *Not that we have dominion over your faith:* He adds, *But are helpers of your joy.* He doth not ſay, We are helpers of your grace, helpers of your faith, helpers of your holineſs, though this is neceſſarily implied; but helpers of your joy and comfort. *Note* thence, That a ſpecial part of the miniſter's work, conſiſts in adminiſtering to the comfort and conſolation of ſuch as ſtand in need of it, and are qualified for it. Our firſt work is to help the graces, our next to help the comforts of our people. The Spirit of God is a ſanctifier, and then a comforter: Joy is not the firſt ſtone in God's building; grace and holineſs is firſt, comfort and conſolation next. *For by faith ye ſtand*; ye have ſtood, and do ſtand ſteadfaſt in the faith; that is the generality and body of you; though ſome among you deny the reſurrection, yet the beſt and greateſt part of you are ſound in the faith, and ſteadfaſt in the faith. Our apoſtle doth not unchurch them, becauſe of ſome diſorders among them, nor becauſe of ſome heretical doctrines found with them, but endeavours to reform their diſorders, that ſo when he came unto them, he might not come with his rod, but in the ſpirit of meekneſs.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle having vindicated himſelf from the imputation of levity and inconſtancy; here vindicates himſelf from the aſperſion of too much rigour, and too great ſeverity towards the inceſtuous perſon.

BUT I determined this with myſelf, that I would not come again to you in heavineſs. 2 For if I make you ſorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the ſame which is made ſorry by me?

The occaſion of St. Paul's writing again to the Corinthians, and deferring for the preſent to come unto them, is here intimated. There was an inceſtuous perſon in the church of Corinth, who had married his father's wife; if ſhe were his own natural mother, the ſin was moſt prodigious and unnatural, that the child of her womb ſhould be the huſband of her bed; if ſhe were his mother-in-law, it was againſt the law of reverence, and an heinous ſin for the ſon to uncover the father's nakedneſs. And it was an aggravation of the ſin, that the perſon committing it was a Chriſtian, a member, and, as ſome think, a miniſter of the church at Corinth. St. Paul, in his former epiſtle, chap. v. commands them to excommunicate this inceſtuous perſon, which accordingly they did; and this ſpiritual phyſic, applied to the offender, had a good effect upon him; for, being puniſhed by the church, he puniſheth himſelf; and being caſt out of the church, he caſts away his ſin. Happy is it, when the church's cenſures are ſo executed as to bring offenders to a ſight and ſenſe of their ſins, in order to a deep humiliation, and thorough reformation. Now, ſays the apoſtle *I determined not to come to you in heavineſs*; that is, one great reaſon why I put off my journey to you, was this, that my coming amongſt you might neither occaſion ſorrow, nor create heavineſs, either to you or myſelf; for I delight not in cenſuring and chiding, when I can otherwiſe avoid it: *For if I make you ſorry*, and myſelf with you, *who is it that can make me glad, but he that is made ſorry by me?* that is, nothing can make me glad, but the reformation of the fallen perſon. Where *note*, That nothing adds ſo much to the joy and comfort of the miniſters of Chriſt, as the recovery of revolted ſouls from under the empire and dominion of ſin and Satan. We joy with them, and rejoice in God for them; we live as we ſee any of you ſtand faſt in the Lord, we die as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their ſins.

3 And I wrote this ſame unto you, leſt when I came I ſhould have ſorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, I gave you a ſharp reproof in my former epiſtle, but it was in much love, and upon a good deſign; namely, to procure ſuch a reformation of life and manners among you, as might prevent my ſorrow when I come unto you: For as your grief is my grief, ſo my joy is the joy of you all. As the miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved people are one, ſo their griefs are one, and their joys one: they rejoice together, and mourn together; their griefs and ſorrows are mutual, and their joys and comforts are reciprocal.

4 For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Here our compaſſionate apoſtle tells them, That what he had wrote in his former epiſtle with ſome ſeverity and ſharpneſs, concerning the inceſtuous perſon, was ſo far from being written with any intention to grieve them, that it was a real affliction to him, a very heavy preſſure upon his heart, which fetched abundance of tears from his eyes, and conſequently was an effect of the greateſt love imaginable. Hence *note*, That when the miniſters of Chriſt do execute church-cenſures, if they do not diſpenſe them with tenderneſs and compaſſion, ſo as to let the offenders ſee that what is done is out of abundant love unto them, they will never be the better for them, nor be bettered or reclaimed by them. Doth a civil judge weep when he paſſes ſentence upon a malefactor? Much more ſhould an eccleſiaſtical judge mourn, when he pronounceth the cenſures of the church upon notorious offenders. Behold the apoſtle here declaring with what anguiſh of ſpirit, and grief of heart, he wrote to have the ſentence of excommunication executed and inflicted on the inceſtuous Corinthian.

5 But if any hath cauſed grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, This inceſtuous perſon, who hath cauſed ſo much grief to me by his ſin, hath cauſed no little grief to you alſo, to the ſounder part of you, even to all, but thoſe who were partakers with him in his ſin; he hath grieved me but in part only: you as well myſelf, have been grieved by him, and afflicted for him. Not only the miniſters, but members of the church are affected with, and afflicted for, the ſcandal of profeſſors' ſins. St. Paul grieved but in part for the inceſtuous perſon's ſin; the ſounder part of the church mourned with him. Or, ſecondly, *He hath grieved me but in part, that I may not overcharge you:* It is as much as if he had ſaid, "The grief and ſorrow which I have had for the ſin and ſcandal of this notorious offender, I am far, very far from charging upon the whole church; I dare not load you all with that imputation, as if you were involved in the guilt of it." It is not only injurious, but very unjuſt, to caſt the dirt of profeſſors' ſin upon the face of their profeſſion, or to charge the guilt of a particular perſon's miſcarriages upon the whole church or Chriſtian ſociety to which he doth belong. As religion juſtifies no man's faults, ſo no man's faults ſhould condemn religion.

6 ¶ Sufficient to ſuch a man *is* this puniſhment which *was inflicted* of many.

Obſerve here, 1. The nature of that puniſhment which the holy apoſtle thought, and adjudged to be ſufficient for the guilty perſon's ſin, and that was exciſion, not deſtruction; excommunication, not death: The rejection of ſuch a ſinner from the communion of the church, by church-cenſure and diſcipline, was the puniſhment pronounced. 2. By whom, and before whom, this puniſhment of excommunication was executed and inflicted, namely, by the officers and governors of the church, (who had and have the power of the keys) in the preſence, and with the conſent of the whole church. In the primitive church, we have reaſon to believe, when any offender was to be excommunicated, the people were acquainted with the crime; the guilty perſon pleaded in their preſence, they judged as your jury men do of the matter of fact, they conſented to the condemnation; but the ſentence was not pronounced by them, but by the governors and officers of the church before them, and in their preſence: And as the church or body of the people conſented to the offender's rejection, ſo likewiſe to his re-admiſſion to the communion of the church; but their actual admiſſion was by the paſtor and governors of the church, and not by the people. Contrary to this primitive practice is the modern practice of thoſe, who have ſnatched the keys out of the hands of the paſtors, (where Chriſt placed them) and put them into the hands of the people.

7 So that contrariwiſe, *ye ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, leſt perhaps ſuch an one ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow. 8 Wherefore I beſeech you that ye would confirm *your* love towards him.

Note, 1. The great duty which the apoſtle directs the Corinthians to the performance of, towards this ſorrowful offender, *to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirm him*; that is, to abſolve him from the ſentence and cenſure of the church; no longer to continue their averſion to him, but to reſtore him to the church's communion, to re-admit him to their fellowſhip and ſociety, to comfort him with the notices of God's pardoning mercy, and to confirm their love to him, by ſhewing, that their excommunicating of him was with deſign to reform, not to ruin him; to recover him by repentance, and not to drive him to deſpair. This is the importance of the three ſeveral words which are uſed here, *Forgive him, comfort him, confirm him.* From whence *note*, That in notorious crimes, which give great cauſe of ſcandal to the church, the comfort of the offender depends not only upon his peace and reconciliation with God, but alſo upon the relaxation of the cenſures of the church, and his re-admiſſion to the church's fellowſhip and communion: Forgive him, and confirm your love towards him. 2. The reaſon offered by our apoſtle why this penitent offender ſhould be forgiven and comforted; namely, *Leſt he ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow. Learn* hence, (1.) That ſorrow even for itſelf may be exceſſive over-much. (2.) That exceſſive and over-much ſorrow ſwalloweth up a perſon; it may ſwallow him up in the gulph of deſpair, and, as a conſequent of it, in the gulph of death. As worldly ſorrow cauſeth death, ſo may religious ſorrow alſo, even ſorrow for ſin. We may diſhonour God by an exceſſive mourning, even for God's diſhonour. Sorrow is not of any worth in itſelf, but only as it ſerves to a ſpiritual end and purpoſe: and when it is exceſſive, not only the comforts, but the gifts and uſefulneſs of the perſon ſorrowing, are in danger to be ſwallowed up by it. *Queſt.* But when is ſorrow for ſin exceſſive and over-much? *Anſ.* When it obſtructs the exerciſe of our graces, when it hinders the performance of our duties, when it hurts our health, and everwhelmeth nature, when it perverts reaſon, ſwalloweth up faith, hindereth our hope, prejudiceth our joy, and unfits us both for doing and ſuffering the will of God; in a word, that ſorrow for ſin which keeps the ſoul from looking towards the mercy-ſeat, that keeps Chriſt and the ſoul aſunder, and renders a perſon unfit for the ſervice of God, and for the communion of ſaints, is a ſinful ſorrow.

9 For to this end alſo did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* alſo: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your ſakes *forgave I it* in the perſon of Chriſt; 11 Leſt Satan ſhould get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle declares what was his end in writing his former epiſtle to them, namely, this amongſt others, to exerciſe their obedience, and to make trial what regard they would ſhew to his apoſtolical authority; whether they would be as obedient to his directions in abſolving of penitents, as they were before in inflicting church-cenſures upon bold offenders: *For this end did I write, that I might have a proof of you.* 2. The apoſtle declares his own forwardneſs to forgive penitent offenders himſelf, as well as makes known his deſires that they ſhould do it: *Whom ye forgive, I forgive alſo in the perſon of Chriſt*; that is, as you forgive him, ſo do *I*; and I abſolve him by Chriſt's authority, as I excommunicated him in Chriſt's name, 1 Cor. v. 4. *In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c. As he delivered the inceſtuous perſon to Satan in the name of Chriſt, ſo in the name and perſon of Chriſt he releaſes him, and relaxes the ſentence againſt him. The power of excommunication and abſolution, of binding and looſing, of caſting out, and receiving into the church, is by Chriſt committed to church-governors, who are to execute this power *in the perſon of Chriſt*; that is, in the name, and by the authority of Chriſt. 3. The arguments with which, and the motive by which, he preſſes the church at Corinth to forgive the inceſtuous perſon, and to re-admit him into their ſociety, *leſt Satan get an advantage of us.* What advantage? *Anſ.* An advantage to lead them into ſin thus, by their abuſing that power which God had given them for edification, to the deſtruction of a perſon, by making them guilty of ſpiritual murder by their over-rigorous proceeding againſt him, by driving him to deſpair, by tempting him to apoſtaſy. Satan ſometimes, by too greatneſs ſlackneſs of diſcipline, ſeeks to lull ſinners aſleep in the boſom of the church; and ſometimes by too great ſeverity endeavours to drive them to deſpair. The force of the apoſtle's words lies thus: I adviſe you to continue the ſeverity of diſcipline no longer towards this penitent offender, but receive him again into your communion with all tenderneſs and ſpeed, leſt Satan ſhould circumvent you, and over-reach you, and make uſe of your rigour to your own ruin, by rendering your doctrine hateful, and your diſcipline deteſtable; *for we are not ignorant of his devices*, his contrivances, plots, and ſtratagems laid againſt us. *Learn* hence, 1. That Satan is a maſter in the art of deceiving ſouls: He is full, very full of cunning methods and devices, to circumvent perſons, and catch them in the net of his deceits. 2. That it concerns all perſons, but eſpecially the miniſters of the goſpel, to be well acquainted with, and not ignorant of any devices or plots of Satan. Satan has a multitude of devices, by which he undoes, entangles and deceives ſouls; and no Chriſtian ought to be ignorant of them, leſt he be circumvented and undone by them: Many are his devices for drawing us into ſin, for drawing us off from duty, for drawing us into temptation, for drowning us in deſpair; our wiſdom will be, not to diſpute, but to reſiſt, for by reſiſting, our temptations will be fewer, and our ſtrength greater, James iv. 7. *Reſiſt the devil, and he will fly.* Where *note*, That the promiſe of conqueſt is made to reſiſting, not diſputing with Satan; to parly with him, is the way to be overcome by him.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Chriſt's goſpel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no reſt in my ſpirit, becauſe I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 14 ¶ Now thanks be unto God, which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place.

Obſerve here, 1. The unwearied diligence of this great apoſtle in travelling from place to place, and carrying the goſpel with him from one city and nation to another: *I came to Troas, and from thence to Macedonia.* 2. The ſucceſs which the holy apoſtle had in preaching the goſpel with unwearied diligence in thoſe places: *A door was opened unto him of the Lord.* This either ſignifies, (1.) The free liberty which he had to preach the goſpel in thoſe places; the door of his mouth was not ſhut by perſecutors, the enemies and oppoſers of the goſpel, but the word of the Lord had a free courſe in the labours of its miniſters. Or, (2.) This opened door may ſignify and import the great and gracious ſucceſs which God gave the apoſtle in his work; as God by his providence opened the apoſtle's mouth to preach and publiſh the glad tidings of the goſpel, ſo by his holy Spirit he opened the people's hearts to receive and entertain the glad tidings of ſalvation which the goſpel brought. Acts xvi. 14. *The Lord opened Lydia's heart, that ſhe attended to the words which were ſpoken of Paul.* 3. How careful the apoſtle is to aſcribe the entire praiſe, and to return the whole thanks to Almighty God, for all the gracious aſſiſtance and ſucceſs which he had received in his miniſterial ſervice: *Thanks be to God which cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Bleſſed be God, although our enemies have been many, and our difficulties great, yet God has given me and my fellow apoſtles ſuch reſolution of mind, that we have not only encountered with them, but triumphed over them, in a powerful converſion of ſo many from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity; and has enabled us to ſpread the ſweet odour of the goſpel far and near, by our laborious preaching of it from place to place." Then is the word, and God in the word, glorified, when the ſword of the Spirit is taken into the hand of the Spirit; when he girds this ſword upon his thigh, as moſt mighty, and rides on triumphantly, conquering and to conquer, in the hearts of his people, till he has conſummated his victories in a glorious triumph over all the powers of hell and darkneſs. *Thanks be to God that cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt.*

15 For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. 16 To the one *we are* the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other, the ſavour of life unto life.

Note here, 1. The title given to the goſpel, and to the preachers and diſpenſers of it; they are a *ſavour*, an alluſion probably to the ointment of ſweet perfume, which the high-prieſts under the law were anointed with. The breath of the goſpel is a ſweet odour or ſmell, and God's faithful miniſters are they that carry it, and blow it abroad to perfume ſinners that lie ſtinking in their ſins. 2. The contrary effects which the preaching of the goſpel has upon thoſe that ſit under it; it is the ſavour of life unto ſome, of death unto others: Here it was ſo, the apoſtle's miniſtry was a ſavour of life to the believing Gentiles, of death to the unbelieving Jews; all men are to be reckoned in a ſtate of life or death, of periſhing, or being ſaved, according as they do, or do not receive the ſavour, and reliſh the doctrine of the goſpel. But how comes the preaching of the goſpel to be the ſavour of death unto ſome? *Anſ.* Partly through pride, in not enduring to be reproved by the goſpel; partly through prejudice againſt the miniſters of the goſpel; partly through ſlothfulneſs, in neglecting to come under the ſound of the goſpel; and partly through curſed infidelity, in not believing the meſſage which the goſpel brings. Thus is the goſpel, which was ordained for life, the ſavour of death unto death. 3. The ſweet ſupport which God gives his faithful miniſters in the diſcharge of their duty, though their doctrine fails of deſired ſucceſs; they are *a ſweet ſavour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved.* Lord! how would thy miniſters be of all men moſt miſerable, ſhouldſt thou require the ſucceſs of their labours at their hands; ſhouldſt thou ſay, "Either reconcile my people unto me, or I will never be reconciled unto you:" But we ſhall be rewarded by thee, according to our faithfulneſs, not according to our people's fruitfulneſs. The faithful miniſters of Chriſt are a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour in the noſtrils of God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved: Though Iſrael (their people) be not gathered, yet ſhall they be glorious: God will reward them, *ſecundum laborem, non fructum*; the nurſe ſhall be paid for her care and pains, though the child dies at the breaſt.

— And who *is* ſufficient for theſe things?

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, So great and weighty is the work of preaching the everlaſting goſpel to a loſt world, that neither myſelf, nor any of my fellow-apoſtles, are ſufficient for it of ourſelves; *Who is ſufficient?* That is, none are ſufficient, without proportionable ſtrength and help from God, neither man nor angel: To preach the goſpel as it ought, is a mighty work, a weighty work. If any think otherwiſe, it is either their ignorance or inadvertency that makes them think ſo. What? Is it an eaſy matter to ſearch into the deep things of God, the great myſteries of the goſpel, which have an unfathomable depth? Is it eaſy to inſtruct the ignorant, to convince the obſtinate, to reſolve the doubting, to reduce the wandering, to know the ſtate of our flock, to viſit the ſick as we ought, to ſpeak to them, and pray for them, as perſons upon the confines of eternity? What! is all this, and much more, a trivial work, and common performance? No, verily; as there is no ſervice more honourable than that of the miniſtry, ſo there is none more arduous and laborious; and therefore, the greateſt men that ever God employed in and about this work, have been ready to ſink under the apprehenſion of the inſuperable difficulties that do attend it. If we conſider how a goſpel miniſter ought to excel in knowledge, in utterance, in prudence and conduct, in exemplary piety, in patient contending with a people's frowardneſs and perverſeneſs, we need not wonder at our apoſtle's exclamation or expoſtulatory queſtion in the words before us: *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?*

17 For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The character which the apoſtle gives the falſe apoſtles who were crept in amongſt the Corinthians: they were *corrupters of the word of God*; they did ſophiſticate and adulterate the ſincere word of God, by intermixing their own pride and paſſions, their own inventions and imaginations, with the doctrine which they delivered. Falſe teachers deal with the word, as ſome vintners deal with their wines; they imbaſe them in their nature, that they may advance them in their price, and thereby increaſe their own profit; they deliver the word of God in ſubtlety, but not in ſincerity. 2. The declaration which the apoſtle makes of his own uprightneſs and integrity in preaching the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt: *As of ſincerity, as of God, and in the ſight of God, ſpeak we in Chriſt*; that is, we act as men of ſincerity in what we do, as men taught of God, and ſent by God, as men acted by the power, and guided by the Spirit of Chriſt, and all this as in the ſight of God; we ſpeak as from God, of God, in obedience to his command, and with an eye at his glory. He is a better preacher that ſpeaks with an upright heart, than he that ſpeaks with an eloquent tongue; he that acts from religious principles, for holy ends, as in the preſence of the all-ſeeing God, and with a fixed eye at the glory of God in what he preaches, he is an interpreter, one of a thouſand.

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle in this chapter intimates to us how much the reputation of a miniſter's perſon is needful and neceſſary in order to the ſucceſs of his miniſtry; and ſheweth that his converſion to Chriſtianity was a full evidence of God's owning and approving of him as his ambaſſador, and a ſufficient commendation of his perſon and miniſtry amongſt them; which miniſtry he proves to be far more excellent than that of Moſes.

DO we begin again to commend ourſelves? or need we, as ſome *others,* epiſtles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? 2 Ye are our epiſtle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3 *Foraſmuch as ye are* manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart.

Our apoſtle here expoſtulates the caſe with the Corinthians, why they would at any time hearken to the falſe apoſtles, who, by reflecting upon his perſon and miniſtry, made it needful for him to vindicate both from contempt and ſcorn. As if he had ſaid, "What do I need to begin again in this ſecond epiſtle, as I did in the firſt, to commend myſelf and the effects of my miniſtry among you? Or need I commendatory letters either to you or from you, as the falſe teachers amongſt you have? No, verily; you yourſelves, by your converſion to Chriſtianity, and embracing the faith of the goſpel, are a better atteſtation and teſtimonial to the world, of the ſucceſs of my miniſtry, than any written epiſtle is or can be: For you are *an epiſtle written in my heart*; that is, your converſion by my miniſtry, is the joy and rejoicing of my heart! there it is that I continually carry a thankful and honourable remembrance of you, and bear you upon my heart, whenever I go in and out before the Lord. And as my epiſtle, *you are known and read of all men*; that is, all Chriſtians far and near take notice of you as a church which God has eminently bleſſed my miniſtry to the converſion and edification of." But, leſt the apoſtle ſhould ſeem too aſſuming in calling the Corinthians his epiſtle, in the next words he calls them the epiſtle of Chriſt, ver. 3. *Ye are the epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtered by us*; that is, your faith and converſion was the work of Chriſt's Spirit, though wrote by my miniſtry; he having wrote his law in your hearts after a more excellent manner than any thing that can be written with ink and paper; not as the ten commandments of old were written, *in tables of ſtone, but in the fleſhly tables of the heart*; that is, in your hearts made ſoft and pliable, and ready to obey the word and the will of God, by the operation of the holy Spirit, uſing my miniſtry as the pen or inſtrument in his hand in order thereunto. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is a very great favour from God, when his miniſters can ſee the ſucceſs of their labours in the hearts and lives of any of their people; when they can ſay, *Ye are our epiſtle.* 2. That nothing doth ſo highly commend our miniſtry as our people's proficiency; their improvement in knowledge, their ſteadfaſtneſs in the faith, their growth in grace and holineſs, is beyond all verbal commendations and acknowledgments whatſoever. Sermons fetch not applauſe from men's renown, the people's practice is the preacher's crown. 3. That whatever ſucceſs the faithful miniſters of Chriſt meet with, either in the work of converſion or edification, among a people, they attribute the whole efficiency of it unto God, aſcribing nothing more than a bare inſtrumentality to themſelves: *Ye are the epiſtle of Chriſt*, ſays the apoſtle, *miniſtered by us*; Chriſt has written his law in your hearts by my miniſtry; As if he had ſaid, Chriſt is the writer, the pen is the miniſter, the ink the Spirit, the paper or table that receives the impreſſion is the heart, and the law of God the writing writ therein and thereupon.

4 And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to God-ward;

Obſerve here, How the apoſtle encourages himſelf from the experience he had of the preſent ſucceſs of his miniſtry, to hope for the favour of farther and future ſucceſs: *Such truſt* or confidence have we, through the grace of Chriſt, of the conſtant efficacy of our miniſtry, that he will ſtill own and honour it, ſucceed and bleſs it. When God has rendered our labours acceptable and ſucceſsful amongſt a people, either for converſion or edification, it ſhould encourage us to truſt in God for the efficacious aſſiſtance of our miniſtry, and rendering us yet more ſucceſsful amongſt them, and a greater bleſſing to them.

5 Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency *is* of God; 6 ¶ Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Obſerve here, 1. How the apoſtle having made an apology and defence for himſelf, and his miniſtry, againſt thoſe that did calumniate him, in the former verſes: In the verſe before us, he acknowledges his great inability for this work, and that his whole ſufficiency for ſervice was from God; and this without doubt he mentions not only out of humility, but out of prudence alſo, in order to ſtop the mouths of thoſe who might be apt to think he had too high an eſteem of himſelf: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Far be it from me to think that I could procure the ſucceſs of my miniſtry, that I have any ſuch ſufficiency of myſelf to convert ſouls; no, no, my ſufficiency and ſucceſs is all from God; for, alas! there is no proportion between ſuch a ſublime and ſupernatural ſervice as that of the goſpel miniſtry is, and the impotency and weakneſs of man." *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* 2. The free and full acknowledgment which the apoſtle makes of the great things which God hath done for him, and by him: He did not find, but made him, a miniſter, an able miniſter; yea, an able miniſter of the New Teſtament, or new covenant; not a preacher of the law of Moſes, but of the goſpel of Jeſus: *Who hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament.* To be a ſufficient and ſucceſsful goſpel-miniſter is a very great favour from God to any perſon: The clay of the goſpel is better than the gold of the temple; the rags of the evangelical, more rich than the robes of the Levitical preacher: It is a great honour to be, and a greater favour to hear, the meaneſt goſpel-preacher, than to hear all Moſes's lectures. 3. How our apoſtle here inſenſibly ſlides into a compariſon which he makes between the law of Moſes and the goſpel of Chriſt, in which he magnifies and prefers the latter above the former; the law he calls *the letter*, the goſpel, *the Spirit*; that is, a miniſtration of the Spirit. *The letter killeth*; that is, the law condemneth and curſeth the ſinner, the tranſgreſſor of it; but the Spirit of Chriſt revealed in the goſpel, enableth, as well as directeth, to obey, and ſo *giveth life.* *Note* here, How falſe the quakers and others gloſs is upon theſe words: They by *the letter*, will underſtand the whole written word of God, contained in the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, the law and goſpel both; and by *the Spirit*, will have to be meant the inward and immediate teachings of the light within them. Others by *the letter*, underſtand the literal and hiſtorical ſenſe of ſcripture in general; and by *the Spirit* giving life, they underſtand the myſtical and ſpiritual ſenſe of ſcripture; but it is evident from ver. 3. that by *the letter* he underſtands the law engraven in ſtone, the law as delivered by Moſes with an appearance of the glory of the Lord upon mount Sinai; And by *the Spirit*, is meant the bleſſed Spirit of Chriſt given to the apoſtles to enable them to preach the goſpel, and conferred upon all believers that did obediently hear and receive it.

7 But if the miniſtration of death written *and* engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſteadfaſtly behold the face of Moſes, for the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away: 8 How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

Our apoſtle, in this and the following verſes, goes on with his compariſon betwixt the law and the goſpel, and ſhews the tranſcendency of the latter above the former. Where *note*, 1. He calls the law again a killing law, or a miniſtration of death; becauſe it condemns men for the breach of it, to temporal and eternal death, without opening to them any door of hope. 2. This law (he ſpeaks of it by way of diminution) was only written upon, and engraven in ſtone; whereas the goſpel is written in the fleſhly tables of men's hearts. 3. How the apoſtle declares that this miniſtration of the law was *glorious*, glorious in the miniſter of it, Moſes, who had ſuch a luſtre upon his face, that the children of Iſrael could not bear the ſight of it; and *glorious* in the manner of giving it: There was a great deal of the glory and majeſty of God attending the giving of the law to Moſes; the miniſtration of the law was glorious. 4. The compariſon which the apoſtle makes between the law and the goſpel, and the preference which he gives to the one above the other. (1.) As the glory of Moſes's face ceaſed after a while, ſo the glory of the law ceaſed at the coming of the goſpel. (2.) The law was delivered by angels to Moſes, but the goſpel was delivered to the apoſtles by the Son of God, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. (3.) Whereas the glory of Moſes did more and more decreaſe; the glory put upon the apoſtles, and derived from Chriſt, was ſtill more and more increaſing upon them. But, (4.) The chief glory of the goſpel, which the apoſtle here inſiſts upon, is *the miniſtration of the Spirit*, in the large effuſions of it under the goſpel diſpenſation, giving ſpiritual and eternal life to believers, inſtead of death ſpiritual and eternal coming by the law. Well therefore might our apoſtle here ſay, the miniſtration of the Spirit, or the goſpel, is much more glorious; and conſequently a greater reverence and honour is due to it, and to the miniſters of it.

9 For if the miniſtration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory. 10 For even that which is made glorious had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

Obſerve here, 1. The different titles given to the law, and to the goſpel; the former is called *the miniſtration of condemnation*, becauſe it condemns men eternally for the violation of it; the latter is called *the miniſtration of righteouſneſs* or juſtification, becauſe it diſcovers to us the only way for a ſinner's juſtification before God, namely, by the righteouſneſs of the Mediator. 2. That the apoſtle comparing the law and the goſpel together, acknowledges that there was a ſurpaſſing glory in the latter above and beyond the former. Indeed God's inſtitution ſtampt an excellency upon the Jewiſh worſhip, and the law given them had both an intrinſic glory in it, as it was a revelation of the will of God; and alſo an accidental and adventitious glory, as it was attended with the ſolemnity of thunder and lightning, fire and ſmoke, and a voice like the ſound of a trumpet, at the promulgation of it; yet, ſays the apoſtle, compared with the goſpel, the glory of the law, or Jewiſh worſhip, had no glory in it at all, by reaſon of the glory that doth excel; as the moon compared with the ſun, is ſo outſhined by it, that its brightneſs is little taken notice of. True, indeed, the law was a revelation of God's will as well as the goſpel, but with this happy advantage on the goſpel's ſide: The law was a revelation of God's will as to duty and as to condemnation, in caſe of non-performance of that duty; but the goſpel is a revelation of God's will, as to grace and mercy, as to remiſſion of ſin and eternal life. 3. Another argument produced here by the apoſtle, to prove the miniſtration of the goſpel to be much more glorious than that of the law; namely, becauſe it is much more durable and abiding: Verſe 11. *If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.* The force of the argument lies thus: That which is durable and permanent, is far more excellent than that which is temporary and tranſient. Now the law or Jewiſh diſpenſation is vaniſhed; its miniſtration is ceaſed, and all the legal ordinances are aboliſhed: but the goſpel-ſtate remaineth to the end of the world. It is called a kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. therefore the goſpel miniſtration, which is eternal, fixed, and abiding, muſt needs be more excellent and more glorious than the legal diſpenſation, which was temporary, tranſient, and vaniſhing.

12 Seeing then that we have ſuch hope, we uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech. 13 And not as Moſes, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Iſrael could not ſteadfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed. 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day remaineth the ſame veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Teſtament; which *veil* is done away in Chriſt. 15 But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheleſs, when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the veil ſhall be taken away.

Here the apoſtle draws an inference from the foregoing diſcourſe; that ſeeing himſelf and the other apoſtles had ſuch hope, that their miniſtry was thus glorious, ſuch confidence and aſſurance of the perfection and perpetuity of their miniſtry, they did now uſe great plainneſs, freedom, and boldneſs of ſpeech in preaching and publiſhing the goſpel: and did not imitate Moſes, the miniſter of the law, who put a veil over his face; which was a ſign of the obſcurity of the legal diſpenſation, and of the blindneſs of the Jews, who could not ſee the end and the accompliſhment of that ceremonial and typical adminiſtration, which was to be aboliſhed by Chriſt and his goſpel: But their minds were then, and ſtill are, blinded by prejudice and unbelief, and the ſame veil remaineth to this day ſpread over Moſes's writings, and not taken away in the reading of the Old Teſtament; which veil is now done away by the doctrine of Chriſt contained in the New Teſtament; nevertheleſs, when the hearts of the Jews ſhall be turned unto the Lord, and they own and acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt, then the veil ſhall be taken away from the Jews, and they ſhall then clearly underſtand and ſee what is now concealed and hidden from their eyes. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a natural veil of blindneſs and ignorance upon the minds of men, which hinders their diſcerning and underſtanding goſpel myſteries. 2. That there is upon the underſtandings of the Jews a veil of unbelief and rooted prejudice againſt Chriſt and his holy religion; they wilfully ſhut their eyes, and ſaid, "They would not ſee;" and God has judicially cloſed their eyes, and ſaid, "They ſhall not ſee." 3. That by reaſon of this veil upon their hearts, they cannot look to the end of that which was aboliſhed; that is, to Jeſus Chriſt, who was the end and ſcope at which the whole ceremonial law did aim and tend. 4. That when the Jews ſhall be called home, and converted to Chriſtianity, the veil ſhall be removed from their hearts, and they ſhall then underſtand the tendency and meaning of the whole ceremonial law, and obſerve its fulfilling and accompliſhment in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *When they ſhall turn to the Lord, the veil ſhall be taken away.*

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is,* there is liberty.

As if he had ſaid, Chriſt is that quickening and life-giving Spirit, who takes away the veil from off our hearts; and where that Spirit, that all-glorious and all-powerful Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; that is, clearneſs, and no more veil; freedom from the yoke of the legal adminiſtration, a liberty and freedom from ſin, a liberty unto righteouſneſs, a freeneſs and readineſs of ſpirit to do good, a liberty of addreſs and approach to God, a liberty of ſpeech in prayer before God. Thus the Spirit of the Lord is a free Spirit.

18 But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is, we who live under the light, and enjoy the liberty of the goſpel, with open face beholding as in a clear glaſs the glory of the Lord Jeſus, as Moſes did the glory of God in the mount, are by degrees changed into the ſame image with him, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord working in us, and transforming us into his own likeneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That the word and ordinances of God are the glaſs wherein we have now a ſight of the glory of God. 2. That the ſight of God in his ordinances is transforming, as well as the ſight of him in heaven; the glory into which we are changed, is our conformity to that holineſs which ſhineth in the word. Viſion, or the ſight of God here in his ordinances, aſſimilates as well as in heaven; perfect viſion produceth perfect aſſimilation; but the ſoul's preſent aſſimilation, or imperfect conformity to God here, is gradually carried on by daily communion with him. All ſorts of communion among men have an aſſimilating power and efficacy: He that converſes with vain company, grows more vain, and he that delights in holy and ſpiritual company, grows more ſerious than he was before: But nothing ſo transforms the ſpirit of a man, as communion with God in his ordinances doth; none ſo like him, as thoſe that converſe moſt frequently with him. 3. That if the ſight of God in the glaſs of an ordinance be ſo aſſimilating, how transforming will be the ſight of God in heaven, when we ſhall there behold and ſee him face to face? If the viſion of Chriſt here be ſo influential upon believers, what an illuſtrious and infallible efficacy will the immediate, clear, and perfect ſight of his glory have in heaven? 1 John iii. 2. We ſhall be perfectly like him, when once we ſhall ſee him as he is.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apoſtle vindicates his office and dignity from the prejudices which either his ſufferings which attended him in the diſpenſation thereof, or the ſuggeſtions of falſe apoſtles, and deceitful workers might have raiſed up againſt him.

THEREFORE ſeeing we have this miniſtry, as we have received mercy we faint not; 2 But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

That is, ſeeing we have ſuch a glorious miniſtry, far more excellent than that of Moſes, mentioned in the concluſion of the foregoing chapter, as we have received mercy or ſpecial favours from God in committing it to us, ſo we faint not under the difficulties and preſſures to which it doth expoſe us. *Having received mercy we faint not*; *but have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty,* all fornication and uncleanneſs, all ambition and covetouſneſs, which the falſe apoſtles allowed themſelves in: *Not walking* in guile *or craftineſs*; *nor handling the word of God deceitfully,* as they do; *but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience, as perſons acting in the ſight of God.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the miniſtry of the goſpel is a very glorious miniſtry, far excelling the Moſaic diſpenſation. 2. That it is a ſpecial favour from God to be judged faithful, and put into this miniſtry. 3. That no troubles or trials, no difficulties, dangers or diſtreſſes, ſhould cauſe any of the faithful ſervants of God to faint, who have received mercy or favour from God to be put into the miniſtry: *Seeing we have this miniſtry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.* *Obſerve*, next, How the apoſtle, having vindicated and extolled his miniſtry, does in the ſecond verſe declare and aſſert his fidelity in the diſcharge of his miniſtry: *Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.* Hence *learn*, That the apoſtles delivered the goſpel, in all things neceſſary to be known, believed, and practiſed, with great plainneſs and ſufficient perſpicuity; otherwiſe, they could not be ſaid *to manifeſt the truth to every man's conſcience.*

3 But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt:

As if he had ſaid, We preach the goſpel plainly: But if men do not underſtand and believe it, will not embrace and obey it, it is not an argument of the goſpel's obſcurity, but of our hearers incredulity. The goſpel is not hid from men for want of clearneſs, but only by means of their own voluntary and wilful blindneſs: *If our goſpel be hid.* Here *note*, 1. St. Paul's claim and intereſt in the goſpel which he preached, he calls it *his* goſpel; not as if he was the author of it, but becauſe of his inſtrumentality in the promulgation and eſtabliſhing of it, it was a divine treaſure committed to his care and truſt; it was not his goſpel, by way of original revelation, but by way of miniſteral diſpenſation. 2. The Corinthians non-proficiency under the goſpel, ſpecified, or at leaſt ſuppoſed. *If our goſpel be hid*; that is, if the word, which we preach with the greateſt plainneſs, in the greateſt ſimplicity and ſincerity, if it be hidden from the minds and underſtandings of men, ſo as to miſs of its convincing power, and converting efficacy, the fault is not in the goſpel, but in them that ſit under it. 3. The heavy doom and judgment which the apoſtle paſſes upon all ſuch perſons as ſit under the external diſpenſation of the goſpel, and yet are no ways enlightened nor improved by it, but remain blind and ignorant, obſtinate, and unreformed. It is a ſad ſymptom and foreboding ſign of a loſt people. *Learn* hence, 1. That there are many, very many, who ſit under the external diſpenſation of the goſpel, unto whom the goſpel is an hidden goſpel. 2. That the goſpel's being hid from a people, who have long enjoyed the light and benefit of it, is a ſad ſymptom, yea, a certain ſign of a loſt people. Such blindneſs, under the cleareſt light, is like the covering of the face, or tying the handkerchief over the eyes, in order to the turning off the obſtinate ſinner into an eternal hell.

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.

Obſerve here, 1. The title given to Satan, he is ſtyled *the God of this world*; not properly, but becauſe the honour and homage of a god is challenged by him, and by a multitude of ſinners given to him. He is called by our Saviour the *prince of this world*, and by the apoſtle the *ruler of the darkneſs of this world*; becauſe he ruleth over a great part of the world, and they are his ſubjects, or rather his ſlaves. 2. The way and courſe which Satan takes to ſecure his ſubjects' obedience to himſelf; *he blinds their eyes*, that they may never know a better prince, ſee a better way, or underſtand a better ſtate, than he hath drawn them into. Satan blinds the underſtandings of men by the efficacy of divers luſts, which are bred and nouriſhed in their hearts. Now the ſtreamings of ſenſual luſts from a corrupt heart, do blind the underſtanding, and beſet the judgment, that the ſinner can neither ſee nor know the excellency of ſpiritual objects. O bloody and barbarous prince, that puts out the eyes of all his ſubjects, darkens the mind and underſtanding, takes away the thinking, conſidering, and reaſoning power of the ſoul, that they neither ſee nor conſider ſpiritual things, nor have any diſtinct and effectual apprehenſions of them! 3. The character of the perſons whom Satan the god of this world, hath blinded; *Such as believe not*; that is, both ſuch as want the means of faith, and ſuch as enjoy the means, but want the grace of faith: The former is the caſe of the Pagan, the latter of the Chriſtian world. Lord! how many live under the light of the goſpel, that never had heart to receive it, or will to obey it! How great a part of the Chriſtianized world do reject Chriſt! though called by his name, yet will not own his authority, or ſubmit to his government. The nobles of the world think themſelves diſhonoured by ſubmitting their necks to Chriſt's yoke; the ſenſualiſts of the world will not lay down a luſt for him, that laid down his life for them; the worldlings of the earth prefer their dirt and dunghill before the pearl of great price. O how few amongſt them that profeſs Chriſtianity, do love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity! 4. The great end and deſign of the devil's agency, in blinding the minds of men with ignorance and error, with paſſion and prejudice; *leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine into their hearts*, to the ruin of him and his kingdom. As the ſun caſts its beams upon blind men, but they receive not the light of it, ſo, though the light of Chriſt's glorious goſpel ſhines before the eyes of them whom the god of this world has blinded with the hopes and deſires, with the poſſeſſions and enjoyments of this world, yet they receive it not. 5. The glorious title here given to Chriſt, *The image of God*; that is, (1.) His ſubſtantial and eſſential image, being God of God, very God of very God. Chriſt, conſidered with reſpect to his divine nature, is the expreſs image of his Father's perſon. (2.) Chriſt is his image as Mediator, and with reference to the goſpel, in which he has given us glorious demonſtrations of the power and wiſdom, of the grace and holineſs, of the mercy and goodneſs of God towards us; all which, as in a glaſs, are repreſented to us, and preſented before us. In both theſe reſpects Chriſt is called, *The image of God.*

5 For we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus' ſake.

In theſe words, our apoſtle further manifeſts his fidelity and integrity in preaching the goſpel, by ſhewing that he ſought to advance Chriſt, and not himſelf, in preaching of it. Here *note*, 1. The duty practiſed by St. Paul: *We* *preach.* How mean and ignoble ſoever this office of preaching is eſteemed by ſome men, who value not their own or other men's ſouls, and therefore no wonder that they undervalue the means of making them happy; yet will the faithful miniſters of Chriſt magnify this part of their office, not by pomp and ſtate, nor by ſcorn and ſuperciliouſneſs, as thinking it beneath them to preach, but by an humble and painful attendance upon the miniſtry, which they have received of the Lord; and will diſpenſe the word with evidence and perſpicuity, with faithfulneſs and ſincerity, with power and authority, with courage and boldneſs, and with exemplarineſs of converſation; not preaching angelical ſermons, and leading diabolical lives. 2. The ſubject-matter of the apoſtle's preaching; *not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* But when may perſons be ſaid to preach themſelves? *Anſ.* When they make themſelves the authors of their own miniſtry, running before they are ſent, and are ſelf-created preachers; when they make themſelves the matter of their preaching, venting their own paſſions, and prejudices, and private opinions, inſtead of the doctrine of Chriſt; and when they make themſelves the end of their preaching, aiming rather at pleaſing others, and profiting themſelves, than at the glory of God, and the good of men's ſouls. But what is it to preach Chriſt? *We preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. Anſ.* When he is the author of our miniſtry, and we receive our miſſion from him; when we make him the object of our preaching; when the ſubject-matter and ſubſtance of it is Jeſus Chriſt, either explicitly or reductively; and when we make him the end of our preaching, deſigning to promote the honour and intereſt of Chriſt by our miniſtry, that his people may be gathered, his body edified, his ſaints perfected, his enemies ſubdued, his goſpel propagated, and he finally admired in all them that believe. 3. In what capacity the apoſtle looked upon himſelf in the church of Chriſt; not as a lord, but as a ſervant: *Ourſelves your ſervants.* There is an honour belonging to Chriſt's miniſters, but verily that honour conſiſts in ſervice which we owe to the church of Chriſt: Servants we are to the ſouls of men, but not to the humours of men; at the ſame time that we are ſervants to them, we are to rule over them, and they are to obey, and ſubmit unto us as thoſe who watch for their ſouls. Therefore it is added, *Servants for Jeſus's ſake:* that is, ſervants in order to the promoting of his honour, and his church's intereſt.

6 For God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, The faithful and humble acknowledgment which the apoſtle makes, how himſelf and his fellow-apoſtles came to preach Jeſus Chriſt ſo convincingly to others; namely, That almighty God, who at firſt by his omnipotent word produced light out of darkneſs, by no leſs efficacy and power brought him, a loſt ſinner, out of the darkneſs of Pharaiſm and ſin, and ſhined into his and their hearts with a glorious light, to the intent that he and they ſhould communicate and impart this divine light of the knowledge of God, which ſhineth in the face of Chriſt unto others. *Learn* hence, That miniſters muſt know Chriſt themſelves, before they can make him known to others; Chriſt muſt be revealed in them, before he can be revealed by them; he muſt ſhine into their hearts by his holy Spirit, and give them an experimental acquaintance, in their own ſouls, with what they deliver and make known to others. Every truth ought to be the tranſcript of our own experience, and be preached firſt to our hearts, and then to our hearers. Who can ſavingly enlighten others, that is in the darkneſs of ignorance, or ſin, himſelf?

7 ¶ But we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

In the foregoing verſes we find the apoſtle magnifying his office, extolling his miniſtry, and vindicating his fidelity in the diſcharge of his duty. In this verſe, *obſerve*, 1. He compares the goſpel he preached to a treaſure: *We have this treaſure*; a treaſure for the enriching and edifying of the church. The goſpel is a treaſure for its worth and dignity, for its abundance and variety, for its cloſeneſs and ſecrecy. This treaſure Chriſt keeps under lock and key, only intruſting thoſe with it whom he calls to it, and furniſhes for it. They are no better than thieves and ſacrilegious robbers, who without a mediate call or warrant from Chriſt, do aſſume this truſt, and break open this treaſure. 2. The repoſitory in which this treaſure is laid up, *in earthen veſſels:* So the apoſtles and miniſters of the goſpel are called. Where *note*, The word of deſcription, they are *veſſels*; and the word of diminution, they are *earthen* veſſels. (1.) The preachers of the goſpel are repreſented by a word of deſcription, they are *veſſels:* Thus veſſels are not natural, but artificial inſtruments. No man is born a Chriſtian, much leſs a miniſter, but made ſuch. Veſſels are not of equal capacity; ſome are leſs, others greater: Thus the miniſters of the goſpel have gifts and graces of different degrees and excellencies. Again, veſſels are not for reception only, but for effuſion alſo: as they receive and retain, ſo they let out what is put into them: The miniſters of Chriſt are not only to receive and lay up, but to lay out this heavenly treaſure, which is not impaired by imparting. Finally, veſſels are not the originals of what they have, but all they contain is poured into them, and received by them. A mine has treaſure in its own bowels, but it is put into the cheſt. Thus the preachers of the goſpel are not the authors, but the receivers only, of thoſe truths which they publiſh: 1 Cor. xi. 23. *I have received of the Lord what I alſo delivered unto you. Note* farther, The word of diminution, they are *earthen* veſſels. The preachers of the goſpel are divine in regard of the ſublimity of their doctrine, but human and earthen in regard of the frailty of their condition. Their being called *earthen veſſels*, may denote the meanneſs of their condition, which for the moſt part is little and low in the world: As the poor receive the goſpel, ſo are they very often poor and low that publiſh the goſpel; neceſſitous and indigent, *earthen veſſels.* Again, it may denote the frailty of their perſons, and the contemptibleneſs of them. Earthen veſſels are little ſet by, ſtand in open places, uſed by every hand, and at every turn; while plate, gold and ſilver veſſels, are laid and locked up with great carefulneſs. Thus it is often with the preachers of the goſpel, they are objects baſe and vile, contemptible and deſpiſed in the eyes of the world, veſſels wherein there is no pleaſure; yea, with ſome, not only our perſons are deſpicable, but our very office and function is contemptible. In a word, as our mean condition and baſe eſtimation, ſo our bodily conſtitution proclaims us earthen: Our bodies are earthen, becauſe formed of the duſt of the earth, becauſe ſubject to flaws and cracks, and to be broken in pieces; we that preach eternal life to others, are dying men ourſelves; and whilſt the word of life is in our mouths, many times death is in our faces. Laſtly, The reaſon aſſigned why this treaſure of the goſpel is committed to earthen veſſels, men; not to heavenly veſſels, angels; namely, *That the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us:* From the weakneſs of man, the inſtrument, there redounds great honour to God, the agent. This precious treaſure of the goſpel is lodged in ſuch weak and worthleſs veſſels, that as the power is from God, namely, the awakening, convincing, quickening, heart-changing power of the word is from him: So the glory, the entire glory and complete praiſe, may be attributed and aſcribed to him.

8 *We are* troubled on every ſide, yet not diſ-
treſſed; *we are* perplexed, but not in deſpair; 9
Perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not
deſtroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body
the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life alſo of
Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body. 11 For
we which live are always delivered unto death for
Jeſus's ſake, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be
made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh. 12 So then
death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 We
having the ſame ſpirit of faith, according as it is
written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken;
we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak;

The falſe apoſtles and ſome weak Chriſtians having taken offence at the manifold and great ſufferings which St. Paul, with his fellow apoſtles, had met with in the courſe of their miniſtry: In theſe verſes, St. Paul ſhews the church at Corinth, that there was no reaſon at all why any ſhould be offended at his ſufferings, or any cauſe why the falſe apoſtles ſhould object, that if he had preached the goſpel ſincerely, Almighty God would never have ſuffered him to be perſecuted and afflicted ſo ſeverely; namely, becauſe all his afflictions were ſo graciouſly moderated, and himſelf ſo powerfully upheld by God, that he ſunk not under the weight and burden of them. We are troubled, ſays he, on every ſide, but not overwhelmed with our troubles; we are often perplexed, but not ſo as to deſpair of God's help and ſuccour; we are perſecuted by men, but not forſaken of God; caſt down indeed, but not killed by the fall. So that there is in our ſufferings a reſemblance and repreſentation of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt Jeſus. We bare in our bodies a memorative conformity to our dying Lord, that it may appear how mightily we are ſupported by the quickening power of the Spirit of Chriſt, under all our afflictions. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Behold and admire in us the almighty power of Chriſt exerted towards us, in upholding theſe earthen veſſels (our frail bodies) notwithſtanding the many thouſand knocks they have met with in carrying about that heavenly treaſure, the holy goſpel, with which God has intruſted us." *Obſerve* next, He rejoices in the cauſe of his ſufferings: *We are delivered unto death for Jeſus's ſake*; for our owning, preaching, and practiſing the doctrine of Jeſus. Bleſſed be God, we ſuffer not as evil-doers, but for well doing; we ſuffer for the ſake of the beſt perſon, and in the beſt cauſe, that ever the world was acquainted with. He adds, *We are delivered unto death, that the life of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh*; that is, the infinitely wiſe God ſuffers us to be thus afflicted, that in and by the ſufferings which our mortal fleſh does ſuſtain and undergo, he might make it evidently manifeſt that Chriſt is riſen from the dead; and, as a living Head, conveys the neceſſary influences of ſtrength, ſupport, and comfort, as to all his members, ſo more particularly to us his miniſters; by which we are enabled, without fainting, to ſuffer the hardeſt things with patience, courage, and conſtancy. Laſtly, He declares to them the great advantages which they reaped by his afflictions: *Death worketh in us, but life in you*; that is, the preaching of the goſpel expoſes us to death, but unto you it brings eternal life. Our death is your life, our ſufferings are your advantage, we having the ſame faithful ſpirit which was in the ſaints under the Old Teſtament, and particularly in holy David, Pſal. cxvi. 10. who ſays, *I believed and therefore ſpake*; *I was ſore afflicted.* Now as he believed and truſted in God for deliverance out of his many and great troubles, ſo, in like manner, do we believe and truſt. From the whole, *note*, 1. That a perplexed, and perſecuted, and afflicted, and diſtreſſed condition, was the lot and portion of the members, but eſpecially of the miniſters of Chriſt, in the firſt and pureſt ages of the church. Chriſt eſpouſed his church to himſelf upon the bed of the croſs, his head begirt with a pillow of thorns, his body drenched in a bath of his own blood: And if the head was crowned with thorns, it is unſuitable that the feet ſhould tread on roſes. 2. Though all Chriſt's followers have drank of the ſame cup with himſelf, yet the dregs of the cup have uſually been put into the hand of the miniſters of the word; *we that live are always delivered unto death:* Moſt of the apoſtles were, by the rage of tyrants, put to cruel deaths, and offered up a bloody ſacrifice. The calling of miniſters is honourable, but their outward condition is deplorable; their embaſſy is glorious, but their uſage is often grievous: God ſends them forth with renown, the world entertains them with reproach. 3. God doth not bring his people into a ſuffering condition, and there leave them; when they ſuffer for him, they are not forſaken by him: The voice of deſpair is not heard in the dark night of their calamity: But God has either the caſtle of providence, or the ark of promiſe; the all-ſufficiency of his power, or the abundance of his grace: Theſe, every of theſe, and all theſe, are for his people's retirement in the greateſt ſtorms and tempeſts.

14 Knowing that he which raiſed up the Lord

Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent *us* with you. 15 For all things *are* for your ſakes, that the abundant grace might through the thankſgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

A double reaſon is here aſſigned, why the apoſtle bare his ſufferings with ſuch invincible courage and Chriſtian patience. The firſt is drawn from the advantage which would redound to the church by his ſufferings: *All things are for your ſakes*; that is, all the ſtraits we are put to, turn to your advantage: If we die, it is to confirm you by our ſufferings; if we be delivered, it is for God's glory and your good, *that the abundant grace might by the thankſgiving of many redound to the glory of God.* Whatever we meet with, tends to the confirming of your faith, and the increaſing of your thankfulneſs. A ſecond reaſon is drawn from the joyful iſſue of his ſufferings: He and his fellow-apoſtles ſteadfaſtly believed, that Almighty God, who raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, would in like manner raiſe them from the grave of their ſufferings, yea, from the grave of death; and both ſoul and body ſhall be preſented with them, to be eternally glorified together. *Learn* hence, That how different ſoever the lot and portion of God's children and ſervants be in this life, ſome more, others leſs afflicted; yet having all, at the ſame time, faith in God for a joyful deliverance out of their afflictions, they ſhall all meet in the morning of the reſurrection, and be by Chriſt preſented unto God as perſons redeemed by him, and ſhall eternally be glorified with him.

16 For which cauſe we faint not; but though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

The original word for *fainting*, ſignifies to ſhrink back, as cowards in war, or to ſink down as a porter under the preſſure of ſome heavy burden: *For this cauſe we faint not.* For what cauſe? Namely this, that though their bodies were weakened by affliction, and they were daily decaying as to the ſtrength and vigour of the outward man; yet as to their inward man, the ſtrength and vigour of their minds and ſpirits, were day by day renewed. O happy apoſtle! the cold blaſts of perſecution beating upon thy outward man, did, by a ſpiritual antiperiſtaſis, increaſe the heat of grace within; thy ſoul is made fat with blows upon thy body, and battens with pricking and beating; every ſtone thrown at thee knocked thee nearer to Chriſt, the chief corner-ſtone: Under all the ſtorms and billows of affliction, thou, like Noah's ark, wert lift up nearer to heaven; and after every encounter, thy ſalvation is nearer than before. Well therefore mighteſt thou declare and ſay, *For this cauſe we faint not.*

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in aſſigning reaſons why all the afflictions which himſelf and others met with, were not only tolerable, but joyous; namely, becauſe, (1.) His afflictions were light. (2.) Becauſe they were ſhort. They were light; but how? Not conſidered in themſelves; ſo they were hard and heavy; thrice was he beaten with rods, five times he received forty ſtripes ſave one; but light, compared with the glory expected. Again, they were ſhort; but for a moment, compared with eternity. Mark the gradation: For affliction there is glory; for light affliction, a weight of glory; and for light affliction, which is but for a moment, an eternal weight of glory. *Obſerve* farther, the apoſtle doth not barely ſay, that glory will be the conſequent of affliction, but that affliction will be the cauſe of glory; *it worketh for us.* But how? Not as a meritorious cauſe: For alas! how can our afflictions deſerve this happineſs? What proportion can there be betwixt light and momentary afflictions, and an eternal weight of glory? But they work for us, as they are ſanctified by God to us. His infinite mercy and goodneſs, his covenant-truth and faithfulneſs, make his ſaints afflictions a whipping-poſt to their corruptions; they purge out iniquity, and take away our ſin, if we belong to God as his covenant-children. But for wicked and obdurate ſinners, alas! it is much otherwiſe: Inſtead of being refined from their droſs, and purged from their filth, by being in the furnace of affliction, it boils their ſcum and impurity more into them; and, like flints in the fire, they fly in the very face of God their refiner.

18 While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen. For the things which are ſeen *are* temporal, but the things which are not ſeen *are* eternal.

The laſt reaſon is aſſigned here, why the apoſtle was kept from fainting in and under the preſſure of the moſt heavy afflictions: He looked not at preſent, but future things; not at things ſeen, but unſeen; not at things temporal, but eternal. *Obſerve* here, 1. What it was that the apoſtle, when on earth, made his main ſcope, his chief aim, grand deſign, and grand end. This is ſignified to us in the original word σκοπȣντων, which ſignifies to look as the archer doth at the mark he ſhoots at. There were ſome things which he, his fellow apoſtles, and all ſerious Chriſtians with them, looked at. This is ſpecified, firſt, negatively, *We look not at things ſeen*; at the things of this life, at ſenſible objects, be they bitter or ſweet, be they comforts or croſſes: Temporal things are temporary things; and we mind them not as the men of the world do, who make them their chief and principal aim, and ſcope: No, we leave the world to the men of the world; *We look not at things which are ſeen.* But, ſecondly, This is ſpecified affirmatively, *We look at the things which are not ſeen*; the things of another life, things which are objects of faith, and not viſible to fleſhly eyes; we look at theſe, we make theſe our aim and ſcope. And the reaſon is ſubjoined why they made theſe things the matter of their choice, the objects of their deſire and endeavour. This is intimated in the word *(for)*; *For the things which are ſeen are temporal*; that is, all the viſible things of this life, whether comforts or croſſes, whether proſperous or adverſe, be it health or ſickneſs, liberty or reſtraint, poverty or riches, honour or diſgrace, life or death, they are all ϖροσκαιρα for a while, only for a ſhort ſeaſon, as the word ſignifies; therefore we do not much eye them, we trouble not our heads much about them; they are things of an higher nature we look at, ſuch as neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard; and theſe are the durable things; *for the things which are not ſeen are eternal. Learn* hence, 1. That temporal things, or things that are ſeen, do take up the heads and hearts, the minds and thoughts of the men of the world, and are the ſum of their deſires, and the ſubſtance of their endeavours: *We look not at the things which are ſeen,* but there are thoſe that do; we *make them* not our aim and ſcope, but others look at them, wholly at them, can ſee nothing beyond them, and deſire nothing beſides them. 2. That things unſeen, the things of eternity, and the viſible encouragements of another world, are the mark and ſcope which every real Chriſtian is aiming at, and contending for: *We look at the things which are not ſeen,* and make them our aim and ſcope. 3. That the things not ſeen, or the things of another life and world, are eternal things; that is, ſuch things as admit of no changes and alterations, of no gradations or ſucceſſions, of no decay or conſumption, of no future hopes and expectations, of no mixture or moderation, of no recovery or revocation, of no period or concluſion. O eternity! eternity! that vaſt, that boundleſs ocean of eternity! how does it ſwallow up our thoughts with wonder and amazement! God help us daily to conſider of it, duly to prepare for it, and not to prefer the trifles of time before it, but make the wiſeſt proviſion for the longeſt duration. 4. That which puts the weight upon things not ſeen, and renders them the proper objects of a Chriſtian's aim and choice, is this, becauſe they are eternal: That which chiefly caſts the ſcale, and maketh things not ſeen to preponderate, is becauſe they are eternal things. It is eternity which tranſcendeth all expreſſion, all conception, much more all our comprehenſion, that puts an infinite weight upon unſeen things: *The things which are not ſeen are eternal.* This meditation, well digeſted, would work in us an holy indifferency towards all temporal things; it would moderate our eſteem of them, our deſires after them, our delight in them, and our grief for the want and loſs of them; and ſweeten all thoſe troubles and trials, all thoſe ſufferings and afflictions, which we meet with in our paſſage through time unto eternity. Lord, take off, and turn away our eyes, from things which are ſeen, and help us to *look at the things which are not ſeen.*

CHAP. V.

Our apoſtle in this chapter gives a reaſon why he did ſo courageouſly labour in the work of the miniſtry, notwithſtanding the great dangers which he met with: And tells us, it was the well-grounded hopes of a future immortality which did ſupport and bear up his ſpirit under all the preſſures of human life.

FOR we know that if our earthly houſe of *this* tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle compares the body of a believer to an houſe, to an earthly houſe, and to an houſe of tabernacle; to an houſe, becauſe of its comely fabric and compoſure, as alſo in regard of the inhabitant that dwells in it, the never-dying ſoul; to an earthly houſe, in regard of the matter of which it was compoſed, and in regard of the means by which it is ſuſtained; and to an houſe of tabernacle, becauſe ſuch buildings conſiſt of ſlight and mean materials, they are ſoon ſet up, and as ſoon taken down. 2. The neceſſity of this earthly tabernacle of the body's diſſolution by death, it muſt down and be diſſolved. 3. The believer's future happineſs, after the body's preſent diſſolution aſſerted and declared: *They have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Learn* hence, 1. That it is the pleaſure and will of God, that his people ſhould for a ſhort time remain in this earthly tabernacle of the body. 2. That this earthly tabernacle of the believer's body, ſooner or later, muſt by death be diſſolved. 3. That after the diſſolution of this earthly tabernacle of the body, all the faithful have an eternal habitation, a building of God, not made with hands, in the higheſt heavens. 4. That it is both the duty and intereſt of every ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian, to labour for the certain knowledge and full aſſurance of this happy privilege, and be able to ſay, *We know, &c.*

2 For in this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven:

For in this, that is, in this ruinous earthly tabernacle. *Note* here, 1. The ſtrength and vehemency of the ſaints affection, *we groan*; the word ſignifies ſuch a groaning as of a man that has a load or burden lying upon him, which makes him fetch his wind from his very bowels: As there are groans which proceed from ſorrow, ſo there are groans which ariſe from deſire and hope. Thus here, *We groan earneſtly deſiring.* 2. What is the ſubject which the apoſtles groaning deſires were carried out after; namely, to be clothed with a celeſtial body, inſtead of that clogging body of earthly corruption which here they carried about with them, *earneſtly deſiring to be clothed upon,* &c. *Learn* thence, That ſuch as do believe and wait for a bleſſed immortality, do groan for it, and earneſtly deſire it, becauſe of the miſeries and preſſures by ſin and ſorrow in this preſent life, becauſe they have already a taſte of the happineſs and glory of the life to come, and becauſe the holy Spirit doth excite and ſtir up theſe groaning deſires in the hearts of believers: Rom. viii. 23. *We alſo, that have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within ourſelves.*

3 If ſo that being clothed we ſhall not be found naked.

That is, If ſo be at our paſſage hence, we ſhall have the happineſs to be of the number of thoſe who are found clothed with glory, or clothed with holineſs and good works, to fit us for our clothing in glory, that we may not be *found naked,* in our natural turpitude of ſin and ſpiritual nakedneſs, which will render us abominable in the ſight of God. *Learn* hence, that none can groan or long for heaven but ſuch as are clothed with a goſpel righteouſneſs, that of juſtification, ſanctification, and new obedience: None ſhall be clothed upon with glory hereafter, but ſuch as are clothed with grace and holineſs here.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.

Note here, That this groaning deſire, again mentioned by the apoſtle in this verſe, with reſpect to the burden of the body, to get rid of it, is not either an unnatural deſire, or a diſcontented deſire, or a deſire of death as death, or a deſire to be unhouſed, and without clothing for the ſoul; but he would be better clothed with a celeſtial body, that his mortal part might be ſwallowed up by immortal glory. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "As weary as I am of life, by means of ſin and ſorrow, by reaſon of corruption and affliction, yet I would not barely, for the ſake of that, deſire a diſſolution, but for the hope's ſake of eternal and immortal life." *Learn* hence, 1. That whilſt the ſaints live in this earthly, mortal body, they are burdened with a heavy load of ſin and affliction. 2. That believers thus burdened, do, in an holy manner, groan and long for a better ſtate. 3. That in that better ſtate, mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life. 4. That in that life, we ſhall be clothed again with our own bodies, glorious and heavenly.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing *is* God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit.

That is, He that hath wrought and appointed us, he that hath prepared and fitted us for this glorious change, and hath ſet our ſouls a-longing for this immortal ſtate, is God; who hath alſo *given us by his Spirit* thoſe holy affections, fervent deſires, and faithful endeavours, which are the earneſt of heaven before we enjoy it. *Learn* hence, 1. That Almighty God doth fit and frame his people for that happy ſtate of bliſs and glory, which he has deſigned them for, and appointed them unto. *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God.* 2. That to the intent his ſaints may look and long for that glorious and immortal ſtate with the greater vehemency and deſire, he has already given them an earneſt and foretaſte of it, by his holy Spirit in their hearts.

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.

We are confident, that is, by the holy Spirit comfortably aſſured of a better ſtate. They who have the earneſt of the Spirit, may be confident of their future glorious ſtate: or we are confident; that is, we are of good courage, fearing neither death nor danger in the way of our duty, *Knowing that whilſt we are at home here in the body*, that is, whilſt ſojourning in the body as pilgrims and ſtrangers, *we are abſent from the Lord:* That is, we are detained from the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of God, and kept out of the poſſeſſion of that happineſs which makes heaven. Here the apoſtle plainly intimates, that whilſt we remain in the body, we are detained from our happineſs, and that ſoon as we leave the body, we ſhall be admitted to our happineſs. *Learn*, 1. That a Chriſtian is not in his own proper home whilſt he ſojourneth in the body, and lives in his earthly tabernacle here below. His birth and parentage is from heaven, his treaſure and inheritance in heaven, his kindred and relations, and beſt friends are there, and there ſhall he longeſt abide. 2. That the true reaſon why the ſaints count themſelves here not at home, is becauſe they are abſent from the Lord whilſt preſent in the body.

7 For we walk by faith, not by ſight:

That is, our condition here in this world is ſuch, that we cannot ſee God face to face, but by faith only; whilſt we are in the body, we do not ſee and enjoy, but believe and expect. Faith is the thing in expectation, ſight is the thing in fruition: Faith is a cloudy diſcovery of things at a diſtance, ſight is a clear view and apprehenſion of things that are preſent. *Learn*, 1. That faith is for earth, and ſight is for heaven. 2. That till we have ſight, it is a great advantage that we have faith. 3. That if we now have faith, we may be well aſſured, that ere long we ſhall have ſight.

8 We are confident *I ſay*, and willing rather to be abſent from that body, and to be preſent with the Lord.

The original words for *we are confident* and *willing*, denote firſt courage and undaunted boldneſs, with reſpect to death, and complacency and ſatisfaction in it. *We are willing:* The tranſlation is too flat, ευδοκουμεν, *we are well pleaſed*. It is a grateful and deſirable thing to us to leave the body, yet not in an abſolute, but comparative conſideration. We are willing *rather*; that is, rather than not ſee and enjoy the Lord, rather than be always here ſinning and groaning, *We had rather be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* *Learn*, 1. That our happineſs in the world to come, lies in our being preſent with the Lord. 2. That we are preſent with the Lord, as ſoon as the ſoul quitteth and takes its leave and farewel of the body. 3. That a ſtate of ſeparation from the body, is much more preferable to the ſaints, than that of dwelling in the body. 4. That this deſire, preference, and choice, ariſes from that confident aſſurance which they have of a better ſtate, and of their intereſt in it.

9 ¶ Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent or abſent we may be accepted of him.

The word ſignifies *to labour ambitiouſly*, as an ambitious courtier labours for his prince's favour. We labour, whether preſent in the body, or abſent from the body, whether living or dying, that our perſons and our ſervices may be accepted with him, whenever we appear before him. *Learn*, 1. That to be accepted with the Lord, is a very high honour: To have our perſons accepted, and our performances acceptable, are high favours; the former is the ground of the latter, and Chriſt is the foundation of both, Epheſ. i. 6. *Learn*, 2. That it is a gracious perſon's great ambition and deſire, his aim and ſcope, his deſign and endeavour, that living and dying he may find acceptance with God, and his actions be ſuch, as God may well like and approve of.

10 For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

Theſe words are fully deſcriptive of a future judgment. In which *obſerve*, 1. The neceſſity of a future judgment, *We muſt*, willing or unwilling. 2. The univerſality of this judgment, *We muſt all*. 3. The perſon by whom, and before whom, we muſt be judged, *Chriſt*. 4. The manner of this judgment, *All muſt appear*, and be made manifeſt, both perſons and actions. 5. The matter about which we ſhall be judged, *The things done in the body*. 6. The end of all this inquiſition, to be puniſhed or rewarded, according to our actions. *Learn*, 1. That there will certainly come a day, when every perſon that ever lived in this world, ſhall certainly be judged by Jeſus Chriſt: *We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt*. 2. That every man's judgment and ſentence at the great day, ſhall proceed and be pronounced according to what he has done in the fleſh, be it good or bad; *That every one may receive the things done in his body*, &c.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men; but we are made manifeſt unto God; and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your conſciences.

That is, knowing the terror and dread of that terrible and dreadful day, in which Chriſt will judge the whole race of mankind; and being perſuaded of the truth and certainty of it ourſelves, we endeavour to perſuade all men, by all means, to fly from the wrath to come, by repentance and faith, that they may be found of God in peace in that ſolemn hour. *Learn* hence, That the knowledge and conſideration of the preſent terrible judgments of God, and the future terrors of that great day, ſhould move the miniſters of God to perſuade, and their people to be perſuaded, to a careful and ſerious preparation for it. Such miniſters as know and conſider the terrors of the Lord, will both perſuade others, and be perſuaded themſelves, to look after reconciliation and acceptance with God; that when Chriſt comes terribly, they may appear comfortably: *Knowing the terrors of the Lord we perſuade men*. It follows, *but we are made manifeſt unto God, and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your conſciences*. As if he had ſaid, We hope God hath diſcovered our ſincerity unto you in ſome meaſure, as he is an obſerver of it, and witneſs to it himſelf. *Learn* hence, That then a miniſter has the full aſſurance of his ſincerity, when he has the approbation of God, and his own conſcience, and alſo a teſtimony in the conſciences of his people. This is gained by the purity of our doctrine, by the piety of our lives, and by the prudence of our conduct: When theſe are evident and manifeſt to the conſciences of our people, how convincing is it to them, and comfortable unto us!

12 For we commend not ourſelves again unto you, but give you occaſion to glory on your behalf, that you may have ſomewhat to *anſwer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "We commend not ourſelves to you upon our own account, as if there were any need of it, with reſpect to us; but only to give you an occaſion to vindicate us, and to glory to others on our behalf, when need requires, that you may have wherewith to anſwer the calumnies of the falſe apoſtles, who gloried much in outward appearance of piety and zeal, but not in purity of heart, and upright intentions." *Learn* hence, That though the miniſters of Chriſt have no itching deſire to exalt themſelves in a way of ſelf-commendation, yet they are ſometimes conſtrained to it in a way of ſelf-vindication, and this is not only lawful, but a duty; becauſe ſcandals caſt upon a good man reach farther than himſelf; they reflect upon others as well as himſelf, yea, they reflect upon God himſelf, therefore to be wiped off and rolled away.

13 For whether we be beſides ourſelves, *it is* to God: or whether we be ſober, *it is* for your cauſe.

The holy apoſtle was ſometimes ſo zealouſly tranſported, and carried forth in his high actings for Jeſus Chriſt, that the falſe apoſtles repreſented him as a frantic perſon, crazed, mad, and what not: "Be it ſo, ſays the holy man, it is unto God, in his cauſe, and to propagate his glory, and not my own: Or if I be ſober in my words and actions, it is for your benefit, not my own." *Learn* hence, That wicked and carnal men account and repreſent the holy ſervants of God as a ſort of madmen. Workings of grace are ſometimes ſo far above reaſon, that they ſeem to be without reaſon: There are ſeveral acts of holineſs, which the profane world eſteem as madneſs; as eminent ſelf-denial, great ſeriouſneſs in religion, their burning zeal, their holy ſingularity, their fervours of devotion, their patience and meekneſs under ſufferings and reproaches. All theſe acts of holineſs repreſent the ſaints as madmen to carnal men.

14 For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.—

That is, the infinite love of Chriſt, in dying for us, conſtraineth us to live unto him, and do the utmoſt ſervices for him. Some underſtand it paſſively, for the love that Chriſt beareth us; others take it actively, for that love which we bear to him. Now, this love is ſaid *to conſtrain*. Some think it a metaphor from a woman in travail, that ſtrives to be delivered of her burden; others, that it ſignifies to have one bound, and ſo much under power, that he cannot move without leave. The expreſſion denotes the abſolute empire which the love of Chriſt had over him, ruling all the inclinations of his heart, and the actions of his life. It ſignifies the ſweet violence and force of love, by which the ſoul is overpowered, and cannot ſay nay; it does wholly poſſeſs us, rule and command us, keep us in its power, and makes us do whatever it would have us do. *Learn* hence, That the love of Chriſt has ſuch a conſtraining power, and obliging force and efficacy, upon the ſoul, that it inclines it to a willing performance of all duties, though attended with the greateſt difficulties and dangers. Love is the ſpring of action, it is a forcible and compelling, it is an invincible, unconquerable affection: And it has ſuch an influence from the conſideration of what Chriſt is in himſelf, and of what he has done for us, and deſigned for us.

—Becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.

If one died for all, then were all dead. Some underſtand it of a death in ſin; all were in a ſtate of ſin and death, when Chriſt died for them. Others underſtand it myſtically, when Chriſt died for all, all were then dead; that is, dead in Chriſt unto ſin; intimating, that when Chriſt died, all believers were dead in him to ſin and the world. As Chriſt died for ſin, ſo ought all to die unto ſin. Farther, Chriſt dying once for all, proveth the verity of his ſatisfaction, and the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction. What virtue was there in that death which merited life for all! What love was there in our God to appoint one for all! That one ſo worthy in himſelf, that one ſo dear to God, ſhould die, ſhould die ſo willingly, ſhould die ſo painfully, ſhould die ſo ſhamefully, ſhould die under a curſe, to abſolve from guilt, and diſcharge from condemnation! *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us! Obſerve* next, The great end and deſign of Chriſt in his death and reſurrection for us; namely, (1.) Negatively declared, that we ſhould not *live unto ourſelves*, to our own eaſe, profit, or honour; gratifying our own wills, inclinations, and corrupt deſires, ſerving our own intereſt and ends; but poſitively, *to live unto him*, according to his word and will, in obedience to his commands, and with an eye at his glory, *who died* for our ſins, *and roſe again* for our juſtification. Had Chriſt only died for us, the favour had been inexpreſſible and unrequitable, and required us to live to his name and glory; but when he not only died for us, but roſe again, and lives for ever in heaven, to pour down freſh benefits upon us, and to do good offices daily and hourly for us, how endearing are our obligations to love him, and to live unto him! *Learn* hence, 1. That by virtue of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, Chriſtians are both obliged to, and have obtained the grace of newneſs of life, and holineſs of converſation. 2. That it is the duty, and will be the endeavour, of all thoſe that are quickened by the Spirit of Chriſt unto newneſs of life, to refer all their actions not to themſelves, but unto him: None can do both, live to Chriſt and ſelf together. His we are already; by creation, by redemption, by ſanctification, by voluntary reſignation, we live by him. Our ſpiritual life is from him, we expect hereafter to live with him; let us therefore now live unto him, even unto him that died for us, and roſe again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh: yea, though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

Theſe words, probably, were ſpoken by the apoſtle, to rebuke the carnal boaſtings of ſome Jews, who gloried in their having ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh before he died. The apoſtle directs them to a more ſpiritual knowledge of him, now ſince his reſurrection, as more ſuitable to his glorified ſtate: "What though you have eaten and drunken in Chriſt's preſence when on earth, all that corporeal familiarity is ceaſed; it is his ſpiritual gracious preſence which now you are to depend upon, and value yourſelves by." For *henceforth know we no man after the fleſh*; we value no man for his outward advantages, for his wiſdom, riches, or learning. Yea, *though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh*, ſeeing and converſing with him, when here on earth, yet muſt *we know him ſo*, and enjoy him as ſuch, *no more*. Our carnal affections and relations to him muſt ever ceaſe, now he is exalted into a ſpiritual and glorious condition. *Learn* 1. That a bare knowing of Chriſt after the fleſh, ought to ceaſe among Chriſtians. There is a knowledge of Chriſt after the fleſh, ſince his aſcenſion into heaven; namely, by a naked profeſſion of his name, without a conformity to his laws, and by acts of ſenſitive affection: Some by reading the hiſtory of our Saviour's paſſion, others by ſeeing in the ſacramental elements, a tragical repreſentation of his crucifixion, do find their human paſſions ſtir and move; but, if it reſts here, without drawing forth our love to his perſon, and quickening our obedience to his commands; all this is but knowing Chriſt *after the fleſh* to no ſpiritual or ſaving purpoſes. 2. That a bare knowledge of Chriſt after the fleſh will do us no good, be of no comfort or advantage to us, as to our eternal ſalvation: It is not a fond affection to his perſon and memory, but obedience to his laws, that Chriſt values. It is obſervable, that an outward ceremonious reſpect to our Saviour's perſon was very little regarded by him, when here upon earth; a ſerious attention to his doctrine was infinitely preferred by him before all that. Our love to Chriſt is better ſhewn by religious ſervices, than by paſſionate affections. We find, St. John xx. when Mary fell at Chriſt's feet, after he was riſen, and embraced him, when ſhe held him by the feet and worſhipped him, when in an humble and affectionate devotion ſhe lies proſtrate before him, Chriſt forbids it, *Touch me not.* He rejects all theſe external teſtimonies of her love, which proceeded only from human affection; but he directs her to a more acceptable ſervice, namely, to run and carry tidings of his reſurrection to his diſconſolate diſciples; *Go to my diſciples, and ſay*, &c. From whence I infer, that it is much more acceptable to Chriſt to be about his ſervice, and doing good in our place and ſtation, than performing any offices of human love and reſpect unto his perſon. Seeing then, that this ceremonious reſpect pleaſed Chriſt, neither when on earth, nor now he is in heaven, *henceforth know we no man after the fleſh*, &c.

17 Therefore, if any man *be* in Chriſt, *he is* a new creature: old things are paſſed away: behold, all things are become new.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, If any one amongſt you pretend to be a Chriſtian indeed, engrafted into Chriſt by baptiſm and regeneration, and is a member of his body, he is by regeneration made a new man, all the faculties of his ſoul are renewed, his principles, affections, and practices are all new: *Old things are paſſed*, or paſſing *away* daily, the old carnal inclinations of mind are wearing off, the old will is changed, the old life is reformed; and, in a word, whatever was old and carnal, is now become new and ſpiritual. *Behold, all things become new*; new affections, new inclinations, new diſpoſitions, a new courſe, and a new converſation. Nothing is new phyſically; he is the ſame perſon, he has the ſame faculties: But all things are new qualitatively, he is renewed in the ſpirit of his mind. *Learn* hence, 1. That all ſuch as call themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, and own themſelves to be his followers, are and ought to be new creatures. This implies a real and inward, a thorough and prevailing change both in heart and life; not a civil change, barely from profaneneſs to ſobriety; not a ſudden change, only under ſome great affliction or awakening providence; not a change from one ſect or party of profeſſors to another: But the change of the new creature conſiſts in a new mind, a new will, a new judgment, new affections, in a new converſation, not in a new form and profeſſion; the change of the new creature introduces the life of God, and produces the neareſt likeneſs to God. 2. That this new creation, wrought in a man by the word and Spirit of God, is an indubitable evidence of his intereſt in Chriſt, and title to ſalvation; for where the new creature is, there all the ſaving graces of the Spirit are, as a pledge and an earneſt of glory and happineſs.

18 And all things *are* of God,—

That is, all thoſe things forementioned belonging to this new ſpiritual creation, are of God, as the author and efficient cauſe of them. *Learn*, That God is the original author of the new creature, and of all things belonging thereunto. This appears partly from the nature of the work, it is a new creation; and partly from the objects of the work, the perſons wrought upon. They are averſe from God, in enmity to him, and rebellion againſt him, dead in ſin, under the dominion of Satan. Well therefore might the apoſtle ſay, *All theſe things are of God.*

—Who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation: 19 To wit, that God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

In theſe words the apoſtle gives us a ſhort, but full account of the grand doctrine of a ſinner's reconciliation unto God by the death of Chriſt, which is the principal ſubject and ſubſtantial part of the goſpel. Where *obſerve*, 1. The privilege itſelf, *reconciliation*; this is two-fold: *Fundamental*, in the death of Chriſt, he is our peace; God laid the foundation of our peace and reconciliation with with himſelf in the death of his Son: *Actual*, in the application of it, on our part, by faith. The death of Chriſt rendered God reconcileable: Faith renders him actually reconciled. 2. The author of this reconciliation, God the Father; he was the perſon wronged by ſin, declaring his anger againſt the ſinner: Hence we are ſaid to have acceſs to the Father through Chriſt, and by the Spirit. The Son brings us to the Father, and the Spirit directs us to the Son: Chriſt takes away God's enmity againſt us, and the Spirit takes away our enmity againſt God. 3. The medium or mean by which we become reconciled to God, *Jeſus Chriſt*. Chriſt was the meritorious cauſe of this privilege: Chriſt is the center of that agreement between the juſtice of God, and the mercy of God. 4. The parties at variance, and made one by reconciliation, God and the world, God and mankind. Almighty God, in conſideration of Chriſt's death, did ſo far reconcile and forgive the offending world, as to offer them pardon of ſin, and ſalvation by a Redeemer, upon a condition of their believing acceptance: But none are actually reconciled but believers, who actually accept the terms and conditions of peace and reconciliation by faith which is a neceſſary receptive qualification. *Learn* hence, That there is an happy peace and reconciliation made in and by Jeſus Chriſt, between an offended God, and an offending world. Reconciliation is a repairing of decayed friendſhip, or making up of a breach between two that were formerly friends, but now at variance. The reconciliation is mutual, becauſe the enmity is ſuch; yet the ſcripture ſpeaks more of our being reconciled to God, than of God's being reconciled to us, becauſe we are in the fault, and not God; we the cauſe of the breach, we offended God, not God us; and becauſe we have the benefit of this reconciliation, and not God, it is no profit to him that we are at peace with him; and becauſe all the difficulty of being reconciled lies on our part, and not God's.

20 Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.

Obſerve here, 1. The miniſters' office and employment declared: they *are ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, ambaſſadors from God to man; and, as ambaſſadors, they have their miſſion, their commiſſion, from a great Prince, about great concerns; they muſt be faithful to their inſtructions, they are inviolable by the law of nations, and their embaſſy muſt be received, upon pain of diſpleaſure. Where let us remark, the wonderful goodneſs and wiſdom of God, in appointing men, of the ſame level with us, and not angels ſuperior to us, to diſpenſe the myſtery of reconciliation to us. As God deals more familiarly with us in this way, (for we cannot bear the voice of God, or the ſight of angels) ſo there is more certainty in this way, becauſe miniſters muſt deceive their own ſouls, if they deceive us: And herein God magnifies his own power, and lets us know, that the efficacy of the goſpel is from him the author, and not from man the diſpenſer. 2. The miniſters duty diſcovered; in God's name, and Chriſt's ſtead, to intreat, beſeech, and perſuade ſinners to become reconciled unto God. Here *note*, 1. That God and man were once friends. 2. That God and man are now enemies. 3. That man, and not God, firſt made the breach of friendſhip, and occaſioned that unhappy controverſy, which is now depending between God and man. 4. That though man was firſt in the breach, yet God is firſt in the offer of reconciliation. 5. That therefore it is the higheſt duty and chiefeſt intereſt of man to accept of terms of peace and reconciliation with God. 6. That in order to all this, the great duty incumbent upon the miniſters of the goſpel, is this, with all earneſtneſs to preſs upon people the doctrine of reconciliation, and to uſe all arguments with them, to perſuade them to become reconciled unto God.

22 For he hath made him *to be* ſin for us, who

knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſpotleſs innocency of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator, declared: *He knew no ſin*; that is, practically and experimentally; he knew it not ſo as to commit it in the leaſt degree; he was a pure, innocent, and ſinleſs perſon: But theoretically and ſpeculatively he did know ſin: He well underſtood its nature, its effects, and fruits: None knew the bitter fruits of ſin ſo well as our bleſſed Saviour. 2. God's ordination of Chriſt, with reference unto ſin: *He hath made him to be ſin*; not made him a ſinner, but a ſin-offering, a ſacrifice for ſin. *Made*; that is, ordained a ſacrifice to expiate ſin, and to bear the puniſhment due to ſinners. 3. The end of this ordination with reſpect to us, *That we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* Here *note*, The righteouſneſs of the Mediator is called the righteouſneſs of God; becauſe, (1.) It was the righteouſneſs of that perſon who was God. (2.) Becauſe the only wiſe God found out and appointed it. And, (3.) Becauſe it is accepted by God; and the penitent believer, for the ſake of it, looked upon as righteous and juſtified. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſin muſt have a ſacrifice. *He hath made him to be ſin:* that is, a ſin-offering, or a ſacrifice to expiate ſin. Under the law the ſacrifice was called *ſin*, becauſe the ſin of the perſon was laid upon the ſacrifice; there was a ſort of a tranſlation of the ſin from the ſinner to the ſacrifice. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt was made a ſacrifice for our ſin: Our guilt was imputed to him, and our puniſhment was born by him; which made Luther call Chriſt *the greateſt ſinner in the world*; not that he had any ſin in his nature, or in his life, but becauſe the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. 3. That Jeſus Chriſt's being made ſin for us, is the meritorious cauſe and means of our being made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Surely God may be as juſt in pardoning us, who have no righteouſneſs of our own, as in condemning his own Son, who had no ſin of his own. Have we broken his royal and righteous law? yet Chriſt has kept it, and fulfilled all righteouſneſs. Have we ſinned againſt mercy? yet Chriſt has ſuffered without mercy: And all this by the ordination and appointment of God the Father, who *made* his own and only Son *to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.*

CHAP. VI.

Our apoſtle in the laſt words of the foregoing chapter having poſitively aſſerted the great doctrine of reconciliation through Chriſt; in this chapter, he draws inferences from that doctrine, by way of application.

WE then *as* workers together *with him*, beſeech *you* alſo that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Here *note*, 1. The nature of the miniſterial function: The miniſtry is a work, an arduous and laborious work, neither angels nor men are of themſelves ſufficient for it, without proportionable aſſiſtance from God. Miniſters are *workers*. 2. They are workers *together*, they join together with one voice, with one cry, beſeeching ſinners to be reconciled unto God. All the miniſters of Chriſt are fellow-labourers, workers together in God's harveſt-field; that which is the work of one, is the work of all; they ſhould all join in it, and rejoice together in the ſucceſs of it: not only labour with, but bleſs God for the ſervices and ſucceſſes of each other. Lord! how ſad is it to ſee the miniſters of God divided in their work and way, when one rejoiceth in that which to another is cauſe of mourning! 3. Miniſters are workers together with God, as well as with one another; they are ſubordinate inſtruments working by him, but not co-ordinate cauſes producing with him the work of converſion in the ſouls of men; not as if they could communicate any power or ſtrength to the working of grace, by the preaching of the word, 1 Cor. iii. 5. *Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed?* 4. The exhortation, or cautionary direction given. *We beſeech you, receive not the grace of God in vain*; where, by the *grace of God*, is meant the doctrine of the goſpel; becauſe it is graciouſly and freely beſtowed upon a people, and becauſe the matter and meſſage which it brings is grace. The law diſcovers God's will, the goſpel diſcovers his good will: And by *receiving this grace in vain*, is meant, the receiving the goſpel unfruitfully, unprofitably, and ineffectually; when we do not receive it with a due eſtimation, with fervency of affection, with a fiducial application; when it doth not purify the heart, reform the life, and ſave the ſoul. It is not the receiving of the goſpel into our houſes, into our heads, into our mouths; but into our hearts, that will bring us to heaven.

2 (For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of ſalvation.)

Theſe words are taken from the prophet Iſa. xlix. 8. They are a promiſe which God the Father made to Chriſt as Mediator, That in the great work of ſaving his church, the Father would accept and ſuccour him, as the head of the church: *I have heard thee in an accepted time, in the day of ſalvation.* Here *note*, There is a two-fold day of ſalvation; the one was Chriſt's day, for the purchaſe of ſalvation; the other is our day, for the application. (1.) Chriſt had a ſeaſon aſſigned him for the impetration or purchaſe of ſalvation: And he ſet in, and complied with that ſeaſon, and it became an acceptable time with reſpect to him. (2.) We have alſo our ſeaſon allotted us by God, for the application of Chriſt and his benefits to our ſouls. Behold, now is our accepted time, now is our day of ſalvation; let us prize it highly, and improve it faithfully. It is a day, and that is but a ſhort ſpace of time; it is a day, and therefore continually ſpending: it is a day, therefore when once gone, is irrecoverably gone. Our working day is a waſting day; it is a day, and that will be followed with a night, in which none can work, but only lament their folly in not working.

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed:

Obſerve here, 1. The nature and quality of the work which the ambaſſadors of Chriſt are called to, and do labour in, *a miniſtry*. 2. What was the deſire and aim, the care and endeavour, of the apoſtle then, ought to be the ſtudy of every miniſtry now; namely, to avoid offence, and that univerſally, both as to perſons and things, *giving no offence in any thing*. 3. What was the ground and reaſon of this care and endeavour to give no offence, namely, *that the miniſtry be not blamed*. *Learn*, That it is the ſtanding duty of all the miniſters of Chriſt, ſo to perform their miniſterial office, that they give no juſt offence in any thing to any perſon, that ſo the miniſtry committed to them may not be blamed. We muſt give no offence by our words and ſpeeches in common converſation; no offence by unſound doctrine, by perſonal reflections; no offence by groſs, careleſs, and negligent omiſſions, or by rude and irreverent indecencies, or by any affected ſingularities in our adminiſtrations; but eſpecially, give no offence by a bad life and ſcandalous converſation.

4 But in all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, 5 In ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſtings.

Obſerve here, 1. The great care which the holy apoſtle took to approve himſelf unto God, in the exerciſe of his miniſtry: *In all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God.* 2. What an approved miniſter muſt do and endure, in order to the obtaining the ends of his miniſtry: If he be called to it, he muſt bear up againſt all diſcouragements, and encounter all oppoſitions; let the way be what it will, fair or foul, a green carpet way, or dirty poachy way, he muſt ſtick at nothing, but go through thick and thin, patiently enduring afflictions of all ſorts, and cheerfully undergoing ſufferings of all kinds, and exerciſing all manner of ſelf-denial, for the goſpel's ſake. Behold here, how the miniſters of Chriſt, that will approve themſelves unto God, muſt run all hazards, and venture through all extremities: They muſt work in heat and cold, in fire and froſt, in all ſorts of providences from God, in all ſorts of aſpects from men, fearing neither the face nor frowns of any: For though every goſpel miniſter attains not to St. Paul's zeal, and holy fortitude and courage, yet he has a truth of zeal, and ſuch a firmneſs of reſolution, as will, according to his meaſure, carry him through a world of evils and incumbrances, in the doing of that good which duty and conſcience doth oblige him to, and call for.

6 By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left, 8 By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report,—

The apoſtle, in the foregoing verſes, had declared how many difficulties and dangers muſt be encountered by him that will attain the ends of his miniſtry, and approve himſelf unto God in integrity and uprightneſs: here he ſhews by how many ways and means the work of the miniſtry is promoted, and how the miniſters of the goſpel muſt be qualified for it; namely, *by pureneſs* of converſation, *by knowledge* of divine myſteries, and ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, *by long-ſuffering* under all provocations, *by kindneſs* towards all men, by the gifts and aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt, *by the word of truth* clearly preached, *and by the power of God* confirming it; *by the armour of righteouſneſs*, which completely covers and protects us *on the right hand and on the left*, both in proſperity and adverſity; by paſſing *through honour and diſhonour*; by going through *evil report and good report*. Here *note*, That the miniſters of God do approve themſelves, and trial is made of them, as well by the things on the right hand as on the left. A miniſter of Chriſt is tried as well by honour as diſgrace, as well by praiſe as by diſparagement. The good report which we meet with in the word, is certainly as great, yea, a more dangerous temptation, than the ill reports we paſs under: It is a great trial to a miniſter to be diſpraiſed and deſpiſed, to have dirt thrown undeſervedly in his face; but verily, it is as great a trial to be praiſed, commended and applauded, to be lifted up in the thoughts and upon the tongues of men. Solomon has an excellent proverb to this purpoſe, Prov. xxvii. 21. *As the fining-pot for ſilver, and the furnace for gold, ſo is a man to his praiſe*; that is, a man is tried by his praiſe, as really as ſilver is tried in the fining-pot, or gold in the furnace: Whenever a miniſter is praiſed, he is tried; his humility is tried, his ſelf-denial is tried; when he is praiſed by men, he is tried whether he can give the entire praiſe to God: When people cry up ſuch and ſuch a preacher, they put him into the fining-pot; and he that is but droſs, conſumes. Let miniſters remember there are trials on the right hand, as well as on the left; that paſſing through honour, and going through good reports, are great trials, as well as paſſing through diſhonour and evil reports. God prepare us for both.

—As deceivers, and *yet* true; 9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chaſtened, and not killed; 10 As ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* poſſeſſing all things.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, Verily our life is made up of ſeeming, but not real contradictions. The wiſe men of the world look upon us *as deceivers*, but we are the *true* diſpenſers of the word of life unto them; we are looked upon by the world *as unknown*, obſcure perſons; but we are *well known* to God and good men by our doctrine and miracles; we are *as dying* perſons daily, by our paſſing through ſo many perils, and by being expoſed to continual perſecutions, and yet you ſee we are ſtill *alive*; and we are ſometimes *chaſtened* by God, as well as perſecuted by men, but we are not *killed*, nor given over unto death. Outwardly we are *ſorrowful*, but inwardly always rejoicing in God, and in the teſtimony of a good conſcience; in worldly goods and outward circumſtances we are very *poor*, *yet making* many ſpiritually *rich* in grace and good works. We have *nothing* we can call our own, yet in Chriſt all things are ours. Hence *obſerve*, What has been the lot and portion of the faithful ambaſſadors and miniſters of Chriſt from the firſt beginning of Chriſtianity; the dirt of a thouſand ſcandals hath been thrown upon their faces, which in the day of Chriſt's appearance will be as crowns upon their heads. 2. That all outward evils are to be received by the miniſters and members of Chriſt, in the ſame manner, and with the ſame mind, that good things are received with: Honour and diſhonour, good report and evil report, muſt be entertained with the ſame evenneſs and conſtancy of mind, becauſe God is the ſame in all variety of eſtates. Though men change their opinions of us, yet God changes not his judgment concerning us: He loves his miniſters and members when poor, as well as when rich; when the world ſmites us, as well as when it ſmiles upon us: Therefore, if God be the ſame to us at all times, it is our wiſdom and duty to keep the temper of our minds, and to be always the ſame to him and to ourſelves. Whatever we meet with from the world, we have no reaſon to be diſſatisfied if our integrity be ſafe. 3. How rich the apoſtle was without earthly riches, and how abounding in wealth, when he had nothing of worldly treaſure to rejoice in: *Having nothing, he yet poſſeſſed all things.* But how? and in what ſenſe? *Anſ.* He and they poſſeſſed all things: 1. In Chriſt, by whom they had a title to all things. 2. They had all things in the covenant, favour, and grace of God: He hath all things who hath him that hath all things. 3. They had all things virtually, in that contentment of mind which they did enjoy: They poſſeſſed all things in poſſeſſing themſelves, and wanted nothing which they could deny themſelves. The contented man is only rich; he is not rich that has much, but he that has enough; that man is poor that covets more. 4. They poſſeſſed all things eventually; they had the good of all things, when they had not the actual poſſeſſion of all things; their poverty was a bleſſing, and their very wants, in the event, worked for good. 5. They poſſeſſed all things, in future expectation; they looked and longed for heaven and everlaſting happineſs, which would ſwallow up their deſires with fruition; for he that overcometh, ſhall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. Thus is this apoſtolical paradox unriddled, *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.* True faith apprehends and enjoys all things in God, which it wanteth in the creature.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not ſtraitened in us, but ye are ſtraitened in your own bowels. 13 Now for a recompenſe in the ſame (I ſpeak as unto *my* children) be ye alſo enlarged.

Theſe words are very pathetic, and expreſſive of St. Paul's moſt affectionate and ardent love towards the Corinthians, whom he had been an happy inſtrument to convert unto Chriſtianity. He tells them, *his mouth was opened to them,* not to receive, but to beſtow; his mouth was open to fill them with the treaſures of goſpel-knowledge, not to be filled by them; *and his heart,* as well as his mouth, was open unto them, and at their ſervice: If therefore they were ſtraitened in affection towards him, who was thus enlarged in heart and mouth, by tongue and pen towards them, it muſt be through miſtakes and miſapprehenſions on their part; therefore, in a way of recompenſe, he challenges it as juſt and fit, that the ſame reciprocal love be beſtowed upon him their ſpiritual father, as he had manifeſted towards them his beloved children. *Learn* hence, That there is no ſtronger love, nor more endeared affection, between any relations upon earth, than between ſuch miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved people, whom they have been happily inſtrumental to convert to God.

14 ¶ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what communion hath light with darkneſs? 15 And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

The holy apoſtle cloſes this chapter with an exhortation to avoid all intimacy with idolaters, either in civil affairs, in marriages, or in religious worſhip, leſt they be brought into communion with their idolatry; there being no more agreement between a believer and an idolater, than betwixt light and darkneſs, betwixt Chriſt and Satan. And, as we muſt not join with idolaters in ſpiritual communion or religious worſhip, ſo ſhould we have no communion with them in marriages; *that,* having proved a dangerous ſnare to the ſouls of many, our divines have juſtly pronounced ſinful: Nay, it is both wiſe and ſafe to have as little civil communion with idolaters as we can; and when we are neceſſitated to have civil communion with them, we muſt utterly avoid all ſinful communion with them, that is, all communion with them in their ſins. *Learn,* That to aſſociate with idolaters, or to join in affinity with them, but eſpecially to communicate with them in their idolatrous worſhip, is a God-provoking and a wrath-procuring ſin.

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.

This form of queſtions evidently implies the abſolute inconſiſtency between believers and idolaters, and the danger from communion with them: And the apoſtle's calling believers *the temple of the living God,* repreſents both their dignity and duty; their dignity, in having the Spirit of God to dwell in them, and walk in them; their duty, to be purified and adorned for his habitation. *Note,* 1. Believers are a ſpiritual temple in which the Holy Ghoſt dwells: This dwelling implies propriety, familiarity, authority, reſidency, and fixedneſs of abode. 2. That the indwelling preſence of the holy Spirit in good men, as in a temple, being the higheſt honour and moſt perfect felicity of the reaſonable nature, ſhould oblige them to univerſal holineſs, and to avoid all communion with idolaters.

17 Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daugthers, ſaith the Lord Almighty.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Go not then to the idols' temples; join not with idolaters in communion, to avoid perſecution, but come out from amongſt them as an holy people ſeparated to the Lord, and defile not yourſelves with any unclean thing; and while you are pure, and cleave to God, he will own you for his ſons and daughters." *Note* here, 1. A preſſing exhortation to make a full ſeparation from unclean perſons and things, particularly from all idolaters, and idolatrous worſhip; *Come out from among them:* The words are taken out of Iſa. lii. 11. where the prophet exhorts the remnant of Iſrael to come fully out of unclean Babylon. *Learn* hence, That God expects and requires his ſaints ſhould make a ſeparation from all uncleanneſs, but eſpecially from the uncleanneſs of idolatry. God expects a ſeparation from us, from all unclean courſes, from all unclean company, from the preſence and appearance of all uncleanneſs, from communion with idolatrous churches, and from communicating with what is ſinful in the trueſt churches of Chriſt upon earth. *Note*, 2. A quickening encouragement to back this exhortation; *I will receive you, and be a Father to you.* Here is a twofold promiſe, (1.) Of reception, *I will receive you.* (2.) Of adoption, *I will be a Father to you.* God will receive them both into his houſe and heart. *Learn* hence, That almighty God will, as a Father, undoubtedly receive all thoſe into his family and favour who renounce communion with all impurity. As he is Almighty, he is abundantly able, and as he is a Father, he is graciouſly willing, to recompenſe all the ſervices and ſufferings of his children, for the honour and intereſt of his name and truth. It is ſufficiently known how this text hath been miſapplied by ſeparatiſts, to very bad purpoſes; (1.) To juſtify their ſchiſmatical ſeparation from the beſt and pureſt of the reformed churches, under pretence of finding greater purity amongſt themſelves; whereas nothing will juſtify a ſeparation from a church, but that which makes a ſeparation between God and that church. If the church's way of worſhip (in their opinion) be faulty, they preſently pronounce it falſe, and they muſt not join in falſe worſhip; whereas no man offers any worſhip to Almighty God that is not falſe worſhip, if all that is faulty be falſe worſhip: If Chriſt doth not diſown his church for that faultineſs, we ought not to deſert her for it. (2.) Others would ſeek occaſion from theſe words, to juſtify their practice, in refuſing to come to the Lord's table, where ſome vicious perſons are apprehended to be, leſt they ſhould pollute the ordinance, and theſe touch the unclean thing; whereas the preſence of a bad man at the ſacrament pollutes the ordinance only to himſelf; for unto the pure all things are pure; and who will neglect a certain duty, to eſcape an uncertain danger? True, we muſt not own ſuch worſhip as we know God rejecteth; but as God pardoneth the faulty imperfections of other men's worſhip, and of our own alſo, thus muſt we bear with our own and one another's failings, that are tolerable, ſo far as we cannot cure them. Wo unto us, had Almighty God no charity for us than we have for one another! A defective worſhip is not a falſe worſhip; ſinful defects in the adminiſtration of ordinances, do not hinder the ſaving effects of ordinances; a wiſe and good man is certainly as great an enemy to ſeparation, as he is to ſuperſtition: Doctrines crying up purity, to the ruin of unity, reject; for the goſpel calls for unity, as well as for purity.

CHAP. VII.

HAVING therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

Theſe words are argumentative, and infer the indiſpenſible duty of Chriſtians to preſerve themſelves untainted from the idolatrous impure world, by the conſideration of the promiſes ſpecified in the preceding chapter, *I will dwell in you, and walk in you*; *and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people:* A promiſe which contains the higheſt honour, and moſt perfect felicity, of the reaſonable nature. Now from hence he infers, That Chriſtians having ſuch promiſes, ſuch helps and aſſiſtances, ſhould cleanſe themſelves from all ſinful pollution, and endeavour after perfection in purity and holineſs: *Having therefore*, &c. *Note* here, 1. The title wherewith the apoſtle addreſſes himſelf unto them, *Dearly beloved*; this expreſſes both the truth and alſo the ſtrength of his affections towards them: By this appellation he recommends his counſel to their acceptance: For, as light opens the mind by clear conviction, ſo love opens the heart by perſuaſive inſinuation. 2. The matter of the addreſs, and that is, to cleanſe ourſelves from all pollution both of ſpirit and fleſh, and the changing of us into the unſpotted image of God's holineſs. The pollution of human nature is intimate and radical, diffuſed through all the faculties of the ſoul, and members of the body; we are therefore to pray for, and endeavour after renewing grace, and to be always advancing in holineſs on earth, till we arrive at perfection in heaven. 3. The motive exciting hereunto, namely, the exceeding great and precious promiſes aſſured to us from the mouth of God, *Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves.* 4. The means to help us therein, *the fear of God.* This grace has an eminent cauſality and influence in a Chriſtian's ſanctification; it is a powerful reſtraint from ſin both in thought and act, by conſidering that God's pure and flaming eyes ſee ſin wherever it is, in order to judgment. An holy fear of God, and an humble fear of ourſelves, will both reſtrain us from ſin, and engage us to obedience. From the whole, *learn*, That the promiſes of the goſpel lay the moſt powerful obligations upon Chriſtians to endeavour after, and ſtrive for the attainment of pure and perfect holineſs. As the pollution is univerſal, ſo muſt the cleanſing be; and though thankful we muſt be for the leaſt meaſure of ſanctifying grace received, yet not ſatiſfied with the greateſt, ſhort of our perfection: *perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

2 Receive us. We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 ¶ I ſpeak not this to condemn *you:* for I have ſaid before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you.* 4 Great is my boldneſs of ſpeech towards you, great is my glorying of you; I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

Note here, 1. The duty which St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to, namely, to receive him, their apoſtle, into their kind affections, into the boſom of their love, *Receive us*; that is, into your beſt affections. The miniſters of Chriſt are very deſirous of a large ſhare and intereſt in their people's love; well knowing, that if they be prejudiced againſt their perſons, they will reap no benefit by their doctrine. 2. The ſolemn proteſtation which the holy apoſtle makes of his integrity and uprightneſs towards the Corinthians, *We have wronged no man, corrupted no man, defrauded no man*; that is, we have wronged none in their reputation by ſlander, we have corrupted no man's judgment by error and falſe doctrine, we have defrauded no men of any part of their eſtates, either by force or fraud. *Learn* hence, That the holy ſervants of God, eſpecially the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, may juſtify themſelves, and make ſolemn proteſtations of their own integrity and uprightneſs, eſpecially when they fall under jealouſy and ſuſpicion by the enemies of religion. As it was the continual practice of the falſe apoſtles to diſcredit St. Paul's miniſtry, and reflect upon his perſon; ſo it was his conſtant care to counter-work them, by a profeſſed vindication of himſelf, and all his actions. 3. The fervour of the apoſtle's affection towards his Corinthian converts, *You are in our hearts to live and die with you*; that is, you lie and are lodged ſo near our heart, that we could live with you, and die for you, to promote your ſpiritual and eternal welfare. Behold how large a room the people of God have in the affections of his miniſters, how near do they lie to their hearts; and ſo paſſionately deſirous are they of their people's ſalvation, that they could even lay down their lives, and die, to promote their temporal and eternal advantage. 4. How the apoſtle gloried in, and was comforted by the Corinthians, in the midſt of all his afflictions, by the report he had of their repentance, obedience and liberality: *Great is my glorying in you*, &c. As if he had ſaid, "Verily, the report I have made of your repentance and reformation upon the receiving of my former epiſtle, has filled me with ſuch a weight of joy, as over-balances all the afflictions and tribulations which I meet with for the goſpel." *Learn* hence, That the repentance and reformation of any of our people, by the bleſſing of God upon our miniſterial endeavours, is matter of great rejoicing aud glorying to us the miniſters of God, who deſire, above all things, the converſion, edification, and ſalvation of the ſouls of our people: *Great is my glorying in you*, &c.

5 For when we were come into Macedonia, our fleſh had no reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide: without *were* fightings, within *were* fears. 6 Nevertheleſs God, that comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 And not by his coming only, but by the conſolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earneſt deſire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me: ſo that I rejoiced the more.

Obſerve here, 1. When the apoſtle was come from Epheſus to Macedonia, how great a conflict he had, both from without and within: From without, by perſecution and oppoſition both from Jews and Gentiles; and from within, by fears leſt the falſe apoſtles ſhould have perverted any of his young converts from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt; or fearing, leſt the Corinthians, being tender and weak in the faith, the violence of perſecution, and the ſtrength of temptation, ſhould cauſe them to apoſtatize from their religion, and backſlide from their holy profeſſion. 2. A moſt endearing title given to Almighty God: *He comforteth all thoſe that are caſt down*. This is his dear title: He eſteems himſelf more honoured with the amiable and endearing title of a *Comforter* and a *Father*, than with the glorious title of a *Creator* and a *Sovereign*. He is more pleaſed in doing us good, than we can be pleaſed in receiving of it; and can as ſoon forget himſelf, as forget as his children. 3. The inſtrumental means which God made uſe of, for the apoſtle's conſolation, ſupport, and relief; namely, the coming of Titus. Firſt, *God comforted us by the coming of Titus*. *Mark*, He doth not intitle Titus, but God, by Titus, to the comfort he received. Whoever is the inſtrumental cauſe, God is the principal efficient cauſe of our conſolation and comfort. It ſhews an holy flame of heart, when we ſtay not in creatures, but are carried to God as the author of our comforts and croſſes. Secondly, The glad tidings and good news which Titus brought, as touching the Corinthians *earneſt deſire* to have all things amiſs rectified, their *ſorrow* expreſſed for the ſin reproved, their *fervent affection* towards the apoſtle, their grief for offending him, their zeal to vindicate him; all theſe were matter of comfort and exceeding conſolation to the apoſtle, under all his diſquietneſs in Macedonia. *Learn* hence, That when troubles, both from without and within, do oppreſs the minds, and even ſink the ſpirits of the miniſters of God; if they can but ſee the ſucceſs of their labours in the lives of their people, that they are humbled for ſin, and turned from it; this is matter of unſpeakable conſolation at preſent, and will be their crown of rejoicing in the day of Chriſt: When Titus told us *of your earneſt deſire*, &c.

8 For though I made you ſorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent. For I perceive that the ſame epiſtle made you ſorry, though *it were* but for a ſeaſon. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed to repentance: for ye were made ſorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, Although in my former epiſtle I wrote ſomewhat ſharply to you, by reaſon of the many abuſes that were crept in amongſt you; I do not now repent of that ſeverity, becauſe it produced a thorough and effectual reformation: Though at firſt I did repent of it, being unwilling to put you to grief; for I was troubled myſelf, becauſe I was neceſſitated to trouble you. However, now I rejoice, not in your grief, as ſuch, but becauſe your ſorrow was a godly ſorrow, and wrought repentance, which is ſo neceſſary to forgiveneſs; ſo that my plain dealing with you has evidently been no damage, but an advantage to you. *Learn* hence, That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt muſt by no means omit the duty of ſharp reproof, nor neglect to bring the cenſures of the church upon notorious

torious offenders, how ungrateful ſoever the work is either to themſelves or others. 2. That there is good ground to hope, that when the cenſures of the church are duly executed, they will have their deſired effects, by bringing the offenders to repentance; and by repentance to remiſſion and ſalvation: I rejoice, *that ye ſorrowed to repentance*, &c.

10 For godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of: —

Note here, That ſorrow for ſin, will be of no advantage or avail upon us, if it be not godly ſorrow, or a *ſorrow according to God*, as it runs in the original. Now it may be called a ſorrow according to God, when it is a ſorrow wrought in us by the Spirit of God, in obedience to the command of God, and with an eye at the glory of God; when it has ſin, and not wrath, for its object; ſin, as a wrong to God, as a contempt of his ſovereignty, and a contrariety to his holineſs. Again, It is then a godly ſorrow, when it puts us upon an high prizing of Jeſus Chriſt, who became a ſacrifice for ſin; and prompts us to a cordial and unfeigned forſaking of all ſin, to ſuch a turning from it, as is reſolved againſt all returning to it.

—But the ſorrow of the world worketh death.

The ſorrow of the world may be taken two ways, (1.) For the ſorrow of worldly men, whoſe ſorrow for ſin is only a vexing of their hearts, not a breaking or humbling of their hearts; which being ſeparate from true faith, and without any purpoſe to leave ſin, worketh death, by wearing out the naturl life lingeringly, and ſometimes deſtroying the natural life violently, as in the caſe of Judas. (2.) By the ſorrow of the world, may be underſtood a ſorrow for worldly things, a ſorrow for worldly loſſes and diſappointments. This is ſinful, when it is exceſſive; and as it is prejudicial to the ſoul, ſo doth it hurt the body, and haſteneth death. Worldly ſorrow is a killing ſorrow.

11 For behold this ſelf-ſame thing; that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourſelves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement deſire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge. In all things ye have approved yourſelves to be clear in this matter.

The apoſtle in the foregoing verſe, had declared, that godly ſorrow, or a ſorrow wrought by the Spirit of God, worketh true repentance, and produceth a thorough reformation, not to be repented of: Now in this verſe he proves, that the Corinthians' ſorrow for the inceſtuous perſon's ſin, was of this nature, namely, a godly ſorrow, becauſe it produced ſuch excellent effects and fruits as godly ſorrow is wont to do. Seven of which he here reckons up. 1. Care, or an holy *carefulneſs* to amend what is amiſs for time to come, by ſhunning and avoiding all occaſions and temptations that lead to ſin. He that truly repenteth, is careful not to ſin again. 2. *Clearing of themſelves*, that they did not approve the fact of the inceſtuous perſon, but did inflict the church's cenſures upon him, and ſo put away evil from amongſt them. 3. *Indignation* againſt ſin; this is found where godly ſorrow is found; the heart riſes, ſwells, and boils againſt ſin; we are then angry and ſin not, when we are angry at ſin, and with ourſelves for ſinning. 4. *Fear*; a true penitent fears to offend; and that he may not offend, doth nouriſh in himſelf an holy fear of God, and an humble fear of himſelf: There is found with him a fear of reverence, from an awful apprehenſion of the holineſs and majeſty of God, and alſo a fear of diligence and vigilance, watching and warring againſt ſin, that it may not ſet upon us and ſurpriſe us for the time to come. 5. *Vehement deſire*, after a thorough reformation, and to rectify whatever is amiſs; a deſire to be rid of all ſin, and in the mean time conflicting with it, and groaning under it. 6. *Zeal*; this is an affection in a true penitent, compounded of love and anger. Be zealous and repent, is Chriſt's own call, Rev. iii. 19. This will make a penitent perſiſt in the exerciſe and expreſſion of his godly ſorrow for ſin, and perſevere in his courſe of mortification, in defiance of all oppoſition made againſt him. 7. *Revenge*; this is the reſult of zeal, when our zeal boils into revenge, and puts us upon ſelf-caſtigations; not ſo much upon our bodies with whips and ſcourges, but by the abatement of luſt which ſtirreth in us, buffeting the fleſh, and bringing it into ſubjection. And this revenge leads the penitent alſo to make ſatisfaction for wrongs done, either by open confeſſion, or ſecret reſtitution: *In all things you have approved yourſelves to be clear of this matter*. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "By theſe forementioned acts of yours, the body of you hath ſhewn that you did not approve of the inceſtuous perſon's ſin, but evidenced by your ſorrow for it, that you are clear of it." *Learn* hence, 1. That there is no way to get clear of the guilt of other men's ſins, but by duly mourning for them: *Now you are clear of this matter*. 2. That true repentance for ſin, clears us from the guilt of it, both in the ſight of God and man; and if ſo, it is both uncharitable and unchriſtian to ſtigmatize or reproach any perſon for the ſin, which we either know or believe he hath truly repented of.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cauſe that had done the wrong, nor for his cauſe that ſuffered wrong, but that our care for you in the ſight of God might appear unto you.

Here the apoſtle tells them, that he did not write ſo paſſionately and ſeverely to them, only or chiefly for the inceſtuous perſon's ſake who had done the wrong, that he might be puniſhed, nor for his ſake that had ſuffered the wrong, namely, the injured father, out of a particular kindneſs to have him righted; but that his general care, ſolicitude, and concern for them, the whole church of Corinth, to remove ſin and ſcandal from them, might appear unto them.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, becauſe his ſpirit was refreſhed by you all.

That is, in all the forementioned effects and fruits, ſigns and evidences of a true repentance, which were found in you, and are matter of great comfort to you, we are alſo comforted with you; and we alſo had a ſuperadded joy, for the joy that Titus conceived, upon his underſtanding of your affairs; alſo your ready compliance with the duties and directions given you in my former epiſtle, did wonderfully refreſh and rejoice his ſpirit; and in all theſe your conſolations and comforts am I comforted. Hence *learn*, That ſuch is the intimate and endeared union between the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt, that they are comforted with one another's comforts, and afflicted with each other's ſorrows and ſufferings.

14 For if I have boaſted any thing to him of you, I am not aſhamed: but as we ſpake all things to you in truth, even ſo our boaſting which *I made* before Titus is found in a truth. 15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilſt he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

Note here, How the apoſtle had formerly taken occaſion to ſpeak boaſtingly, and not without aſſurance, concerning the church of Corinth. "Now, ſays the apoſtle, whatever I ſaid of you, is as infallibly and certainly true, as what I have heretofore either written or ſpoken to you." Happy is it when a miniſter's commendation of his people unto others, are not contradicted or gainſayed by the people themſelves, but confirmed greatly. Here, what St. Paul had boaſted of the Corinthians, Titus found a truth. *Note* next, With what inward affection Titus did embrace and receive the Corinthians, remembering with what great deference and regard they had received him; *he is greatly affected towards you*, upon his finding you ſo obedient to me. Nothing doth more endear a people to the miniſters of Chriſt, than to find them obedient to their ſpiritual guides in things pertaining to godlineſs and religion: *The affection of Titus is more abundant towards you, whilſt he remembereth the obedience of you all.* Laſtly, What confidence the apoſtle had, that the church of Corinth would hearken to, and comply with his future admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs: *I have confidence in you in all things.* It is a bleſſed thing when the miniſters of the goſpel and their beloved people have a mutual confidence in each other, and when that confidence on either ſide is not broken, but preſerved and increaſed between them all their days; when they can ſay of each other, as doth the apoſtle here, *I rejoice that I have confidence in you in all things.*

CHAP. VIII.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this and the following chapter, is, to excite and ſtir up the Corinthians *to a liberal contribution of their charity towards the poor ſaints in* Jeruſalem *and* Judea; *and this he does by ſeveral arguments.*

MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

The firſt argument which our apoſtle makes uſe of to excite the charity of the Corinthians, is drawn from the example of the Macedonians, into whoſe hearts God had poured that excellent grace of charity: inſomuch that the churches of Philippi, Theſſalonica, Berœa, and other churches in the region of Macedonia, though under great trials and afflictions themſelves, yet ſuch was their joy in, and their affection to the Chriſtian profeſſion, that notwithſtanding their deep poverty, they abounded in their liberality towards the neceſſities of the poor ſaints in Jeruſalem and Judea. *Note* here, 1. The root from which all acceptable charity to the members of Chriſt muſt ariſe and ſpring, namely from the *grace of God*; from an inward principle of love to God, in obedience to his command, and with a pure and fixed eye at his glory. Liberality to the poor diſtreſſed members of Chriſt, as ſuch, muſt flow from that habit of divine love, by which men are taught of God to love one another; for though from a natural ſympathy and compaſſion men may relieve the afflicted, as men, yet without a gracious inclination they cannot do good to them, as members of the houſhold of faith. Charity then is here called *the grace of God*, becauſe it proceeds from a gracious diſpoſition wrought in the heart by God, as the root and ſpring, the motive and attractive of it. *Note* here, 2. The condition which the churches of Macedonia were in themſelves; when they thus liberally and cheerfully adminiſtered to the neceſſities of others, they were firſt under great affliction, and then in great poverty themſelves; and yet *the riches of their liberality* are ſaid here to *abound*. From hence *learn*, That poverty excuſes not from charity: If we have nothing actually to give, God accepts the inclination of the mind, and a willing deſire. If we have but little to give, God will accept of our mite, and reward us for that little, if given for his ſake. It is not the quantity of the gift, but the good affection of the giver, that God's eye is upon. If we give but a cup of cold water to a diſciple, and as a diſciple, God accepts it and rewards it, provided we have nothing better to give; for if our charity be not in ſome degree proportionable to what we have, it will not be acceptable, but we ſhall miſs of its reward.

3 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, *they were* willing of themſelves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowſhip of the miniſtering to the ſaints.

Three things are here recorded as the glory of the Macedonians' charity. (1.) It was profuſely liberal, beyond their ability: *To their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were ready.* Though, generally ſpeaking, we are to conſult our own ability and preſent circumſtances in all our charitable diſtributions; yet there may be, and ſometimes are, ſuch emergent occaſions, as may make it a neceſſary duty to adminiſter to others neceſſities far beyond our own ability. (2.) Their charity was purely voluntary; *They were willing of themſelves*; that is, unſolicited by the apoſtle, unaſked by any other, only prompted to it by the grace of God: They made a collection amongſt themſelves freely and cheerfully. (3.) Their charity was accompanied with importunity to the apoſtle to receive and diſtribute it. He was ſo far from intreating them to give, that they intreated him to receive their collection, and to take care for its conveyance to them, and diſtribution among them: *Praying us with much intreaty, that we would receive this*, &c.

5 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but firſt gave their own-ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “ Verily theſe Macedonians, in the liberal diſtribution of their alms to the poor Chriſtians, have exceeded our hopes and expectation.” Wherein? Firſt, They gave their own-ſelves to the Lord, and then unto us by the will of God. They gave themſelves, their own-ſelves, firſt to the Lord. To give a man's ſelf to the Lord, is more than to give all his eſtate to him, though, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is rather a debt than a gift; for we owe ourſelves to the Lord. And, oh, how infinitely ſhall we gain by this giving! he gains all, who gives his all to God: God will return it with advantage to him. Next, the Macedonians, ſays the apoſtle, gave themſelves unto us by the will of God; that is, they reſigned themſelves up to us, to be employed by us in ſuch ſervices as we thought meet. It ſeems they were ready to aſſiſt the poor ſaints, as well with their perſons as with their purſes. From the Macedonians giving themſelves firſt to the Lord, and then to the church's ſervice, in all charitable diſtributions, we *learn*, That he that does not firſt dedicate himſelf, will never dedicate his eſtate to God; but he that by a deliberate and voluntary dedication gives himſelf to God, will keep back nothing that he requires from him; yea, he will look upon all that he has and is, as the Lord's: Not an inch of his time, not a penny in his purſe, but it is to be employed by, and improved for God. He looks upon God as the owner and proprietor of all, and himſelf as the ſteward and diſpenſer only: Oh! let us, in imitation of theſe noble, though poor Macedonians, firſt give ourſelves to the Lord, and then we ſhall never withhold any thing that is ours from him.

6 Inſomuch that we deſired Titus, that as he had begun, ſo he would alſo finiſh in you the ſame grace alſo. 7 Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; *ſee* that ye abound in this grace alſo. 8 I ſpeak not by commandment, but by occaſion of the forwardneſs of others, and to prove the ſincerity of your love.

Here our apoſtle proceeds to make uſe of ſeveral other arguments to perſuade the Corinthians to the exerciſe of the duty and grace of charity; as namely, (1.) Becauſe he had deſired Titus to go to them; and as he had in his laſt viſit begun to ſtir them up to this duty, and to exerciſe this grace, ſo he would farther promote and bring it to perfection. And, (2.) Becauſe they abounded in other graces and gifts; as namely, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, &c. therefore they ought to abound in this grace alſo, otherwiſe they would not be complete in the whole will of God. (3.) Becauſe hereby they would teſtify the ſincerity of their love to the ſaints. It is not good words, but charitable deeds, that evidence the truth of our love to our fellow-members in Chriſt; not ſaying, *Be ye warmed, or be ye clothed*; but diſtributing to their neceſſities according to our abilities. Yet, *note*, The apoſtle doth not command their purſes, and require ſo much of them for charity; he mentions no particular ſum, much leſs doth he command them to give away all their eſtates, and live upon a common ſtock, and leave nothing to themſelves which they could call their own; for if a man has nothing of his own, there is no room for liberality. There muſt be prudence then in the exerciſe of our charity, prudence in finding out proper objects for our charity, prudence in timing of our charity, prudence in the meaſure of our charity, and prudence in the end which we propound to ourſelves in the exerciſe of our charity.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that, though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Here we have the grand motive uſed by the apoſtle to excite their charity, namely, the example of Chriſt, who impoveriſhed himſelf to enrich us, and emptied himſelf to fill us; therefore ſhould we be ready to adminiſter unto others: *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c. *Obſerve* hence, 1. A deſcription of Chriſt in his divine nature, as God: He was originally, eſſentially, and eternally rich; that is, in his Godhead. All the riches that Chriſt now has in his ſtate of exaltation, he had from all eternity; before his humiliation, with reſpect to his divine nature, he was rich. 2. A deſcription of Chriſt in his human nature, he became poor; that is, in the day of his incarnation, when he aſſumed our fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our nature, he impoveriſhed himſelf; though he was rich, yet he became poor. 3. The perſons for whoſe ſake he did thus impoveriſh himſelf: *For our ſakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.* 4. The moving, impelling, or impulſive cauſe of this condeſcenſion in Chriſt, and that was the graciouſneſs of his nature: *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. The uſe and improvement which the apoſtle makes of this gracious dignation and condeſcenſion in Jeſus Chriſt, and that was by way of argument, to excite the believing Corinthians to exerciſe their charity towards the poor ſaints which were at Jeruſalem. *Learn* from hence, That the extenſive charity and wonderful compaſſion of Chriſt towards us ſinners, hath both the force of an argument to excite us to, and alſo the nature of a rule to direct us in, the exerciſe of our charity towards all fellow-brethren and members of Chriſt: *Ye know the grace*, &c.

10 And herein I give *my* advice. For this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but alſo to be forward a year ago. 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readineſs to will, ſo *there may be* a performance alſo

out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be firſt a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

Here the apoſtle proceeds to a freſh argument for the quickening and exciting the Corinthians charity, drawn from their own reputation. He had heard, that a year ago, upon writing his former epiſtle, they had made ſeveral collections, at ſeveral times, as their gains came in; his advice therefore is, that they perfect and complete the good work which they had undertaken; and that as there was a readineſs and willingneſs of mind then, ſo there might be a performance of good reſolutions now: For whatſoever is given to God, is accepted according to what a man has, and it is not expected he ſhould give according to what he has not. *Learn*, That God interprets and accepts the charity of men, according to the largeneſs of their hearts, and not according to the ſtraitneſs of their fortunes. It is not ſo much the quantity of the gift, as the good-will and cheerful mind of the giver, that God looks at: *If there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted. Learn* farther, That to do any good with a willing mind, be it little or much, is very acceptable to God; if there be little of the purſe, and much of the heart in it, provided that little be what we can well ſpare, the Lord hath a great reſpect unto it. *Learn* laſtly, That as we muſt give, ſo God will accept what is given, according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. What is due to another, either by debt or duty, in making proviſion for thoſe of our own family cannot be charitably given, as being not our own.

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eaſed and you burdened; 14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a ſupply* for their want, that their abundance alſo may be *a ſupply* for your want, that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much, had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little, had no lack.

Note here, The humble modeſty and holy prudence of the apoſtle, in what he demanded of the Corinthians by way of charity for the poor ſaints in Judea. He tells them freely, he did not deſign to lay a load upon them to eaſe others, or to make others rich by making themſelves poor; but that there might be an equality in ſupplying the wants of one another, that now you abound, you may ſupply them; and when they abound, they may ſupply you; yet *mark*, We muſt not, by the equality mentioned here, underſtand it ſo, as if the wiſdom of the divine providence had ordained *levelling*, or making all men equal in their portion of the good things of this life: But ſo far Chriſtianity ſeems to require this equality, that we ſhould not ſuffer others to lack the neceſſary comforts of this life, whilſt we abound with them, and can ſpare them, and ſuffer them to ſink in their ſorrows, whilſt we ſwim in fulneſs. *Learn* hence, There is a debt of mercy and pity, of charity and compaſſion, of relief and ſuccour, due to human nature, and payable from one man to another; and ſuch as deny to pay it the diſtreſſed in the time of their abundance, may juſtly expect it will be denied themſelves in a time of want. To confirm this, the apoſtle draws an alluſion from the gatherers of manna in the wilderneſs; ſome gathered more, and others leſs; but they that had more, were to give them that had leſs: In like manner would Almighty God have it, that they which have great riches, ſhould impart of their abundance, to them that are in want; otherwiſe, Almighty God will ſhrink their heap into ſome equality with them whom they refuſed to relieve. With what meaſure we mete, in acts of charity, as well as in acts of juſtice, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.

16 ¶ But thanks *be* to God, which put the ſame earneſt care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18 And we have ſent with him the brother, whoſe praiſe *is* in the goſpel, throughout all the churches: (19 And not *that* only, but who was alſo choſen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is adminiſtered by us to the glory of the ſame Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind.)

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, I thank God that Titus was as forward to move you to this good work as myſelf; for he did not barely yield to it at my requeſt, but of his own accord, was ready to come to you about it. And with him we ſent Luke, a beloved brother, whoſe ſervice for the goſpel has made him honoured in all the churches, and who was choſen by the church to go with us in this deaconary ſervice, namely, the miniſtration of your charity to the glory of God, and evincing the readineſs of your mind to ſo good a work. Here *note*, 1. The holy apoſtle's conſtant cuſtom and practice to refer all good in us to God, as the author and producer of it: *Thanks be to God that put this into the heart of Titus*. 2. That a miniſter of the goſpel who declines being chargeable to his people himſelf, may yet put on confidence, and be bold and importunate in urging them to charity for the ſervice and ſupply of others. 3. That St. Paul's importunity for collecting this charity at Corinth, ſhews how much the caſe was altered, ſince at Jeruſalem, Acts iv. they ſold all and laid it at the apoſtle's feet: And as that was not intended for a conſtant and univerſal practice, ſo we ſee how quickly the love of Chriſtians grew more cold. To procure this charity, St. Paul writes, Titus is ſent, exhortation is given, arguments urged, and all due means uſed to accompliſh this collection for the poor diſtreſſed Chriſtians. 4. That amongſt Chriſtians, renowned for gifts and parts, coſtly duties come hardly off, elſe what needed this ado? And yet it is not the cheap duties of religion, (ſuch are prayer, hearing the word, and receiving ſacraments) but the coſtly duties of charity, that muſt evidence the truth of our faith and love, which are certainly dead, if barren and deſtitute of theſe fruits.

20 Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us in this abundance which is adminiſtered by us: 21 Providing for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of men. 22 And we have ſent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now

much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

Note here, The holy wiſdom of this great apoſtle, in joining ſome other perſons with himſelf, as Titus and Luke, &c. in the diſtribution of this charity; leſt evil-minded men ſhould ſuſpect him of diſhoneſty, he takes care to cut off all occaſion of ſuſpicion, that he either kept any part of this large contribution to himſelf, or diſtributed it unfaithfully unto others: *Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us.* *Note* 2. The reaſon alſo aſſigned by the apoſtle for this his prudential management; namely, becauſe as a miniſter and a Chriſtian, he was obliged to provide and take care that all things be done blamleſly in the ſight of men, as well as faithfully in the ſight of God. The apoſtle, by this his example, recommends to all miniſters, and private Chriſtians, a prudential foreſight of ſuch ſcandalous imputations, as they may be expoſed to by the world, let their ſincerity in their actions be what it will; and let us ſee how we ought to provide againſt them: Any one of theſe upright perſons alone, either St. Paul alone, Titus alone, or St. Luke alone, were ſufficient to be intruſted alone with the diſtribution of this charity; but the apoſtle did not know what a cenſorious world might ſay; and therefore, to cut off all occaſion, and to prevent all ſuſpicion, he wiſely appoints ſeveral perſons to be witneſſes of this action. If there be not, in ſome caſes, over much caution, all is too little, and not enough.

23 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* the meſſengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Chriſt. 24 Wherefore ſhew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boaſting on your behalf.

Note here, What pains the apoſtle takes to anſwer all cavils and objections that might hinder the free collection and regular diſtribution of this charity. Some might pretend, poſſibly, to ſay then, (as many amongſt us do now) "We know not in whoſe hands this charity-money may fall; we know not whether ever they ſhall be the better for it, for whom it was intended." Therefore, ſays St. Paul, if any make that objection, that they do not know Titus, and inquire after him, or his truſtineſs, tell them he is my coadjutor, my partner and fellow-helper in converting you to Chriſtianity; and if the other two be inquired after, they are our brethren, the meſſengers of the churches, and the glory of Chriſt; that is, the inſtruments of his glory: Therefore, let theſe meſſengers ſee, and the churches which did depute them, the proof of your love to me, and to the ſaints, and that I did not boaſt of your liberality in vain. *Note* here, The high honour which St. Paul puts upon the miniſters of the goſpel, in calling them the *glory of Chriſt*, that is, the glory of the goſpel of Chriſt, the glory of the Chriſtian profeſſion, the inſtruments of Chriſt's glory, by whom his honour and glory is greatly promoted; perſons, who, by their exemplary gloriousneſs, did bring much honour and glory to Chriſt. This title, I conceive, ſhews both our dignity and duty; our dignity, in that Chriſt accounts us his glory when we are found faithful to him; as the faithfulneſs of an ambaſſador redounds to the glory and honour of the prince that ſends him: And it points our duty to promote the glory of Chriſt, to pray and endeavour that he would uſe us as inſtruments for the advancement of his glory; that as we glorify him on earth, he may glory in us, and be glorified by us, before his Father in heaven, and we be preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. *Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

FOR as touching the miniſtering to the ſaints, it is ſuperfluous for me to write to you. 2 For I know the forwardneſs of your mind, for which I boaſt of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago: and your zeal hath provoked very many.

Note here, The holy art and ſkill of this wiſe and great apoſtle, in promoting forward, and putting on theſe Corinthians to this work of pious charity; he inſinuates their preſent forwardneſs, to provoke them to farther forwardneſs; he tells them, it was ſuperfluous for him to uſe farther arguments with them; for their forwardneſs was known unto him, and boaſted of by him to the Macedonians, that the Chriſtians in Achaia, (of which Corinth was the chief city) had made a propoſal to ſupply the poor ſaints of Judea a year ago; and that their zeal therein had provoked very many to the like forwardneſs. It is very happy, when the miniſters of Chriſt find their people forward and ready to every good work, to coſtly works of charity eſpecially; yet it will be their wiſdom, by commending their people for what they have done, to encourage them to do farther; not only for increaſing their own reward, but for provoking many to do the like: *I know the forwardneſs of your mind*, &c.

3 Yet have I ſent the brethren, leſt our boaſting of you ſhould be in vain in this behalf; that, as I ſaid, ye may be ready: 4 Leſt haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we ſay not ye) ſhould be aſhamed in this ſame confident boaſting. 5 Therefore I thought it neceſſary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the ſame might be ready, as *a matter* of bounty, and not as *of* covetouſneſs.

As confident and fully perſuaded as the apoſtle was of the readineſs and willingneſs of mind that was found in the Corinthians towards this charitable contribution, yet he judgeth it both expedient and neceſſary to ſend the brethren before to them, to get all things ready, the collection finiſhed and over; that ſo, when he himſelf, and the Macedonians ſhould come to Corinth, he might not be put to the bluſh for them, having made great boaſts of their charity, but finding no deeds; and alſo he deſires their collection may be ready, with reſpect to themſelves, that ſo their beneficence may appear to be their own free bounty, and not a collection difficultly extorted from them, as from covetous men, who give grudgingly and unwillingly. *Note* here, 1. That it is very lawful for the miniſters of Chriſt to uſe an holy craft, and innocent guile, to draw men to a ſpeedy compliance with their duty; ſometimes by engaging their reputation in it, and ſometimes alluring them by juſt praiſes to the doing of it. Thus our apoſtle did here. 2. That the readineſs which St. Paul here preſſes them to, is not the readineſs of the mind, but the readineſs of the action: He was well-ſatisfied, that they were ready in their preparation of the mind long ago, but he preſſes them to finiſh the collection, of which he had ſo much boaſted to the Macedonians. 3. How the bleſſed apoſtle did conſult the Corinthians honour and reputation equally with his own, and was as deſirous to prevent reflection upon them, as upon himſelf; he would not have them aſhamed, no more than himſelf, at his coming among them. 4. That a liberal free-giving to the ſaints in diſtreſs, is called here *χαρις κι ευλογια*, *grace and bleſſing*; we tranſlate it *bounty*: It is called grace, becauſe an heart to give liberally is wrought in us by the grace of God; the world ſhuts up our hearts until God opens them; and if the heart be open, the hands will not be ſhut: And works of charity are a bleſſing of God with our ſubſtance, and the way and means to produce his bleſſing upon our ſubſtance. Giving to diſtreſſed ſaints in proportion to what God has given us, is by Almighty God, accounted a bleſſing of him, and a bleſſing of our fellow brethren; and whoever thus bleſſes God, ſhall be bleſſed by him. 5. That the Corinthians being a very rich and wealthy people, the apoſtle ſtirs them up to an abundant charity. Where God gives much, he expects much: But how many, alas, grudge God a little of his own! And how difficultly is that little drawn from them like drops of blood! Whereas, to give alms purely to ſatisfy the importunity of others, or out of ſhame, miſſes of its reward before God.

6 ¶ But this *I ſay*, He which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, *ſo let him give*; not grudgingly, or of neceſſity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Here the apoſtle comes to direct the Corinthians, how and after what manner they ſhould give their alms, ſo as to ſecure a bleſſing; namely, deliberately. (1.) *As he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give*; as he is determined and reſolved within himſelf. When a Chriſtian gives, he muſt take care that it be his own act as much as he can. Some men give what they did never intend, and beſtow what they did never chuſe or deſign to beſtow: Importunity extorts charity from ſome; they give, to get rid of the noiſe, and purchaſe their quiet with their alms; whereas, the liberal man deviſes liberal things, the good man lays by in ſtore what he intends to beſtow in alms. (2.) Freely and bountifully: *For he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully*; that is, he that giveth liberally to the poor, ſhall be liberally rewarded by God; no wiſe man will pinch his ground of the ſeed. The proportion, or how much every one ſhould give, cannot be determined, becauſe that muſt be meaſured according to the ability of him that giveth, and according to the neceſſity of him that receiveth. (3.) Cheerfully, not *grudgingly, or of neceſſity: for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver*. In all thy gifts ſhew a cheerful countenance, ſays the wiſe man; let us give with the ſame cheerfulneſs that we ſhould receive, and be as willing to give, as the needy are to receive; nay, it is our duty to ſeek out objects; for ſome of Chriſt's members have as great modeſty as they have neceſſity, and cannot ſpeak for themſelves: And let none think that this liberality will prejudice their eſtates; no, it is men's luſts that undo them, and not their charity.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all ſufficiency in all things may abound to every good work: 9 As it is written, He hath diſperſed abroad, he hath given to the poor: his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever.

Here the apoſtle tacitly anſwers the common objection againſt liberal alms-giving; men are afraid they ſhall want themſelves, what they give away to others: No, ſays the apoſtle, God is able to make all grace and mercy ſhewn by you, to abound the more towards you; that you having a ſufficiency of the comforts of this life, may abound in every good work of charity towards others. As if he had ſaid, "Be not afraid to give, nor ſparing in giving; for hereby you make God your debtor, and you will find him an all-ſufficient paymaſter; he will repay you both in ſpirituals and temporals. Thou ſhalt receive ſilver for thy braſs, and gold for thy ſilver, grace for thy gold, a treaſure in heaven for thy droſs on earth: Nay, your gold and ſilver will multiply here, as ſeed ſown, when ſcattered with a wiſe and prudent hand." The apoſtle here engages God's all-ſufficiency for it; God will ſhew his all-ſufficiency, in giving you an all-ſufficiency in all things: Only we muſt remember, that we are to allow time; for Almighty God loves to be truſted upon his word; and thoſe that that will not give him credit, let them try if they can improve their eſtates better, or put them into ſafer hands.

10 ¶ Now he that miniſtereth ſeed to the ſower, both miniſter bread for your food, and multiply your ſeed ſown, and increaſe the fruits of your righteouſneſs. 11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulneſs, which cauſeth through us thankſgiving to God.

Some look upon theſe words as a prayer, others as a promiſe, that as Almighty God bleſſeth the increaſe of the earth ſo largely, that it ſufficeth for the nouriſhment of men, and for ſeed to ſow again; in like manner would he ſupply all their wants, and grant them ability to ſupply the wants of others, and plentifully reward them for all the fruits of their righteouſneſs and mercy; and they being thus enriched by the goodneſs of God, and exerciſing all bountifulneſs towards their brethren, much thankſgiving and praiſe upon that occaſion is given unto God. In theſe laſt words is couched an argument farther to preſs the Corinthians to this liberality; namely, that it would cauſe both the miniſters of Chriſt, and alſo the poor ſaints, to offer up inceſſant praiſes and thankſgivings to God for the ſame.

12 For the adminiſtration of this ſervice not only ſupplieth the want of the ſaints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God: 13 Whiles by the experiment of this miniſtration, they glorify God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all *men*; 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

Still our apoſtle proceeds, by way of motive, farther to excite and ſtir up the Corinthians to this charitable contribution, from ſundry conſiderations; namely, 1. That it would be a very ſeaſonable ſupply to the church's wants, who were at this time in great want of it: Now, the ſeaſonableneſs of any mercy, adds greatly to the worth and value, to the pleaſure and ſweetneſs of it. 2. That it would occaſion repeated praiſes and inceſſant thankſgivings to God, for many perſons, and upon many occaſions. 3. This diſtribution of yours, ſays the apoſtle, will be a convincing experiment, evidence and demonſtration of your profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel, and that your faith is not barren and ineffectual. No better evidence of our real ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt, than a cheerful compliance, not with the cheap, but with the coſtly duties of Chriſtianity. Laſtly, For your alms, you will engage a ſtock of prayers going for you: This will procure, yea, provoke them to pray night and day for you, nay, not only engage prayer for you, but it will alſo draw forth their love and fervent affection towards you, make them very deſirous of your acquaintance, having received ſuch an experiment of the grace of God that is in you.

15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unſpeakable gift.

Here the apoſtle concludes his diſcourſe upon this great argument, with a doxology, praiſing and bleſſing God for putting it into their hearts, in ſo liberal a manner, to relieve the neceſſities of the ſaints, by which ſo much glory did redound to God, and ſo much honour to the Chriſtian religion. This he calls, not barely an admirable, but an *unſpeakable gift*; becauſe a gift by which God was ſo much glorified, the goſpel adorned, the poor ſaints ſo much comforted, and they themſelves ſo plentifully rewarded: *Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift.* But if the Corinthians charity was an unſpeakable gift, what was the gift of Chriſt? the gift of God to a loſt world, to whom this title of *unſpeakable* doth beſt agree; who is the author and finiſher of all grace, and particularly of this noble grace of charity in the hearts of his people; for he ſends his holy Spirit, and pours into their hearts his moſt excellent grace of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues, without which, whoſoever liveth, is counted dead before him. Eternal thanks then be to Chriſt for this admirable gift of charity, and thanks be to God for the unſpeakable gift of Chriſt. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

Our apoſtle having pleaded with the Corinthians *on the behalf of the poor Chriſtians in* Judea, *comes, in this chapter, to plead for himſelf, and to vindicate his authority from the contempt caſt upon it by the falſe apoſtles.*

NOW I Paul myſelf beſeech you by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt, who in preſence *am* baſe among you, but being abſent am bold toward you. 2 But I beſeech you that I may not be bold when I am preſent, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold againſt ſome which think of us, as if we walked according to the fleſh.

Obſerve here, 1. The charge brought in unjuſtly againſt St. Paul by the falſe apoſtles, namely, that when he was preſent with the Corinthians, he was low and humble enough to ſome degree of baſeneſs; but when abſent, that then he writes like a Lord to them, and exerciſes an authority with pride and imperiouſneſs over them. The greateſt apoſtles, no more than the meaneſt miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, cannot expect protection from ſlander and falſe accuſation. 2. The pious and prudent courſe which the apoſtle takes for his own neceſſary and juſt vindication; he beſeeches them, by all that meekneſs and gentleneſs, which, according to the command and example of Chriſt, he deſired to expreſs towards them, firmly to believe that he deſired nothing more, than not to be forced to uſe his power with that boldneſs towards them, which he feared he muſt uſe againſt the falſe apoſtles, who accuſed him of too much ſervility and meanneſs in his behaviour amongſt them, and reproached his miniſtry as carnal and ſelf-ſeeking.

3 For though we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh.

That is, "Although I yet dwell in the body, and conſequently am not free from human infirmities and weakneſſes; yet neither my miniſtry nor my life are from fleſhly principles, by fleſhly means, or fleſhly ends." The beſt and holieſt of men in this life walk in the fleſh; they are clothed with a mortal body, but they do not *war after the fleſh*, they do not fight under the banner of corrupt nature. Here *note*, The Chriſtian life deſcribed; it is a *warfare*; *we war:* It is a life of vigorous oppoſition. The Chriſtian has many enemies to conflict with, and to contend againſt, both outward and inward enemies; in a paſſive ſenſe, he is a man of ſtrife and contention, his hand is againſt many, and many hands againſt him; he doth not manage a war for the fleſh, but againſt the fleſh: And in the next verſe he tells us with what weapons he managed this war.

4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds: 5 Caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt;

Obſerve here, 1. That as the life of every Chriſtian is a continual warfare, ſo the miniſters of the goſpel are more eminently men of war; they fight againſt *principalities and powers*;

powers; and the devil draws up his full ſtrength to pull down the office of the miniſtry, which is erected for the pulling down the ſtrong holds of him and his kingdom. 2. The weapons which theſe ſpiritual warriors, the miniſters of the goſpel, do make uſe of in their conflict and combat with ſin and Satan; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but ſpiritual.* They are not carnal or fleſhly weapons that we uſe, neither fraud or flattery, nor force; but ſpiritual armour, with which we batter the fortreſſes of ſin and Satan; namely, the ſword of the Spirit, the word of God, the plain and perſuaſive preaching of the goſpel, the holy Spirit, miracles of all ſorts, eminent wiſdom and patience, exemplary zeal and courage in executing and inflicting the cenſures of the church upon the diſobedient. 3. Theſe weapons are called *mighty*; but mighty through God; that is, as quickened by the power and preſence of God's Spirit. Then is our miniſtry mighty, when made mighty through God. The Spirits of darkneſs cannot be conquered but by ſpiritual weapons. It is as poſſible to make an impreſſion with your finger upon a wall of braſs, as for the beſt ſermon in the world to make an effectual impreſſion upon a ſinner's will, without the co-operation and concurring aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit: *The weapons of our warfare are ſpiritual and mighty through God.* It is the Spirit that gives them their ſucceſs and efficacy: There is a real ſpiritual power and energetical preſence of Chriſt in his own inſtitutions and appointments. When the ſword of his Spirit is taken into the hand of the Spirit, it works wonders. 4. The great and good execution which theſe ſpiritual weapons do effect and accompliſh, when thus accompanied with the power of God; they are mighty to the *pulling down of ſtrong-holds.* By which ſome do underſtand a particular beloved luſt; a ſpecial ſin, by which Satan keeps and holds poſſeſſion of the ſinner's heart. Others underſtand it more generally of every thing that oppoſeth, reſiſteth, and hindereth the ſucceſs of the goſpel; and particularly, the ſtubborn will of the ſinner, which is ſo ſtrong an hold, that no power ſhort of an Almighty power can influence it to ſurrender; *Caſting down imaginations* or reaſonings, and proud conceits, and particularly unbelief, in which ſinners fortify themſelves againſt the convictions of the word, diſdaining to ſubmit themſelves to the abaſing, humble, and ſelf-denying way of the goſpel. But behold the glorious conqueſt which the goſpel of Chriſt obtains over ſinners thus fortified againſt it; *it caſts down imaginations*, and *pulls down every ſtrong-hold.* Thus the miniſtry of the goſpel ſpoils Satan of his armour, in which he truſted, by ſhewing the ſinner, that all this can be no defence to his ſoul againſt the wrath of God. 5. The improvement of the victory: The goſpel doth not only lead away theſe enemies ſpoiled, but brings them into captivity and obedience to itſelf. O happy and bleſſed conqueſt! Sinners do not only lay down their arms, and fight no more againſt Chriſt, but they repair to his camp, and fight for him with thoſe reaſonings of theirs which before were employed againſt him. O bleſſed victory! where the conqueror and conquered both triumph together.

6 And having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

That is, having in a readineſs that which will revenge all diſobedience upon refractory and ſtubborn offenders, (namely, the power of excommunication) and both authority and ability to inflict ſuch corporal puniſhment as he judged fit, by delivering them unto Satan; which power he reſolved to make uſe of, when the greater part of them were, by their obedience to his admonitions, reduced to good order again. Where, *note*, That the apoſtle defers the excommunicating and cenſuring the offenders amongſt them, they being very many, till he had, by exhortation and argument, brought over as many as poſſibly he could unto obedience. There is no place for ſevere remedies, when the diſeaſes have taken and infected the whole church: The offenders in the church, when very many, cannot be eaſily puniſhed; for when great multitudes are concerned, they are like to draw great multitudes after them. The apoſtle's practice in this caſe here, is a good pattern for our imitation, not to be too forward, raſh, and haſty in denouncing the cenſures of the church, but to proceed prudently and gradually: firſt uſing all fair means and gentle methods, and waiting with all patience for the reducing them to their duty who will be reduced, and then revenging the glory and honour of God only upon ſuch as will by no means be reclaimed or reduced.

7 Do we look on things after the outward appearance? if any man truſt to himſelf that he is Chriſt's, let him of himſelf think this again, that as he *is* Chriſt's, even ſo *are* we Chriſt's.

Becauſe the falſe apoſtles had taught the Corinthians to deſpiſe St. Paul, upon the account of his mean appearance; he here expoſtulates with them, and deſires to know whether they would judge of men by outward appearance, or by inward worth? As if he had ſaid, "Are ye ſo weak as to judge of me by my outward perſon, by my bodily preſence, by the meanneſs of my garb, by the ſmallneſs of my ſtature, by my outward aſpect and countenance? but if you will judge of me, and the pretended apoſtles, by miniſterial gifts and authority received from Chriſt, ſurely I have as much to ſhew of theſe, as they can pretend to ſhew; for in nothing was I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles." There is no judging of men, much leſs of miniſters, by outward appearances: Much real worth ſometimes lodges within, when nothing but what is deſpicable and contemptible appears without.

8 For though I ſhould boaſt ſomewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your deſtruction, I ſhould not be aſhamed.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, I have not only an equal power and authority with thoſe which deſpiſe me, (the falſe teachers) but I have an authority and power which they cannot, dare not, will not pretend unto: namely, the power to inflict corporal puniſhments upon obſtinate and contumacious offenders, and delivering them up to Satan; which power, if at any time I make uſe of, it is for edification, not for deſtruction. This rod is not to be uſed raſhly, but diſcreetly, by me. *Obſerve* we, and learn from hence, an excellent rule, Never to handle the cenſures of the church (thoſe edge-tools) but with care and caution, with an intention to reform, not to ruin; to ſave, not deſtroy: The church's power is for edification, not for deſtruction.

9 That I may not ſeem as if I would terrify you by letters. 10 For *his* letters (ſay they) *are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily preſence *is* weak, and *his* ſpeech contemptible. 11 Let ſuch an one think this, that ſuch as we are in word by letters when we are abſent, ſuch *will we be* alſo in deed when we are preſent.

Our apoſtle here goes on, vindicating himſelf from the aſperſions and reflections which the falſe teachers caſt upon him. They told the Corinthians, that St. Paul's letters were indeed ſevere and authoritative, terrifying and affrighting: but his perſonal preſence was weak, and his ſpeech contemptible. Tradition tells us, that Paul (according to his name) was a man of a very little ſtature, and his voice anſwerably ſmall; whence probably, the falſe apoſtles took occaſion to raiſe this report of his preſence and ſpeech. St. Chryſoſtom ſaith, that St. Paul's ſtature was low, his body crooked, his head bald; and when it is added, that *his ſpeech was contemptible*, it cannot be underſtood as it were ſo for want of eloquence, but it is thought, this refers rather to ſome infirmity, or natural impediment, which the apoſtle might have in his ſpeech. The gift of knowledge and learning, and the gift of utterance and elocution, as they are diſtinct in their nature, ſo they are ſeparable in their ſubject, and do not always go together; a perſon of the profoundeſt knowledge is not always happy in elocution and utterance. However, in theſe falſe teachers we ſee the conſtant method and practice of impoſtors and ſeducers; namely, to aſperſe and leſſen all that ſtand in their light: This is an old way of inſinuating into the people. The falſe apoſtles feared they ſhould never reign at Corinth, but by bringing St. Paul into diſeſteem with the Corinthians; therefore they ſay, *his letters are weighty*, *but his bodily preſence weak.* But the apoſtle, ver. 11. gives them to underſtand, that they ſhould find him the ſame both abſent and preſent; and that his deeds then ſhould appear as aweful as his words now; that when he came again, he would not ſpare, but puniſh all diſobedience. *Note* here, That the thing which St. Paul would have his accuſers fear, was, that by the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghoſt given to him, to inflict corporal puniſhments upon diſobedient perſons, they ſhould ſpeed as Elymas did, Acts xiii. 8. who was ſmitten with blindneſs, &c.

12 ¶ For we dare not make ourſelves of the number, or compare ourſelves with ſome that commend themſelves: but they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe. 13 But we will not boaſt of things without *our* meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you. 14 For we ſtretch not ourſelves beyond *our meaſure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you alſo in *preaching* the goſpel of Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. St. Paul's juſt charge, which he brings in againſt the falſe apoſtles, for their pride and vanity, in commending themſelves, and comparing themſelves with ſuch as were like themſelves; *They meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe.* The reaſon why many think themſelves wiſer than they are, is, becauſe they compare themſelves with thoſe that are below themſelves, and not above them in underſtanding and knowledge. It is an excellent mean to keep us from pride, to conſider how many are above us in knowledge; and there are thouſands ſo much excelling us in underſtanding, that our knowledge is but ignorance, our ſtrength but weakneſs, our faith but unbelief, our fruitfulneſs but barrenneſs, compared with theirs. 2. As the pride and vanity of the falſe apoſtles, ſo the great modeſty and humility of St. Paul, the true apoſtle of Chriſt Jeſus; *but we will not boaſt of things without our meaſure, but according to the meaſure which God hath diſtributed to us.* Where, *note*, The apoſtle makes his apoſtleſhip or preaching of the goſpel, to be, as it were, his ſpiritual exerciſe, or running a race, to which he here alludes; declaring that he kept his province, his ſtage, his compaſs of ground which God had marked out to him; beyond or out of which line, whoever pretends to run, doth over-extend himſelf, and boaſt without his meaſure. 3. That the apoſtle's line or meaſure reached as far as Corinth, where Chriſt never had been preached; thither he came, and there he firſt planted the Chriſtian faith amongſt them; and he takes occaſion from thence, to advance himſelf above the falſe apoſtles. (1.) That he could ſhew a commiſſion to preach to the Corinthians: a meaſure by which God had diſtributed the Corinthians to him, as his proper province, which none of them could pretend unto. (2.) That whereas they went out of their line, leaping from one church to another, he went on orderly in the converſion of churches to the faith, from Judea, through all the interjacent provinces, till he came to Corinth. 3. That whereas they came to thoſe churches where the goſpel had been already preached, and ſo could only boaſt of things made ready to their hands, he preached the goſpel where Chriſt was not named before.

15 Not boaſting of things without *our* meaſure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increaſed, that we ſhall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16 To preach the goſpel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boaſt in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

Here the apoſtle tells the Corinthins, that he would not boaſt of other men's labours, nor pretend any title to thoſe Chriſtians at Corinth, nor any where elſe, whom others had converted, as the falſe apoſtles did: Notwithſtanding he declares his hope, that when the goſpel ſhould have an eminent ſucceſs amongſt them, and thereby their faith be increaſed, that the increaſe of their faith would increaſe his joy and comfort, his preſent advantage and future reward; becauſe it was the fruit and increaſe of the ſeed which he had himſelf ſown amongſt them. The apoſtle alſo doth farther declare his hopes, that he ſhould preach the goſpel beyond Corinth, in the regions of Achaia, where it had not been preached before; he being unwilling to enter upon other men's labours. Here *note*, That though ordinary miniſters are fixed in particular places, and confined to particular churches, yet the apoſtles had a commiſſion to go into all places, and preach the goſpel over the whole world, and were tied to no certain place or people. *Note* farther, That the apoſtle ſeems to prefer an inſtrumentality in the work of converſion, before being inſtrumental in the work of edification. The falſe apoſtles could only pretend to build upon other men's foundations, and carry on a work by others made ready to their hands: But the apoſtle preferred preaching the goſpel where Chriſt had never been heard of, as being unwilling to build upon another's foundation, or to boaſt of another man's line. It is a ſpecial favour now vouchſafed by God to us his miniſters, if he puts the honour upon us, to make us inſtruments in his hands, either for converſion, or edification, either for bringing home, or building upon a people. Happy we, if when our predeceſſors have laboured before us, we enter into their labours, and ſee the ſeed, which they ſowed with a laborious hand, flouriſhing in the lives of our people, to the joy of our hearts. Ere long, both he that ſowed, and he that reapeth, ſhall rejoice together.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Theſe words are a ſeaſonable exhortation to all the miniſters of the goſpel. (1.) To take heed that they glory not in themſelves, or in any ſervices or performances of their own. As it is the higheſt act of grace to make our boaſt of God all the day long, ſo it is the higheſt act of corruption, to make a boaſt of any thing we either have or do, though but for a moment. Alas; what have we, that we have not received? Or what do we, wherein we have not been divinely aſſiſted? And if ſo, why ſhould we glory? Verily, when man is moſt bent and ſet upon theſe gloryings, God delights to check him therein, and ſpit upon his glorying; and ſo jealous is God of his glory, that he ſeldom ſuffers a proud miniſter that aſſumes and arrogates to himſelf, to be either ſerviceable or ſucceſsful in his work. (2.) Theſe words are an exhortation to all the miniſters of the goſpel, as not to glory in themſelves, ſo to glory in the Lord; that is 1. To glory in the work of the Lord, that we promote his kingdom, his honour and intereſt in the world. 2. To glory in the help of the Lord; the Lord is a Maſter in covenant with us, and that a covenant of grace, in which every command hath a promiſe annexed to it, a promiſe both of aſſiſtance and acceptance. 3. To glory in the reward of the Lord, expected by us, and ſecured to us, by purchaſe and promiſe the private Chriſtian's labours ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, much leſs his faithful miniſters, who have borne the burden and heat of the day; let them then glory in the Lord, and not in themſelves, ſeeing all the good that is in them, and their actions, comes from him, and their recompence of reward is ſecured by him.

18 For not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Three things are here *obſervable*, 1. The proneneſs which is in human nature to admire, applaud and commend itſelf. Man is a proud piece of fleſh, and a little apprehended excellency in himſelf preſently puffs him up, and he looks big with conceit: It is rare to ſee a man rich in gifts, and poor in ſpirit: poverty of ſpirit is better than all the riches of gifts; yea, it is the trueſt riches of grace. 2. Though a man is prone to commend and admire himſelf, yet ſelf-commendation is no juſt praiſe, but rather diſparagement, a ſhameful indication both of pride and folly. He that commendeth himſelf, is not approved of God or wiſe men; the ſame word in Hebrew, ſignifies *to praiſe ourſelves*, and *to be fooliſh*, becauſe there is no greater evidence of folly, than ſelf-commendation; yet ſometimes, a wiſe man is forced to boaſt of his own performances, rather in a way of ſelf-vindication, than by way of ſelf-commendation. 3. That it is God's approbation, and not our own commendation, which is matter of true praiſe and real honour. When God and conſcience bear witneſs to our ſincerity, we need neither our own nor others commendation; the open teſtimony of God, and the ſilent applauſe of our own conſcience, is above all commendations whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

Our apoſtle in this and the following chapter, enters upon a juſt and neceſſary commendation of himſelf; he gives us a large catalogue of his ſufferings and ſervices, not to grace himſelf, but to glorify God thereby.

WOULD to God you could bear with me a little in *my* folly, and indeed bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealouſy: for I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent *you* as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. That which the apoſtle calls his folly is his ſpeaking ſo much in his own commendation and praiſe, becauſe ordinarily ſelf-commendation has a very great ſhew of folly in it, though not always. As if he had ſaid, "I would you could bear with me a little, in that, which looks like a fooliſh boaſting in me, namely, my glorying in my performances, in my ſervices and ſufferings, amongſt you; and indeed, you muſt bear with me herein." Where *note*, That although the apoſtle lay under a neceſſity to commend himſelf for the vindication of his office, which made him free from folly in this matter; yet becauſe, generally ſpeaking, ſelf-commendation uſually proceeds from folly and vanity, and ſuch as did not know the neceſſity which lay upon St. Paul thus to ſpeak, would be apt to impute folly to him for thus ſpeaking, he therefore calls it folly himſelf firſt, and tells the Corinthians, they did and muſt bear with it. 2. The reaſon aſſigned, which conſtrained the apoſtle thus to do it, was his holy jealouſy for them. He had, by preaching of the goſpel, brought them to know and believe in Chriſt, and ſo, by converting them to the Chriſtian faith, had eſpouſed them to Chriſt: He earneſtly therefore deſired that he might preſent them a pure and chaſte virgin; that is, a ſpotleſs church unto Chriſt. As the Jews ſay, that Moſes eſpouſed Iſrael to God in mount Sinai, when he made them enter into covenant with him there; ſo ſays the apoſtle here, by converting you to the Chriſtian faith, I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, even Chriſt.

3 But I fear leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

Our apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes, with a rhetorical inſinuation, begged their pardon and their patience, whilſt by juſt and neceſſary commendation of himſelf, he vindicated his perſon and office from contempt; and having ſhewn, that what he did and ſaid, was the fruit and effect of a pious jealouſy, or holy love mixed with fear; accordingly, he tells them very plainly in this verſe, that he was really afraid of them, leſt as Eve was ſeduced by the ſubtilty of the devil, ſo their minds ſhould be corrupted by falſe apoſtles, and ſeduced from the pure doctrine of the goſpel: For as the nobleſt and moſt generous wine is adulterated by mingling it with water, ſo is the doctrine of the goſpel corrupted, by mixing with either philoſophical ſpeculations, or Jewiſh traditions, or any ſort of human inventions. Well therefore might the apoſtle ſay, *I fear leſt your minds ſhould be corrupted*, &c.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jeſus whom we have not preached, or if *ye* receive another ſpirit which ye have not received, or another goſpel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "It is one Chriſt, one Spirit, one goſpel, and not many which we have preached, and you have received; now, if your new teachers, the falſe apoſtles, have another Chriſt to ſet forth, more excellent gifts of the Spirit to boaſt of, another goſpel to preach unto you, which I never preached amongſt you, let them be heard and received:" But this being impoſſible, they might well bear with him in his modeſt boaſting and glorying in what he had done and ſuffered amongſt them, by whoſe miniſtry they were at firſt converted to Chriſtianity.

5 For I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles. 6 But though I *be* rude in ſpeech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifeſt among you in all things.

Obſerve here, 1. The great modeſty of the apoſtle in this expreſſion; *I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the chiefeſt apoſtles.* He might have ſaid he was equal with them, and in ſome ſenſe ſuperior to them, even the moſt eminent of them, Peter, James, and John. Indeed the apoſtleſhip, as an office, was of equal honour in all the apoſtles; but even amongſt them, ſome had more excellent gifts, and greater enlargements, and did more ſignal ſervices than others. Thus one of thoſe ſtars differed from another in brightneſs and glory. But, *obſerve*, 2. Before whom it is that St. Paul thus compares himſelf with the chiefeſt apoſtles; it was not before the true, but the falſe apoſtles, that he makes this modeſt boaſt. He did not contend with any of the apoſtles of Chriſt for the upper-hand, nor ſay, I am not behind any of you, or I am better than any of you; but he only gives check to thoſe falſe apoſtles who undervalued him, and poured contempt upon him. He who ſaid at another time, *I am not worthy to be called an apoſtle*, ſays here, *I am not behind the chiefeſt apoſtle.* From whence we *learn*, That the miniſters of Chriſt may ſtand upon terms of credit with thoſe that vilify their perſons, diſparage their function, and diſcredit that honourable work which God hath called them unto. Though all ambitious contending with others is odious, yet no man ought to betray either the truth of God or his own integrity, leſt he ſhould be counted contentious. He purchaſes the opinion of an humble and peaceable miniſter too dear, who either pays the faith of God for it, or his own credit; ſomething of reputation being abſolutely neceſſary in a miniſter, to render his labours ſucceſsful. 3. The objection which the falſe apoſtles, thoſe proud boaſters of their eloquence, made againſt St. Paul, namely, that he was *rude in ſpeech*. That the apoſtle had ſome imperfection in his ſpeech or utterance, is the opinion of many. Others affirm, that he was an eloquent preacher, from Acts xix. 12. where he is compared to Mercurious for it; but he did not think fit, in his miniſtry, to uſe the Grecian flaunting way in oſtentation thereof, that ſo the power of the goſpel might not ſeem to be placed in human wiſdom. "However, ſays the apoſtle, though *I be rude in ſpeech*, *yet not in knowledge*; if my language has nothing extraordinary in it, yet ſure nothing can be objected againſt my ſkill in the myſteries of ſalvation. But I need not tell you of this, who have had the proof of it in my miniſtry amongſt yourſelves." *Note* we here, The manner and method of St. Paul's preaching; it was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable. No doubt, he could have acted the orator in the pulpit, as well as moſt: But he choſe rather to ſpeak cloſe and home to the conſciences of men, in a plain and familiar ſtyle, delivering all his evangelical and apoſtolical precepts ſo plainly, that the weakeſt capacities might underſtand and receive them. Plain truths, without any art or varniſh, may be conveyed with more warmth and vigour to the conſcience, than all the charms of human eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular tongue.

7 Have I committed an offence in abaſing myſelf that ye might be exalted, becauſe I have preached to you the goſpel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them* to do you ſervice. 9 And when I was preſent with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Mace-

donia ſupplied; and in all things I have kept myſelf from being burdenſome unto you, and *ſo* will I keep *myſelf.* 10 As the truth of Chriſt is in me, no man ſhall ſtop me of this boaſting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? becauſe I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13 For ſuch *are* falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt. 14 And no marvel: for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of righteouſneſs: whoſe end ſhall be according to their works.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. Paul, in his former epiſtle to the Corinthians, abundantly proved the lawfulneſs of his taking maintenance from thoſe to whom he preached the goſpel: Yet here he tells the Corinthians, he preached freely to them, without putting them to any charge, though at the ſame time, he had ſubſiſtance from the brethren in Macedonia. From whence *learn*, That one church ought to contribute towards the furtherance of the goſpel in and amongſt other churches. Here the brethren in Macedonia ſupplied the apoſtle with maintenance, whilſt he preached to the church of Corinth. *Obſerve*, 2. The reaſon why St. Paul did preach the goſpel without receiving any thing for the ſame at Corinth; namely, to cut off occaſion from the falſe apoſtles, who ſought occaſion to traduce and ſlander him, as a poor indigent fellow that preached for bread, and gloried that he preached freely. Where *note*, That it is very probable, that theſe falſe apoſtles were ſome rich men, who took no pay of the churches for what they did, but preached, or rather deceived freely, and would have reproached the apoſtle as a mercenary preacher, had he taken any thing. From the whole, *learn* 1. That it is agreeable to the mind of Chriſt, that the miniſters and diſpenſers of his goſpel ſhould be maintained. A maintenance for the miniſtry, is certainly of divine right. 2. That the apoſtles themſelves did not all work, at leaſt, not at all times, for their livelihood, but, generally ſpeaking, did always receive maintenance from the churches: ver. 8. *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them.* We do not find the eleven apoſtles, after the Holy Ghoſt came upon them, wrought afterwards with their hands for their livelihood, but gave themſelves continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word, Acts vi. 4. 3. That though St. Paul did labour with his own hands at Corinth, and refuſed maintenance, for the reaſon forementioned, yet his example doth not enjoin us to work for our ſubſiſtance, with the labour of our hands, nor forbid us to take maintenance, when the churches we ſerve are able to maintain us. St. Paul tells us, when he wrought with his hands, he had then a power to leave working, 1 Cor. ix. 6. He had a right to a maintenance from the church at Corinth, though, upon prudential conſideration, he did forbear it, and no law of Chriſt reſtrained him from it. 4. That there have been perſons, all along, from the firſt planting and preaching of the goſpel, who have ſought occaſion, and taken all occaſions, though very unjuſtly, to charge the miniſters of Chriſt with covetouſneſs, worldly-mindedneſs, and with preaching for filthy lucre ſake. It was St. Paul's own caſe here; and therefore, ſays he, *will I glory in this*, that at Corinth, and all Achaia, I have preached freely, to cut off occaſion from them that deſire occaſion, to charge me with covetouſneſs and worldly-mindedneſs, which he would by no means give them an handle for. And thus it continues to this day: Let a miniſter be never ſo laborious in his office, or inoffenſive in his life, if he expects but a moderate part of what is his juſt due, there are thoſe who will cheat him of one half of his right, and then charge him with covetouſneſs for demanding the other. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The deſcription and character here given by St. Paul of the apoſtles, *They transform themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt*; that is, they pretend themſelves to be Chriſt's apoſtles, and act as if they were ſuch indeed; they take up the doctrine of Chriſt in ſome things which the holy apoſtles taught, but it was, that they might weaken the eſtimation of the true apoſtles in the hearts of the Corinthians, and ſet up themſelves there. Theſe falſe apoſtles were Judaizing Chriſtians, who mingled Judaiſm with Chriſtianity, and endeavoured to bring the Corinthians under the bondage of the ceremonial law. Behold here the firſt hereſy with which the wiſdom of God was pleaſed to exerciſe the church, even in the apoſtles' days, that no church, and no age of the church, might paſs without ſome temptation and trial; *they transform themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt, even as Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light.* Then is Satan an angel of light, when he ſuggeſts good for evil ends, and under ſpecious pretences of bringing glory to God, doth tempt perſons to tranſgreſs the will of God. Thus the falſe apoſtles would preach error with as great zeal and induſtry, as the apoſtles of Chriſt did preach truth, and uſe their utmoſt arguments, perſuaſions, and motives, for embracing of error, which the holy apoſtles did for the entertainment of truth, ſeeming to do the ſame things that the true miniſters of Chriſt did. It is very poſſible for men to be really Satan's inſtruments, animated and taught by him to do his work, againſt the intereſt of Chriſt and his truth, and yet, at the ſame time, pretend to excel and go beyond Chriſt's faithful miniſters in preaching truth and holineſs. So that the higheſt pretences to truth, orthodoxneſs, free grace, purity, and unity, are no ſufficient evidences of a true miniſtry. Satan and his miniſters, who love to tranſform themſelves ſometimes into angels of light, may pretend to all theſe, and are, notwithſtanding, the ſworn enemies of Chriſt and his kingdom.

16 I ſay again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwiſe, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boaſt myſelf a little. 17 That which I ſpeak, I ſpeak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly, and this confidence of boaſting.

Here our apoſtle returns again to his own juſt and neceſſary vindication of himſelf; he acknowledges it unbecoming and unſeemly in itſelf to boaſt much; and that boaſting is the uſual mark of a fool; but it is no folly when the intereſt of God and ſouls require it: It was only ſeemingly, and not really, his folly; though it had the appearance of folly in oſtentation; yet with reſpect to the ſcope, the aim, and end, and deſign of it, it was needful and neceſſary. But yet he tells them, that what he had before ſpoken, and was now farther about to ſpeak, *he ſpake not after the Lord*; that is, as if the Lord commanded any ſuch boaſting and glorying in ourſelves, or of ourſelves. He did not pretend to have any ſpecial command from God, to enlarge ſo copiouſly in his own commendation; for the Spirit of God no where adviſes us to commend ourſelves, or to glory either in the ſufferings we have undergone, or the ſervices we have done: Yet what the apoſtle here ſaid and did, though not after the Lord, yet was it not contrary to the Lord, or to the direction of his word, which no where commands us to conceal what grace God has wrought in us, or the good done by us, upon a fitting occaſion, and with a ſincere deſign, that he, and not ourſelves, may have the praiſe and glory of it.

18 Seeing that many glory after the fleſh, I will
glory alſo. 19 For ye ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing ye
yourſelves are wiſe. 20 For ye ſuffer if a man bring
you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man
take *of you*, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite
you on the face. 21 I ſpeak as concerning reproach,
as though we had been weak: howbeit, wherein
ſoever any is bold, (I ſpeak fooliſhly) I am bold alſo.

Here our apoſtle, with ſome kind of ſalt and ſmartneſs, reflects upon the Corinthians, (whom ironically he calls *wiſe men*), for ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed upon by their falſe teachers, to be tyrannized over, to be ſpunged upon and exhauſted, to be brought again into bondage to Jewiſh ceremonies, to be *ſmitten on the face*; that is, to be upbraided to their faces, becauſe they had ſubjected themſelves to ſo mean and weak a perſon as Paul, a tent-maker. However, he aſſures them, that in any thing according to the fleſh, wherein the falſe apoſtles could glory, he could glory alſo. Here *note*, That by *glorying after the fleſh*, is meant glorying in any external privileges and outward advantages, particularly in glorying that they were the ſeed of Abraham according to the fleſh; for the Jews had a very high opinion of themſelves, as being the ſeed of Abraham, and the only people of God, by viſible profeſſion, at that time in the world; having contemptible thoughts of all others, whom they called *the profane*, and *the people of the earth*, likening them to *dogs*. Now the apoſtles tells the Corinthians plainly, That although there is nothing after the fleſh which deſerves greatly to be gloried in, yet ſeeing that the falſe apoſtles did pride themſelves in theſe things, he could boaſt of the ſame carnal privileges with them, and glory after the fleſh as well as themſelves; and accordingly, thus he ſpeaks in the following verſes:

22 Are they Hebrews? [*ſpeaking the Jewiſh language*] ſo *am* I: are they Iſraelites? [*deſcended from
beloved Jacob*] ſo *am* I: are they the ſeed of Abraham? [*and not proſelytes*] ſo *am* I: 23 Are they
miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) I *am* more;
in labours more abundant [*than any of them*,] in
ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in
deaths oft.

That is, I have ſuffered more for Chriſt, by ſtripes, by impriſonments, by daily dying, than any of them have done. Here *note*, That theſe falſe teachers, the Judaizing doctors, were moſt certainly of the Jewiſh race; and that they were not only converted to, but did preach up the faith of Chriſt; but withal, the neceſſity of circumciſion, and the obſervation of the Jewiſh rites. Theſe teachers went from Judea, and gave great diſturbance to all Chriſtian churches; as Corinth, Galatia, and Philippi: And we often find St. Paul complaining of them, by the name of *thoſe of the circumciſion*; becauſe they required of ſuch as did embrace Chriſtianity, to ſubmit to circumciſion and the Jewiſh law.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *ſtripes* ſave one.

The law in Deut. xxv. 3. allowed forty ſtripes to be given to them that were worthy to be beaten, but forbade them to exceed that number: But it being their cuſtom to beat them with a whip that had three cords, they muſt either ſtop at thirty-nine, or exceed and go to forty-two. Here *obſerve*, That the apoſtle contending with theſe falſe teachers, proves the truth of his miniſtry and apoſtleſhip; not, as elſewhere, from the miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which did accompany his preaching, but from his ſufferings, as being the things which theſe falſe apoſtles could not pretend unto, and ſo could not glory that they were like unto him in them.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I
ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwreck; a night and a
day I have been in the deep, 26 *In* journeyings
often, *in* pearls of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in*
perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderneſs,
in perils in the ſea, *in* perils amongſt falſe brethren;
27 In wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often,
in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and
nakedneſs.

Behold what a catalogue the apoſtle here gives of his ſufferings and ſervices: He was ſcourged by the Jews with whips, beaten by the Gentiles with rods, ſtoned by the rabble, thrice ſuffered ſhipwreck, a night and a day toſſed to and fro upon the ſea, and in great danger of periſhing; in journeyings often, from one country to another, to preach, plant, and propagate the goſpel; in perils at ſea and land, by pirates and robbers; in perils by his countrymen the Jews; in perils in the cities, Damaſcus, Epheſus, and Jeruſalem; in perils in wilderneſſes and deſerts, in perils amongſt falſe brethren, men of the Chriſtian profeſſion; in wearineſs and painfulneſs, by travelling from place to place; in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, that is, in neceſſitated hunger often, and in voluntary faſtings frequent, for ſpiritual purpoſes; in cold and nakedneſs, that is, very poor and thin in clothing. Lord! what tongue can utter, or what heart can conceive, the pains which the apoſtle took, or the hazards which he run, in preaching the goſpel to a loſt world? And yet the good man heartily thanks our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for all that, who had counted him faithful, and put him into the miniſtry. Verily none of the miniſters of Chriſt have any reaſon or cauſe to repent of the choice of their office, whatever ſervices they undertake, or whatever ſufferings or reproaches it either hath or may expoſe them to. Alas! what is all that we feel, to what this apoſtle underwent? And what is all that he underwent for Chriſt, compared with that tranſcendent reward which is in the hand of Chriſt, both for him and us.

28 Beſides thoſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The apoſtle's burden of outward troubles was diſcovered before: His burden of outward care is declared now. Beſides, thoſe things which were afflicting to him from without, the care and buſineſs of all the new-planted churches was daily upon his heart and hand; beſides all his bodily labours by journeying and travelling inceſſantly from place to place, his ſolicitous care and thoughtfulneſs of mind, for the proſperity and happineſs of all the churches of Chriſt, both near and afar off, was great and preſſing; the holy man felt as much by ſympathy as he did by ſenſe. Many were the perſonal troubles which he had felt, but more were the churches troubles of which he had feeling; concerning which, he thus expreſſes himſelf in the next verſe:

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

That is, "What particular church, or what particular Chriſtian in any of the churches of Chriſt, is weak in faith, or wavering in their profeſſion? Where is the perſon that is aſſaulted with inward temptations, or outward troubles, and I do not ſympathize with him, yea, burn with his holy zeal and fervent deſire for his ſettlement and eſtabliſhing?" Sympathy among all the members, but eſpecially in and among the miniſters of Chriſt, is a great Chriſtian duty: They ought to have a tender compaſſion to the whole flock, and alſo a quick ſenſe both of the ſins and of the ſufferings of every particular and individual member and part thereof. As Chriſt, our Head, is afflicted in all his church's afflictions; ſo ought we, as his miniſters and members, to be afflicted in the afflictions of our fellow-brethren. He that has no croſs of his own, muſt take up and bear his brother's; yea, he that has many of his own, muſt yet bear a part of all his brethren's croſſes. Good men ever have been, and are men of tender and compaſſionate diſpoſitions, ready to mourn over, and lament for, both the ſins and ſufferings of others, from the overflowings of a Chriſt-like ſpirit in them. True goodneſs evermore promotes compaſſion.

30 If I muſt needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

By *infirmities* here, we are to underſtand ſufferings, reproaches and diſgraces, afflictions and perſecutions, for the ſake of the goſpel. Where, *note*, That the apoſtle choſe rather to glory in what Chriſt had enabled him to *ſuffer*, than in what he enabled him to *do* for him; he had wrought divers miracles, could ſpeak divers tongues, had done very great and eminent ſervices for Chriſt; but not a word of theſe, becauſe theſe indeed were evidences of the power of God in him, and of the favour of God towards him, but no demonſtrations of any inherent grace or goodneſs in him; whereas his patient bearing of ſuch ſharp, long, and continual ſufferings for the ſake of the goſpel, were undeniable proofs of extraordinary meaſures of faith and patience, of holy ſelf-denial and eminent love to God, and conſequently were a truer and greater cauſe of boaſting, than extraordinary gifts, and miraculous operations.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Note here, How the apoſtle, in a moſt aweful and ſolemn manner, appeals to the all-knowing and heart-ſearching God, that the foregoing account of his ſufferings for Chriſt and his goſpel, was the exact truth, and no lie. He calls God to bear witneſs to the certainty of all that he had ſaid of his ſufferings and ſervices: And calling him the *Father of our Lord Jeſus*, who is *bleſſed for evermore*, affords an undeniable argument to prove the Godhead of Chriſt; this doxology, *bleſſed for evermore*, being a term of honour uſually annexed by the Jews at the naming of God.

32 In Damaſcus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damaſcenes with a garriſon, deſirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a baſket was I let down by the wall, and eſcaped his hands.

The apoſtle concludes this chapter, continuing a relation of his ſufferings, with a remarkable deliverance which God gave him from danger and death, at the city of Damaſcus, ſoon after his converſion, of which mention is made, Acts ix. 24, 25. The Jews, whom he confuted and confounded with his arguments at Damaſcus, ſought to kill him; to effect which, they had, by ſome means or other, brought over Aretas, who was king under the Roman emperor at Damaſcus, and he engages with the Jews in perſecuting the holy and innocent apoſtle: He ſhuts up the gates of the city, keeps his ſoldiers in arms, and uſes all poſſible means to prevent the apoſtle's eſcape. But what ſaith the Pſalmiſt! Pſal. cxxvii. 1. *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain*; either to keep out thoſe whom he will have in, or to keep in thoſe whom he will have out. All the walls ſhall be an open gate to thoſe whom divine providence will have to eſcape; as here St. Paul, being let down over the wall by a rope in a baſket: Neither was it an evidence of cowardice that the apoſtle now fled, nor in the leaſt degree ſinful; our Lord having given us a particular licence in the caſe, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one city, fly to another*. Beſides, the perſecution now raiſed was directly levelled againſt the apoſtle in particular: It was therefore piouſly done in the diſciples, and prudently done in himſelf, to attend the means of his own preſervation. As the huſbandman doth not commit all his corn to the oven, but ſaves ſome for ſeed; ſo doth God in perſecution. All are not martyrs; and none ſhall be ſo preſently; they muſt firſt finiſh their courſe of obedience, before they finiſh their courſe with joy. Haypy ſoul, that can ſay with this great and good man, *I have fought the good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, I am ready to be offered up; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.* Amen.

CHAP. XII.

Our apoſtle here purſues the argument uſed in the foregoing chapter, namely, a juſt and neceſſary vindication of himſelf, from the aſperſions of the falſe apoſtles.

IT is not expedient for me doubtleſs to glory, I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord.

That is, "I acknowledge it neither decent nor advantageous, with reſpect to myſelf, to go on in farther boaſting and glorying; but ſince it may be neceſſary with reſpect to you, I will declare what viſions and revelations I have received from the Lord; in which I ſhall give ſuch an evidence of the favours of Chriſt to me, and ſuch a teſtimony of my miſſion from heaven, as none of theſe falſe apoſtles or deceitful workers can pretend unto." *Learn* hence, That although glorying or boaſting, in itſelf is ſo inexpedient a thing, ſavours of pride, and is an evidence of folly, when it is not neceſſary and juſt, and therefore all Chriſtians ſhould be backward to it: Yet that which is ſo inexpedient in itſelf, may, upon a juſt and fitting occaſion, be not only lawful, but laudable, both a neceſſary and commendable duty. 2. The preſent ſubject matter of St. Paul's glorying; it was heavenly raptures and viſions which he gloried in. *Learn* thence, That divine revelations, acquainting the ſoul with heaven, are matters moſt worthy of humble and modeſt glorying. Oh! if God would vouchſafe to favour us with the ſight of what St. Paul ſaw, what little things would crowns and ſcepters, empires and kingdoms, ſeem to us? How would it make us long, groan, and cry, to be with Chriſt! But though none of us muſt expect ſuch raptures and ecſtaſies as the apoſtle had, bleſſed be God for that clear revelation of this heavenly glory which the goſpel gives, and for that aſſurance which faith gives, that Chriſt as our forerunner is entered into, and keeps his poſſeſſion of it, in the name and ſtead of all believers: He has prepared it for us, and is daily preparing us for that, and in his own appointed time will put us into the actual poſſeſſion of it; not for a few hours, (which was all the apoſtle enjoyed) but for eternal ages.

2 I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell: or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) ſuch an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew ſuch a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) 4 How that he was caught up into paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Note 1. That the perſon here ſpoken of was doubtleſs himſelf, otherwiſe it had been no cauſe or ground of glorying to him at all; yet he ſpeaks in the name of a third perſon. Thence *note*, That they who know moſt of God, are moſt modeſt when they come to ſpeak of themſelves. 2. The deſcription of the perſon, *a man in Chriſt*; that is, a man acted by the Spirit of Chriſt, above himſelf; and alſo a deſcription of the place he was caught up into, *paradiſe*, the ſeat of the bleſſed. *Learn* thence, That there is a third heaven, or heavenly paradiſe, where are the concerns and hopes of holy ſouls: And holy ſouls are not ſo cloſely tied to the body, but they may, whenever God pleaſes, be wrapt up into paradiſe, or the third heaven. The apoſtle not being able to tell whether he was in the body, or out of the body, ſheweth that ſomehow the ſoul was there, though he could not declare nor diſcover the manner how. *Note*, 3. What St. Paul heard when thus wrapt up into paradiſe, namely, *unſpeakable words*, ſuch as cannot be uttered; or, if uttered, cannot be underſtood. *Learn* thence, That the things of the heavenly paradiſe are to mortal men unſpeakable; there is no human language that hath words fit to reveal that part of heavenly things which God hath ſhut up as ſecret from us. *Obſerve*, laſtly, St. Paul's great humility, both in concealing formerly this extraordinary favour, and now not without ſome difficultly and diſguiſe mentioning it, though for defence of the goſpel, in a manner, conſtrained thereunto; contenting himſelf with ſuch a fame as his deportment and outward actions, in ſerving the intereſt of Chriſt, could procure, and no way avoid.

5 Of ſuch an one will I glory: yet of myſelf I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6 For though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool, for I will ſay the truth: but *now* I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

Here the apoſtle declares, That although this foretaſte of the heavenly glory was worthy to be gloried in, and though he might boaſt of himſelf as thus exalted, yet he being purely paſſive in it, and advanced freely by God to it, he choſe rather to aſcribe unto God the entire glory of that, and content himſelf with glorying in ſuch infirmities, and debaſing ſufferings, as he could ſtrictly call his own, being undergone by him with an invincible courage and conſtancy of mind. However, he aſſures them, that if he had a mind to glory of this rapture and revelation, he might do it without folly or vanity, it being moſt certainly true; but he choſe rather to forbear, leſt he ſhould thereby give occaſion to any to over-value him, and to think more highly of him, than his common behaviour, his ordinary words and actions, gave them reaſon to do. A wiſe and good man is not ambitious of more applauſe or commendation than what his perſonal worth deſervedly challenges; he deſires no man to think or ſpeak of him above that which he appeareth to be, which is always as he really is, being that in reality, which he is in appearance.

7 And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure.

Note here, The great and ſpecial ſin which St. Paul was in danger of, by the abundance of revelations, namely, the ſin of ſpiritual pride. *Learn* hence, That heavenly revelations may be matter and occaſion of unmeet and ſinful exaltation: The holieſt Chriſtians, after their moſt heavenly acquaintance, are not out of danger of ſpiritual pride, or being too much exalted. Pride is ſuch a ſin as the holieſt ſaint is not fully ſecured from; no, not when he hath been hearing unutterable words, and ſeeing the heavenly paradiſe itſelf; no, not if he came down from the third heaven, newly from converſe with angels, yet bringing an imperfect nature with him, is he not out of danger of this ſin, much leſs is he ſo when he cometh off his knees from prayer, &c. 2. The way and means which the wiſdom of God made uſe of for preventing St. Paul's falling into this dangerous ſin of ſpiritual pride, and that was, the giving him a thorn in the fleſh; a bodily pain, ſay ſome; a bitter perſecution, ſay others; ſomething that was very afflictive to the fleſh, ſay all. *Learn* hence, That ſpiritual pride is ſo dangerous a ſin, that it is a mercy to be freed from it, even by bodily pain: God ſeeth our danger when we ſee not our own, and will hurt the body, to ſave the ſoul of his deareſt children. Oh, how much better is it that the body ſhould ſmart, than that the ſoul ſhould be over-much exalted! It is an happy thorn in the fleſh, which lets the peſtilent and corrupt blood of ſpiritual pride out of the ſoul. Lord! why do we contend and quarrel with thee for every ſickneſs, bodily pain, or afflictive croſs? Can ſin be prevented or killed at too dear a rate? 3. This thorn in the fleſh is called the *meſſenger of Satan*, from whence St. Chryſoſtom concluded that it was ſome evil angel that was permitted and impowered by God to ſcourge and buffet him. The ſufferings of the beſt and holieſt perſons in the fleſh, may be the buffetings of a meſſenger of Satan, and yet be from God. Satan certainly intendeth our hurt, but God over-rules him as an inſtrument to do us good: It is no proof that a man is not a child of God, becauſe Satan has a permiſſion to torment his fleſh. The meſſenger of Satan was ſent to buffet me, ſays St. Paul, leſt I ſhould be exalted.

8 For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

Note here, 1. The perſon prayed to, *the Lord*; that is, the Lord Jeſus, as appears by the two next verſes, that *the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.* Here is an inſtance of prayer directed to Chriſt, therefore here is an inſtance of Chriſt's divinity; prayer made to Chriſt at all times, in all places, and for all things, is an evidence of his omniſcience, omnipotence, and omnipreſence, and conſequently of his being truly and eſſentially God. 2. The ſubject-matter of this prayer, and that was, for the removal of the affliction: *I prayed that it might depart from me*; together with the reiterated frequency of it, *I beſought the Lord thrice.* *Learn* hence, That peace with God doth not make the fleſh inſenſible; a good man may groan under bodily pain, and lawfully pray for the removal of it; yea, be oft in prayer for it; earneſt and frequent prayer is not unſuitable to ſharp affliction: *For this I beſought the Lord thrice.* Where *mark*, St. Paul's conformity to his Saviour, who in his agony prayed thrice that the cup might paſs, but both of them with profound ſubmiſſion. *Note* alſo, That the apoſtles gifts of healing was not to be uſed at their own pleaſure, (then St. Paul might have healed himſelf) but for the confirmation of the faith, when it pleaſed the holy Spirit.

9 ¶ And he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee:—

Note, In this anſwer that is given to St. Paul's prayer, that the mercy prayed for, is not in kind given in unto him, but promiſed grace and ſtrength, which is better than the mercy he prayed for. *Learn* hence, That the frequent and earneſt prayers of the moſt holy and eminent ſaints, for deliverance from outward troubles, may not be granted in the kind or thing deſired. We are not lords, but beggars, and muſt leave it to God to determine the matter, the manner, the meaſure, the time of our afflictions. *Note* farther, That as in the prayer, ſo in the anſwer, St. Paul was conformed to Chriſt; the one was heard, but not by the paſſing of the cup; the other was heard, but not by removing the thorn in the fleſh; but both were heard by aſſurance and ſupply of divine ſtrength, and ſufficient grace to help in time of need: *He ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee.* *Learn* hence, That the grace of Chriſt is ſufficient for his people in all their afflictions; ſufficient for their preſervation, to keep them from falling away from God and godlineſs, by the temptation which always attends affliction; ſufficient for their ſuſtentation, to uphold and ſupport them in and under their heavieſt preſſures and afflictions; and ſufficient to render their afflictions truly advantageous and ſerviceable to them, to make them more holy, humble, heavenly, conformed unto Chriſt, &c.

— For my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.—

This is not to be underſtood as if our weakneſs added any thing to God's power, or could make his power perfect: But our weakneſs renders God's power more illuſtrious, he delights in and under our weakneſs, to manifeſt moſt of his helping power; as the ſtars never ſhine ſo gloriouſly as in the ſharpeſt froſty night, ſo the power of God never appears ſo ſignally and conſpicuouſly, as in and under our weakneſs. *Learn* hence, That when God, upon our prayer, doth not deliver us from bodily ſufferings, he will be ſure to come in with ſufficient grace, and manifeſt his ſtrength in our pain and weakneſs. We never thought how much or how long we could bear and hold out, until God made manifeſt his own ſtrength in our weakneſs. More of the power of grace is ſeen in the ſufferings of believers, than ever was ſeen in their proſperity: Beg then, O Chriſtian! more importunately for divine ſtrength, than for the departing of the thorn: Grace is better than eaſe or health; the one is proper to ſaints, the other is common to wicked men and brutes.

—Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.

Here our apoſtle tells the Corinthians, that moſt gladly he choſe rather to glory in his afflictions and tribulations, than in his viſions and revelations, becauſe by them he had greater experience of the power and preſence of Chriſt with him, and ſupporting of him under all his preſſures. *Learn* hence, 1. That the people of God are ſupported under, and carried through all their ſufferings and afflictions, by the power of Chriſt: A divine power above their own ſtrength, like everlaſting arms, is underneath them in the hour of trial. 2. That to glory in afflictions and tribulations, is an high pitch of holineſs and grace, but attainable. To glory in tribulation, is, (1.) To rejoice in it. (2.) To expreſs that joy outwardly upon a fit occaſion. (3.) To expreſs it with a great degree of exultation and boaſting. Many of the martyrs were ſo far from changing countenance at the ſtake, that they ſung and triumphed in the midſt of the flames. But can any comfort be derived from this for ſinful infirmities? *Anſ.* From the power of Chriſt, in this text, there may. Thus the powerful mediation and interceſſion of Chriſt is magnified, in procuring the acceptance of our perſons and ſervices, notwithſtanding the ſinful infirmities cleaving to them: Alſo the power of his grace, will at death be magnified, in purging and purifying his people from all their droſs and dregs. There is nothing uneaſy to a child of God, but there is ſomething in Chriſt to alleviate it; affliction is uneaſy, temptation is uneaſy, death uneaſy, the wrath of God uneaſy, the law, as condemning, is uneaſy and unpleaſing; but Chriſt has delivered from the curſe of the law, ſatisfied the juſtice of God, ſanctified the croſs, ſweetened death. Oh, how adorable is the power, how deſirable the grace of Chriſt!

10 Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.

Note here, 1. The high and heroic pitch which St. Paul's ſpirit was raiſed to, *he took pleaſure in reproaches and perſecutions.* Pleaſure is a degree beyond joy; though theſe ſufferings were painful to the fleſh, yet were they pleaſing to the ſpirit: A Chriſtian may not love that which he bears, yet may he love to bear; to bear, is the patience of neceſſity; to love to bear, is the patience of virtue; to delight to bear reproach or perſecution for Chriſt, is expreſſive of the higheſt affection towards Chriſt, and loweſt ſubjection to him. If nature ſuffers not a ſaint to take pleaſure in reproaches, as ſuch, yet grace enables him to take pleaſure in what he is reproached for. 2. The cauſe aſſigned why the apoſtle took ſuch pleaſure in his ſufferings and abaſements, becauſe they gave him ſuch experience of the power of Chriſt: Inſomuch that when he was moſt weak in himſelf, he was then moſt ſtrong in him: *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*; which words are a divine paradox or riddle: The apoſtle affirms one contrary of another: Weakneſs is contrary to ſtrength; how then can a weak man be ſtrong, when he is weak? The meaning is, that when a Chriſtian is moſt ſenſible of his own weakneſs, and moſt diffident and diſtruſtful of his own ſtrength, then the power of Chriſt reſts upon him, and he experiences divine ſtrength coming in unto him. Chriſt fills none but the hungry, nor doth he ſtrengthen any but the weak; only by going out of our ſtrength, do we get ſtrength; when in an humble ſenſe of our weakneſſes we reſt upon Chriſt, the power of Chriſt reſts upon us.

11 ¶ I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, though I be nothing. 22 Truly the ſigns of an apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience, in ſigns, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myſelf was not burdenſome to you? forgive me this wrong.

Here again does our apoſtle excuſe his boaſting, and tells the Corinthians that they had compelled him to it, and ought to have ſaved him the labour of it, by defending him themſelves: For he had done and ſuffered as much as any of the moſt eminent apoſtles, though he looked upon all as nothing; and conſequently, his ſervices and ſufferings, his miracles, ſigns and wonders, were ſufficient arguments, and undeniable demonſtrations that he was indeed an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt. He farther adds, That the church at Corinth had as great and excellent gifts of the Spirit beſtowed upon them by his miniſtry, as any church whatſoever; all the difference was, that whatever was done for them, was done freely: He ſpared their purſes, and put them to no charge. Now, ſays he, if that be a wrong, I hope you can eaſily forgive it. Corinth was a very rich and wealthy city, but they loved a cheap goſpel: the apoſtle ſpared their purſes not becauſe they were unable, but unwilling to draw them. Here *obſerve*, That the people ought to give teſtimony to their miniſter's integrity, and do all that in them lies to ſupport and maintain the honour of his miniſtry; *I ought*, ſays the apoſtle, *to be commended of you.* *Note* farther, That when the people omit and neglect this neceſſary part of their duty towards their miniſters, it is lawful, and not diſcommendable, for the miniſters of Chriſt themſelves, in a modeſt humble manner, to declare both what they have been, and what they have done: *In nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, though I be nothing.* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Verily, I am as much an apoſtle as they who think themſelves more than apoſtles, though you and they, through envy, count me nothing, and though I in humility account myſelf nothing." Thus the miniſters of Chriſt may ſtand upon terms of credit with any, who lay their perſons low, that they may diſparage their work, and lay that ſervice low to which God hath called them: Though the miniſters and members of Chriſt ought in lowlineſs to ſubmit to one another, yet muſt they not ſubmit to the pride or luſts of any, how high ſoever in their own, or others account.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdenſome to you: for I ſeek not yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.

The apoſtle here acquaints the Corinthians, that he prepared himſelf a third time to come unto them, being providentially hindered twice before, yet with a firm reſolution not to be any ways burdenſome to them; for he coveted not their poſſeſſions, but was deſirous of their ſalvation: And as a parent lays up for his children, and takes not from them; ſo he deſired as their ſpiritual father, to enrich them with ſpiritual good things, and not to take from them any temporal riches. Nay he adds, that he was willing to ſpend and be ſpent; that is, to ſpend his time, his ſtrength, his pains, his life; although he met with very undue returns from ſome of them, who loved him ſo little, becauſe he loved them ſo much; ſhewing more kindneſs to the falſe apoſtles, than to him their ſpiritual father. Behold here an imitable pattern of miniſterial diligence and faithfulneſs, love and affectionateneſs; the apoſtle was willing to ſpend and be ſpent; not only his purſe and pains, but time and ſtrength, life and health. Oh, how tender are ſome of their carcaſe, how fearful of their ſkin, how ſparing of their pains, for fear of ſhortening their days, and haſtening their end! Whereas, the lamp of our lives can never burn out better than in lighting others to heaven: Is it not better that our fleſh conſume with induſtry and uſefulneſs, than wear out with ruſt and idleneſs? As it is the duty, ſo it is the diſpoſition of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, to ſpend and to be ſpent for ſouls.

16 But be it ſo, I did not burden you: nevertheleſs being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I ſent unto you? 18 I deſired Titus, and with *him* I ſent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the ſame ſpirit? *walked we* not in the ſame ſteps?

Here the apoſtle anſwers an objection, which, without any juſt cauſe, was made againſt him by ſome: It was ſuggeſted, "That though he was not burdenſome to the Corinthians himſelf, nor took any thing of them for preaching the goſpel, yet that he cunningly and craftily ſent others to them, and ſet them at work to take money for him." Now, to wipe off this aſperſion, the apoſtle appeals to themſelves, whether any perſon he ever ſent to them, received any thing of them for his uſe? Neither Titus nor Luke made a gain of them, but with the ſame generoſity and freedom preached the goſpel, and communicated the riches of grace to their ſouls. When the miniſters of the goſpel at any time call in the aſſiſtance of others to help them in their work, their care is to employ ſuch, as near as they can judge, who are of the ſame ſpirit, and walk in the ſame ſteps with themſelves. St. Paul, Titus, and Luke, all agree together in carrying on a generous deſign for the preaching the goſpel to the Corinthians freely, and are of the ſame mind and practice in every thing.

19 Again, think ye that we excuſe ourſelves unto you? we ſpeak before God in Chriſt: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 20 For I fear, leſt when I come I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would, and *that* I ſhall be found unto you ſuch as ye would not: leſt *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, ſtrifes, back-bitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults: 21 *And* leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs and fornication and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Think not that for any ſiniſter or by-ends of my own, I excuſe myſelf ſo often to you, for deferring ſo long my promiſed and intended journey among you, for all I do is with an eye to your advantage. It is your benefit and reformation I aim at; for verily, I fear, whenever I come, I ſhall find thoſe ſins unrepented of, and unhumbled for, by many of you, which will be matter of humiliation, ſorrow, and lamentation to me; and that I muſt be neceſſitated, contrary to my inclinations and deſires, to inflict cenſures and corporal puniſhments upon many among you, for the ſchiſms, debates and ſtrifes of ſome; for the uncleanneſs, fornication, and laſciviouſneſs of others." *Note* here, 1. What great diſorders and ſcandalous crimes were found in the church of Corinth, and yet ſhe retained the denomination and character of a true church; the apoſtle fears, and not without cauſe, that he ſhould find debates, envyings, wraths and ſtrifes among them, the uſual and neceſſary conſequences of ſchiſms and factions in the church. 2. That notwithſtanding all theſe corruptions and ſcandalous abuſes, St. Paul neither ſeparates himſelf, nor perſuades any to ſeparate from them. Nothing will juſtify a ſeparation from a church, but that which makes a ſeparation between God and that church, namely, hereſy in doctrine, or idolatry in worſhip.

CHAP. XIII.

Our apoſtle being come to the concluſion of this ſecond epiſtle, lets the Corinthians *know, that he had a third time reſolved to come unto them, and to be ſharp againſt ſuch of them with his eccleſiaſtical cenſures, as he found unreformed; ſparing neither great nor ſmall, one or other, if involved in the ſame guilt.*

THIS *is* the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witneſſes ſhall every word be eſtabliſhed. 2 I told you before, and foretel you as if I were preſent the ſecond time, and being abſent now I write to them which heretofore have ſinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not ſpare: 3 Since ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. 4 For though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we alſo are weak in him, but we ſhall live with him by the power of God toward you.

The apoſtle having, throughout both his epiſtles, blamed the Corinthians for ſeveral groſs enormities found amongſt them, and hearing there were ſome that had not repented of them, he gives them plainly to underſtand, that he had a full purpoſe to come unto them with his rod of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline and church cenſures, and would not ſpare a man of them, but execute that power on the impenitent, which Chriſt had given him, by excluding ſuch unreclaimable offenders from church communion. *Note* here, With what wiſdom and caution the holy apoſtle proceeds in the executing and inflicting the ſevere cenſures of the church: He uſes admonition a firſt, ſecond, and third time, before he proceeds to the aweful ſentence of excommunication: *I told you before, I foretel you now, and being abſent, I write to you, that when I come I will not ſpare.* He tells them farther, that they had tempted him hereunto, in that they had required a proof from him whether Chriſt had owned him as an apoſtle or not, and would ratify his cenſures by judgments following them. He ſhews, that Chriſt had owned him, and manifeſted his power in his miniſtry among them, by converting many of them to the Chriſtian faith, by beſtowing the gifts of his Spirit upon them, and by many ſigns and miracles which he enabled him to do in the midſt of them. When God calls his ſervants to the work of the miniſtry, he leaves not either himſelf or them without witneſs; he bears teſtimony to their ſincerity, by giving them, in ſome degree, the ſeal of their miniſtry, in the converſion or edification of thoſe they are ſent unto: *Since you ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, to you-ward he is not weak, but is mighty in and amongſt you.* Next, the holy apoſtle draws a parallel, and makes a compariſon between his bleſſed Lord and Maſter and himſelf. As Chriſt, in his ſtate of humiliation, appeared to be a weak and frail man, by being crucified; but was evidenced to be the great and mighty God, by his riſing from the dead; ſo the apoſtle, conſidered in himſelf, and in reſpect of his afflictions, appears a weak and contemptible man; but yet they had found, and ſhould farther find, a reſemblance of the power and ſtrength of Chriſt in his life and miniſtry; and particularly, they ſhould find him armed with authority from Chriſt, to execute cenſures upon the contumacious and impenitent. Though the miniſters of Chriſt, like their Maſter, when here on earth, are in a ſtate of weakneſs, poverty and contempt, yet they are clothed with divine power in the execution of their office, and their miniſtry is a living, powerful, and efficacious miniſtry, in the vigorous effects of it upon the hearts of their people.

5 ¶ Examine yourſelves whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownſelves. Know ye not your ownſelves, *how* that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Here the apoſtle adviſes the Corinthians, inſtead of inquiring after the proof of Chriſt in *him*, to examine whether they were in Chriſt *themſelves*; intimating to us, that ſuch are uſually moſt backward to examine the ſtate of their own ſouls, who are forward to enquire into the ſpiritual ſtate and condition of others. "You ſeek a proof of Chriſt in me, ſays the apoſtle; Oh, rather prove and examine yourſelves." Where *note*, 1. A duty expreſſed; *Examine yourſelves*; *prove yourſelves*: The word is a metaphor taken from goldſmiths, who with great exactneſs try their gold; the truth of it by the touchſtone, the weight of it by the ſcale, and the purity of it by the fire. And the repetition of the command, *Examine yourſelves*; *prove yourſelves*; implies the great backwardneſs that is in the men's natures to perform this duty, the great neceſſity of the duty, and the great diligence and frequency to be uſed in performing of the duty. *Learn* hence, That ſelf-examination is an excellent, a neceſſary and important duty, belonging to every one in the church, and requires great diligence and faithfulneſs in the performing of it. It is neceſſary, in regard of our comforts, and alſo in regard of our graces; for there are counterfeit graces, as well as real; and common graces, as well as ſaving; and it is a duty that requires diligence and frequency, becauſe the work is difficult, becauſe the heart is backward, becauſe we are apt to be deceived, and willing to be deceived; becauſe many have miſcarried without it, and many periſhed by a negligent performance of it; *Therefore examine yourſelves*; *prove yourſelves*. *Note*, 2. The ſubject-matter of our examination, *whether ye be in the faith*; that is, whether ye be converted to the Chriſtian faith, whether the faith of Chriſt be in you, whether the principle of faith be in your hearts, whether the power of faith be in your conſciences, whether the practice of faith be in your lives, whether your faith be the parent and principle of obedience, working love, and working by love. 3. The enforcement and motive to this duty, *Except ye be reprobates*; that is, counterfeit, adulterate, unſound, and unſincere Chriſtians, unaccepted of God, and not owned by him. As reprobate ſilver has no worth or fitneſs in it for trading, ſo ſuch Chriſtians as, upon examination, are not found to have the grace of faith in them, more precious than gold, are unapproved of God, and rejected by him. 4. When the apoſtle expoſtulates with them, and ſays. *Know ye not your ownſelves?* it implies both the folly and unreaſonableneſs of the neglect of the duty, and alſo the poſſibility and eaſineſs of knowing whether Chriſt be in us, or not, upon a due and diligent inquiry, whether we have experienced the quickening and transforming power of Chriſt in our hearts and lives. Finally, So great is the benefit, and ſo ſweet the comfort, which flows to us by examination and ſelf-acquaintance, that it will abundantly recompence our care and diligence, in the frequent and faithful diſcharge of it.

6 But I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not reprobates.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Whatever you, upon examination, ſhall be found to be, I truſt you ſhall know, and be convinced, that we have not diſhonoured Chriſt, nor ſhall be diſowned of him: But whenever I come to you, you ſhall find that I am not deſtitute of the grace and power of Chriſt; whether for advancing your faith, improving your holineſs, or correcting your miſcarriages." The miniſters of Chriſt, who are faithful to him, in contending with the errors and vices of men, in reproving ſin, in cenſuring ſin, ſhall be owned and approved of God, when the reprobate world ſhall be condemned by him.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we ſhould appear approved, but that ye ſhould do that which is honeſt, though we be as reprobates.

The apoſtle, drawing towards the concluſion of his epiſtle, ſhuts it up with prayer, earneſtly imploring almighty God, that the Corinthians might be found doing no evil, which might expoſe them to his cenſure, and force him to exerciſe his apoſtolical power, in puniſhing ſuch offenders and offences as he ſhould find among them. And he prayed thus for them, becauſe he had rather have them good, than by puniſhing their evil manners, have an occaſion to teſtify himſelf an approved and faithful apoſtle: For he did not ſo much regard his own reputation, as their ſalvation.

8 For we can do nothing againſt the truth; but for the truth.

The apoſtle having prayed that the Corinthians might be found doing no evil, in the former verſe, and aſſuring them thereupon, that they would then be ſecured from his *cenſures* and *chaſtiſements*, he aſſigns a reaſon here for that aſſurance given them; becauſe, ſays he, *We can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth*; having our power given us only for edification, and not for deſtruction. Conſidering the words, without reſpect to the coherence, *obſerve*, 1. A negative propoſition, *We can do nothing againſt the truth*. O bleſſed impotency! 2. An affirmation, or poſitive aſſertion, *but for the truth*. O bleſſed ability! He was as ſtrong as a giant for the truth, but as weak as an infant againſt it. *Learn*, That ſincere Chriſtians in general, and the miniſters of Chriſt in particular, cannot, dare not, will not do any thing againſt the truth, but for the truth; They cannot, that is, they may not, they are reſtrained by an outward command from God, who is truth itſelf: They cannot, that is, they will not, there is a reſtraint of an inward principle; neither the conviction of their underſtandings, the clearneſs of their judgments, nor the holineſs of their hearts, will ſuffer them to oppoſe the truth. Again, they cannot attempt it; or if they did, they can never effect it; they cannot do it ſafely, they cannot do it ſucceſsfully. We can do nothing againſt the truth in a way of diſcouragement; nor nothing againſt it in a way of diſparagement: But all our endeavours are for the truth; we embrace it in our judgments, we hide it in our hearts, and practiſe it in our lives. Whatever talent God entruſts any of his miniſters with, whether of parts, power, or eſtate, it is an opportunity put into their hands of doing ſervice for the truth, and, as ſuch, to be accepted and improved.

6 For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are ſtrong: and this alſo we wiſh, *even* your perfection.

The apoſtle may be underſtood two ways: 1. We are glad *when we are weak*; that is, when I have no occaſion to manifeſt my *apoſtolical power*, in cenſuring any of you as offenders: *But ye are ſtrong*; ſtrong in faith, and fruitful in good works. Or, 2. We are glad when we are weak, that is, when we are weakened by never ſo many ſufferings and infirmities, provided you are made ſtrong thereby: For this is what we principally wiſh and endeavour, even your utmoſt perfection in knowledge, faith, and holineſs. Nothing is more deſired by the zealous and faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, than to ſee their people ſtrong in faith, fruitful in good works, perſevering in well-doing, yea, perfect in holineſs and obedience.

10 Therefore I write theſe things being abſent, leſt being preſent I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to deſtruction.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Verily I write thus to you, being abſent, purpoſely to reclaim you, leſt being preſent, I ſhould be forced to uſe ſome ſharpneſs towards you, according to the power which the Lord hath given me, tending to your edification always, and not at any time to your deſtruction." *Obſerve*, here, With what tenderneſs the apoſtle treats theſe offenders; he tells them, the ſharpneſs and ſeverity in his letters (if they accounted it ſuch) was upon a kind deſign, to prevent ſharpneſs and ſeverity in his dealings with them, when he came amongſt them; yet withal, he aſſures them, that if matters ſhould come to an extremity, that he muſt be forced to exerciſe his apoſtolical power, in cutting the contumacious off from the church's communion; he would exerciſe it with a tender regard to their good, not their hurt; for their edification, and not willingly to their deſtruction. *Learn* we, from the apoſtle's practice, to execute the cenſures of the church with great tenderneſs and affection, with great pity and compaſſion, with extraordinary dread and caution; not with raſhneſs and indiſcretion, or upon every light and trivial occaſion, but like a tender-hearted father, with a rod in our hand, and tears in our eyes.

11 Finally, brethren, farewel. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you.

Here our apoſtle ſhuts up his epiſtle with a pathetical option and affectionate wiſh of all perfection, conſolation, concord and communion, to his beloved Corinthians. Where *note*, 1. What a fervent and unfeigned love there is in all the faithful miniſters of Chriſt to the people committed to their charge, and how deſirous they are, when they are taking their leave of them, to leave God with them; *The God of love and peace be with you*. Now God's being with a people, implies and imports theſe things; namely, the heart of God with them, the help of God with them, and the preſence of God with them, and that they ſhall ſhortly be with God. 2. What are the particular graces and bleſſings which the apoſtle wiſhes his beloved Corinthians? He doth not wiſh them earthly honours, worldly riches, ſenſual pleaſures; but perfection of grace, ſpiritual conſolation, mutual love, ſweet communion with God, unanimity and concord amongſt themſelves: Sanctifying gifts and ſaving graces are the beſt legacies that can be left by the miniſters of God unto their people. *Be perfect*, be knit together; let the ſchiſms and breaches which have been amongſt you, be healed. *Be of good comfort*, rejoice in and under all your ſufferings for Chriſt, and the profeſſion of his holy religion. *Be of one mind*, of the ſame judgment, if poſſible, in all things; or if otherwiſe, let no difference in judgment cauſe diſunion in affection; if in ſome leſſer things your heads be different, yet let your hearts be one. *Live in peace*; for the Lord's ſake, live no longer in diviſion and ſtrife, in contention and wrath; let me hear no more of thoſe debates, envyings, backbitings, whiſperings, and ſwellings, which I have reproved you for; but eſpecially live in peace with your teachers and ſpiritual guides; cauſe not them to complain to God of you, nor to groan to God againſt you, for your factious preferring one miniſter before another; one crying, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos. Thus doing, *the God of peace and love ſhall be with you*: That is, he who is the author and enjoiner of love and peace will be with you, and dwell among you with his gracious and favourable preſence.

12 Greet one another with an holy kiſs. 13 All the ſaints ſalute you.

He exhorts them, according to the cuſtom of thoſe eaſtern countries, to ſalute one another with a kiſs, as a token of mutual and ſincere love: And ſince it was become a practice in ſacred meetings and church aſſemblies, particularly before their receiving the holy communion, to kiſs each other, he adviſes them to uſe it innocently, chaſtely; let it not be a wanton, but an holy kiſs. However, afterwards, the piety and purity of the church degenerating and declining, it was laid aſide. That which is innocent in itſelf, and pious in its firſt intendment, may in time fall under ſuch abuſe, as to cauſe it wholly to be laid aſide.

14 The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, *be* with you all. Amen.

Here are the higheſt bleſſings and benefits wiſhed to, and prayed for, in behalf of the Corinthians, which they could poſſibly be made partakers of; namely, all that love which doth or can flow from the Father; all that grace which was purchaſed by the Son, and all that fellowſhip and communion with, and communication from the holy Spirit, which might render them meet for the ſervice of Chriſt on earth, and for the full fruition and final enjoyment of him in heaven. *Obſerve* here, A full text for the holy Trinity; the names of the three perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are here diſtinctly mentioned, as in the commiſſion for, and in the form of baptiſm, Matt. xxviii. 19. Here the apoſtle calls the Father God, the Son Lord, and the Spirit the Holy Ghoſt; and as he attributes love to the Father, grace to the Son, ſo fellowſhip to the Holy Ghoſt; ſo that we have no reaſon to doubt of the perſonality of either, or any of them. But when we conſider how many at this day, with impudence and impunity, deny the divinity of the ſecond, and the perſonality of the third perſon in the bleſſed Trinity, we have reaſon to pray, as our church has taught us, for our own eſtabliſhment, in the collect for Trinity-Sunday;

Almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us thy ſervants grace, by the confeſſion of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majeſty, to worſhip the Unity; we beſeech thee, that thou wouldſt keep us ſtedfaſt in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adverſaries, who liveſt and reigneſt one God, world without end. Amen.

THE
EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO THE
GALATIANS.

That this epiſtle was written by St. Paul, *whoſe name it bears, I think was never queſtioned; though it be not writ, as moſt of his other epiſtles are, to the Chriſtians of one particular city, but of the whole country, to wit,* Galatia.

The Galatians *very readily embraced the goſpel, upon the preaching of St.* Paul, *and were at firſt exceedingly affectionate to his perſon, and zealous in the profeſſion of what he taught. But, alas! ſoon after St.* Paul *had left them, ſome falſe apoſtles from* Judea *crept in amongſt them, perverting ſome, and ſtaggering others; teaching the neceſſity, for ſuch as had embraced the Chriſtian religion, to ſubmit to circumciſion, and the obſervation of the Moſaical inſtitution.*

To countenance this inſinuation of theirs, they alledged, that St. Peter, James, *and* John, *had ſent them thither, and that they were of their minds in this matter; and particularly, that St.* Peter *was againſt the rejecting of circumciſion, and did himſelf practiſe the ceremonial law, and obſerve the rites of it in common converſation, ſeparating himſelf from the* Gentiles. *Thus theſe Judaizers oppoſed the doctrine and practice of St.* Peter *to that of St.* Paul; *and to carry on their deſign with greater ſucceſs, they magnified the other apoſtles, and vilified St.* Paul, *not allowing him the name or right of an apoſtle, having not ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, as the reſt had done, affirming, that he never was called by Chriſt, nor ever owned for an apoſtle by the other apoſtles.*

Hereupon St. Paul, *in his abſence from the* Galatians, *writes this epiſtle to them; in which,* 1. *He vindicates himſelf and his doctrine, proving, that he was called to be an apoſtle by Chriſt himſelf, and that he had received his doctrine by immediate revelation from him; and that it was conformable to, and the very ſame with, what was preached by the other apoſtles. Next, he ſtrenuouſly proves, that circumſion, and all the ceremonial rites, were certainly aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt. And,* laſtly, *He draws practical inferences from this doctrine, and inſtructs them in the duties of an holy life, exhorting them to live religiouſly in every relation; and ſo concludes his epiſtle with a ſolemn proteſtation of his ſincere affection to them; aſſuring them, that as an evidence thereof, he had written the whole epiſtle with his own hand, wiſhing them abundant conſolation in Chriſt, both in life and death.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle (not of men, neither by man, but of Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead)

The penman of this epiſtle is here deſcribed by his name, *Paul*; by his office, *an apoſtle*; and by his commiſſion to that office, which was not human, but altogether divine, even from *God the Father by Jeſus Chriſt*. *Obſerve* here, 1. The great modeſty of this great apoſtle, in the ſetting forth his authority as an apoſtle; you will find, in the front of his epiſtles, when he names any others in the ſalutation with himſelf (as Silvanus and Timotheus) he mentions not himſelf as an apoſtle, when named with them, leſt he ſhould be thought to magnify himſelf above them. But here, becauſe his apoſtolical office was called in queſtion, he is neceſſitated to vindicate his authority, and accordingly declares himſelf *an apoſtle, not by men, nor by man*; that is, men were neither the authors nor chuſers of him to his office: He was not called, as Matthias was, Acts i. by the ſuffrage of the reſt of the apoſtles: He was not an apoſtle of men's election, nor by men's inſtruction; but appointed by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead. *Learn* hence, that no ſins before, nor yet after, converſion, can hinder the rich mercy and free grace of God, from uſing men in the higheſt employments in the church, if he pleaſes to make uſe of them. Paul, after he had been a blaſphemer, was made an apoſtle; and Peter, after his converſion, denied Chriſt with oaths and curſes; yet is a chief apoſtle, and an inſpired penman of holy ſcripture. *Note* 2. The high dignity conferred upon St. Paul, with reference to his apoſtolical office, he did not take it upon himſelf, but was choſen to it; he was not choſen to it for any merit in himſelf, but it was a grace freely beſtowed upon him: And this not by the miniſtry and mediation of man, but by the immediate deſignation and election of Jeſus Chriſt. Thus far he ſtands upon equal terms with the reſt of the apoſtles; they did not call themſelves, nor were they called by Chriſt, for any worthineſs in themſelves above others: But behold the peculiar prerogative of St. Paul above the reſt of the apoſtles, in this particular; they were called by Chriſt, in the day of his humiliation, when he was here upon earth in the fleſh; but he was called by Chriſt after his reſurrection, yea, in his higheſt ſtate of exaltation, when ſitting at his Father's right hand in heaven. And as his call was thus very extraordinary, ſo his gifts were anſwerable to his call: The goſpel which he preached, he received by inward and immediate revelation, which made him ſo much excel all the other apoſtles; inſomuch, that although, in his own opinion, he was the leaſt of ſaints when here upon earth; yet, in the opinion of others, he was the holieſt man when upon earth, and the higheſt now in heaven, next the man Jeſus Chriſt.

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.

That is, "All the brethren which are here with me, and own the doctrine which I preach, ſend greeting unto the churches of Galatia." Here *note*, 1. How St. Paul's doctrine is juſtified from the charge of ſingularity, which the Judaizing falſe teachers objected againſt it. What he wrote and taught, he tells the Galatians, was owned by *all the brethren*. This ſhews he had the conſent of the church with him, in that holy doctrine which was delivered by him. 2. The generality of the perſons to whom this epiſtle is directed; not to a ſingle perſon, nor to a particular church, but to all the churches in the province of Galatia. There were ſeveral chriſtian congregations, called churches, in that country, and all of them being leavened, or in danger of being ſoured with Judaiſm, that is, of ſuperadding the ceremonial law of Moſes to the goſpel of Chriſt; the apoſtle, and the brethren with him, direct this epiſtle, not to any ſingle church in that province, but to them all in general, being equally concerned: *All the brethren with me, unto the churches of Galatia*. 3. How the apoſtle doth not ſay here, as elſewhere, To the ſaints of God which are in Galatia; or, To them that are ſanctified by God the Father; but barely ſays, *To the churches of Galatia*; thereby declaring his holy indignation againſt the Galatians, as unworthy of thoſe gracious appellations, becauſe they had ſadly corrupted the doctrine of the goſpel begun in the ſpirit, and ended in the fleſh; firſt owning Chriſt and the liberty of the goſpel, and afterwards pleading for the bondage of the ceremonial law. Yet, *note*, laſtly, As corrupt as theſe churches of Galatia were, our apoſtle owns and acknowledges them to be true churches; they retained the eſſentials of Chriſtianity, and were not guilty either of idolatry, or a total apoſtaſy: therefore though ſtained with divers corruptions both in doctrine and manners, which he ſharply rebukes and reproves them for, yet he doth not deny them the name of churches: *All the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.*

3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe words are both a Chriſtian ſalutation, and an apoſtolical benediction: As they are a ſalutation, they expreſs a wiſh and deſire of the beſt bleſſings towards and on the behalf of them they ſaluted. From whence we may *learn*, That religion doth not aboliſh and deſtroy, but ſpiritualize and improve civility, humanity, and common courteſy. The Heathens wiſhed health to their ſaluted friends; the Jews, peace; but the Chriſtians, grace and peace. Again, the words may be underſtood as an apoſtolical and miniſterial bleſſing: The apoſtles were the patriarchs of the church of the New Teſtament: And as a ſpiritual father, St. Paul here bleſſes his children, wiſhes them firſt grace, then peace: *Peace* muſt be ſought after *grace*; and not expected before it. Peace without grace, is no peace. There can be no peace with the Creator, no ſanctified peace with the creatures, except through Jeſus Chriſt we are firſt made partakers of the gracious love and favour of Almighty God. Accordingly, ſays the apoſtle here, *Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *note*, That grace and peace may be ſaid to be from the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, theſe two ways: (1.) Efficiently, as the authors and cauſes of both: God the Father is the author of all grace, as he did decree it; and Chriſt, as he did purchaſe it. (2.) Objectively; that is, this grace and love in God the Father, and this peace and ſatisfaction that is in Jeſus Chriſt, the more they are by faith apprehended by us, the more are they increaſed in us, and upon us. *Learn* from the whole, That the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians here on earth, ſtand in manifeſt need of fuller ſupplies and farther additions both of grace and peace to be daily communicated to them, and enjoyed by them.

4 Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

That is, "Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf unto death, for the remiſſion of our ſins, that he might deliver us from this evil world; namely, to ſeparate or bring us off from the evil cuſtoms and practices of the wicked men in the world, and engage us to live a life of ſtrict holineſs, according to the will and command of God our Father." Here *note*, 1. The prieſtly office of Chriſt declared and aſſerted: *He gave himſelf for our ſins*; that is, an expiatory ſacrifice for our ſins. So deadly was the guilt of ſin, ſo exact the juſtice of God, and ſo unalterable his faithfulneſs, in executing the judgment which was denounced againſt ſinners, that there was no hope for guilty ſinners pardon, without ſatisfaction given to the injured juſtice of God, for ſin; and nothing leſs would ſatisfy than the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, who is eſſentially, truly, and really God. 2. A farther end and deſign which Chriſt had in giving himſelf for us, namely, to deliver us from the rage of our luſts, as well as from the wrath of God, to ſanctify our natures for us, and to mortify our corruptions in us, to redeem us from our vain converſation, and *deliver us from this preſent evil world*; not totally to remove us out of the world, but morally to oblige us to abandon the wicked courſes, the ſinful practices of the evil men of the world. Bleſſed be God, that Jeſus Chriſt did not only purchaſe pardon and remiſſion, but holineſs and ſanctification alſo for his ranſomed and redeemed ones, and is as willing to free us from the dominion, as from the danger of our ſins: *He gave himſelf for us, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world.* 3. As the final cauſe of Chriſt's death, deliverance from God's wrath and ſin's rage, ſo the efficient cauſe of his death, the will of his Father: *He gave himſelf for us, according to the will of God*; that is, according to the purpoſe and appointment of God. Chriſt, as Mediator, was the Father's ſervant; and whatever he did in the work of mediation for us, was by the appointment and with the ſpecial approbation of God the Father. Eternal thanks be given, that the Son's purchaſe was the Father's pleaſure. 4. The comfortable relation in which God now ſtands unto us, ſince Chriſt gave himſelf for us, namely, that of a Father: *according to the will of God and our Father*; that is, who is now our Father. *Learn* hence, That ſatisfaction being given by Chriſt to provoked juſtice for our ſins, God, who was before a conſuming fire, and a ſin-puniſhing judge, is become our gracious and reconciled Father; our Father by adoption, who before was our Father only by creation: *according to the will of God and our Father.*

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

That is, "To God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Redeemer, be given the higheſt degrees of honour and glory, throughout the preſent and eternal ages." *Note* here, 1. The work and duty incumbent upon Chriſt's redeemed ones, and that is, to aſcribe all honour and homage, all glory and praiſe to God the Father, as the contriver, and to Chriſt the Son, as the accompliſher of the work of redemption; *To whom*, both whom, *be glory*. 2. The duration and continuance of this duty; not for a day, or year, but for eternal ages. This duty of aſcribing honour and homage, glory and praiſe to the Father and Mediator, for the glorious work of man's redemption, is ſuch, that it can never be ſufficiently diſcharged, but requires a ſucceſſion of ages to perform it in; yea, eternity itſelf is too ſhort for the performance of it: To whom be glory *for ever and ever*. The glory of the Redeemer, and of him that ſent him to redeem, will be the long-laſting, and never-ending ſong of redeemed ones, through millions of ages, yea, to all eternity; a work begun on earth, never finiſhed in heaven.

6 I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt unto another goſpel: 7 Which is not another: but there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt.

Note here, 1. The heavy charge which St. Paul brings in againſt the falſe apoſtles or Judaizing teachers, they perverted the goſpel which St. Paul preached, and taught a new goſpel of their own; yet not abſolutely ſo, but by compounding and mingling the goſpel with the ceremonial law, and by making circumciſion and other things, neceſſary to ſalvation, which our Saviour never made ſo, this the apoſtle calls *another goſpel*. Whence *learn*, 1. That it is no new or ſtrange thing to hear of new goſpels, of true goſpel perverters, and of falſe goſpel teachers. We find ſuch in the primitive and pureſt churches, planted even by the apoſtles themſelves; no wonder they are found in our days, who are fallen into the very dregs of time and error together. 2. That the addition of any thing to the Chriſtian religion, as neceſſary to be believed and practiſed in order to ſalvation, is a perverting the goſpel of Chriſt, and preaching another goſpel. Theſe Galatians did not renounce Chriſtianity, and go over to another religion, but they received circumciſion, and the obſervation of the law of Moſes; as an eſſential part of the Chriſtian religion, and as a condition of eternal ſalvation: Whereas the death of Chriſt having put an end to the Jewiſh diſpenſation, there was neither then, nor now, any obligation upon Chriſtians to obſerve the law of Moſes, and conſequently, the addition of any thing to the Chriſtian doctrine, as neceſſary to be believed and practiſed in order to ſalvation, is preaching another goſpel, and a manifeſt perverting of the goſpel of Chriſt. 3. That there is no authority in the Chriſtian church, in any, or in all the guides of it, to impoſe upon Chriſtians any thing, as of neceſſity to ſalvation, which the goſpel has not made neceſſary. The apoſtles themſelves had no authority to add any thing to the goſpel, much leſs can any that come after them pretend to it: Chriſt commanded them, Matt. xxviii. to teach all nations, to obſerve all things whatſoever he commanded them: and had the apoſtles themſelves added any point of faith and practice, not given them in charge by Chriſt himſelf, they had fallen under that curſe themſelves, which here they denounced againſt falſe teachers. *Note* 2. The artifice which theſe falſe teachers uſed to draw the Galatians into theſe new errors, and that was haſtily and ſuddenly to avow and own them before the world; I marvel that ye are *ſo ſoon* removed. Seducers are for clapping up an haſty match between the mind and error, and preſs the ſeduced to quick reſolutions; an haſty diſpatch being their great advantage, before they conſult their ſpiritual guides, or weigh matters in the balance of impartial judgments. What, ſays the apoſtle, are ye *ſo ſoon* removed? Yes, might the falſe teachers have ſaid, if not ſo ſoon, it might never; if not ſo ſoon removed, they might never be at all: For errors are like fiſh, they muſt be eaten freſh and new, or they will quickly ſtink, and be thrown away. 3. The true cauſe from which the Galatians' fall into error did proceed: They truſted themſelves with themſelves; they truſted to the clearneſs of their own unaſſiſted eyes, and to the ſtrength of their own reaſon and judgment, without conſulting their ſpiritual guide: Had not theſe Galatians a Paul to conſult with, before they gave their conſent to falſe teachers? Or if he was at a diſtance from them, about the work of the Lord in remote places, could not they have written to him, or adviſed with others beſides him? Wo to him that is alone, when aſſaulted by ſeducers!

8 But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. 9 As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any *man* preach any other goſpel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.

Note here, 1. How our apoſtle ſuppoſes an impoſſibility, only for the confirmation of what he had before affirmed. He doth not ſuppoſe it poſſible for any angel in heaven, or apoſtle upon earth, to contradict the doctrine of the goſpel which he had delivered, to preach any thing contrary to it, or beſides it, or different from it; making that neceſſary to be believed and practiſed, which Chriſt and his apoſtles never made neceſſary. *Learn* hence, That the written word of God, without unwritten traditions, contains in it all things neceſſary to ſalvation; and whatever doctrines are propounded to the church, not only contrary to, but differing from it, or beſides the written word, are curſed doctrines. *Note*, 2. The terrible anathema which the apoſtle denounces againſt thoſe, whoever they ſhould be, be it an apoſtle upon earth, or an angel from heaven, that ſhould thus pervert the goſpel of Chriſt, by making any thing neceſſary to be believed or practiſed in order to ſalvation, which Chriſt has not made neceſſary, *Let him be accurſed*. Let the church of Rome in general, and the council of Trent in particular, dread the efficacy of this curſe, who have added ſo many new articles to the Chriſtian faith, and enforced them as neceſſary to be believed by all Chriſtians; inſomuch that they pronounce, "that no ſalvation can be obtained without the belief of them," and denounce their anathemas againſt us who cannot believe them: But as their curſe, cauſeleſs, ſhall not come, ſo we believe that they, propounding terms of ſalvation no where delivered by Chriſt and his apoſtles, do bring themſelves under the apoſtle's anathema here in this text: For if the new articles of the church of Rome be neceſſary to ſalvation, then what Chriſt and his apoſtles delivered was not ſufficient to ſalvation before; and thus the pride of man exalts itſelf above the wiſdom of God. 3. How the apoſtle expreſſes his aſſurance in this matter; and to ſhew that he did not ſpeak raſhly, and in an heat, but upon due conſideration, he repeats again, ver. 9. *As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again*, &c. *Note* here, How poſitive and peremptory the apoſtle is in this matter: And doubtleſs this one anathema of his, is more dreadful than all the *bruta fulmina*, the freakiſh anathemas of an enthuſiaſtic church, which, in a manifeſt affront to the authority of St. Paul, has preſumed to add ſo many new articles to the Chriſtian religion, for which there is not the leaſt ground or warrant, either from the holy ſcriptures, or any of the ancient creeds. Laſtly, How the apoſtle puts himſelf into the number, *if I*, or any man, or any angel preach otherwiſe, let him be accurſed. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Not only the falſe apoſtles are to be rejected, but I myſelf deſerve to be anathematized, and accounted an execrable perſon, ſhould I preach any other doctrine to you, than what you have received from Chriſt by me; nay, ſhould any angel from heaven attempt it, he ought to be deteſted for it." *Learn*, That no angel in heaven, no perſon or church upon earth, have power to make new articles of faith, or to impoſe any thing upon our belief or practice, that is either againſt or beſides the written word, or any ways inconſiſtent with it, or contrary unto it.

10 For do I now perſuade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.

Our apoſtle in theſe words diſcovers the great ſincerity he uſed in preaching the pure and unmixed doctrine of the goſpel to the Galatians; for he did not perſuade, that men, but God, ſhould be heard and obeyed, that ſo their faith might be founded upon divine, and not human authority; nor did he in his miniſtry aim at pleaſing men, but Chriſt: For ſhould he *now* pleaſe men, being an apoſtle, as he did in times paſt, being a Phariſee, he ſhould not be *the ſervant of Chriſt*. The miniſters of Chriſt muſt not be men-pleaſers; they muſt not pleaſe men either by flattery or falſhood, nor accommodate their doctrines to the humour and diſpoſitions of men; pleaſing of God is our great work and buſineſs, let us mind that: Man-pleaſing is endleſs and needleſs, any farther than for their good, and the goſpel's gain. Accordingly, the apoſtle tells us elſewhere, that he was *made all things to all men that he might gain ſome*; not to make a preſent gain of them, but that they might be eternal gainers by him; it was not to exalt himſelf, but that Chriſt might be exalted in the hearts and lives of his hearers, that he ſought in and by his miniſtry to pleaſe all men; and thus, in imitation of him, let us ſeek to pleaſe all men for their good to edification.

11 ¶ But I certify you, brethen, that the goſpel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

The apoſtle here, as he did before, ver. 1, 2, aſſerts the divinity of the doctrine of the goſpel which he had preached to them: and aſſures them likewiſe of his own lawful call to be an apoſtle, which was queſtioned by his adverſaries, who affirmed, that he had received his doctrine only from others at the ſecond hand. To ſatisfy them in the divinity of his doctrine, he tells them, it was not after man; that is, it was not human, but divine; nothing belonging to man, but all from God in it: And as for his authority to preach it, he aſſures them, he had a revelation and commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt ſo to do; he learned not his doctrine from any human teacher, nor undertook to preach it by any human authority, but from Chriſt's immediate revelation. *Learn* hence, It is a ſingular ſatisfaction to the miniſters of Chriſt, and that which gives them boldneſs before their falſe accuſers, when they can give good proof of their regular call to the work of the miniſtry, and of the divinity of the doctrine diſpenſed by them. Thus did St.

Paul here: The goſpel, ſays he, which I preach to you, and the miſſion I had ſo to preach it, was not after man, nor from man, nor by man, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: Where, *note*, From Chriſt's being ſo often oppoſed to man in theſe verſes, and in the firſt verſe, that he is not mere man, but God as well as man: Why elſe doth the apoſtle oppoſe Chriſt to man ſo often as he doth here? Not *of man*, neither *by man*, nor *after man*, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, who is God.

13 For ye have heard of my converſation in time paſt in the Jews religion, *how* that beyond meaſure I perſecuted church of God, and waſted it; 14 And profited the in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Here the apoſtle offers ſeveral arguments to ſatisfy the Galatians, that both his commiſſion to preach the goſpel, and alſo the goſpel which he preached to them, were not from man, but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And the firſt argument to prove it, as a convictive evidence of it, was his bitter enmity againſt the Chriſtian religion, and his mighty zeal for the Jewiſh religion, in which he was educated and brought up: All which he mentions as a thing publicly known, leaving them to infer from thence, that ſo great and ſudden a change could not be the effect of human perſuaſion, but divine revelation: *In time paſt I perſecuted the church of God, and waſted it.* Where, *note*, That although our apoſtle did not ſhun to make an open confeſſion of his wicked life, before his converſion, that he might thereby make evident, that his converſion was immediately from God, yet he makes an open confeſſion only of his open ſins, ſuch as they had *heard of in time paſt*, without diſcovering his ſecret ſins, which had been kept from the knowledge of the world, the divulging whereof would but have multiplied ſcandals and ſtumbling-blocks unto others. To confeſs our ſecret ſins to God, is ſafe; to confeſs our open ſins to the world, is ſufficient. *Obſerve* farther, The commendable proficiency which St. Paul made in the Jewiſh religion, wherein he was inſtructed and educated, *I profited in the Jews religion above many my equals.* He was alſo a zealous maintainer of the Jewiſh cuſtoms, and unwritten traditions, *being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* From St. Paul's example we may infer, That it is a ſpecial duty incumbent upon all perſons to make religion the matter of their choice; and having eſpouſed it, to be the more ſerious and zealous in it; to labour to advance and grow both in the knowledge and in the practice of it; and that to a degree of eminency, excelling and out-ſtripping others.

15 But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood; 17 Neither went I up to Jeruſalem to them which were apoſtles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damaſcus.

Here we have a ſecond evidence which St. Paul brings to prove himſelf an apoſtle extraordinary, called by God himſelf unto the miniſterial ſervice; and that the doctrine he delivered, was not immediately from the mouths of the apoſtles, but by immediate revelation from Jeſus Chriſt. Thus he ſpeaks: "When ſays he, it pleaſed God, who decreed and determined to ſeparate and ſet me apart for the work of an apoſtle, even from my very infancy, and afterwards of his mere grace and good will called me to preach the goſpel to the Gentile world, having firſt revealed his Son in me, and to me, and then by me, immediately I ſet about the work, and complied with my duty, not conſulting any perſon living, neither my own carnal reaſon, nor any man's advice; neither went I up preſently to Jeruſalem to confer with, to receive authority or inſtruction from them, which were apoſtles before me; but I went immediately from Damaſcus, the place of my converſion, into Arabia, and preached the goſpel three years among thoſe wild and barbarous heathens, and then returned again unto Damaſcus: From whence it evidently appears, that I neither had inſtruction nor commiſſion from any of the apoſtles that were before me, having never ſeen any of them as yet, but both my miſſion and my meſſage were immediately received from Jeſus Chriſt. Here *note*, 1. The qualification neceſſary in a miniſter that reveals Jeſus Chriſt unto his people, namely, that Chriſt muſt be revealed to him, and in him. We muſt learn Chriſt ourſelves, before we pretend to preach him to others: *When it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in me, I preached him among the Heathen.* As there is no knowledge like the knowledge of experience; ſo there is no preaching like experimental preaching. Happy thoſe that can ſay, Not only that which we have heard and read, but that which we have taſted, and felt, and experienced from the holy Spirit's operation in and upon our own hearts, *that* declare we unto you. 2. What haſte the apoſtle made to obey the call and command of God, after he had received it: *Immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood.* He conſulted neither himſelf nor others, neither his own heart, nor the wiſeſt heads, he conſulted not his own ſafety nor carnal intereſt, but inſtantly did what he was commanded to do. The great commendation of duties, is the ready diſcharge of duties. When once the mind of God is declared, and conſcience thoroughly ſatisfied, we cannot be too quick and expeditious in the execution of divine commands. Lord! how readily ſhould all men, but eſpecially thy miniſters, anſwer and obey thy call, and execute thy will and pleaſure! *Immediately I conferred not*, ſays St. Paul; *I made haſte and delayed not*, ſays holy David. In a good work it is good to make haſte: In God's work we cannot readily make more haſte than good ſpeed.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave James the Lord's brother.

Here is a third evidence to prove that St. Paul received his miniſtry and meſſage by divine revelation from Jeſus Chriſt, and not from man, or by man. He acknowledges, that not till three years after his converſion, when he had preached the goſpel in the deſerts of Arabia, had he ever ſeen Peter, or any other of the apoſtles, and conſequently could not receive the knowledge of the goſpel from him or them, as his adverſaries the falſe apoſtles would inſinuate and ſuggeſt. True, after his three years preaching in, and his return from Arabia, he went up to Jeruſalem, and ſaw Peter and James, and converſed with them for fifteen days: But the ſhortneſs of his ſtay with them is an evidence that he went not up to Jeruſalem to learn the goſpel from them, much leſs to pay homage to St. Peter as the prince of the apoſtles; for St. Paul often affirms, in his epiſtles, That he was not inferior to St. Peter, nor came behind the chiefeſt of the apoſtles; but it was only a familiar and friendly viſit, given by one miniſter of Chriſt to another, in token of mutual conſent and agreement in the ſame truth preached by both; and by no means to receive ordination from Peter, or divine inſtructions (for he had an higher teacher than him, even Chriſt himſelf) or to acknowledge any ſubjection to him, by owning his ſupremacy over all the apoſtles; as the church of Rome would bear us in hand he did, in defiance of what St. Paul himſelf declares to the contrary. But we cannot help it, if men who have their credulity at their own diſpoſal, and can believe what they liſt, will yield their aſſent to what is contrary to divine relation, and the reaſon of things. Very evident is it to any impartial obſerver, that St. Paul's viſit at Jeruſalem was a viſit of civil courteſy, yet for the ſpiritual conſolation and mutual edification both of himſelf and the *apoſtles*, whom he thus viſited. From hence *learn*, 1. That the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould be ſo far from being at variance with, or at any diſtance in affection from each other, that they ought to maintain correſpondency and familiarity with one another, and to give friendly viſits to each other, in token of their harmony and mutual agreement in the ſame divine truths delivered by them. Thus did our apoſtle here; he took a journey to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter and James our Lord's kinſman. 2. From the ſhortneſs of his viſit and ſtay at Jeruſalem, though it was in the moſt delightful and deſirable, yea moſt profitable company, yet it was but for *fifteen days*; he haſtens away to his charge again. Thence *note*, That though the miniſters of Chriſt may and ought to viſit each other, as an evidence of reciprocal affection, and in order to mutual direction, edification and conſolation; yet ought their meetings to be neither ſo frequent, nor of ſo long continuance, that thereby their ſeveral flocks ſhall ſuffer prejudice: After a ſhort time ſpent in viſiting, we muſt return to our buſineſs, and mind, above all things, our miniſterial charge: *I went to ſee Peter*, &c.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Obſerve here, That St. Paul, having to do with the falſe apoſtles and the ſeduced Galatians, who, he had juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, would not (as they ought) give much credit to his word; he aſſerts the truth of what he affirmed, upon oath, appealing to the all-knowing and heart-ſearching God, as witneſs and judge of the truth of what he ſaid: *Behold, before God I lie not.* Where, *note*, 1. That it is no new thing for the faithfulleſt and ableſt miniſters and ſervants of Chriſt to be looked upon as liars, unworthy to be truſted, and to have the truth of what they deliver, though in God's name, queſtioned and ſuſpected. Our apoſtle's purging of himſelf here from lying, doth import, that ſome did ſuſpect him for a liar. And if an inſpired apoſtle be, what private miniſter may not be, ſuſpected? 2. The mean which St. Paul makes uſe of, for purging himſelf from the imputation of falſhood; it was, by taking an oath in a ſolemn manner. *Learn* thence, That though raſh ſwearing, falſe ſwearing, and upon every light occaſion to take or multiply oaths, be a very great ſin; yet to ſwear, and bear witneſs to the truth, and to take an oath upon due conſideration, and for weighty reaſons, and to ſwear by the name of God, is certainly a lawful, and ſometimes a very neceſſary and important duty.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Chriſt; 23 But they had heard only, That he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me.

The fourth evidence is here produced by St. Paul, to prove, that both his miniſtry and his meſſage, his office and his doctrine, were divine; and that he was ſo far from learning the Chriſtian religion from the Chriſtian churches in Judea, that he was not by face ſo much as known to them, or they to him: They had heard, indeed, that one Paul a perſecutor was become a preacher, but they had never ſeen him; and accordingly they magnified the grace of God in his converſion, admiring the wonderful change wrought in him. *Obſerve* here, 1. The laborious diligence and indefatigable induſtry of St. Paul, in planting and propagating the Chriſtian faith throughout the world; he travels, as ſoon as converted, into Arabia, then into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, thinking he could never do enough for Chriſt, who had ſuffered and done ſo much for him. Oh, how full of life and zeal are young converts! What activity and induſtry for Chriſt and ſouls, is found with them! They deſpiſe all dangers, they ſurmount all difficulties, are above all diſcouragements, in expreſſing their love to Chriſt, and venturing their lives for him: But, alas! as they grow older, their affections are cooler: ſo that they have many times juſt cauſe to ſay, *Oh, that it were with me, as in the months of old, in the day when God* converted *me, when the ſecret of God was with me, and when by his light I walked through all difficulties* to ſubſerve his intereſt, and to promote his glory. 2. The great and mighty power of the heart-changing grace of God, which turns the haters and profeſſed enemies of religion into friends, and bitter and bloody perſecutors into bold and painful preachers of the goſpel: *He who perſecuted in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed.* He that *leads captivity captive*, can ſoon make the ſtouteſt enemies of religion to become its ſtrongeſt friends. 3. Paul, before his converſion, is ſaid to *deſtroy the faith*, becauſe he intended it, and endeavoured it, though he could not actually effect it, and accompliſh it. Sin and evil, intended by a determinate reſolution, are as good as acted, in God's account. Bloody perſecutors deſign no leſs than a total extirpation of the truth, *to deſtroy the faith*, which, though it be out of their reach to effect, yet having deliberately reſolved it, it is as actually accompliſhed in the account of God; *He now preacheth the faith that once he deſtroyed.* Laſtly, To whom the glory and praiſe of converting grace is due, namely, to God, and to God alone; *They glorified God in me*; that is, they owned and admired the grace of God beſtowed upon me, which wrought ſuch a glorious and bleſſed change in me. The converting grace of God, wrought either in ourſelves, or others, is matter of admiration, and calls for thankſgivings and acknowledgments unto God; *They glorified God in me.*

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle here proſecutes the argument begun in the former chapter, namely, To evidence and prove, that both his miniſtry and his meſſage, his office and his doctrine, were divine, neither of them received from man, but immediately from Jeſus Chriſt.

THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jeruſalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me alſo. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that goſpel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, leſt by any means I ſhould run, or had run in vain.

Obſerve here, 1. How the gracious care and good providence of God did watch over St. Paul from place to place, and from time to time, when and whereſoever he went forth to preach, to plant, and propagate the goſpel. After fourteen years he went up to Jeruſalem, that is, fourteen years after his converſion; ſoon after which, he went about preaching the goſpel to the Gentile world. Bleſſed be God, who is oftentimes pleaſed, in mercy to his church, to preſerve the lives of his laborious miniſters, and their liberties alſo, for the free exerciſe of their miniſtry, notwithſtanding the joint endeavours of men and devils to the contrary. This good man, this great apoſtle, whoſe blood was thirſted after, having obtained help of God, continued fourteen years together, preaching the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. The end, deſign, and intent of St. Paul, in his preſent going up to Jeruſalem, and appearing before St. Peter there: It was not to acknowledge St. Peter's ſupremacy over him, or to appeal to him as the infallible judge in matters of religion; but it was, in a friendly and brotherly manner, to acquaint St. Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles, with the doctrine preached by him; that their concurring approbation being given to it, the mouth of his adverſaries, the falſe apoſtles, might be ſtopped, who accuſed him for preaching contrary to what the reſt of the apoſtles both believed and practiſed. 3. The ground upon which St. Paul undertook this journey to Jeruſalem at this time; *He went up by revelation*; he adviſed with God about the matter, and received direction from God to undertake the journey. Bleſſed be God, that although we cannot expect immediate direction and information from God now, as the ſaints of old had before the canon of the ſcripture was completed, yet we have the written word of God *to be a light to our feet, and a lamp unto our paths*, to direct and guide us in all our enterprizes; and we ought to regulate all our actions according to it, and to judge of the lawfulneſs and expediency of our undertakings by it. 4. With what prudence and holy caution the bleſſed apoſtle proceeded in this matter; he imparted his ſentiments, and communicated his doctrine to the reſt of the apoſtles privately, for fear of exaſperating the zealous Judaizing Chriſtians: And to the moſt eminent of the apoſtles, *ſuch as were of the greateſt reputation*; leſt if there ſhould be any oppoſition made to his doctrine, he *ſhould* hereafter *run, or had run in vain.* Nothing more obſtructs the ſucceſs and efficacy of the goſpel, than differences of judgment, and ſtrife and debate about thoſe differences, amongſt the moſt eminent preachers of it. Hence it was, that St. Paul endeavoured ſo much to get the joint conſent of the moſt eminent apoſtles to the doctrine delivered by him, leſt by the calumnies of his adverſaries, his preaching ſhould have been rendered unſucceſsful, *and he ſhould hereafter run and labour in vain.*

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumciſed: 4 And that becauſe of falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out our liberty which we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by ſubjection no not for an hour; that the truth of the goſpel might continue with you.

Obſerve here, 1. The inſtance and evidence which St. Paul brings of the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, agreeing with him, both in their doctrine and in their practice; and that was Titus, who being a Gentile, born a Greek, and now a preacher of the goſpel, and never circumciſed, the apoſtles at Jeruſalem would no more compel him to be circumciſed than St. Paul had done, but received him into fellowſhip with them, though he was an uncircumciſed Greek. This was a plain evidence, that they did not judge circumciſion, at that time, to be a part of God's commanded worſhip; for then they would have compelled Titus to it; that is, conſtrained him, by the force of eccleſiaſtical cenſures, to become circumciſed, had they thought circumciſion neceſſary to the Gentiles. 2. The reaſon aſſigned, why the apoſtle would not circumciſe Titus, though he had before circumciſed Timothy, namely, becauſe ſome falſe brethren crept in, would have taken advantage from it, to bring perſons into bondage to the law of ceremonies, and plead conformity to circumciſion as an obliged duty. *Learn* hence. That although the ceremonial law was certainly aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt; yet, Almighty God, partly with reſpect to it as his own ordinance, and partly in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of the Jews, was pleaſed to tolerate the obſervation of ſome part of it, and particularly circumciſion, as an indifferent action, though not as a part of religion, for ſome time; the ceremonial rites being dead, they were to be decently, not over haſtily buried. *Obſerve*, 3. The apoſtle's undaunted courage, and heroic reſolution in this matter; he would, notwithſtanding the falſe apoſtles importunity, never yield ſubjection, or ſubmiſſion to, or compliance with, their commands, in the leaſt meaſure, by conſenting to circumciſe Titus; that ſo the truth and liberty of the goſpel might continue ſincere and unſhaken. *Learn* hence, That an outward act of compliance muſt not be conſented to, which, in ſome caſes, might be complied with, when, by making it neceſſary, we turn Chriſtian liberty into ſervitude and bondage, when things in their own nature indifferent are urged and enforced as neceſſary; in that caſe, the practice of a thing indifferent, is to be abſtained from. Thus here, when falſe brethren urged the circumciſion of Titus, as an evidence of St. Paul's receding from the doctrine of *Chriſtian liberty*, he would not obey them, nor conſent unto them: *To whom we gave place, no not for an hour*; that is, we refuſed to uſe circumciſion, though but that once, becauſe we would not give the adverſaries the leaſt advantage againſt us, or againſt the truth delivered and defended by us.

6 But of thoſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat (whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's perſon) for they who ſeemed *to be ſomewhat*, in conference added nothing to me.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "When I came up to Jeruſalem, thus I behaved myſelf towards the falſe brethren, as I have here declared; but now, for thoſe *who ſeemed to be ſomewhat*, that is, Peter, James, and John, who were of chief reputation among the apoſtles, and more than ordinary miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, being the foundations of the Chriſtian church, laid by Chriſt himſelf, although they had ſome external advantages above me, as being apoſtles before me, and having converſed with Chriſt, and ſeen him here on earth, which I never did; *yet this maketh no matter to me*; for God values no man for theſe outward favours and benefits: Neither in that conference about circumciſion, did they add any thing to me, either by their authority or inſtruction; they added nothing, they corrected nothing, but approved all things, both what I did and ſaid: From whence it evidently appears, that my authority was equal with theirs, and my doctrine the ſame with theirs alſo."

7 But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that the goſpel of the uncircumciſion, was committed unto me, as *the goſpel* of the circumciſion was unto Peter: 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, the ſame was mighty in me towards the Gentiles.) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; that we *ſhould go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumciſion, 10 Only *they would* that we ſhould remember the poor; the ſame which I alſo was forward to do.

Note here, 1. That the ordinance both of Peter and Paul, for the office and work of apoſtles, was alike divine. The former, St. Peter, was to be the miniſter of the circumciſion: that is, to exerciſe his miniſtry among the Jews, and St. Paul, by virtue of the ſame divine ordinance, was to exerciſe his office among the Gentiles, called the uncircumciſion; yet this muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if Paul might not preach to the Jews, nor St. Peter to the Gentiles, which they both did upon occaſion, but becauſe their more ſpecial and particular province was thus, St. Peter to preach to the Jews, and St. Paul to the Gentiles. *Learn* hence, That the office of preaching the goſpel is a ſpecial truſt, committed by God himſelf to ſuch as he qualifies for it; and as none muſt enterprize it, but ſuch as he calls unto it, ſo muſt all that undertake, be accountable to him for it; *The goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, and the goſpel of the circumciſion was committed unto Peter.* *Note* 2. How this great apoſtle aſcribes the ſucceſs and efficacy of his own miniſtry among the Gentiles, and of St. Peter's among the Jews, alike to God; *He that wrought effectually in Peter, was alſo mighty in me:* It is neither the perſon nor pains of the miniſter, nor any natural energy or efficacy in the word preached, upon which the ſucceſs of the goſpel depends, but upon the effectual working of the holy Spirit; *He that wrought effectually in Peter, was alſo mighty in me.* The word of God works not as a natural agent, but as a moral inſtrument in the hand of the Spirit. The weapons of our miniſterial warfare are then mighty, when made mighty through God, for the pulling down the ſtrong-holds of ſin and Satan. 3. The duty of the miniſters of Chriſt implicitly declared, namely, to *be pillars*; not ſeeming to be ſo, but really ſo: As pillars, they are to uphold the truth, by their doctrine and diligence; as pillars, to be conſtant in defending the truth againſt all the blaſts and ſtorms of error and falſe doctrine; as pillars, to adorn the truth, by an innocent life and inſtructive example, whereby they ought not only to ſhine before others, but alſo to outſhine others. *When James, Cephas, and John ſeemed to be pillars:* Theſe three apoſtles under Chriſt, were great ſupporters of the church of Chriſt, by their diligence and faithfulneſs; yet *obſerve*, St. James is here named before St. Peter; which ſhews the weakneſs of the Papiſt's argument for Peter's primacy, becauſe ſometimes firſt named: But it is evident he is not always ſo; St. James is here mentioned before him, becauſe, ſay ſome, biſhop of Jeruſalem, and the Lord's brother, or near kinſman; but certain it is, that St. Paul paid not here any deference to Peter, upon the account of his primacy or ſupremacy, which is now ſo much contended for, but was not then thought of, becauſe it is the apoſtle's great drift and deſign to ſhew that he was in every reſpect equal with Peter, and the reſt of the apoſtles, and in no reſpect inferior to any of them; and conſequently, that neither in his miſſion nor his meſſage, neither in his office nor his doctrine, neither in his external authority, nor his internal gifts and graces, did he come behind the chiefeſt apoſtles, as the falſe apoſtles had miſrepreſented him. *Note* farther, St. Peter's integrity with James's and John's, in this matter, they being all very well ſatisfied, by convincing evidence, that almighty God had certainly called Paul to be an apoſtle no leſs than themſelves; they own and acknowledge him for ſuch, no doubt, to the grief, as well as to the ſhame of the falſe apoſtles, who had vilified his perſon, leſſened his authority, and diſparaged his doctrine; *When James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace that was given unto me*; that is, the grace of apoſtleſhip, they, in the name of all the apoſtles, and the whole church, gave unto me, and Barnabas my fellow-labourer, the *right hand of fellowſhip*; that is, they owned us to be pillars as much as themſelves, and acknowledged us to be apoſtles no leſs than themſelves; and it was agreed and concluded upon that we ſhould continue to preach chiefly to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews: So far were the apoſtles at Jeruſalem from condemning St. Paul's doctrine, or undervaluing his calling, which was the thing that the falſe apoſtles were ſo deſirous of, and hoped for. *Note*, laſtly, That as an evidence of the happy agreement of Peter, James, and John, with Paul and Barnabas, and of their owning them as apoſtles and miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, they recommended to St. Paul's charitable conſideration, the poverty of the Jewiſh converts to Chriſtianity, deſiring him to make collections in the Gentile churches for the Chriſtian Jews. Here *obſerve*, 1. That the Jews were generally poorer than the Gentiles; it is frequently the lot of thoſe who are rich in grace, to be poor in goods, and to be reduced to ſuch ſtraits, as to be forced to live upon ſome charitable ſupplies from others. 2. That although thoſe who are our own poor, and live within our bounds, near us, and about us, are chiefly to be relieved by us; yet in caſes of extreme neceſſity, ſuch poor as live remote from us, whoſe faces were never ſeen by us, ought to be ſharers in our charity. 3. That the care of God's poor, and the ſupplying of the outward neceſſities of his ſaints, is an employment not unworthy the higheſt apoſtle, much leſs unbecoming the ordinary miniſters of Chriſt; *They would that we ſhould remember the poor*. 4. That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt ought, upon juſt and fit occaſions, to excite and ſtir up their people to duties of charity, as well as piety; to coſtly and expenſive duties, as well as thoſe that are eaſy and leſs burdenſome; theſe being no leſs profitable to the church, and much more evidential of a real work of grace upon the heart.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.

Obſerve here, St Peter's offence, and St. Paul's rebuke. St. Peter's offence, 1. was this, He declined from the doctrine taught by himſelf, concerning the abrogation of circumciſion and the ceremonial law; he had formerly converſed freely with the Chriſtian Gentiles without ſcruple, making no objection againſt them, becauſe they were not circumciſed: But at Antioch he withdrew from the Gentiles, refuſing to eat with them, becauſe they were not circumciſed; as if, for want of circumciſion, they had been unclean, and altogether unfit to be converſed with. This was his fault; whereby it appears, that St. Peter himſelf was not infallible, whatever his pretended ſucceſſors, the biſhops of Rome, are ſuppoſed to be. *Learn* hence, How certainly and ſuddenly the holieſt and beſt of men will run into ſin and error, if a ſpecial aſſiſtance from the holy Spirit doth not uphold them. and preſerve them. *Obſerve*, 2. As St. Peter's offence, ſo St. Paul's rebuke; he *withſtood him to the face*; that is, rebuked him publicly, becauſe he was blame-worthy, and not ſecretly behind his back; ſuch as ſin openly, muſt be rebuked and reproved openly. Here *note*, How little St. Paul dreamed of St. Peter's ſupremacy; if ſo, he had been more modeſt than thus to reprove him to his face. *Learn* hence, That as no bands of friendſhip muſt keep the miniſters of God from reproving ſin and vice; ſo, when they find the fault to be notorious, they muſt reprove it wherever they find it, with much boldneſs and reſolution. St. Paul here, in reproving St. Peter, *withſtood* him: It is in the original a military word, ſignifying *to ſtand againſt*, either by force of arms, as among ſoldiers; or by dint of argument, as among diſputants: It is a word of defiance, and ſignifies an oppoſition hand to hand, face to face, foot to foot, not yielding an hair's breadth to the adverſary. Yet withal, as St. Paul's courage, ſo his candour appeared, in reproving St. Peter, to his face, and not reproaching him, as ſome, behind his back. And behold this great and chief apoſtle St. Peter, ſubmits to his reprover, neither juſtifying his action, nor reflecting upon St. Paul; he replieth not again.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion. 13 And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation. 14 ¶ But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

A farther account is given us in theſe verſes, of St. Peter's offence at Antioch, in giving occaſion of ſcandal to the Gentiles, by refuſing to converſe and eat with them, although he had before, in a viſion, received a divine command ſo to do. St. Paul calls it *fear*, ver. 12. *diſſimulation*, ver. 13. and *not walking uprightly*, ver. 14. He refuſed to converſe with the believing Gentiles, being uncircumciſed, for fear of offending the believing Jews, who were ſo tenacious of circumciſion, and the ceremonial law. *Learn* hence, What weakneſs and inconſtancy is found with the beſt of men, eſpecially when fear gets a prevailing power over them. St. Peter was the miniſter of the circumciſion, in great honour and eſteem with the believing Jews, but fearing the loſs of his reputation among them, he falls into ſin againſt God. *Obſerve*, 2. The fatal influence of that his ſin; it drew others into a partnerſhip with him therein; Barnabas himſelf was led away with the diſſimulation, and the other Jews diſſembled with him. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are eminent in the church, had need be exactly careful how they walk; for if they fall, they fall not alone, many do fall with them. *Obſerve*, 3. With what openneſs and freedom, with what courage and reſolution, St. Paul checks and reproves Peter, for his cowardneſs and timorouſneſs, in refuſing to converſe with the believing Gentiles, for fear of gaining the diſpleaſure of the circumciſed Jews: *I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt,* in thy ordinary converſation, *after the manner of the Gentiles, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles,* by thy example, *to live, as do the Jews.* Where *note,* What a conſtraining power there is in the example of eminent perſons. He is ſaid to compel in ſcripture, not only who doth violently force, but who, being of authority, doth provoke by his example. The errors of thoſe that do rule, become rulers of error. Men ſin through a kind of authority, through the ſins of thoſe who are in authority.

15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles. 16 Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.

St. Paul having fully vindicated his own authority as an apoſtle, from the imputations of the falſe apoſtles, he comes next to vindicate his doctrine, namely, the evangelical doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, which he had formerly preached to the Galatians, and which, in his abſence, the falſe apoſtles had endeavoured to ſubvert and overthrow, urging the ſtrict obſervation of the ceremonial law, as neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation. Our apoſtle, therefore, to ſtrike at the root of this dangerous error, excludes all works of our own from having any influence upon our juſtification. Now this he proveth, (1.) Becauſe they that were Jews by birth, and ſo federally the holy people of God, found it neceſſary to renounce the works of the law in point of juſtification, and to ſeek righteouſneſs only through faith in Chriſt, as well as the profane idolatrous ſinners, or the Gentiles, who were ſtrangers to the covenant of God: *For by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh,* neither Jew nor Gentile, *be juſtified;* that is, acquitted from the guilt of ſin, and diſcharged from obnoxiouſneſs to the wrath of God. Now, no obedience of ours can obtain this, becauſe of the great imperfection which cleaves to it, and becauſe God will have all boaſting excluded; Eph. ii. 8. *By grace ye are ſaved, through faith; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt;* but that he that glorieth, ſhould glory in the Lord. *Note* here, That the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and not by works, was early, very early oppoſed by Satan and falſe teachers. It being *articulous ſtantis et cadentis eccleſiæ,* a fundamental article of our Chriſtian faith, our comfort ſtands or falls with it; no wonder then it is ſtrenuouſly oppoſed.

17 But if, while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves alſo are found ſinners, *is* therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor.

Theſe words are generally looked upon as an objection, which the adverſaries of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, have been always ready to make againſt it, namely, "That if perſons be not juſtified by their obedience to the law, then they may live as they liſt in the breach and violation of the law, and freely indulge themſelves in ſin, and conſequently make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin, as if he had relaxed the duty." The apoſtle rejects this inference and deduction with the greateſt abhorrence and deteſtation, ſaying, *God forbid.* Hence *note,* That it is no new prejudice, though a very unjuſt one, againſt the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, and not by works, that it opens a door to licentiouſneſs, and makes Chriſt the miniſter of ſin. *Note* farther, A ſecond objection here ſuggeſted. Some might pretend that he built up by his practice, what he had deſtroyed: No, ſays the apoſtle, I have, together with the doctrine of free juſtification, preached to you, preſſed upon you, the duty of mortification, as of indiſpenſible neceſſity to be practiſed by you; ſhould therefore my preaching or my practice be otherwiſe then it has been, I ſhould build again what I have deſtroyed, and deſtroy what I have already builded; and thus by encouraging ſin, and diſcouraging holineſs and obedience, I ſhould be a tranſgreſſor againſt the law of righteouſneſs. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, cannot be rightly preached, except the duty of mortification of ſin be urged and enforced with it; for the ſame faith that depends upon Chriſt for pardon of ſin, doth look up unto him for power and ſtrength to vanquiſh and ſubdue ſin: If we do not the latter, Chriſt will never do the former.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Here the apoſtle ſhews, that believers are ſo far from being juſtified by the law, that they are dead to the law, ſo as to put no confidence in their obedience to it for juſtification; particularly, (1.) They are dead to the law; that is, they are delivered from the rigorous exactions of the law. Perfect, perſonal and perpetual obedience, is the duty which the law exacts at the believer's hand, and he has performed it, though not in himſelf, yet in the perſon of Chriſt his Surety, who yielded as abſolute and complete obedience to the law, as it could require or demand. (2.) The law is dead to believers, and they to that, in regard to the condemnatory curſe and ſentence of the law; Chriſt hath redeemed them from the curſe of the law; being made a curſe for them, Gal. iii. 13. True, the believer's violation of the royal and righteous law of God, in the ſmalleſt meaſure and degree, doth, in its own nature, deſerve the curſe and condemnatory ſentence; but Chriſt has diſcharged him from obnoxiouſneſs to the curſe, by being made a curſe. (3.) The law is dead to believers, as to its authority, to juſtify and ſave them. This is that the law cannot do, being made weak through the fleſh; though properly ſpeaking, the law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that; the law has not loſt its authority to command, but we our ability to obey; it is as impoſſible for a fallen ſinner to keep the law of God perfectly, as it is for a lame cripple to run a race ſwiftly. Yet, (4.) Believers are not dead, but alive to the law, as a rule of life and holy living; the law binds the believer (in Chriſt's hand) as ſtrictly to endeavour obedience to it, as it did bind Adam in innocency: But here is the believer's privilege, that God the Father, upon the ſcore of the covenant of grace, which the blood of Chriſt has ratified and confirmed, doth graciouſly accept the faithful endeavours of his children, inſtead of perfect performances; which obedience the law-covenant did rigorouſly exact and require. Thus may every believer ſay with the apoſtle, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*, namely, a life of righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

20 ¶ I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

Several things are here *obſervable*, viz. St. Paul's ſpiritual death declared, and his ſpiritual life deſcribed, together with the author and inſtrument of it. *Obſerve*, 1. St Paul's ſpiritual death, *I am crucified with Chriſt*; that is, with Chriſt I am dead to the law (in the manner mentioned in the foregoing verſe) dead to ſin, and dead to the world. *Learn* hence, That all true believers are crucified with Chriſt Jeſus; or that all juſtified perſons have fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death: They have fellowſhip with him, (1.) In the merit and value of his death; they are ranſomed by it, as a price paid down to the juſtice of God for them. (2.) In the virtue and efficacy of his death; which doth not only merit pardon for us, but mortifies ſin in us; *Our old man is crucified*; that is, the power of ſin is ſubdued in us. (3.) A juſtified perſon hath fellowſhip with Chriſt, in the likeneſs and ſimilitude of his death, and that is a crucifixion: As Chriſt died a painful, ſhameful, lingering, and accurſed death for him, ſo doth ſin die painfully, ſhamefully, and gradually in him: *They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts*, Gal. v. 24. *Obſerve*, 2. St. Paul's ſpiritual life deſcribed, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me*. *Learn* hence, That a crucified Chriſtian is a living Chriſtian: *I am crucified, nevertheleſs I live*; a life of juſtification and ſanctification at preſent, in hope of, and as an earneſt for, a life of glorification to come. Yet, *obſerve*, 3. How the apoſtle corrects, or rather explains himſelf, after what kind, and in what manner he lives; he denies himſelf to be the author and root of his own life; and declares Chriſt to be both. *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me*. Chriſt is both the author and efficient cauſe, the exemplary cauſe, the end or final cauſe of the Chriſtian's life; *a living Chriſtian* lives not himſelf, but *Chriſt lives in him*. 4. As the author of the Chriſtian's ſpiritual life, *Chriſt*; ſo the inſtrument of it, and that is *faith: The life which I live in the fleſh*, that is, the *ſpiritual life* which I live as a Chriſtian here in the world, *I live by faith in the Son of God*; my life of juſtification, is by faith in his blood; my life of ſanctification and conſolation, is through *faith*, in and by influences derived from his holy Spirit. 5. How the apoſtle appropriates to himſelf in particular, what Chriſt had done for all believers in general: *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me*. Where note, Though a firm perſuaſion, and full aſſurance of Chriſt's ſpecial love to ourſelves, and his dying for us in particlar, is not of the eſſence and being of juſtifying and ſaving *faith*, yet it is attainable without an extraordinary revelation; and, as ſuch, every ſincere Chriſtian ought to aim at it, to labour and endeavour after it.

21 I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for if righteouſneſs *come* by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.

The apoſtle concludes the chapter with a double argument, to prove the Chriſtian's juſtification by faith, without the works of law. (1.) Were it otherwiſe, we ſhould fruſtrate and make void the grace of God: For if *juſtification* be by works, it can no more be by grace; according to the apoſtle, Rom. xi. 6. (2.) Chriſt's death had been in vain, without any neceſſary cauſe or reaſon at all, if the *juſtification of a ſinner* could have been obtained by his own works. Where *note*, That as well works done after faith and converſion, as thoſe done before it, are excluded from being the meritorious cauſe of our juſtification, either in whole or in part; becauſe the joining of works with faith, in the matter of our juſtification, is a total excluding of God's free grace, and a loud proclaiming, that Chriſt died in vain.

CHAP. III.

In this and the following chapters of this epiſtle, our apoſtle expoſtulates with the Galatians, *who were ſeduced by the falſe apoſtles to relinquiſh the liberty they were called to by the goſpel, and to put their necks under the Judaical yoke again.*

O Fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you?

Note here, 1. The object of the apoſtle's ſharp reprehenſion, the churches of Galatia. 2. The ground of their reprehenſion, their defection from the truth into a very great error, namely, their holding of circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law, as neceſſary to ſalvation; which was a making of the croſs of Chriſt of no effect, and a virtual denial of his being come in the fleſh. From hence we *learn*, That the beſt and and pureſt of particular churches may err, and have erred fundamentally and dangerouſly: For what conſiſts ſuch a church of, but perſons all fallible? Head and members, being all ſinful, are as unable to ſecure themſelves from error, as from vice. Indeed the church of Rome talks big, and boaſts of a falſe gift, that of infallibility; but could never yet agree where it is lodged, whether in the Pope, or in a general council; however, they are ſure they have it. Well, if ſo, the more wicked and wretchedly inexcuſable are they, in not improving their talent of infallibility for the beſt ſervice of the Chriſtian church, namely, by writing one infallible comment upon the whole bible. What a ſervicable performance would it have been in them, to pin the Pope in his chair, and hold down his hands to write, as Aaron and Hur held up Moſes's hands to pray, till all the Amalekite errors and hereſies, ſo much complained of, were routed and ruined! Wo unto them that let ſuch an excellent gift lie idle amongſt them, and unemployed by them. 3. The high and heinous aggravation of this fault in the Galatians, *before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt had been evidently ſet forth, crucified among them*; that is, Chriſt, and their freedom by him from the bondage of the ceremonial law, had been preached to them; and his death and ſufferings, with the great end and deſign of them, as plainly laid before them, as if Chriſt himſelf had been crucified in the midſt of them. Laſtly, The brand of infamy which our apoſtle ſets upon the Judaizing doctors, heretical and falſe teachers; he calls them ſpiritual ſorcerers, and their doctrines ſpiritual witchcraft: *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* Becauſe, (1.) As ſorcerers, by deluding the ſenſes, make perſons apprehend they ſee what they ſee not; ſo heretics, by caſting a miſt of ſeeming reaſon before the underſtanding, do delude it, and make the deluded perſon believe that to be truth, which indeed is not. (2.) As ſorcerers, in what they do, are aſſiſted beyond the reach of their own ability and ſkill, by the help of Satan; ſo heretical ſpirits are often by Satan's concurrence with them, more than ordinarily aſſiſted by him, in drawing multitudes after them: *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* The original word ſeems borrowed from the practice of witches and ſorcerers, who being aſſiſted by the devil, uſed to caſt miſts before the eyes of the people, to dazzle and delude them.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Our apoſtle having prepared the Galatians attention, by a very ſmart and ſharp reprehenſion in the foregoing verſe, returns to the ſubject of juſtification by faith, without the works of the law, which he had entered upon in the former chapter, and proſecutes at large in this; and he uſes five arguments to prove that we are juſtified by *faith*, and not by *works*: The firſt is contained in the verſe before us, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I appeal to your own experience; you have received the Spirit yourſelves, ſome of you for ſanctification, others for miraculous operations; now I would know by what means you received it? Was it by hearing the law of Moſes preached? You cannot ſay it; for you were heathens, and without the written law; it muſt then be by hearing of the goſpel, the doctrine of *faith*, which I preached to you." Here we have a truth expreſſed, and a truth implied. The truth expreſſed is this, That the hearing of the goſpel faithfully preached, is the inſtrumental mean by which perſons receive the Holy Spirit in the ſanctifying gifts and graces of it, to enable them to live an holy and ſpiritual life: *Received ye not the Spirit by the hearing of faith?* Yes, he did. The truth implied is this, That a people ſhould take great heed, that they never undervalue, much leſs deſpiſe and vilify that miniſtry, or that doctrine, which God at firſt bleſſed for their converſion. How many are there in England at this day, who diſown that church, deſpiſe that miniſtry which God bleſſed to their converſion, if ever they were converted? Sad it is, yet very certain, that like vipers they gnaw out the bowels of her who ſuckled them at her breaſt.

3 Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?

Obſerve here, The apoſtle calls the doctrine of the goſpel, *Spirit*; becauſe by hearing the goſpel preached, they had received both the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. The law, with all its rites and ceremonies, he calls *fleſh*; becauſe they were now weak, and being but temporary inſtitutions, were aboliſhed by the coming of Chriſt and the goſpel. *Note* next, How the apoſtle endeavours to convince the Galatians of the folly and abſurdity of hoping to perfect that in the fleſh, which they had begun in the Spirit: *Are ye ſo fooliſh?* As if he had ſaid, "That having at your entrance into Chriſtianity begun an holy life, by and according to the Holy Spirit conferred upon you, that now you ſhould think to be made more perfect by the *fleſh*, by the external commandments and obſervances of the law; how unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe that your juſtification ſhould be begun by a more noble, and perfected by a leſs noble cauſe?"

4 Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "To what purpoſe have you ſuffered ſo many perſecutions from the Jews, for the cauſe of Chriſtianity? All which ſufferings will be in vain, if, after all, you bring yourſelves under the bondage of the Jewiſh yoke; for theſe might have been eſcaped, had you owned the neceſſity of circumciſion, and other legal obſervances: But I hope you will recollect yourſelves, and perſevere in your firſt profeſſion, without which all your former labours, your paſt and preſent ſufferings, will avail you nothing." Intimating that all the good actions we have done, and the hard things which we have ſuffered, will be altogether in vain to us, if we do not perſevere in well-doing, and patient ſuffering unto the end: *Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. Note* here, 1. That it has been from the beginning the lot and portion of ſuch as profeſs Chriſtianity, to ſuffer many things in the defence of it. 2. That it is very poſſible for ſome of thoſe who have made an early and long profeſſion of Chriſtianity, yea, and ſuffered hard things for it, after all, to make a foul defection and apoſtaſy from it. 3. That all ſuch ſufferings have been, are, and will be in vain, and turn to no joyful account, if the perſons ſuffering do afterward apoſtatize from, and turn their backs upon the truths of God, formerly embraced and maintained by them.

5 He therefore that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Note here, 1. That God did accompany the firſt preaching and planting of the goſpel with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, with a power to work miracles, to heal diſeaſes, and to ſpeak with tongues, which were ſo many atteſtations and confirmations that the doctrine of the goſpel was from God; for here St. Paul appeals to the Galatians, as men that had the Spirit and miracles amongſt them, *He that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles*; implying, that Almighty God had given to them his Holy

Spirit, both in the ſanctifying graces, and miraculous gifts of it. 2. That the Spirit thus communicated in the firſt and early days of Chriſtianity, was not given to the Galatians, or any other Gentiles, by the preaching of the law, but by the miniſtry and diſpenſation of the goſpel, which is here called *the hearing of faith: He that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* *Learn* hence, That although the gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit are conveyed to the hearers of the goſpel by the miniſtry of the word, yet God is the author, the miniſter and diſpenſer of them, and the goſpel only the inſtrument and mean of their conveyance: *He miniſtereth to you the Spirit.*

6 ¶ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham.

Here our apoſtle proceeds to a ſecond argument, to prove that perſons are juſtified by faith, and not by works; and that is drawn from the example of Abraham: And the argument lies thus, "As Abraham, the father of the faithful, was juſtified; ſo muſt all believers, the children of faithful Abraham, be juſtified alſo. But though Abraham did abound in many virtues and good works, yet he was not juſtified by theſe, but by faith only; therefore by faith muſt all his children be juſtified alſo. *Abraham believed God*; that is, aſſented to, and relied upon the promiſe of God made unto him, That in him, that is, in the Meſſias, who was to deſcend from him, *ſhould all the nations of the earth be bleſſed*; and this *faith* of his was accounted, imputed, and reckoned to him for *righteouſneſs*; that is, was accepted of God for his juſtification." From whence the apoſtle doth infer, or draw this concluſion, that ſuch as ſeek juſtification by faith, as Abraham did, *are the children of Abraham*, as the Gentiles were; that is, the children of his *faith*; a far greater privilege than what the Jews gloried in, namely, that they were the children of his *fleſh*. *Learn* hence, That as the pious Jews under the Old Teſtament, ſo are Chriſtians now under the New Teſtament, juſtified alike. Were they juſtified freely? So are we. Are we juſtified fully? So are they. Was a righteouſneſs neceſſary for them to be clothed with, in order to their acceptance with God? The ſame is neceſſary for us alſo. Was faith imputed by God to them for righteouſneſs? So ſhall it be to us alſo.

8 And the ſcriptures foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, *ſaying*, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. 9 ¶ So then they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.

Obſerve here, That becauſe the former conſequence from Abraham's juſtification to ours, might be queſtioned whether it holds in the Gentiles, who were not of Abraham's poſterity; therefore the apoſtle declares, that the greateſt promiſe made to him, was, *That in him*, that is, in the Meſſias Chriſt Jeſus, who was to come of him, *all nations*, Gentiles as well as Jews, *ſhould be bleſſed*: God having determined, that all believers indefinitely, of what nation or kindred ſoever, ſhould be all juſtified one and the ſame way, namely, by faith in Chriſt, without the works of the law. So that all that are of faith, or true believers, whether Gentiles or Jews, do partake of all thoſe benefits and bleſſings which believing Abraham did partake of, amongſt which juſtification by faith is the chief. *Learn* hence, 1. That the goſpel is no new doctrine, but the ſame for ſubſtance, though not for clearneſs, with that which was preached to Abraham and to the church under the Old Teſtament: *The ſcripture preached before the goſpel unto Abraham.* 2. That the bleſſing of juſtification by faith, and other ſpiritual favours promiſed to the nations in Abraham, was ſuch as Abraham himſelf was a ſharer in, and partaker of; they were bleſſed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe. For it is written, Curſed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Here is a third argument produced in this chapter, to prove that we are juſtified by faith, and not by works; becauſe they who ſeek to be juſtified by the works of the law, are under the curſe; and if ſo, cannot be juſtified. The argument runs thus, "Our obſervance of the law, when at the beſt, is but imperfect: Now every performance lays us under the curſe, therefore no performance of ours can juſtify us. They that cannot fulfil the law, can never be juſtified by the law: But no fallen man can perfectly fulfil the law, therefore none can be juſtified by the law." This is the force of the argument, which the apoſtle proves by a quotation out of Deut. xxvii. 26. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The duty which the law enacts, namely, perfect, perſonal, and perpetual obedience. 2. The penalty which the law inflicts, and that is, the curſe: *Curſed is every one*, &c. *Learn* hence, That ſin and the curſe are inſeparable; wherever ſin is, the curſe will be, be it upon a perſon by imputation, or by actual commiſſion; wherever ſin lies, it lays us under the curſe; for ſin is an infinite evil, objectively conſidered; it is is a contempt of infinite authority, a contrariety to infinite holineſs, a provocation of infinite juſtice, and an abuſe of infinite mercy; and conſequently, the deſert of ſin is death and the curſe.

11 But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, *it is* evident: for, The juſt ſhall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them ſhall live in them.

A fourth argument is here produced to prove, that no ſinner can be juſtified before God, by the works of the law, although before men he may. The argument is this, taken from Hab. ii. 4. *The juſt ſhall live by faith*; that is, live his ſpiritual life by faith, his life of juſtification and ſanctification alſo; the life of his righteouſneſs before God, of his holineſs before men, and his life of glory with God in heaven, are all by faith. He adds, ver. 12. *The law is not of faith*; that is, the law ſays nothing of faith in a Mediator, or promiſes life to any perſon, ſave only to him who by a ſinleſs obedience performs exactly what it preſcribes: but the voice of the law is, *Do, or die.* *Learn* hence, That *the law and faith*, that is, the law and the goſpel, are not contrary to each other, but are mutually ſubſervient one to another in many things; as thus, when the law makes known ſin, the goſpel holds forth the remedy for ſin; the law diſcovers our need of Chriſt, the goſpel makes an offer and gracious tender of Jeſus Chriſt; the law makes known to us our entire duty, the goſpel furniſhes us with ſtrength and ability to perform that duty. 2. That though the law and faith, that is, the goſpel, which is the doctrine of faith, be not contrary to each other, yet in point of juſtification they are mutually inconſiſtent one with another: So that if juſtification be by the works of the law, it cannot be had by faith; if it be had by faith, it cannot be attained by the works of the law. There can be no mixture of law and goſpel, of faith and works, in this matter.

13 Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.

This is the apoſtle's fifth and laſt argument, to prove that we are juſtified by faith; and that, notwithſtanding the threats of the law, a believer is freed from the curſe and malediction of the law, by Chriſt's bearing the curſe for him. *Chriſt hath redeemed us*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The believer's happy diſcharge from the moſt diſmal and dreadful thing imaginable; namely, the condemnatory ſentence and curſe of the law, whereby a ſinner is bound over to death, even to death of ſoul and body. 2. The perſon that doth, and only can deliver the ſinner from this condemnatory curſe and ſentence, and that is Jeſus Chriſt. He diſcharges the believer from his obnoxiouſneſs to wrath, diſſolves his obligation to puniſhment, looſes all bands and chains of guilt; ſo that the curſe of the law has nothing, and ſhall have nothing to do with him for ever. 3. The way and manner in and by which Jeſus Chriſt effecteth all this for us; namely, by *his being made a curſe for us*; not that Chriſt was made the very curſe itſelf, or changed into a curſe, but he took the curſe upon himſelf; our ſin became his, by voluntary ſuſception of the puniſhment; and Chriſt underwent that death, the death of the croſs, which by the law was accurſed, to free us from the curſe of the law; as Chriſt was made ſin for us, ſo was he made a curſe for us. Now as he was made ſin, not by contracting the guilt of ſin, but by ſuffering the puniſhment of ſin; ſo he was made a curſe, by undergoing that death which the law ſtyles accurſed.

14 That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.

Obſerve here, One ſpecial fruit of Chriſt's ſufferings, and being made a *curſe for us*; namely, that the curſe being aboliſhed, the bleſſing of Abraham, that is, the bleſſing of juſtification, reconciliation, and adoption, promiſed to Abraham upon his believing, might come upon all the believing Gentiles, through Chriſt, the promiſed ſeed; and that the Gentiles might receive the promiſes made by Chriſt, of the holy Spirit, both in its miraculous gifts and ſanctifying graces, through their ſubmiſſion to the faith of Chriſt, or the doctrine of the goſpel. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt, by ſubmitting to the curſe of the law did not only appeaſe the wrath of God towards us, and deliver us from the curſe of the law deſerved by us, but purchaſed all ſpiritual bleſſings for us, ſuch as grace here, and glory hereafter. *Chriſt was made a curſe, that the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.* O wonderful grace, infinite love, and aſtoniſhing goodneſs of God, in that great work of our redemption, in bringing about one contrary by another! He giveth life by death, and the bleſſing by the curſe; *Chriſt was made a curſe, that the bleſſing might come*, &c. 2. That there was a promiſe of divers bleſſings made to Abraham; namely, that God would give him a ſon, a ſon by Sarah, a ſon in his old age, and by that ſon a numerous iſſue; that that iſſue ſhould become a mighty nation, and poſſeſs all the land of Canaan, wherein he then ſojourned; and that he would ſettle his covenant, that is, his church, in that family and nation; and that in one perſon deſcending from his poſterity, all nations ſhould be bleſſed; and that this bleſſing, introduced by that one perſon, ſhould aboliſh the curſe brought upon all nations by the firſt perſon's ſin: *That the bleſſing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt.*

15 Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth or addeth thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but, as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. 17 And this I ſay, *that* the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promiſe: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promiſe.

Note here, 1. An argument drawn from contracts among men, to prove the fixedneſs and ſtability of the covenant made by God: if one man makes a covenant with another, ſigns it, ſeals it, and delivers it before witneſſes, it becomes irrevocable and irreverſible; much more then muſt the covenant of grace and mercy made with us by God, be perpetual and immutable, ſince it is a covenant eſtabliſhed by oath; and when God ſwears, he cannot repent. 2. The apoſtle proves, That as the covenant of God can never fail, in regard of the wiſdom and invariableneſs of him that made it; ſo it can never expire for want of parties that have intereſt in it it, and advantage by it, for want of a ſeed to whom it is made; for as long as Chriſt hath a church and members upon earth, ſo long ſhall the promiſe be of force; not only *to Abraham, but to his ſeed, were the promiſes made: not to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt*; where, by *one*, we underſtand *one* myſtically, and in the aggregate; not only perſonally and individually: And by Chriſt, the whole church, conſiſting of head and members, believing Gentiles, as well as Jews. 3. That the apoſtle having confirmed the truth of his doctrine by arguments in the foregoing part of the chapter, comes now, in the latter part of it, to anſwer objections which ſome might be ready to make againſt his doctrine. The firſt we have, ver. 17. *This I ſay, that the covenant*, &c. The objection lies thus: Some might ſay, "When two laws are made, whereof the one was expreſsly contradictory to the other, the latter doth, in common preſumption, abrogate and diſannul the former: But here we find, that four hundred and thirty years after the promiſe made to Abraham, there was a law publiſhed extremely contrary to that promiſe, a law without mercy or compaſſion, a law both impoſſible and inexorable, a law which can neither be obeyed nor endured, a law which denounces a terrible and ſevere curſe to the tranſgreſſors and breakers of it; therefore, it ſhould ſeem as if ſome cauſe had happened, to make God repent and revoke his former covenant-promiſe made to Abraham." To obviate this objection, our apoſtle ſhews, firſt, What the purpoſe of the covenant-promiſe to Abraham was; namely, to give life and ſalvation by grace and promiſe. Secondly, What the purpoſe of the latter covenant by Moſes was not; namely, to give the ſame life by working, ſince, in thoſe reſpects, there would be a contradiction and inconſiſtency in the covenants, and ſo by conſequence, inſtability and unfaithfulneſs in him that made them. That, therefore, which the apoſtle here drives at, is this, That the coming of the law hath not voided the promiſe, and that the law is not of force towards the ſeed to whom the promiſe is made, in any ſuch ſenſe as carries contradiction to, or implies abrogation of, the promiſe before made; from whence it follows, if it be not to ſtand in contradiction to, it muſt ſtand in ſubordination to the goſpel, and ſo ſtand to evangelical purpoſes. *Learn* hence, 1. That although God might have dealt with mankind as an abſolute Lord and Sovereign, yet he doth not govern them barely by a law, but by a covenant, which has promiſes and threatenings annexed. 2. That after the covenant of works, made with man before the fall, was broken by Adam, God was pleaſed to enter into a covenant of grace with fallen man, to deliver him out of an eſtate of ſin and miſery, and to bring him into a ſtate of ſalvation by a Redeemer. 3. That though the former and latter covenant did differ in ſome conſiderable circumſtances, yet they are one and the ſame in ſubſtance, and do fully agree in all the eſſential parts of both. 4. That God's intent in giving the law, and urging exact obedience to it, under the penalty of the curſe, was not to take us off from ſeeking righteouſneſs and life only by the promiſe, but to encourage us to ſeek it; for, ſays the apoſtle here, *The law could not diſannul the covenant made with Abraham*, &c.

19 Wherefore then *ſerveth* the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made, *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one: but God is one.

Here an objection is moved: Some might be ready to ſay, "If the law, that is, works done in obedience to the law, do not juſtify, then the law given by Moſes upon mount Sinai, is in vain, and to no purpoſe; for why was the law given, enjoining ſo many duties, promiſing life to the obedient, and threatening wrath and a curſe to the diſobedient, if the inheritance come not by the law?" The apoſtle anſwers, That one great end for which the law was given, was to diſcover ſin, and a ſinner's undone condition by reaſon of ſin, and to lead him to ſeek out for a remedy. *The law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions*; that is, to make tranſgreſſion appear, to diſcover the pollutions of men's hearts and natures, and make them ſenſible of the condemnation they are under. *The law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come*; that is, Chriſt and his church. Where *note*, That the legal diſpenſations were not to continue always in the church, but only till the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; at whoſe death the partition-wall was broken down, and the Gentiles called into the fellowſhip of the church, as well as the Jews. *Note* farther, The glorious and amazing manner, in which the law was given upon mount Sinai, in thunder and lightning, by the *miniſtry of angels*, in ſuch a terrible manner, that there was no acceſs for ſinful men to God, but by Moſes, a mediator, ſtanding betwixt God and them; who in that action was a type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only Mediator between God and us. As Moſes was a typical, national, and repreſentative Mediator, ſtanding between the Lord and that people of the Jews, ſo Chriſt was a ſubſtantial and univerſal Mediator between God and mankind. Where *note*, That the law was publiſhed in mercy and pacification, not in fury and revenge; for had the Lord intended death in the publiſhing of the law, he would not have proclaimed it in the hand of a Mediator, but of an executioner. He adds, *That a Mediator is not a Mediator of one*, that is, of one party, but of diſagreeing parties. God and man were once friends: They were one, and needed no Mediator: But God and man, by ſin, fell at variance, and now need a Mediator. The very notion of a Mediator doth ſuppoſe, that men, by ſin, are at odds with God, and that God, by grace, is willing to be one with man. However though a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, yet *God is one*; that is, though there be two covenants, and two mediators, yet God is one and the ſame in both covenants; he carries on one and the ſame purpoſe and intention, both in the law, and in the goſpel; namely, a benevolence and good-will towards, and an hearty deſire and reconciliation with mankind.

21 *Is* the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law. 22 But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

Another objection is here made by the apoſtle: The Jews might poſſible ſay, "That the law given by Moſes, was againſt the promiſe of God made to Abraham." The apoſtle anſwers, No; that the law is not contrary, but ſubſervient to the promiſe: For the law was not given on mount Sinai, to afford life and juſtification by obedience to it (ſeeing it could not by a fallen creature be ever perfectly kept)

kept) but to convince of ſin, and to condemn for ſin; and that men, deſpairing of ſalvation in and of themſelves, might betake themſelves to Chriſt for it: For God in the ſcripture, hath *concluded*, that is, declared all men to be under ſin, and under the curſe due to ſin; that renouncing all confidence in themſelves, they ſhould, by faith, have recourſe to the only Mediator for righteouſneſs and life, for juſtification and ſalvation. *Learn* hence, That God, in the publication of the law by Moſes on mount Sinai, had none but merciful and evangelical intentions. 2. That the publication of the law by Moſes, was not againſt the promiſe of God made to Abraham, but they had both the ſame merciful deſign and gracious intention. To explain the matter by a ſimilitude or illuſtration, thus: "Suppoſe a prince ſhould proclaim a pardon to all traitors, if they would come in and plead it, and after this, ſhould ſend forth an officer to attack and arraign them, to threaten and condemn them: Is the prince contrary to himſelf? Hath he repented of his mercy? No, ſure! but he is unwilling to loſe the glory of his mercy, and moſt deſirous to have the honour of it acknowledged; and therefore he bringeth theſe criminals into extremities, that when their guilt is made evident, they may acknowledge the juſtice of the law that would condemn them, and the great mercy of the prince in offering a pardon to them." The caſe is alike between God and us; firſt to Abraham, and in him to us: God made a promiſe of mercy and bleſſedneſs, even to all that would plead an intereſt in it, for remiſſion of ſins, and acceptance with God: But the world grew ſecure; and though ſin was in them, and death reigned over them, they regarded not their miſerable condition; being without a law to evidence ſin and death unto their conſciences, they ſaw no neceſſity of pleading the promiſe of pardon. Hereupon God publiſhes by Moſes, a ſevere and terrible law, a law which filled the air with thunder, and the mount with fire, inſomuch, that Moſes, the mediator, did exceedingly fear and quake; in all this, God did but purſue his firſt purpoſe of mercy, and take a courſe to make his goſpel accounted worthy of all acceptation, that men being by this law rouzed from their ſecurity, and made ſenſible of the curſe and malediction they lie under, might run from Sinai unto Sion, from Moſes to Chriſt, and by faith plead that pardon and remiſſion which in Chriſt was promiſed, when God told Abraham, that in his ſeed ſhould all the families of the earth be bleſſed.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter *to bring us* unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter.

Before faith came, that is, before Chriſt came, and the doctrine of faith was preached, *we were in* bondage *under the* law; the ceremonial law was a very great bondage; their frequent going up to Jeruſalem at their feſtivals, was burdenſome; their ceremonies were many, inconvenient and chargeable; their laws for uncleanneſs and purifications, rendered them unconverſable, at all times, with other people, and ſometimes unconverſable one with another; yet was the law very uſeful to the Jews, that ſo they might be prepared by it to receive the doctrine of Chriſt, and ſalvation by faith in him. Hence it is that he calleth the law their *ſchoolmaſter to bring them unto Chriſt*; the ſchoolmaſter exerciſes authority over minors only, not over grown perſons; he teaches only rudiments and firſt principles for beginners, not ſuch things as require mature judgment and perfect age. Such was the law in compariſon of the goſpel, and Moſes with reſpect to Chriſt. Moſes and the law is a rigid and ſevere ſchoolmaſter, who, by whips and threats, require an hard leſſon of their ſcholars, whether able to learn it or not: But Chriſt and the goſpel is a mild and gentle teacher, who, by ſweet promiſes and good rewards, invite their ſcholars to their duty, and guide and help them to do what of themſelves they cannot do; by which means, they love both their maſter and their leſſon, and rejoice when it is neareſt to them, to direct them in their ſtudies. As the law is our ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, ſo Chriſt is our great prophet that leads us to God. *Note*, farther, That though the law was a good ſchoolmaſter to the Jews in their infancy and minority; yet it has no authority over Chriſtians now grown up to maturity. The goſpel-church, that is, both believing Jews and Gentiles, being like a ſon come to age, believing in Chriſt already come, are no longer to be treated as children under the diſcipline of the law as a ſchoolmaſter; for the they are now under the evangelical, not Moſaical diſpenſation of the covenant of grace. *After that faith is come*; that is, Chriſt, the object of faith manifeſted, and the goſpel, the doctrine of faith, revealed, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. A glorious goſpel privilege diſcovered, namely, adoption; *Ye are the children of God.* The church of God, under the New Teſtament, is in a ſpecial ſtate of ſonſhip and adoption, to whom the privileges and immunities of ſons and heirs grown up to maturity do belong. 2. The univerſality of this privilege, *Ye are all children of God*; that is, all, both Jews and Gentiles, all, both weak and ſtrong believers; ſubſtantial relations do not *recipere majus et minus*; he that is a father in reality, cannot be more a father to one child than to another; the young one in the cradle may call the parent father, as well as he that is grown to man's eſtate: *Ye are all the children of God.* 3. The inſtrumental cauſe of this bleſſed privilege, *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*; Chriſt inveſts every believer, weak as well as ſtrong, in the glorious privilege of adoption; faith in Chriſt to come, did intitle believers under the Old Teſtament, to the dignity of ſons and daughters; and faith in Chriſt now already come, doth add ſome peculiar dignity of ſonſhip to believers under the New Teſtament: They with us, and we with them, are all the children of God, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus; Chriſt of a Son became a ſervant, that we of ſlaves might become ſons.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.

What the apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing verſe, he proves in this; namely, that *all believers are the children of God, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, becauſe they are baptized into Chriſt and have put on Chriſt; that is, they are admitted into the Chriſtian church by baptiſm, they profeſs Chriſt's holy religion; and if they live as they profeſs, *they put on Chriſt*; that is, they are made partakers of his Spirit, and do copy forth the excellencies of his life. To *put on Chriſt*, is not as to put on a ſuit of clothes fitted to the body, but as metal caſt into a mould, receiving the figure from it. Happy they, who are not only ſacramentally, but really and ſpiritually baptized into Chriſt; incorporated into him, and made one body with him by faith; who do not only bear his name, but wear his image.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, " Now ſince the coming of Chriſt, there is no difference or diſcrimination between one nation and another, no regard to any national privilege, either of Jew or Gentile, no diſtinction of conditions, either bond or free; or of ſexes, either male or female; but circumciſed or uncircumciſed, we are all one as good as another, in reſpect of outward privileges, or external advantages; but being ſincere believers, we are all equally accepted of God in Chriſt." *Learn* hence, that no external privilege or prerogative whatever, without faith in Chriſt, is any whit available to ſalvation; none are debarred from Chriſt, nor more nor better accepted with him for any of theſe things: Both the circumciſed and uncircumciſed are his, if believing in Chriſt.

29 And if ye *be* Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

That is, " If ye be Chriſt's ſervants and ſubjects, then are ye the true ſeed of faithful Abraham, and heirs of the bleſſing, according to the promiſe made to him and his ſeed." This our apoſtle aſſerts, in oppoſition to the falſe apoſtles, who maintained, that there could be none truly reputed Abraham's ſeed, except they were circumciſed, and ſubjected themſelves to the law of Moſes, " Yes, ſays the apoſtle, if ye be Chriſt's, and by baptiſm ingrafted into him, you are the true children of Abraham, though ye be not circumciſed; yea, you are heirs apparent of the heavenly inheritance given unto Abraham by promiſe." *Learn* hence, That all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are Abraham's ſpiritual ſeed, children of his faith, though not of his fleſh; and being the children of his faith, are heirs together with him of the ſame promiſes.

CHAP. IV.

NOW I ſay, *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be Lord of all; 2 But is under tutors, and governors, until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world;

The apoſtle, in theſe words, compares the church of God, under the Old Teſtament, to an infant or child in its minority and nonage; partly, with reſpect to their weakneſs in underſtanding, and want of the means of knowledge, comparatively to what we enjoy; and partly, with reſpect to the diſcipline they were under from their rigid ſchoolmaſter, the ceremonial law. " Now, ſays the apoſtle, as a child, though he be heir to, and owner of all his father's inheritance in hope, yet ſo long as he is a minor, and under age, he differeth nothing from a ſervant in point of ſubjection, but is under the management of tutors and directors:" In like manner the church, when in its infant ſtate, under the Old Teſtament, was kept in bondage and ſubjection under the rigid adminiſtration, and rigorous exaction of the law, and tied to almoſt a numberleſs number of ceremonial obſervances, by which it pleaſed Almighty God to inſtruct the former ages of his church. *Learn* hence, That the Jewiſh church, in its infant ſtate, was obliged to learn and practiſe the elements of a religion chiefly conſiſting in viſible and bodily performances of the ceremonial law, which were but rudiments, in reſpect to that heavenly doctrine concerning ſpiritual life which the goſpel now reveals, and clearly makes known unto us.

4 But when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 ¶ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.

That is, " When the fulneſs of time was come, which God the Father had appointed for the finiſhing of the legal diſpenſation, and for the aboliſhing the ceremonial rites, God ſent forth from himſelf the Son of himſelf, his only begotten Son, made, that is, born of a woman, made under and obedient to the law, ſubjecting himſelf both to its precepts and its curſe, to redeem them who were under the law, and diſcharge them from the curſe of the malediction of it; that we believers, we the members of the Chriſtian church, might receive the adoption of ſons, without any obſervance of circumciſion, or other ceremonial rites." *Obſerve* here, 1. That Chriſt was God's Son, his own Son, the Son of himſelf, as the original calls him, Rom. viii. 3. his Son, not barely in regard of his miraculous conception, or in regard of his ſanctification and miſſion, or in regard of his reſurrection and exaltation, or in regard of that endeared affection which the Father bare unto him, but in regard of his eſſence and nature, as begotten by him; his Son, by eternal and ineffable generation; being for nature co-eſſential, for dignity co-equal, and for duration co-eternal with the Father. 2 That Chriſt, God's own Son, was ſent forth by God the Father: *God ſent forth his Son.* This ſending of the Son doth (1.) pre-ſuppoſe his pre-exiſtence before his incarnation; for if he had not had a being, he could not have been ſent: It ſuppoſes alſo his perſonality, and that he was a perſon; not an operation or manifeſtation only, for that could not be ſent; and that he was a perſon really diſtinct from the Father; for how elſe could one ſend the other? (2.) God's ſending of Chriſt doth imply his ordaining, conſtituting, and appointing Chriſt from all eternity to come into the world; alſo, his fitting and qualifying of him for his incarnation, and his authorizing and commiſſionating of Chriſt to take our nature upon him, and in that nature to do and ſuffer for us, as our pattern, and as our ſurety.

Obſerve, 3. That Chriſt, God's own Son, ſent forth by God the Father, was made of a woman, did really aſſume and take upon him our fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our nature: It was not an indigeſted, unſhapen maſs, or lump of fleſh, that Chriſt aſſumed, but that fleſh was organized and formed into a perfect body, having the ſame parts, members, lineaments and proportions which ours have; St. Paul calls it, Coloſ. i. 22. *the body of his fleſh*; a body, to ſhew the organization of it; and a body of fleſh, to ſhew the reality of it. 4. That the ſeaſon in which Chriſt was ſent forth, was not in the beginning of time, nor at the end of time, but in the fulneſs of time. He came not in the beginning of time, to excite his people's affections and longing deſires for his coming, and to teach them to prize him the more when come. He ſtaid not till the end of time, leſt the faith of his church and people ſhould have failed; the patriarchs believed in Chriſt to come, the apoſtles believed in Chriſt then preſent among them, and we believe in Chriſt as come, and gone again to heaven. Thus, in all differences of time paſt, preſent, and to come, faith had, has, and will have its ſuitable work, and proper employment. 5. That the great end of God in ſending Chriſt unto us, and the gracious deſign of Chriſt in his undertaking for us, was our redemption from the bondage and curſe of the law, and our adoption into the number of God's children.

6 And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "That you are now, under the goſpel, become and made the ſons of God, appeareth by this, that God hath ſent the Spirit of his natural Son into your hearts, to authorize and enable you to call upon him, not only as your God, but as your Father: The goſpel aſſuring you, that you are no longer in that ſervile condition you were in whilſt under the law; but God will deal with you now upon goſpel terms, and juſtify you by faith, without the deeds of the law: Now God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." *Obſerve* here, 1. The title given to the holy Spirit; it is called *the Spirit of God's Son*; that is, the Spirit of Chriſt, becauſe it is the ſame Spirit which abode upon him that reſteth upon us, and becauſe the Spirit is purchaſed and procured for us by the blood of the Son. Thoſe *rivers of living water*, by which the effuſion of the Spirit is expreſſed, do flow out of Chriſt's pierced ſide; Chriſt purchaſed the Spirit for us, before he ſent him from heaven to us. 2. The act reſpecting his perſon, *God hath ſent forth*. This imports not any change of place, as if he were more diſtant from the Father when he was thus ſent, than he was before; but it notes his commiſſion for ſome ſpecial work in and upon the creature. 3. The objects which have the benefits of this act; *God hath ſent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*; that is, into the hearts of believers; ſignifying that the work here intended is an inward work, and a ſaving work, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit in them*; not into the brain, to dwell there by common unſanctified gifts, but into the heart, where all the habits of grace are planted, and from whence all the iſſues of life proceed. 4. The office which the holy Spirit performs in the believer's heart: Firſt, it cries; Secondly, it cries, *Abba*, *Father*: The Spirit cries, by enabling us through his gracious influences and aſſiſtances to cry or pray unto God; and it cries, *Father*, *Father*: The repetition made, and the word redoubled, denotes the ſtrength and vehemency of the deſire, and ſpeaks a paſſionate and extraordinary concernment of ſoul, for obtaining the mercy deſired, and the bleſſings prayed for. *Learn* hence, 1. That there are three ſacred perſons in the bleſſed Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; all are held forth to us in this ſingle verſe, yea, in this ſingle clauſe of the verſe, *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son*. 2. That the Spirit is not a quality or operation, but a perſon that has a real being and ſubſtance; elſe the phraſe of being ſent could not be properly applyed to him. 3. That the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son; for he is the Spirit of the Son, and is ſent by the Father: There is an order among the divine perſons, though no priority of being. 4. That the ſpirit of adoption is a ſpirit of ſupplication; and this ſpirit of ſupplication is the great privilege and advantage of believers under the goſpel; for it teaches us what to pray for, and the manner how we are to pray; it joineth with our prayers his own effectual interceſſions; it gives us a right and privilege to come unto God as unto a Father, and gives us alſo confidence and aſſurance, as ſons, to be accepted with him. 5. That the great privilege of adoption is both diſcovered and improved by the help of the Spirit of Chriſt: Our privilege of ſonſhip under the goſpel excels by far theirs under the law: 1. In point of manifeſtation and clearneſs; 2. As to fulneſs and amplitude of enjoyment.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon: and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.

Note here, 1. That the ſpirit of the firſt covenant was a ſervile ſpirit, a ſpirit of fear and bondage, and they that were under that covenant, were rather ſervants than ſons; not but that true believers, in and under the Old Teſtament, were the ſons and daughters of the moſt high God, and we find them challenging their privilege. Iſa. lxiii. 16. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father*: But yet it was in ſo defective a degree, that they ſeemed more like to ſervants than to ſons, and were trained up in ſuitable diſcipline: Hence, ſays the apoſtle here, *thou art now no more a ſervant*; implying, they were once ſo. 2. That the Spirit of the new covenant is a free and ingenuous ſpirit, and the goſpel ſtate a more filial ſtate than the legal ſtate was: *Thou art now no more a ſervant*, *but a ſon*: and if ſons, *then are you heirs of God*, and have a right to the inheritance of heaven when you die, and to the bleſſed privileges, and royal immunities contained in that great charter and covenant of grace whilſt you live: *If a ſon*, *then an heir of God*, *through Chriſt*.

8 Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?

Our apoſtle having proved ſufficiently the believing

Chriſtians freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law; next endeavours to convince the Galatians how abſurd and unreaſonable it was for them voluntarily to put themſelves under the obligation and obedience of it, and to look upon it as neceſſary to their juſtification and ſalvation: Now in the verſes before us he tells them, that when they were Gentiles they were the worſt of ſlaves, ſerving them that were no gods at all; whereas the Jews ſerved the true God, though in a ſervile manner: Theſe Galatians being Heathens before converſion, ſerved falſe gods, and ſo were in a bondage much worſe than that of the Jews. The apoſtle therefore juſtly blames them, that they being naturally Gentiles, and never under the ceremonial law, ſhould now deſire and chuſe to enter into that bondage; which was apparently to go backward in religion, or to return to thoſe principles which they had already overpaſt. Thence *learn*, That it is poſſible for a profeſſing people to advance very far in the way of Chriſtianity, and yet make a foul retreat afterwards in a courſe of defection and apoſtacy: *After ye have known God*, that is acknowledged the living and true God, and been *acknowledged* by him, *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?* Here *note*, How contemptuouſly, or at leaſt diſeſteemingly, our apoſtle ſpeaks of the legal rites of the ceremonial law: He calls them *elements* or rudiments, becauſe they were God's firſt inſtructions given to his church for his worſhip, to which he intended afterwards a more perfect way of worſhip: Next he calls them *weak elements*, becauſe the law made nothing perfect, and the obſervance of it was impotent and unavailable to a ſinner's juſtification before God: And laſtly, he calls them *beggarly elements*, in compariſon of that more rational and ſpiritual way of worſhip under the goſpel. Whence we may *learn*, That holy zeal will teach a ſaint to ſpeak with a ſort of contempt of any thing that encroaches upon the honour due to Chriſt, or any of his offices. True, the Levitical ceremonies were appointed by God himſelf, as a part of divine worſhip leading to Chriſt, and as ſuch to be religiouſly obſerved; but when the falſe apoſtles did urge the obſervation of them under the goſpel, as a part of neceſſary commanded worſhip, and as a part of the Galatians righteouſneſs before God, St. Paul is bold then to give them the name of *weak and beggarly elements.*

10 Ye obſerve days and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.

St. Paul here gives inſtances to the Galatians, wherein it did appear, that they brought themſelves under an unneceſſary bondage to the rites of the ceremonial law; he tells them plainly, that they kept the ceremonial ſabbaths, feaſts and faſts, as if that law was obligatory, and ſtill binding: "*Ye obſerve days*, that is, the Jewiſh ſabbath days, and new moons; *and months*, as the feaſt of the firſt month, and of the ſeventh month; *and times*, that is, the times of their ſolemn feſtivals for going up to Jeruſalem, as the *Paſſover*, *Pentecoſt*, and *feaſt of tabernacles*; *and years* as the ſabbatical years, and years of jubilee. This, ſays the apoſtle, makes me afraid of you, that I have preached the goſpel, and the doctrine of free juſtification by faith, in vain to you; becauſe you leave the doctrine I taught you, and put your confidence in obſerving thoſe legal ceremonial rites." *Learn* hence, 1. That the work of the miniſtry is a laborious work; *I have beſtowed upon you labour*, ſays St. Paul. A miniſter's life is not a life of eaſe, but of much toil and pains, a labouring unto faintneſs and wearineſs, as the word here uſed doth import and ſignify. 2. That the moſt laborious miniſters and lively preachers may ſometimes ſee ſo little fruit of their labours and endeavours, that they may have juſt cauſe to fear that few are ſavingly converted by their miniſtry: St. Paul here was afraid, *leſt he had laboured in vain* among the Galatians. 3. That in order to the ſucceſs of our miniſtry, we muſt not content ourſelves with a reproof of ſin in general, but muſt deſcend to particulars, and give inſtances of thoſe ſeveral and diſtinct ſins which our people are guilty of, and ought to fall under our reproof for. Thus the apoſtle here gives particular inſtances of the ſins formerly reproved, in their obſerving *days, and months, and times, and years.* Generals, we ſay, do not affect; but particular reproofs are more piercing, and more convincing: When we ſay to the ſinner, as Nathan to David, *Thou art the man*; this, if any thing, will ſtick cloſe to the conſcience.

12 Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.

Obſerve here, The holy wiſdom of our apoſtle, in tempering his former reproofs with great mildneſs and gentleneſs; *I beſeech you, brethren.* He well knew that theſe Galatians were alienated in their affections from him; and fearing leſt from his preſent ſeverity and ſharpneſs towards them, they ſhould apprehend that he was alienated from them alſo, he thus lovingly beſpeaks them, "I pray you be affected towards me as I ſtand affected towards you: Count me not your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth; for I am the ſame to you that ever I was; my love is not alienated from you, for any wrong or injury done to me by you: For, alas! it is yourſelves, and not me, that you injure, by bringing yourſelves into this bondage to the ceremonial law, to the loſs of your Chriſtian liberty: *Be as I am*; *for I am as ye are*; *ye have not injured me at all.*" *Learn* from St. Paul's example, That though the miniſters of Chriſt may, and ſometimes muſt, uſe ſeverity and ſharpneſs in the rebukes and reproofs which they give for ſin, yet muſt they temper ſeverity with gentleneſs; and inſinuations of kindneſs and affection muſt be mingled with rebukes; as looking not ſo much at what their ſin deſerveth, as what is moſt convenient for bringing them to repentance: *Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am.* 2. That when the miniſters of God, from a true zeal for the glory of God, do rebuke ſin, and reprove ſinners, the people are apt to apprehend that our zeal flows from a private ſpirit of revenge, as if we had ſome particular diſpleaſure againſt their perſons, for ſome perſonal injury done unto ourſelves, all which groundleſs ſuſpicions it is our duty to labour to wipe off: So doth our apoſtle here: *Ye have not injured me at all*, ſays he.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt. 14 And

my temptation which was in my fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me as angel of God, *even* as Chriſt Jeſus. 15 Where is then the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of? for I bear you record, that if *it had been* poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Note here, 1. A ſingular inſtance which St. Paul gives of his ſincere affection towards theſe Galatians, *he preached the goſpel to them at firſt*, and this both with difficulty and danger, *through the infirmity of the fleſh*; that is, through much bodily weakneſs and imperfection. The ancients ſay St. Paul was a little man, and had ſome deformity or crookedneſs of body, and imperfection in his utterance, which rendered both his perſon and his ſpeech contemptible. Theſe bodily infirmities he calls a *temptation*; intimating, that the afflictions of the body are great temptations to the ſoul. And beſides theſe bodily infirmities, he encountered alſo with perſecutions in preaching the goſpel to them; which were evidences and convincing demonſtrations of his fervent love and affectionate regard towards them: *Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh*, &c. *Note*, 2. The reciprocal returns of love and affection which the Galatians made to St. Paul, at his firſt coming among them to preach the goſpel; they received him as an angel of God, or as a meſſenger from God ſent unto them, yea, as Jeſus Chriſt, as if Chriſt himſelf had been there in perſon, and preached to them: Nay, ſo warm were their affections then to St. Paul at his firſt coming among them, that they did not only pull open their purſes, but, had it been poſſible for them, or profitable to him, they could even have plucked out their very eyes for him. But *obſerve*, It was at his firſt coming among them, and preaching to them. Whence we may *note*, That the firſt years of a miniſter's preaching to, and amongſt a people, are uſually moſt ſucceſsful: Then our people's affections are warmeſt, and perhaps our own too: Our people then hear us without prejudice againſt us, with great deſire and delight; afterwards their affections cool, either through their own inconſtancy, or our inadvertency, or by the malice of Satan, or by the miſchievous deſigns and miſrepreſentations of ſome of his inſtruments. *Note* farther, That the love and reverence which people owe to their miniſters, ſhould not be verbal and in profeſſion only, but real and in ſincerity; they ought to part with what is dear to them, to promote the work of God in their houſes. There was a time when theſe Galatians could have given all they had to the apoſtle, money out of their purſe, bread from their table, yea, blood out of their veins, and the very eyes out of their head: *I bear you record, that you would even have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Learn*, laſtly, That it is an high commendation to a people, when neither poverty nor deformity, nor any deficiency, which may render a miniſter of the goſpel baſe and contemptible in the eſtimation of the world, can poſſibly diminiſh any thing of that reſpect which they know to be due and payable unto him. Notwithſtanding the Galatians *knew the infirmity and temptation* of the apoſtle, yet *they received him* (at firſt) *as an angel of God.*

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "How comes your affections, which were ſo warm at firſt, to be ſo cold now? Whence is it that I, who was formerly ſo precious in your eſteem, am now looked upon as an enemy, and only becauſe I declare the truth of God unto you? Can any reaſon be given on my part, for this ſudden change of affection on your part? I trow not, unleſs you count my candour and ingenuity in telling the truth, a crime: *Am I become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?*" *Learn* hence, That notwithſtanding the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, in reproving ſin, and vindicating the truths of God, are ſometimes counted and treated as enemies, yet will they perſiſt, and finally perſevere in their duty, whatever the event may be; though the world account them their enemy, yet they will tell them the truth.

17 They zealouſly affect you, *but* not well: yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

They, that is, the falſe apoſtles, pretend great love to you, and zealous affection for you; *but not well*, not upon honeſt and juſt grounds. There is often an ill cauſe, which is to be condemned and avoided; zeal is a mixed affection of love and anger working into a fervency of mind, in defending what we believe to be true and good, and in oppoſing what we judge to be falſe and bad: *they zealouſly affect you, but not well.* Nothing is more common, and conſequently more dangerous, than for heretical teachers to pretend great zeal for the glory of God, and great love and affection to the people of God, whilſt they are about to perſuade them to embrace their pernicious errors and damnable hereſies. He adds, *Yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them: Exclude you*, that is, from the liberty and privileges of the goſpel, ſay ſome; from depending upon me, or any faithful paſtor, ſay others; they would ingratiate themſelves, that they may engroſs you, and you may affect them only. The old practice has ever been amongſt ſeducers, firſt to alienate the people's minds from their own teachers, and next get themſelves looked upon as alone, and only worthy to have room in the people's hearts and affections: *They would exclude you* from us, and us from you, only *that you might affect them.*

18 But *it is* good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am preſent with you.

Note here, That although there is a zeal in a bad cauſe, which is to be condemned and avoided, yet there is a zeal in a juſt and righteous cauſe, which is ſo laudable and worthy to be practiſed; when it is a zeal guided by religion, governed by prudence, attended with perſeverance; when in a good thing we are affected, zealouſly affected, and zealouſly affected always. This the apoſtle deſires that the Galatians ſhould be, and that as well when he was abſent from them, as when he was preſent with them.

19 My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Chriſt be formed in you.

Note here, 1. The endearing title which the apoſtle gives to the apoſtatizing Galatians; he calls them *children*, *little children*, *his little children*, *my little children*. *Obſerve*, He calls them *children*, becauſe converted to Chriſtianity by the preaching of the goſpel; and being thus regenerate and born again, they were to be as children, innocent and inoffenſive. He calls them *little children*, to denote the tenderneſs of their growth in Chriſtianity, the ſmallneſs of their proficiency in religion; they were not come to that conſiſtency in grace, to that maturity in goodneſs, to that perfection in knowledge, which he did deſire. Farther, he calls them *his* little children, to denote that ſpiritual relation which was between them, he having been the undoubted inſtrument of their converſion, and ſo was their ſpiritual Father; and alſo to denote that endearedneſs of affection which he bare unto them, and that tender care and concern which he had for them. *Note*, 2. The holy vehemency of the apoſtle's deſire, how earneſtly he longed after them in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt. He compares himſelf to a mother in travail, until he ſaw Chriſt formed in their hearts and lives. *I travail in birth till Chriſt be formed in you.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there is no ſtronger love, nor more endeared affection between any relations upon earth, than between ſuch miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved people, as they have been happily inſtrumental to convert and bring home to Chriſt. 2. That there is nothing in this world which the faithful miniſters of Chriſt do ſo paſſionately deſire and affectionately long after, as to ſee Jeſus Chriſt *formed*, and faſhioned in the hearts and lives of their beloved people: *My little children, of whom I travail*, &c.

20 I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice: for I ſtand in doubt of you.

Our apoſtle, as a farther teſtimony of his endeared affection towards the Galatians, declares here his earneſt deſire to have been with them, and ſee them face to face, that ſo being more fully acquainted with their caſe, he might know how to ſuit his diſcourſes to them, and might have more cauſe of rejoicing with, than complaining of them. *Learn* hence, 1. That though a miniſter may ſometimes neceſſarily withdraw himſelf from his flock, yet he ought always to have a fervent deſire to be preſent with them, without neglecting any opportunity, when occaſion offereth of rereturning to them: *I deſire to be preſent with you.* 2. That it is a miniſter's duty to get, as much as may be, the exact knowledge of his people's inclinations and diſpoſitions, of their ſtate and condition, that he may know how to make a fit application to all of them, admoniſhing and reproving ſome, threatening and correcting others. Thus the apoſtle here wiſhed to be preſent with them, *that he might change his voice*; that is, know the better how to ſpeak moſt ſuitably and ſeaſonably to their condition.

21 Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 ¶ For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons; the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free-woman. 23 But he *who was* of the bond-woman, was born after the fleſh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promiſe.

Our apoſtle here proceeds to the end of this chapter, in ſhewing the Galatians that it was the deſign of God, at the coming of Chriſt, to aboliſh the legal diſpenſation, and free men from the ſervitude and bondage of that law. And firſt, he argues with them from the nature of the law they were ſo willing, yea, ſo deſirous to be under, ver. 21. *Ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* That is, "Ye that deſire to be juſtified by your legal performances, by obſerving circumciſion, &c. do you not hear and take notice how the very law itſelf doth ſentence, curſe, and condemn you? And do you not find in the Old Teſtament, the ſtory of Sarah and Hagar, of Iſhmael and Iſaac? Are you ignorant that Abraham had two ſons, Iſhmael by Hagar the bond-woman, and Iſaac by Sarah the free-woman? Iſhmael the bond-woman's ſon was born after the fleſh; that is, by the ordinary ſtrength of nature in generation; Hagar being young, and Abraham being ſtrong. But Iſaac was the ſon of the promiſe; God gave him, by virtue of his promiſe made to Abraham when his body was dead, unfit for generation, and Sarah paſt conception alſo." Now from this hiſtory of Abraham's family, conſidered in itſelf (without the myſtery prefigured by it) we *learn*, 1. That the beſt of men are imperfect men; the holy patriarchs lived in the ſin of polygamy, or taking more wives than one, contrary to the firſt inſtitution of marriage, either not knowing, or not conſidering it was a ſin. *Abraham had two wives.* 2. That the truth and veracity of God, engages him to fulfil and make good all his promiſes, though all ordinary means and ſecondary cauſes fail, and become impotent and unable to bring about the thing promiſed. Thus here, a promiſe being made to Abraham, that Sarah ſhould have a child, ſhe conceiveth and beareth Iſaac; not according to the courſe of nature, but through virtue of the promiſe: *he of the free-woman was by promiſe.*

24 Which things are an allegory. For theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jeruſalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Here the apoſtle makes an allegorical and ſpiritual application of the foregoing hiſtory of Sarah and Hagar, of Iſaac and Iſhmael; and the myſtery he tells us is this, "The two mothers, Sarah and Hagar, are types of the two covenants, the one of works, the other of grace; the two ſons, Iſaac and Iſhmael, are a type of two ſorts of men living in the church, the one proceeding from the firſt, the other from the ſecond covenant; the one regenerate the other unregenerate men. All regenerate men are under the covenant of grace, and free men; for every man's freedom depends upon the covenant under which he ſtands. Iſhmael is the ſon of the bond-woman, and points at the Jeruſalem which then was, and the people of the Jews, as they then ſtood affected, ſeeking juſtification, and expecting eternal ſalvation by the works of the law; but now behold in Iſaac, a ſon of the free woman, an emblem of the goſpel church, which dares not depend upon the righteouſneſs of the law for juſtification, but relies upon the meritorious righteouſneſs of the Mediator; and this points out Jeruſalem above, *which is free, and the mother of us all.* *Learn* hence, That all unregenerate men, who continue in a ſtate of nature, are under the firſt covenant, or covenant of works. Iſhmael is a type of all unregenerate men. Mankind is bound to God by a double bond: Firſt, by a bond of creation; Secondly, by a bond of ſtimulation: The one is a natural, and the other is a voluntary obligation; by the former we are bound to God, by the latter he is bound to us. The covenant made with man in his ſtate of innocency, was *fœdus amicitiæ*, a covenant of friendſhip; the covenant made with us ſince the fall, is *fœdus miſericordiæ*, a covenant of reconciliation; the former made with the firſt Adam, and the latter with Chriſt the ſecond Adam. The firſt covenant was made not barely with the perſon, but with the nature of Adam, with the whole race of mankind; for God dealt with Adam, not as a ſingle perſon, but as *caput gentis*, as the root and repreſentative of mankind; and conſequently, this covenant was not aboliſhed by the fall, but ſtands ſtill in force; not to give life, becauſe it is become weak through our fleſh; we are become weak to that, not that weak to us; but it commands duty as it did before, namely, perfect, perſonal, and perpetual obedience; and in caſe of failure, denounces the curſe. Lord! awaken every natural and unregenerate man, who bearing only Adam's image, is alſo under Adam's covenant; he is a bond-man now, as was Iſhmael of old, in bondage to ſin, in bondage to Satan, in bondage to the law, in bondage to his own fears, in bondage to the world. O, reſt not, till by grace you are delivered from this bondage, by being tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and heartily ſubmitted to the terms and conditions of the ſecond covenant, which propoundeth repentance, and promiſeth pardon and acceptance upon repentance!

27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband.

Our apoſtle here proceeds, and ſtill goes on in his former allegory; the church of the Gentiles he compare to Sarah, who was a long time barren, but at laſt brought forth a child of the promiſe, a ſeed in which all the families of the earth were bleſſed. The church of the Jews is repreſented under the notion of a woman that had an huſband and many children; but the barren Gentiles are, by a ſpirit of prophecy, called upon to rejoice, and ſhout for joy, becauſe there ſhould be more children brought forth to God amongſt them, than were amongſt the Jews. Here, and hence *obſerve*, That it is not the church's lot to be always alike fruitful in bringing forth children unto God; ſhe hath her barren times, in which the labours of her miniſters are attended with little ſucceſs, and few are converted and brought home to God: In the firſt beginnings of the Chriſtian Church, though Chriſt himſelf was the preacher, ſhe was one that *beareth not, and travaileth not.* *Learn*, 2. That upon the enlargement of Chriſt's kingdom, and the weakening of Satan's intereſt in the world, when ſouls are gathered in, and brought home to Chriſt, by the power of converting grace, all the churches of Chriſt ought to rejoice, and break forth into ſinging, as being matter of exceeding joy and great exultation: *Rejoice, thou barren*, &c.

28 Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe. 29 But as then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him *that was born* after the ſpirit, even ſo *it is* now.

In the former of theſe two verſes, the apoſtle applies the foregoing allegory, or typical hiſtory of Sarah and Hagar, thus; "As, ſays he, Iſaac by virtue of the promiſe, being born of the free-woman, was heir to all his father's eſtate; in like manner, they who ſeek ſalvation not by the law, but by faith in Chriſt, are the free children of God, and heirs of the promiſe of life eternal; *We brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of the promiſe.*" In the latter of theſe two verſes, which gives us an account of the perſecuting enmity that was in the heart and tongue of Iſhmael againſt Iſaac, we have ſeveral things *obſervable*: As, 1. The root and riſe of Iſhmael's perſecuting malice diſcovered, and from whence it proceeded, and that was an inward antipathy to the work of grace in Iſaac. Thoſe great differences in divine heraldry, of being born after the fleſh, and after the Spirit, evidently diſcover where the quarrel lay, and whence it aroſe; it was the ſpiritualneſs of Iſaac that exaſperated Iſhmael's rage; Iſaac was born after the Spirit, and doubtleſs he ſhewed ſome fruits of the Spirit, which Iſhmael could not reliſh, and therefore did deride and mock him. 2. What was the kind of perſecution which Iſaac underwent. It was the perſecution of the tongue, in deriſions and cruel mockings; Moſes tells us, in the book of Geneſis, the manner how, and the weapon with which: Iſhmael did not lift up his hand againſt Iſaac, as Cain did againſt Abel, but his tongue only; yet St. Paul calls it here perſecution. Mocking and ſcoffing either at the word, ways, or people of God, is a ſin of unſpeakable profaneneſs, a blaſpheming of Chriſt, and a perſecution of his members. *He that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit.* 3. That the perſecution of the tongue, at leaſt, is that which the children and church of God have met with in all former, and muſt expect to meet with in future ages; *as it was then*, ſays the apoſtle, *even ſo it is now*; afflictions are the donatives of the goſpel, and perſecution is the church's patrimony; *To us it is given on the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but to ſuffer*, Phil. i. 29. Laſtly, From Iſhmael's being brother to Iſaac, and yet his bitter perſecutor, that the soreſt trials and ſharpeſt perſecutions, which the ſaints endure, are very often from their neareſt relations who are tied to them by the ſtrongeſt obligations, either of kindred or acquaintance. Bittereſt things are ſometimes endured from the hands of thoſe from whom better things might juſtly have been expected; Chriſt foretold all this, *The brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the father the ſon.* Cain is dead, but the ſpirit of Cain yet lives; they that ſcoff, would bite, and make their teeth meet, had they power to uſe their cheek-bone: He that is born after the fleſh, will perſecute thoſe of his own fleſh and family that are born after the Spirit; *as it was then*, we may go on to ſay, *even ſo it is now*.

30 Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.

The apoſtle goes on in explaining and applying this typical hiſtory of Iſhmael and Iſaac, and tells us, that the caſting out of Iſhmael the ſon of Hagar the bond-woman, did typify the excluſion of the law from a partnerſhip with the goſpel in the juſtification of a ſinner before God: As Iſhmael was caſt out of Abraham's family, and none but Iſaac muſt inherit; ſo they that depend upon the law for juſtification, ſhall be caſt out of the church of God, and never attain the heavenly inheritance: But they who depend upon the promiſe of God, and expect to be juſtified by faith, without legal performances, they only ſhall be heirs of grace and mercy. The doctrine of juſtification by the works of the law, when it is not only doctrinally maintained, but practically purſued and walked in, doth exclude perſons from having any part or ſhare in the kingdom of heaven. So much was typified and prefigured by the ſon of the bond-woman's being caſt out, and not allowed *to be heir with the ſon of the free-woman*.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

Here the apoſtle draws a concluſion from the foregoing diſcourſe, thus, "As Sarah caſt out Hagar and Iſhmael, ſo muſt the children of the new Jeruſalem caſt out the law, and all the legal rites, henceforth to be obſerved no more, either alone without Chriſt, or in conjunction with Chriſt. And as the church of the Gentiles was not typified in Hagar, but in Sarah, ſo we Chriſtian Gentiles are not obliged to Judaical obſervances, but freed entirely by Chriſt from them, and juſtified by goſpel grace without them." The concluſion and ſum of all is this, to bring off the Galatians from ſeeking juſtification by the works of the law, and to apprehend themſelves no longer in bondage to circumciſion and the Moſaic rites, but to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free, which introduces that excellent diſcourſe to this purpoſe, contained in the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

STAND faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

As if he had ſaid, "Since Chriſt, by his death, has purchaſed our freedom from the yoke and bondage of the ceremonial law, let us reſolutely ſtand faſt in this our Chriſtian liberty, without ſubjecting ourſelves again to circumciſion, and the obſervation of the Moſaic rites." Here *note*, 1. The ſervile condition of the Jewiſh church, they were under *bondage*, under a *yoke of bondage*. This ſervitude of theirs conſiſted in the vaſt number of their religious rites and obſervances, as to days and weeks, months and years; in the multitude of their ſacrifices of all ſorts, which they were obliged every day to offer; in their frequent purifications and waſhings; in the ſtrict diſtinction they were obliged to make betwixt clean and unclean meats; in the numerous rites and ceremonies they were required to obſerve at their marriages and burials, at bed and board, at home and abroad, nay, even in ploughing, ſowing, and reaping: So numerous were theſe obſervances, that they took up half their time, and as burdenſome as they were numerous. Well might the apoſtle here call it *a yoke of bondage*, and elſewhere, viz. Acts xv. 10. *A yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*. 2. The happy liberty and freedom from this intolerable yoke, purchaſed by Chriſt, for the Chriſtian church, *Chriſt has made us free*: He, by his obedience and death, has purchaſed this happy freedom for us, a freedom from ceremonial bondage, from ſinful ſervitude and ſlavery; not from civil ſubjection, not from the yoke of new obedience, but from the obliging force of the ceremonial law, and the curſe and irritating power of the moral law. 3. The Chriſtians duty, with reference to this privilege, namely, to ſtand faſt in the liberty which Chriſt has purchaſed for them, without obliging themſelves to obſerve any part of the ceremonial law, which was now a ſervility perfectly unprofitable, and nothing elſe; *ſtand faſt in it*; that is, maintain and defend it both in judgment and practice.

2 Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.

That is, "Behold, I Paul, your apoſtle, do poſitively declare, and expreſsly tell you the Galatians, and all other Chriſtians converted by me to Chriſtianity, that *if ye be circumciſed*, that is, join circumciſion with the goſpel as a thing neceſſary to juſtification and ſalvation, Chriſt's undertaking will *profit you nothing*, for, embracing circumciſion after Chriſt's coming, is virtually to deny and diſown that he is come, and in effect to renounce and diſclaim him; becauſe at his coming the promiſe was fulfilled, and circumciſion of its own nature ceaſed." *Learn* hence, That for perſons religiouſly to obſerve any of the rites of the ceremonial law, in obedience to any divine precept, or to join any thing with Chriſt, and faith in him, for the juſtification of a ſinner before God, is a plain denial of Chriſt, and a diſdaining of his ability and ſufficiency to juſtify and ſave us.

3 ¶ For I teſtify again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

He that urges the neceſſity of circumciſion, *is a debtor to the law* in a double reſpect, namely, in regard of duty, and in regard of penalty: Firſt, He *is a debtor* in regard of duty; becauſe he that thinks himſelf bound to keep one part of the ceremonial law, circumciſion, doth thereby oblige himſelf to keep the whole ceremonial law, yea, and the whole moral law too, without deficiency, and that under the penalty of condemnation. Again, ſecondly, As he *is a debtor* in point of duty, ſo he muſt needs be a debtor in regard of penalty, becauſe he is not able to keep any part of it perfectly. Hence we may infer, (1.) how endearing our obligations are to Chriſt, who as our Surety paid both theſe debts for us, namely, our debt of duty, and our debt of penalty to the law of God; by fulfilling all righteouſneſs, he paid our debt of duty, and by ſuffering the puniſhment due to tranſgreſſors, he paid our debt of penalty. We may alſo (2.) infer, that as he that is circumciſed, is bound to keep the whole law; ſo, he that is baptized, is obliged to obey all the commands of the goſpel, to make conſcience of the duties of both tables, as an argument of his ſincerity, and as an ornament to his profeſſion.

4 Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Here another argument is uſed, to ſhew that believers are dead to the ceremonial law, and are by no means to expect juſtification by it: *Whoſoever of you*, ſays the apoſtle, *is juſtified by the law*, that is, whoſoever ſeeks and endeavours to be ſo juſtified (for, in reality, none can in that manner be juſtified) *Chriſt is become of no effect* unto ſuch perſons; that is, they renounce Chriſt, and diſdain benefit by his death: And they are fallen from grace; that is, fallen from Chriſtianity, and the covenant of grace; they have forfeited the grace of the goſpel, by cleaving to the ceremonial law; they are fallen from the doctrine of grace delivered in the goſpel, and Chriſt is become of no effect unto them. *Learn* from hence, That ſuch perſons as do believe that faith in Chriſt alone is not ſufficient to juſtification and acceptance with God, without the obſervation of the abrogated law, do in effect diſown their relation to Chriſt, and diſclaim all benefit by his death.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith.

That is, "We Chriſtians, we believers, through the Spirit which we have received, and not by legal obſervances, do hope both for ſuch a righteouſneſs as will denominate and conſtitute us righteous in the ſight of God, and alſo for the crown of righteouſneſs in heaven, which now we wait and hope for here on earth." *Note*, 1. That a believer does not value himſelf by what he has in hand, but by what he has in hope; his riches are not ſo much in preſent poſſeſſion, as in future expectation: *We wait for the hope*; that is, for heaven, the good hoped for. 2. That none have either right to heaven, or can warrantably expect the enjoyments of heaven, who are deſtitute of righteouſneſs; heaven is here called the *hope of righteouſneſs*, that is, the rational hope and expectation of righteous perſons only. 3. That it is a righteouſneſs made ours by faith, even the righteouſneſs of the Mediator, which gives us the beſt title to, and the firmeſt ground to hope and wait for, the kingdom of heaven and eternal life. 4. That it is the ſpecial work of the holy Spirit to produce in us the graces of the Spirit, both faith and hope; faith to enable us to apprehend, and hope to enable us to wait for the crown of righteouſneſs, even eternal glory.

6 For in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.

In Chriſt Jeſus, that is, in the œconomy of Chriſt Jeſus, under the goſpel diſpenſation, in our ſtate of Chriſtianity, ſince Chriſt's manifeſtation in the fleſh, *neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing* with God, as to our acceptance with him, or reward from him: But the qualification *now* neceſſary to ſalvation under the goſpel, is faith working by love; that is, ſuch an effectual belief of future happineſs purchaſed for us, and promiſed to us by Chriſt, as cauſes us to love and ſerve him, to truſt in, and depend upon him for the ſame. *Learn*, 1. That although circumciſion, and the reſt of the Levitical ceremonies were once enjoined by God, and practiſed by the Jews as an acceptable ſervice, and the neglect or contempt of them was a mortal ſin; yet ſince Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, who was the ſubſtance of all thoſe ſhadows, the command whereby they were enjoined did ceaſe, and *neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing* to ſalvation. 2. That though the ceremonial law be aboliſhed, yet a believer under the goſpel has work to do, a work of faith, and labour of love; for though faith alone juſtifieth us before God, yet it is not alone in the heart when it doth juſtify, but is always accompanied with the grace of love to God and our neighbour: *For in Chriſt Jeſus*, no faith availeth any thing, but that *which worketh by love*.

7 Ye did run well, who did hinder you that ye ſhould not obey the truth?

Ye did run well; that is, in the race of Chriſtianity; you ſet out well at firſt, and received the goſpel in the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it, without any mixture of Jewiſh ceremonies: What hindered you? Who ſtopt you? Who drove you back from your belief of, and obedience to the truth of the goſpel, which you then received from me? Here *note*, 1. With what holy wiſdom our apoſtle mixed commendations with his reproofs: At the ſame time that he reproves them for their preſent backſliding, he commends them for their former forwardneſs: *Ye did run well*. 2. That ordinarily a Chriſtian's firſt ways are his beſt ways, his firſt fruits his faireſt fruits: *Jehoſhaphat walked in the firſt ways of David his father*, 2 Chron. xvii. 3. Commonly young converts are carried out with a greater meaſure of affection and zeal, and make a ſwifter progreſs in religion, than others do, at firſt, or they themſelves do afterwards, when they are of older ſtanding. Theſe Galatians did run, yea, did run very well, at firſt, in the race of Chriſtianity. 3. That when a perſon's or a people's progreſs in Chriſtianity is not anſwerable to their hopeful beginning, it is matter of regret and grief to all beholders, as well as matter of reproach and ſhame to the perſons themſelves: *Ye did run well, who did hinder you?* Intimating, that this their defection and apoſtacy was no leſs matter of aſtoniſhment to St. Paul, than it was of rebuke and reproach to them.

8 This perſuaſion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "This Judaizing opinion and practice of yours, this perſuaſion of the neceſſity of your being circumciſed, and obeying the law of Moſes, this new doctrine ſo contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel, and the deſign of Chriſtianity, was never taught you either by God or myſelf, or any other faithful miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, who firſt converted you to the faith; but it is a mere deluſion of Satan, and his emiſſaries the falſe apoſtles: And do not think this a ſmall matter; let not circumciſion ſeem a little thing to you; and let not theſe Judaizing teachers be diſregarded by you as inconſiderable, becauſe they are few in number, for they are like to leaven; and ye know very well that *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*; intimating, that a few falſe teachers, and a little of error and falſe doctrine, crept into the congregation and church of Chriſt, may do unſpeakable miſchief, by ſpeedily infecting the whole church, as *a little leaven* (to which error is compared) *leaveneth the whole lump*.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord that you will be none otherwiſe minded: but he that troubleth you ſhall bear *his* judgment whoſoever he be.

Obſerve here, 1. The apoſtle's holy confidence grounded upon charity, that *through the Lord*, that is, through the Lord's aſſiſting his endeavours, and through the Lord's bleſſing upon their ſerious conſideration of what he had written to them, they would be reclaimed from their errors and brought to be of the ſame mind with himſelf. Where *note*, How the holy and zealous apoſtle was divided betwixt hope and fear concerning theſe men; he feared the worſt of theſe Galatians, and yet hopes the beſt; *I have confidence in you through the Lord.* It is a fault in the miniſters of the goſpel, when they deſpair of men too ſoon, when they ceaſe or ſlacken their endeavours for their people's good, looking upon them as reſolutely bent upon, and judicially given up unto all evil. Though our apoſtle here had not a confidence of faith, or full perſuaſion, yet he had a confidence of charity, which cauſed him to hope that they would be like minded with himſelf: *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be no otherwiſe minded.* 2. With what a holy caution, as well as Chriſtian prudence and charity, our apoſtle applies himſelf unto them; declaring, that though he hoped they might be reclaimed from their error, yet leaſt they ſhould conclude their error not to be very dangerous, he ſhews them his juſt indignation againſt it, by denouncing deſerved puniſhments againſt thoſe that ſeduced them into it: *He that troubleth you, ſhall bear his own judgment*, his condemnation due to him in hell, without repentance, which is ſuppoſed in all threatenings. For the condition of conditional threatenings, though it is not always expreſſed, yet it is to be underſtood. 3. The univerſality of the threatening; *He ſhall bear his own judgment, whoſoever he be*; let him be who he will, or what he will; who he will for abilities and parts, what he will for power or reputation; whoever he is, or whatſoever he be, he ſhall bear his judgment. Such is the exact juſtice of God, and ſuch his impartiality in the exerciſe of it, that he will ſuffer no impenitent tranſgreſſor to eſcape his indignation, whoever he is, without reſpect of perſons: *He that troubleth you*, &c.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, ſignifies to us, that ſome of the Judaizing teachers had ſuggeſted to the Galatians, as if he himſelf had preached elſewhere the doctrine of circumciſion, and alſo practiſed the duty of circumciſion (by circumciſing Timothy) which here he oppoſes. "True, he did circumciſe Timothy, but it was only to avoid offending the weak Jews, not out of any opinion which he had touching the neceſſity of circumciſion: Therefore, to diſcover to them the falſhood of that ſuggeſtion, he declares, that if he would have preached circumciſion, he might have eſcaped perſecution; the Jews were his perſecutors, looking upon him as an apoſtate from their holy religion, for preaching up the aboliſhment of the Moſaic law. Where *obſerve*, That the Jews, who looked upon themſelves to be the people, yea, the peculiar and only people of God, and accounted all others contemptible and profane, were yet far greater perſecutors of Chriſt and his apoſtles, than the blind and barbarous heathen; and all this out of zeal for God and his law: *Why do I yet ſuffer perſecution?* implying, that the Jews did perſecute him, and that his not preaching circumciſion was the cauſe why they did ſo. He adds, *Then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.* By *the croſs*, may be underſtood, either, (1.) The doctrine of the croſs, the doctrine of the goſpel; and then the ſenſe is, the Jews would not have taken ſuch offence at my preaching the doctrine of the goſpel as they do, were it not becauſe by it, circumciſion, and the whole frame of the old legal adminiſtration are laid aſide: Or elſe, (2.) By *the croſs*, may be underſtood the afflictions and ſufferings which he underwent for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion; and the ſenſe then is this: Verily, all my ſufferings had long ſince been at an end, would I but have yielded the Jews this point, that *Chriſtians are obliged to circumciſion, and to yield obedience to the law of Moſes*; would I grant them this, my ſufferings would ſoon be at an end; but my daily perſecutions are evident demonſtrations that I do not preach up circumciſion; for had I ſo done, the offence of the croſs had long ſince ceaſed. *Learn* hence, That the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt will not, dare not, conceal any part of the neceſſary truth, when the eminent hazard of the people's ſalvation calls for the preaching of it, though the imbittered enemies of religion ſhould raiſe againſt them the fierceſt perſecutions for the ſame: *If I yet preach circumciſion*, &c.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

The apoſtle's meaning is, "That it were very fit, were it ſeaſonable, that thoſe which had thus ſeduced them, ſhould be excommunicated and cut off from the church's communion." Where *note*, 1. How implicitly and interpretatively St. Paul compares theſe ſeducers to rotten members, which are and ought to be cut off, leſt the gangrene overſpread the whole body; *I would they were cut off*; implying, that like rotten members they deſerved it, and the church's ſafety called for it, would her then circumſtances admit of it. 2. That in the very expreſſion here uſed by St. Paul, of *cutting off*, there ſeems to be an alluſion to the practice of circumciſion, which is a cutting off the fore-ſkin of the fleſh, and throwing it away. Now, ſays the apoſtle, I wiſh that theſe Judaizing teachers, that urge you to be circumciſed, that is, to cut off and caſt away the fore-ſkin of your fleſh, I wiſh that they might be cut off as ſuperfluous fleſh, and caſt out of the fellowſhip and communion of the church. Yet, 3. The apoſtle doth rather declare what ſuch ſeducers deſerve, than actually inflict the cenſure itſelf; he ſatisfieth himſelf with an affectionate wiſh, leſt the number of the ſeduced being great, and perhaps the ſeducers not a few, they ſhould be hardened rather than reformed, and the ordinance itſelf expoſed: *I would they were even cut off*, &c.

13 ¶ For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty: only *uſe* not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed the former part of the chapter, which contains an exhortation to *ſtand faſt in that liberty which Chriſt had purchaſed for them:* he now enters upon the ſecond part of it, namely, to caution them againſt abuſing of their Chriſtian liberty, and by no means to apprehend or ſuppoſe as if they were thereby freed from all obligation to ſerve God or man, in the duties particularly required of them. "*Brethren*, ſays he, *ye are called unto liberty*; that is to the enjoyment of evangelical liberty, which conſiſts in a freedom from the obligation of the ceremonial law, and the curſe of the moral law: Uſe it then ſo as not to abuſe it; uſe it neither to ſin nor ſcandal; not to ſin, to allow yourſelves the leaſt liberty in indulging any carnal luſt, or ſinful affection, nor yet to ſcandalize the weak, who at preſent ſcruple the forſaking of circumciſion, and the reſt of the ceremonial rites: *Uſe not your liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but in love ſerve one another.*" *Learn* hence, 1. That our liberty and freedom, purchaſed for us by Chriſt, doth not diſſolve any tie or obligation which we lie under, either to God or man; the yoke of duty is very conſiſtent with our Chriſtian liberty. 2. That one of the great occaſions of the ſins we commit in the courſe of our lives, is the too free uſe of our Chriſtian liberty: The uſing our liberty to the utmoſt pitch and extent of that which we call lawful, is the occaſion of our running into that which is certainly ſinful. Religion moſt certainly allows us all reaſonable liberty in the gratification of our natural appetites and paſſions; but all exceſſes and immoderate liberties are forbidden by religion. And accordingly, one good rule for ſecuring ourſelves from falling into ſin, in the uſing our Chriſtian liberty, is this, namely, That in matters of duty, we ſhould rather do too much, than too little: But in matters of indifferency, we ſhould rather take too little of our liberty than too much. For inſtance, prayer and almſgiving are indiſpenſible duties; but how oft we ſhould pray, and how much we ſhould give, is not poſitively declared; in this caſe, to pray very frequently, and to give alms very liberally and largely, is our wiſdom and duty; no damage will come by doing too much, but both damage and danger will accrue by doing too little. 3. That it is not ſufficient, in order to the right uſe of our Chriſtian liberty, that we do not from thence take occaſion to ſin ourſelves; but we ought to take care, leſt by any indiſcreet uſe of our own liberty, we give offence, and miniſter occaſion of ſin and ſtumbling unto others. This truth is implied in the ſecond injunction, *By love ſerve one another.*

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

Here our apoſtle enforces the foregoing exhortation to love and ſerve one another, with a forcible argument or motive, namely, becauſe love is the fulfilling of the law; that is, (1.) It is the fulfilling of that part of the law which relates to our neighbour; all the moral law reſpecting our neighbour is fulfilled in that one word, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Or, (2.) Love may be ſaid to be the fulfilling of the law in general; for true and regular love to our neighbour ſuppoſeth our love to God, ſpringeth from it, and is an evidence of it; yea, the love of our neighbour is the perfecting and completing of our love to God, 1 John iv. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* *Learn*, That as *love* is a very comprehenſive duty, compriſing the inward affection as well as the outward action, ſo the word *neighbour* is of a very extenſive conſideration, and includes all perſons, friend and foe, rich and poor, near and afar off; all that partake of humanity muſt be ſharers in our charity: Our inward affection and good-will muſt extend to all, though the outward expreſſions of it can reach but a very few. Thus the law is fulfilled in one word, when we love our neighbour as ourſelves; not as we do (often) love ourſelves, but as we ſhould love ourſelves, namely, with a wiſe and well-guided love.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.

The apoſtle, to enforce the foregoing exhortation to mutual love, urges here the dangerous effects which their animoſities and ſtrifes, with their controverſies and contentions, would moſt certainly produce: By biting one another, ſays he, you will deſtroy and conſume one another; where it deſerves a ſerious remark, that St. Paul compares the enmities and animoſities which were amongſt them, upon the ſcore of their differences in religion, to the bitings, rendings, and devourings of wild beaſts, *If ye bite and devour one another*; and gives them timely notice of the fatal miſchiefs and conſequences that will follow thereupon, namely, a total devaſtation and inevitable conſumption of the whole church. *Take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.* It is a true ſaying, *Odia religionum ſunt acerbiſſima:* there is no ſuch hatred amongſt men as upon the ſcore of religion: As the zeal of the Jews would not ſuffer an uncircumciſed perſon to live amongſt them, ſo probably theſe zealous Judaizers in Galatia, would not ſuffer thoſe who had caſt off legal obſervances, to live quietly and peaceably by them; which might give occaſion to theſe words of the apoſtle, *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not conſumed one of another.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there ever have been, are, and will be differences about matters of religion, in the beſt and pureſt churches here on earth. 2. That theſe differences may and ought to be managed with great temper and charity. 3. That then contentions are highly uncharitable, and very ſinful, when men *bite and devour one another*. 4. That ſuch uncharitable contentions do prepare and make ready a people for utter deſtruction.

16 *This* I ſay then, Walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.

“ To prevent the forementioned evils, as if the apoſtle had ſaid, I adviſe and exhort you to walk in the Spirit, that is, according to the guidance and direction, according to the influence and motion, of the holy Spirit ſpeaking to you in his word, and then you never will fulfil the luſts of the fleſh; that is, you will never accompliſh and bring into complete act (eſpecially with deliberation and conſent) the inordinate motions of corrupt nature.” *Learn* hence, That the more Chriſtians ſet themſelves to obey the new nature, and follow the motions of the Spirit of grace, the more will the power of indwelling ſin and inbred corruption be mortified and kept under. This expreſſion, *Ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh*, may be thought to import and imply theſe two things; (1.) That an inward principle of grace in the heart, will give a check to ſin in its firſt motions, and cauſe it oft-times to miſcarry in the womb, like an untimely birth, before it comes to its full maturity; it ſhall never gain the full conſent of a gracious perſon's will, as it doth of an unregenerate perſon. (2.) But if, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition grace makes to hinder the production of ſin, if yet it doth break forth into act, ſuch acts of ſin are not committed without reluctancy and regret, and are followed with ſhame and ſorrow, yea, thoſe very ſurprizals and captivities of ſin at one time, are made cautions and warnings to prevent it at another time: And thus they that *walk in the Spirit, do not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.*

17 For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Theſe words are brought in as a ſpecial reaſon, why Chriſtians ſhould walk in the ſpirit, that is, after the motions and guidance of God's holy ſpirit: becauſe, otherwiſe the fleſh will quickly prevail over them; for the fleſh is continually luſting againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh; that is, the evil inclinations of corrupt nature are continually ſtruggling with, and ſtriving againſt the good motions which the holy Spirit of God ſtirreth up in us: And in like manner, the Spirit, or renewed nature, oppoſeth the motions of corrupt nature: For theſe two principles are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye who are led by the Spirit, cannot act (with deliberation and conſent) according to the fleſh; nor can they that are led by the fleſh, do the things which delight the Spirit. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a diverſity of principles in a Chriſtian, fleſh and Spirit; there is a good principle, called Spirit, becauſe the Spirit of God is the author of it; and a bad principle in us, which is called fleſh, by which we are inclined to that which is evil. This is called fleſh, to denote its intimacy with us; it is as dear to us as our fleſh, to denote its dearneſs to us; it is as dear to us as our own fleſh, as dear as a right hand or right eye; and, to denote its continuance with us, as long as we carry fleſh about us, ſo long will this principle of corrupt nature remain in us, and continue with us. 2. That the motions and inclinations in our nature to ſin, do ever conflict and combat with, oppoſe and war againſt, the motions of God's holy Spirit, exciting and inclining us to good: Though contraries cannot be together in the ſame ſubject in an intenſe, yet they may be together in a remiſs degree. 3. The conſequence and iſſue of this combat, *we cannot do the things that we would*, nor any thing as we would; we cannot perform any holy duty perfectly in this life. As ſoon may an imperfect father beget a perfect child, as we in our ſtate of imperfection perform any duty free from ſin. O what need, what great need then, have the beſt of ſaints, of the mediation and interceſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when they preſent any performed duty unto God! And what need alſo to watch our own hearts, when we are upon our knees, to fortify them againſt the incurſions and diſturbances of the fleſh; ſeeing, after all our care and vigilance in duty, we can none of us do the things that we would, nor any thing as we would!

18 But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

That is, if ye be under the guidance and government of the holy Spirit of God, and that renewing principle of grace which he has produced in you, you are no longer under the law; that is, not under the moral law as a covenant of life for our juſtification, though under it as an eternal rule of living; not under the vindictive, though under the directive power of the law.” So that the force of the apoſtle's argument ſeems to lie thus: “ You are by the Spirit, by the ſpiritual diſpenſation of the goſpel, free from the curſe and terror of the moral law; how unreaſonable then is it to ſuppoſe, that you ſhould be ſtill ſubject to the ceremonial law? No; if you be led by the Spirit, neither the moral law ſhall condemn you, nor the ceremonial law oblige and bind you.”

19 ¶ Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are *theſe*, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Our apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes, exhorted the Galatians to walk in the Spirit, to be led and guided by the Spirit, and by no means to obey or fulfil the luſts of the fleſh; he comes in theſe and the following verſes to diſcover how they might with certainty and aſſurance, know whether they were ſpiritual or carnal, whether the Spirit or the fleſh had a prevalency in them, or dominion over them: Accordingly, he deſcribes particularly the fleſh and the Spirit, by their various and different effects, and gives us a catalogue of the one and the other; he reckons up no fewer than ſeventeen works of the fleſh, all which, yea, any of which, continued in, and unrepented of, are damnable; after this, he enumerates nine ſpecial and gracious fruits of the Spirit, which qualify us for, and intitle us to the kingdom of heaven: *The works of the fleſh are manifeſt*, &c. Here *note*, 1. That ſin is called *a work*; thereby intimating to us the labour and toil, the drudgery and pains, which ſinners meet with in a ſinful courſe: The ways of ſin are very toilſome, although in their iſſue very unfruitful; ſin is no pleaſurable ſervice, but a laborious ſervitude. 2. The apoſtle calls ſin by the name of works, in the plural number, *the works of the fleſh*; intimating, that ſin never goes ſingle, but has a dangerous train and retinue: He that yields himſelf a ſervant to one ſin, ſhall ſoon find himſelf a ſlave to many. 3. That ſin is called *a work of the fleſh*, becauſe moſt ſins are committed by the fleſh; the body is the ſoul's inſtrument, as well in the work of ſin, as in the ſervice of Chriſt; and the fleſh is the object, about which theſe works are converſant, as well as the organ and inſtrument by which they are committed. 4. Theſe works of the fleſh are here ſaid to be manifeſt: But how ſo? Firſt, They are moſt of them manifeſtly condemned by the light of nature; the natural conſcience in men ſtartles at them at firſt, till by cuſtom and frequent practice they become habitual and natural to them. Secondly, They are all of them manifeſt by the light of ſcripture; the word of God, which is in all our hands, condemns all theſe works of the fleſh to the pit of hell. 5. The particular enumeration of the works of the fleſh, here made by the apoſtle; *adultery*, or the defiling our neighbour's bed; *fornication*, or the unlawful mixture of ſingle perſons one with another; *uncleanneſs*, under which is comprehended all ſorts of filthineſs, and filthy luſts, whether natural or unnatural; *laſciviouſneſs*, by which is meant all wanton behaviour, either in ſpeech or action, tending to excite filthy deſires, either in themſelves or others; *idolatry*, whereby God is repreſented to corporeal eyes by pictures and images, and ſo brought down to human ſenſes; properly, therefore, is idolatry, as ſuch, called here a work of the fleſh: Again, *witchcraft*, a deviliſh art, whereby ſome men and women, having made a compact with the devil, either expreſsly or implicitly, are enabled, with God's permiſſion, and by the aſſiſtance of Satan, to produce effects beyond the ordinary courſe and order of nature, and theſe for the moſt part rather miſchievous to others, than beneficial to themſelves; *hatred*, or a ſecret enmity in our hearts againſt our neighbour, either for real or apprehended injuries; *variance*, or outward contention by words or actions, ariſing from the forementioned enmity in the heart; *emulations*, or an inward grief and diſpleaſure at ſome good in others, or done by others, which eclipſes and overſhadows us; *wrath*, or violent anger, and immoderate paſſion, depriving a man for the time of his reaſon, and transforming him into a beaſt; *ſtrife*, or a litigious ſpirit, a continual proneneſs to quarrelling and contending; *ſeditions*, or rending of ſocieties into factions, and dividing communities into parties; which dividing work, when it falls out in the ſtate, is called ſedition, when in the church, by the name of ſchiſm: *hereſies*, or dangerous errors in the fundamental points of religion, not ariſing purely from miſtakes of judgment, but from the eſpouſing of falſe doctrines out of diſguſt or pride, or from worldly principles, to avoid perſecution or trouble in the fleſh; theſe may well be accounted carnal luſts, and called works of the fleſh, although they be mental errors, and their firſt ſeat is in the underſtanding and judgment: *envyings*, a peſtilent luſt, which makes another's good our grief; our eyes ſmart at the ſight of what another enjoys, though we have never the leſs, becauſe another has more: *murders*, that is, the executing of private revenge, by ſhedding of blood, and taking away our neighbour's life unjuſtly: *drunkenneſs, revellings*, the one is intemperance in drinking, the other an exceſs in eating; all ſinful abuſe of the creatures of God, which he has given, not barely for neceſſity, but delight, is cenſured here as a work of the fleſh. 6. The ſolemn warning which the apoſtle gives the Galatians to watch againſt all theſe ſins, and not indulge or allow themſelves in the wilful commiſſion of any one of them: *I tell you*, ſays he, *that ſuch ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*, but be eternally baniſhed from him. Now, from the whole, *learn*, 1. That the miniſters of the goſpel muſt not ſatisfy themſelves barely to reprove and condemn ſin in general, but muſt deſcend to particulars: though invectives againſt ſin, at large, are of good uſe to expoſe the deformity of ſin, yet, in order to the awakening of particular ſinners, we muſt take into our conſideration their particular ſins, and endeavour to convince them of them, and turn them from them: ſo doth our apoſtle here, in the foregoing catalogue of vices. 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt muſt acquaint their people, not only with the danger of allowing themſelves in the groſſer acts of ſin, as adultery, fornication, drunkenneſs, and revellings, and ſuch like, but alſo with the danger of indulging themſelves in ſecret ſins, heart ſins, ſins which the eye of the world can never accuſe them of, but God will condemn them for; ſuch are hatred, emulation, envy, &c. not only the outward act of ſin, but the inward deſire, is dangerous and damning. It is eaſy for a man to murder his neighbour, in the account of God, by a ſecret wiſh, and a paſſionate deſire; he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and he that looks upon a woman unduly, is an adulterer in the ſight of God. 3. That the miniſters of Chriſt can never often enough warn ſinners of the danger of ſin, and continuance in it; we muſt do it over and over again; every ſabbath, and every ſermon, muſt ring a peal in the ſinner's ears, of the fatal danger of a reſolute impiety: Thus here, *I tell you now, as I told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit*, &c.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, 23 Meekneſs, temperance: againſt ſuch there is no law.

Note here, 1. That the apoſtle, who called *ſin* the work of the fleſh, doth here call *grace* the fruit of the Spirit. Sin is a work of our own; it proceeds wholly from ourſelves, our own depraved minds and wills, without the leaſt co-operation of the holy Spirit; he can neither be the author nor abettor of any thing that is evil. All ſinful works are works of the fleſh, and therefore our own works; but all graces accompanying ſalvation, are the fruit of God's Spirit; both becauſe he is the author of them, and alſo, becauſe they are ſo acceptable and pleaſing to him, even as fruit is unto our taſte, and likewiſe, ſo profitable and advantageous to ourſelves. Where the fleſh ruleth, there the work exceeds the fruit; and accordingly, without any mentioning of the fruit, they are called works of the fleſh; but where the Spirit of God ruleth, there the fruit exceeds the work; and therefore, without ever mentioning the work, it is called the fruit of the Spirit. 2. That the works of the fleſh are ſpoken of as many; but the fruit of the Spirit is ſpoken of as one, many works, but one fruit. There is ſuch a connexion and concatenation of graces, that although they are diſtinct in their natures, yet are they inſeparable in their ſubject, pull one link of a chain, and you pull all; ſo he that has any one ſpiritual grace in reality, or at leaſt in eminency, cannot be utterly deſtitute of any other; for where the Holy Spirit is, there cannot be a total defect of any holy grace. 3. That the works of the fleſh are ſaid to be manifeſt, ver. 19. but no ſuch thing is here affirmed of the fruit of the Spirit. Alas! God knows, the works of the fleſh are but every where too manifeſt; adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, drunkenneſs, do ſo abound in all places, that you can ſcarce look beſide them: But the fruits of the Spirit are not ſo; love, peace, gentleneſs, meekneſs, theſe are very thin in the world; hips and haws grow in every hedge, when choicer fruits are but in ſome few gardens. 4. How Paul enumerates here nine ſpecial fruits of the Spirit; not as if there were no more, but becauſe theſe here mentioned ſtand in a direct oppoſition to the former vices recited in the foregoing verſes. The firſt ſweet fruit of the Spirit, taken notice of here by our apoſtle, is *love*, an holy affection in the ſoul, whereby a perſon is carried forth to love God, primarily and chiefly for himſelf, and his neighbour for God's ſake: *Joy*, delight in doing our duty, and rejoicing in expectation of the reward for well-doing: *Peace*, inward peace with God and conſcience, and outward peace with one another: *Long-ſuffering*, an inclination of mind diſpoſing us to bear injuries patiently, and to forgive them readily: *Gentleneſs*, or affability and courteſy in converſation, a ſweetneſs of temper, which renders us greatly uſeful, as well as exceedingly delightful to mankind: *Goodneſs*, a diſpoſition inclining us to communicate what we have and are to others, and to do all the poſſible good we can in our reſpective places and ſtations: *Faith*, or fidelity towards men, in our promiſes, and in all our actions, ſpeaking exact truth: *Meekneſs*, this is threefold, a natural meekneſs, which is the product of the temperament of the humours in the body, a rare felicity; there is alſo a moral meekneſs, which is the product of education and counſel, this is an amiable virtue; and there is a ſpiritual meekneſs, that orders the perſons according to the divine rule, the holy law of God; this is a noble and divine grace, which attracts the eſtimation of God, and the admiration of men: *Temperance*, a ſober uſe of meat, drink, and every thing wherein our ſenſes are gratified or delighted. 5. A ſpecial privilege belonging to all thoſe who are poſſeſſed of the forementioned fruits of the Spirit, and that is, exemption from the law: *Againſt ſuch there is no law*; that is, no law to compel, no law to accuſe or condemn; for the law enjoins them, and encourages the practice and performance of them. *Learn* hence, 1. That the beſt, yea, the only way to have the fruits of the Spirit thrive in our hearts, is firſt to mortify the works of the fleſh; weeds and thiſtles muſt be rooted up before grain can grow or thrive. As the corruption of one form is the production of another, ſo the mortification of ſin makes way for the plantation of the fruits of the Spirit. 2. That moral virtues are the fruits of the Spirit, and commence Chriſtian graces when they are acted by faith in Chriſt, influenced by love unto him, and aiming at the higheſt of ends, the glory of God, and our own ſalvation. 3. That if we compare the fruits of the Spirit with the works of the fleſh, there will appear ſo much beauty in the one, and ſuch real deformity in the other, ſo much ſatisfaction in the one, and ſuch diſquiet and vexation in the other, that beſides the difference between them in their original and event, the former conſiderations are abundantly ſufficient to engage our love to the fruits of the Spirit, and to excite our hatred to the works of the fleſh.

24 And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts.

They that are Chriſt's, that is, they that are truly his followers, and ſincere diſciples, they have *crucified*, that is, ſubdued, and in ſome degree mortified and put to death their fleſhly corruptions, their carnal luſts, and ſinful affections and paſſions. They did, by baptiſm, engage themſelves to die unto ſin; and the regenerate have done it in ſome meaſure; they *have crucified the fleſh:* Yet we muſt not underſtand this of a total, plenary, and final crucifixion, but inchoative only; and they are ſaid to have done it, becauſe they are daily doing of it, *in propoſito, voto, et conatu*, in reſolution, in deſire, and endeavour. And by *affections*, we are not to underſtand natural, but inordinate affections; and by *crucifixion*, is not to be underſtood a total extinction of ſin, but a depoſing of it from its regency and dominion in the ſoul of the ſinner; yet as death ſurely, though ſlowly, follows crucifixion, ſo likewiſe doth ſin live in a believer a dying life, and dies a lingering, but a certain death: *They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there are a peculiar people which are Chriſt's, that have ſpecial intereſt in him, union and communion with him; *they that are Chriſt's*, not by an external profeſſion only, but by an internal implantation into him by faith. 2. That all ſuch as thus have an intereſt in Chriſt, are daily crucifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts. The death of ſin, is here compared to our Saviour's crucifixion; (1.) To ſhew the conformity there is betwixt the death of ſin, and the death of Chriſt. Did Chriſt die a painful, ſhameful, lingering, and accurſed death? So dies ſin in the ſoul of a believer. There is a gradual weakening of the power of ſin in him; ſin is dying, as he, but it is a long time a dying. (2.) To denote the principal mean and inſtrument of our mortification, namely, the death of Chriſt; by virtue whereof, believers do crucify their corrupt affections; the great arguments to mortification being drawn from the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin. 3. That the work of mortification (called here, tropically, a crucifixion) ſtrikes not only at all ſin, but at the root of all ſin; it ſpares none, neither the fleſh, nor any of its affections and luſts do eſcape; root and branches, head and members, the old man is crucified, and the body of ſin deſtroyed, and the ax of mortification laid to the root of every ſin and ſinful affection. In this manner, do they that are Chriſt's, crucify the fleſh, with its affections and luſts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.

If we live in the Spirit; that is, if the Spirit lives in us, if the holy Spirit of grace be the principle of our life, *let us walk in the Spirit*; that is, let us live and act under the conduct and guidance, under the direction and influence of the holy Spirit; let us do the works of the Spirit, let us bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and let us live a ſpiritual life; let our dealings be about ſpiritual and heavenly things, and our chiefeſt delight be in ſuch things; and by theſe ſpiritual delights and exerciſes we ſhall every day become more and more ſpiritual, and in the account of God be eſteemed and reckoned amongſt the number of thoſe that walk in the Spirit. Let us then evidence the life of grace in ourſelves, by exerciſing that grace in a life of communion with God: This ſeems to be the importance of this remarkable place, *If we live in the Spirit*, &c. Here *note*, 1. That there muſt be a principle of ſpiritual life, before there can be any ſpiritual motion and exerciſe; we muſt firſt live in the Spirit, and the Spirit live in us, before we can poſſibly walk in the Spirit; the child muſt live before it can walk. 2. That where there is a principle of grace and ſpiritual life in the heart, there will be the actings and exerciſe of grace in the life; *If we live in the Spirit, we ſhall walk in the Spirit.* Ezek. xxxvii. 27. *I will put my Spirit within them, and cauſe them to walk in my ſtatutes.* An holy heart will be attended with an holy life, and a good conſcience accompanied with a good converſation; ſpiritual life will produce ſpiritual motion.

26 Let us not be deſirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Our apoſtle cloſes this excellent chapter with an exhortation to the Galatians to avoid all pride and ambition, all vain-glorious boaſtings and oſtentation, not provoking one another by their contentions, not envying either the gifts or graces of God beſtowed on others. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is and may be in all men, a deſire of applauſe and juſt commendation: All men pretend to a ſhare in reputation, and do not love to ſee it monopolized and ingroſſed by any perſon. 2. That a vain-glorious deſire of applauſe and reputation is ſinful, when we ſeek for what we do not deſerve, or for more than we deſerve, or ſeek more to be applauded by men, than to be approved by God. 3. That ambition is uſually attended with envy and contention; no ſin goes ſingle, but has a train of followers: *Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory*, &c.

CHAP. VI.

Our apoſtle in this concluding chapter exhorts the Galatians *to the practice of ſeveral important duties, in order to an holy life, which was ſo neceſſary to evidence the truth of their converſion to Chriſtianity.*

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs: conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.

The firſt exhortation here given, is, how they ſhould carry themſelves one towards another, upon ſuppoſition of their ſcandalous falling either into error, or into ſin, namely, not with rigour and ſeverity, but with mildneſs and lenity: *If any be overtaken in a fault*, &c. Here *note*, 1. An evil ſuppoſed, namely, that the wiſeſt, the holieſt, and the beſt of men, may be overtaken in a fault, and ſurpriſed by a temptation; *If any man be overtaken*; implying that any man may be ſo: that ſin, or that miſery, which befals ſome men, may befal others, any others, yea, all others; for all are partakers of the ſame frail nature, ſubject to the working of the ſame corruption, and liable to the danger of the ſame temptation. 2. The duty directed to, with relation to theſe perſons, who trip and fall either into ſin, or into error, *reſtore him*, ſet him right, put him in joint again; a metaphor taken from bone-ſetters, who place diſlocated bones, and ſet broken bones, with great tenderneſs: Thoſe three things, which we ſay are neceſſary in a bone-ſetter, are abſolutely needful in a reprover; namely, an *eagle*'s eye, to diſcern where the fault lies; a *lion*'s heart, to deal faithfully and freely with the faults; and a *lady*'s hand, to uſe them gently and tenderly. 3. The perſons particularly named, who are and ought to manage this duty of brotherly reproof, *ye that are ſpiritual*; you that are the governors of the church, ſay ſome; you that are endowed with ſpiritual gifts, ſay others; the prophets among you, who perform all ſpiritual offices for you, let them rebuke offenders. Others, by *ſpiritual*, underſtand ſuch as had received larger meaſures of the gift and graces of the Spirit than others; *Let ſuch as are ſtrong bear with the infirmities of the weak.* 4. The manner how this duty of fraternal correption, or brotherly reproof is, and ought to be managed, namely, with patience and meekneſs, not with ſeverity and roughneſs: *Ye that are ſpiritual, reſtore him in the ſpirit of meekneſs*; if the reproofs you give others be imbittered with your own paſſions, they will ſpit them out of their mouths; yea, ſpit them back upon your very faces. 5. The argument to excite to all this; namely, the conſideration of our own perſonal frailty, and great liableneſs to fall into temptation ourſelves, conſidering *thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted:* Who knows what a feather the ſtrongeſt ſaint and ſtouteſt Chriſtian may prove in the wind of temptation? Therefore, *let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, and exerciſe great candour and Chriſtian tenderneſs towards them that are fallen before him. *Hodie, mihi, cras tibi.* From the whole, *learn*, 1. That fraternal correption, or brotherly reproof, is a great duty which Chriſtians mutually owe to one another, when they either run into error, or fall into ſin: *If any of you be overtaken, reſtore him.* 2. That although it be the duty of private Chriſtians to admoniſh and reprove one another, as being members one of another, yet thoſe that are *ſpiritual*, Chriſt's miniſters, the guides of his church, the ſtewards of his houſhold, ought in ſpecial to look upon it as their obliged duty to reprove and rebuke with all long-ſuffering and gentleneſs. 3. That rigour and ſeverity, expreſſed towards the failings and eſcapes of others, will rather exaſperate than reclaim them; we muſt deal as gently with a fallen brother, as with a broken bone; if we do not temper our reproofs with meekneſs, they will certainly prove ſucceſsleſs. 4. That the holieſt ſaint and moſt ſpiritual man, here on earth, is within the reach of temptation, and may poſſibly fall himſelf; therefore ought to treat a fallen brother with great tenderneſs and regard.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.

This is a general precept, and requires us to ſympathize with our brethren in all their ſorrows and ſufferings, and to bear a part with them under the load and burden of oppreſſive wants and neceſſities; particularly, bearing with the weakneſſes and infirmities of our brethren, ſeems here to be recommended to our care and practice in this apoſtolical injunction. *Bear ye one another's burdens.* The encouragement to which duty follows, *ſo ſhall we fulfil the law of Chriſt*; that is, the law of love, the moral law, which enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourſelves. But why is this called the law of Chriſt, when it was long before Chriſt; yea, before Moſes, and as old as Adam himſelf, being part of the law of nature, which was written in Adam's heart before there was any written bible? I anſwer, the law of love is very properly called the law of Chriſt; becauſe he revived it, reſcued it, recommended and enforced it, frequently urged it upon his followers, and exemplified it in his own life and converſation, therefore called *a new commandment, and his commandment: This is my commandment*, &c. *A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another*. St. John xiii. 34. (See the *note* there) *Learn* hence, 1. That to have our ear, our heart, and our hand open to our brethren in diſtreſs, is a neceſſary Chriſtian duty: Our ear open to their mournful complaints, our heart open to ſympathize with, and mourn over them, our hand open to the relief of their neceſſities and wants. This is a burden which the law of Chriſt has laid upon us, *Bear ye one another's burdens.* 2. To bear a part of our brethren's burdens with a compaſſionate heart, and helping hand, is a fulfilling of the law of Chriſt; becauſe much love which is the fulfilling of the law, goes out, and is acted in the bearing of it; *ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.*

3 For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another. 5 For every man ſhall bear his own burden.

The apoſtle is ſtill directing the Galatians, and enforcing them to expreſs great lenity and tenderneſs towards ſuch of their brethren as had fallen into ſin and error, and particularly cautions them, 1. To beware of the ſin of pride and ſelf-conceit, and to abound in the grace of humility and modeſty: intimating to us, that pride, and an high opinion of ourſelves, are the certain cauſes of cenſoriouſneſs and raſh judging of others, and the true reaſon why we deſpiſe and glory over an offending brother, inſtead of pitying him, ſympathizing with him, and endeavouring to reſtore him; *He that thinks himſelf to be ſomething here*, is the man that hath proud thoughts of himſelf, who thinks himſelf more righteous and holy, more ſteady and ſtedfaſt, than his fallen brother; and conceits he has more power to preſerve himſelf than others; ſuch an one thinks himſelf to be ſome great thing; when, alas! every man is nothing; and the beſt of men have nothing but what the grace of God confers upon them, 2 Cor. xii. 11. 2. How the apoſtle ſtrikes at the root of the forementioned ſin of pride and ſelf-conceit; namely, the comparing of themſelves with thoſe who are worſe than themſelves, which is very apt to ſtir up pride and arrogancy; to cure which he directs them to compare themſelves with thoſe who are better than themſelves, and to try and prove their own works by the rule of the word of God, and not by the example and practice of others; and ſo ſhall they find matter of rejoicing in themſelves, in the teſtimony of God, and the ſilent applauſe of their own conſciences, without borrowing matter of rejoicing from the failings and infirmities of other perſons. 3. The argument or motive uſed by the apoſtle to enforce upon every man the duty of trying his own work, rather than prying into the infirmities of others; becauſe when he cometh to judgment, every man muſt bear *his own burden*, or give an account of himſelf and his own actions to God; who will then abſolve or condemn men, not as they have done better or worſe than others, but as they ſhall be then found in themſelves, abſolutely conſidered. It is a great error for any man to meaſure himſelf by the meaſure of other men, either by their perfections, or by their imperfections. To conclude our eſtate ſafe, becauſe we are not ſo bad as others, or unſafe, becauſe we have not attained to the perfections of others, is alike dangerous; God will not proceed by this rule, no more ſhould we; every man that appears before him, ſhall *bear his own burden*, and anſwer for his own ſin. Here *note*, 1. That how light ſoever men make of ſin in the commiſſion of it, it will be found heavy and burdenſome when they come before God to account for it; *He ſhall bear his own burden.* 2. That the righteous God, in the great judgment, will call no man to account for the ſins of others, unleſs he has ſome ways been acceſſary to them; but *every one ſhall bear his own burden*, both of guilt and puniſhment.

6 ¶ Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.

In this and the following verſes, our apoſtle enters upon a new exhortation, and that is, to ſtir up the Galatians to liberality and beneficence, upon every fitting occaſion, to be ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, and to do good unto all men. And becauſe it is highly probable, that by reaſon of the prevalency of error amongſt them, and the number of falſe teachers found with them, that the Galatians' love to the word, and to the miniſters and diſpenſers of it, was grown cold; he firſt begins to ſtir up their liberality towards their teachers, ſaying, *Let him that is taught in the word* of the goſpel, *communicate unto him that teacheth*, in all ſuch *good things* as he ſtands in need of. *Learn* hence, 1. That the wiſdom of God hath ſeen it fit to teach men by the miniſtry of man, not by his own immediate voice; this we cannot bear; nor by the glorious angels, theſe would rather terrify than teach us; but by men like ourſelves doth the great God inſtruct us: He has appointed ſome to teach, and obliged others to be taught; but the pride of man is grown to that pitch in our days, that almoſt every one thinks himſelf ſufficient to teach, and few have humility enough to be taught. 2. That it is the ſpecial duty of miniſters not only to teach, but to teach the word: *Let him that is taught in the word*, that is, the written word, as dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, *communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.* Our buſineſs is not to go into the pulpit, and read a lecture to our people out of *Ariſtotle's ethics*, or *Seneca's morals*, much leſs to load them with the burden of unwritten traditions, but to make known a crucified Saviour to them, and the way to eternal ſalvation by him. 3. That ſeeing the miniſters of Chriſt are to give themſelves wholly to the work of teaching, &c. without being entangled with the affairs of this life; the people whom they teach, and amongſt whom they ſpend their time and ſtrength, are obliged, by common equity, as well as by the command of God, to allow them a comfortable ſubſiſtance; and, if able, an honourable maintenance. *Let him that is taught, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things.* 4. The church's maintenance, is only due to ſuch miniſters as are apt to teach, that labour in the word themſelves: None have a right to the church's ſalary, which do not perform the church's ſervice. Let ſuch laymen as by their impropriations take away the vicar's bread, and ſuch clergymen as eat the ſweat of their curate's brow, conſider how they will anſwer it at the bar of God.

7 Be not deceived. God is not mocked: for
whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.
8 For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh
reap corruption: but he that ſoweth to the Spirit,
ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.

Here the apoſtle offers ſeveral arguments to conſideration, for exciting them to the forementioned duty of liberality and Chriſtian beneficence in general, and to the miniſters of the word in particular; and the firſt of them is taken from God's omniſciency, who takes notice of all the petty and pitiful pretences, pleas, and excuſes, which men make, why they cannot be ſo kind as they would be to the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt. Alas! their own wants are many (but it is their luſts that make them ſo); their burdens are great upon them, and they muſt provide and take care for themſelves: But, ſays the apoſtle, though you may, with theſe lying pretences, cheat yourſelves, and mock your miniſters and poor neighbours, yet God is not, will not, cannot be mocked. There is no juggling with God, no deceiving of his eye; man never deceives himſelf ſo much, as when he thinks to deceive God in the leaſt: Man may be mocked and deceived by man, but God can never be mocked by man. *Obſerve*, 1. St. Paul compares charity and Chriſtian bounty, to ſeed ſown, and aſſures us, that the crop we reap ſhall be anſwerable, both in quality and kind, and alſo in meaſure and degree, to the ſeed we now ſow; *Whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* *Learn*, That every man's harveſt hereafter, ſhall be according to his ſeed-time here. The actions of this life, are as ſeed ſown for the life to come; if the huſbandman ſow tares, he muſt not expect to reap wheat: *For whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* *Obſerve*, 2. How the apoſtle doth amplify in particular, what he had aſſerted in general; namely, that ſuch as the ſeed is, ſuch will the harveſt be: He that *ſoweth to the fleſh*, that is, plainly, he that ſpends his ſubſtance upon his luſts, ſeeking no more than the gratification of his ſenſual deſires, ſhall reap corruption; that is, a periſhing ſatisfaction only at preſent, and eternal perdition afterwards: But he that *ſows to the Spirit*, he that improves his eſtate for God, for the ſupport of his goſpel, for the ſuſtenance of his members, *ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.* The Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, will alſo raiſe us up at the great day, and reward our preſent parting with the things of this world, which we cannot keep, with eternal life, which we ſhall never loſe.

9 ¶ And let us not be weary in well doing: for
in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not. 10
As we have therefore opportunity let us do good
unto all *men*, eſpecially unto them who are of the
houſhold of faith.

The holy apoſtle, in theſe words, exhorts the Galatians, and in them all Chriſtians, to the practice of one of the moſt important parts and duties of the Chriſtian religion, namely, that of doing good one to another: And he doth not barely excite us to the duty, but he exhorts us alſo to an unwearied diligence in the doing of it, according to our ability and opportunity. In the exhortation before us, *obſerve*, 1. The grand comprehenſive *duty* we are exhorted to, *well-doing*, and an *unwearied diligence* therein. This comprehends all thoſe ways and means whereby we may be beneficial and uſeful one to another, both to ſoul and body, in ſpiritual and temporal good things, and promote both the preſent comfort and future happineſs of each other. 2. The extent and latitude of the duty, with reſpect to its object, which is all mankind: *Let us do good unto all.* The Galatians were in danger of Judaizing in their practice, as well as in their doctrines; that is, of loving none but themſelves and their own countrymen: For the Jews were grown ſo ſour and churliſh in their temper, that they would not do the leaſt office of kindneſs to any that was not of their own nation: Therefore, St. Paul here exhorts them to extend their charity univerſally to all and every one that is of the ſame nature with themſelves. 3. The ſpecial and particular objects of our charity, *the houſhold of faith:* Do good to all, but eſpecially to them. By *the houſhold of faith*, as appears by the context, ver. 6. are primarily meant the miniſters of God, the teachers of his word; theſe are God's domeſtic ſervants. Wherever there has been a people, there has been a religion profeſſed, ſuch as it was; wherever there has been a religion profeſſed, there have been perſons conſecrated and ſet apart to attend the ſervice of that religion, and a maintenance provided for thoſe attendants: It was ſo by God's appointment under the law, and by Chriſt's under the goſpel, 1 Cor. ix. 14. But farther, by *the houſhold of faith*, we are to underſtand the whole collective body of believing Chriſtians, all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body; ſuch are very dear to God, and ought to be ſo to us. 4. The ſubject of this duty, or whom it doth eminently concern, all Chriſtians: *As we have opportunity, let us do good*; that is, every one of us; for verily there is no condition in the world ſo mean and deſpicable, but it yields perſons an opportunity one way or other of doing good, if not by their purſe, yet at leaſt by their prayers, and by their example. 5. The frequency of the duty, *As we have opportunity*; that is, as often as the occaſions of doing good are preſented to us, and as long as ability for doing good is found with us. Some men defer doing good till they come to die, till they come to make their will, that unwilling will in which they give God a ſmall pittance of his own, becauſe they can keep it no longer; they will repent when they are dying, and be charitable after they are dead. Good God! how unwilling are men to part with either their money or their ſins, as long as they can keep them! But verily a death-bed charity may be as unavailing as a death-bed repentance. The rule is, *As we have opportunity*; that is, as often as an opportunity is offered: Let us decline no opportunity by getting out of the way, with ſome, when a work of charity preſents itſelf unto us. 6. The meaſure of this duty, as we have ability, *let us do good unto all*; that is, proportionably to what God has given us, let us be willing to give to others: God could eaſily level the world, and give every man alike, but he is pleaſed to give ſome more than others, on purpoſe to try their graces, the charity and bounty of the rich, the faith and patience of the poor. And verily an eſtate above what ſufficeth our occaſions and neceſſities, is no farther a bleſſing to us, than as it puts an opportunity into our hands of doing more good than others. 7. An unwearied perſeverance in doing good required at our hands, *Let us not be weary in well doing*; though we have done much good, there is room for more; new objects will appear, new occaſions will ariſe, new opportunities will preſent themſelves unto us. Let us never think we can do enough, much leſs too much good; the beſt of beings are moſt unwearied in well doing. God, Chriſt, the holy angels, are never weary of this bleſſed work; let us never be weary in imitating them in that which is their higheſt and their chiefeſt excellency and perfection. 8. The argument and encouragement to the chearful diſcharge of this duty, *in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not*; that is, ſooner or later, either in this world, or in the next, or in both, we ſhall certainly reap the reward of well doing. We ſhall reap, but what? *Anſ.* We ſhall reap the bleſſing of God upon all we have, are, and do; we ſhall reap the benefit and bleſſing of their prayers, to whom we extend our charity; we ſhall reap the higheſt pleaſure and ſatisfaction in our own minds of doing good, with which no ſenſual pleaſure can be compared. The reflections upon any good we have done, is a perpetual ſpring of peace and pleaſure to us; the thoughts of it lie even and eaſy in our minds, and the remembrance of it refreſhes the ſoul with a ſtrange kind of delight and joy. But, Lord! what tongue can utter, or what heart conceive, that vaſt and unſpeakable reward, which an unwearied diligence in well doing will meet with in the other world? It will plead for us at the day of judgment, and procure at the hands of a merciful God, for the rich merits of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, a glorious recompence at the reſurrection of the juſt: And proportionable to the degrees of our charity, will be the diſpenſations of this reward. From the whole *learn*, 1. That great are the obligations which all Chriſtians do lie under of doing good one to another, according to their abilities and opportunities. 2. That great is the reward of well doing, which Chriſtians may eye as a motive to an unwearied diligence, and unfainting perſeverance in well doing.

11 Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

It is very probable, that St. Paul ordinarily did only dictate, and that ſome other perſon wrote his epiſtles, as that to the Romans, wrote by Tertius, Rom. xvi. 22. Sometimes he only wrote the *ſalutation*, and ſubſcribed the epiſtle with his own hand, as 1 Cor. xvi. 22. but here he tells the Galatians, that he wrote this epiſtle to them all with his own hand, having never wrote ſo large an epiſtle wholly with his own hand to any church, as he did to them. This he did for two reaſons, (1.) To teſtify the fervency of his own affections towards them, and to inſinuate how much he loved them. (2.) To evidence the ſincerity of his endeavours for their preſent and future happineſs: To accompliſh theſe ends, he judged no pains too great. From whence *learn*, 1. That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt will ſtick at no pains, but encounter with all difficulties, to advance the good of ſouls in general, and to reduce an erroneous and wandering people in particular to the obedience of the goſpel. Thus, this great apoſtle, though he had upon him the care of all the churches, and conſequently a multiplicity of buſineſs, many avocations, and a multitude of diſtractions; yet, in order to the reclaiming of theſe Galatians, who were deeply tinctured with error, as well as dangerouſly tainted with ſin, he redeems time for, and undergoes the fatigue and trouble of writing this whole epiſtle to them with his own hand: *Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.* 2. That it neither ſavours of pride nor vain-glory in the miniſters of the goſpel, if upon occaſion, though ſparingly, they make known to the world the great pains they have taken for promoting the good of their people, that ſo they may be excited the more to bring forth fruit anſwerable to the coſt and culture which the miniſters of Chriſt have expended upon them: St. Paul here ſticks not to tell the Galatians, and the whole world, the pains he had been at in writing this large epiſtle with his own hand to them; yet it was not to commend himſelf, but to excite and encourage them.

12 As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the
fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed: only leſt
they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt.
13 For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed
keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed,
that they may glory in your fleſh.

Here our apoſtle returns to the deſcription which he had before given of the falſe apoſtles, who, though they urged the neceſſity of circumciſion, yet it was not with any ſincerity of intention: It was, firſt, *to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*; that is, to make a fair outward ſhew of religion, an high pretence to holineſs, by obſerving circumciſion, and the other abrogated rites of the ceremonial law: And ſecondly, This pretended zeal of theirs proceeded from puſillanimity and fear, leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution from the Jews, for preaching the doctrine of the goſpel, called here, the *croſs of Chriſt*, becauſe it treats of a crucified Chriſt. Now the fury of theſe perſecutors was abated towards thoſe that preached up circumciſion, but enraged abundantly againſt thoſe who preached circumciſion down. *Note* farther, How well the apoſtle makes good his charge againſt theſe falſe apoſtles, the Judaizing doctors, that they urged the neceſſity of circumciſion inſincerely, and for baſe ends; namely, becauſe they made no conſcience to keep the law themſelves, but could diſpenſe with circumciſion well enough, if they were amongſt their friends, but pleaded for it when in fear of their perſecuting enemies: Thus they *became all things to all men*, but it was to ſave themſelves. And, laſtly, He aſſures them, that they urged circumciſion upon them, *that they might glory in their fleſh*; that is, might pride themſelves that you were become their converts, by being circumciſed at their perſuaſion, and be able to boaſt of the multitudes of their proſelytes, who received circumciſion at their inſtigation, and carried it as a mark of their inſtruction. *Learn* hence, 1. That deſigning hypocrites do conſtantly pretend high to religion, but they evermore ſeek themſelves, under pretence of acting for God and his glory; they that *conſtrain you to be circumciſed, make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*. 2. That though it is our duty to eſchew perſecution when we can fairly avoid it, yet we muſt not part with the leaſt iota of truth, or eſpouſe the ſmalleſt error, to avoid the ſharpeſt perſecution: they *conſtrain you to be circumciſed, leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution*. 3. That men who talk loud of religion, and pretend high to it, who preach it to, and preſs it upon others, but do not conſcientiouſly practiſe it themſelves, it is an evident demonſtration, that they are men of corrupt minds, of profligate conſciences, that do not believe themſelves; for he only believes what he ſays, that lives as he doth believe: *Neither they themſelves who are circumciſed*, ſays the apoſtle, *keep the law*. 4. That there is nothing which falſe teachers and erroneous ſeducers do ſo much glory of, magnify themſelves by, and pride themſelves in, as in the number of their proſelytes and converts, which they look upon as ſo many trophies of their victory, and ſpeaking proofs of their unparalelled abilities.

14 But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Having ſhewn what it was that the falſe apoſtles gloried in, he next ſhews what it was that he himſelf gloried in; namely in the croſs of Chriſt; that is, in his preaching Chriſt crucified, and the neceſſity of faith in him, who died as a ſacrifice upon the croſs. The croſs of Chriſt is taken three ways in ſcripture, materially, metaphorically, and metonymically; the material croſs of Chriſt, is that which he died upon at Jeruſalem: This the church of Rome glories in greatly, but not the apoſtle. The metaphorical croſs of Chriſt, is afflictions, Luke, chap. ix. ver. 28. *Let him take up the croſs*, that is, ſubmit to any afflictions: God oft-times ſanctifies this croſs, for the crucifying the hearts of his people to the world: But the *croſs of Chriſt* is taken metonymically for the goſpel, the doctrine of the goſpel, or of him that died upon the croſs. Now, Chriſtianity, or the doctrine of the goſpel, crucifies us to the world: Firſt, by diſcovering to us the great vanity and emptineſs of the world, and all the periſhing ſatisfactions of it: Secondly, By propounding ſuch arguments to crucify the world, as were never heard of from all the philoſophers and wiſe men that ever lived in the world; namely, arguments taken from the glory of God, from the death of Chriſt, from the dignity of the ſoul, &c. *Learn* hence, That ſuch a Chriſtian as doth experimentally find his heart and affections daily more and more crucified to the world, by the *croſs of Chriſt*, has unſpeakable cauſe and reaſon ſufficient for ſpiritual glorying and rejoicing. *Queſt.* Wherein conſiſts not our crucifixion to the world? *Anſw.* It conſiſts not in a vile eſteem of the world, as uſeleſs or hurtful, or in caſting off all care and concern for the things of the world, as ſinful and unneceſſary; nor is every degree of deſire after, love unto, or delight in the things of the world, inconſiſtent with our being crucified to it; nor doth it conſiſt in, or oblige us to the withdrawing of ourſelves from all ſociety and converſation with the men of the world: But, poſitively, crucifixion to the world, conſiſts in a crucified judgment and opinion of the world; in crucifying our love and our affections to the world; in crucifying our hopes and expectations from the world; in crucifying our care and concern for the world; in crucifying our delight in, and our endeavours after the world. *Queſt.* How doth a Chriſtian's being crucified to the world, afford him cauſe for unſpeakable rejoicings? *Anſ.* Thus: We may, and ought to glory in the bleſſed effect and fruit of Chriſt's death, in re-inſtamping the image of God upon the ſoul, in the certain tokens of the love of God. We may glory in the death of Chriſt's enemy, and our ſoul's enemy: We may glory in that wherein God is glorified, and in that which is the earneſt of our own glorification. Now, crucifixion to the world, by the croſs of Chriſt, is this, all this, and therefore warrantably to be boaſted of, and gloried in. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs*, &c.

15 For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.

Here the apoſtle ſubjoins a reaſon why he gloried only in the croſs of Chriſt, and not in thoſe carnal ordinances and fleſhly privileges of circumciſion, &c. which the falſe apoſtles ſo much gloried in; namely, becauſe *circumciſion* nor *uncircumciſion*, neither the preſence of that ordinance, nor the want of it, availeth any thing, as to our acceptance with Chriſt, and intereſt in him; but the new creature is all in all; a circumciſed heart, not a circumciſed fore-ſkin, a renewed nature, a divine temper of mind, rendering us like to Chriſt. This will enable us to love him, and qualify us for living with him now in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, now under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, under the œconomy of the goſpel, neither the preſence nor abſence of this outward badge of circumciſion will avail any thing to our juſtification before God; but that which was ſignified by circumciſion, is the thing that pleaſeth God; namely, the renovation of our nature, and becoming new creatures both in heart and life. *Learn* hence, That according to the terms of the goſpel-covenant, or Chriſtian religion, nothing will avail to our acceptance with God, but the real renovation of our hearts and lives: *Neither circumciſion availeth*, &c.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.

Note here, 1. The nature of Chriſtianity deſcribed; it is a walk: Now, a walk is a motion, a free and voluntary motion, an uniform and even motion, it is a progreſſive motion, and a conſtant motion. 2. The condition of this walk, and that is regularity, it is a walk by rule; a Chriſtian is not a lawleſs perſon, to range and ramble, and run up and down as fancy leads him, but he walks by rule, by the rule of ſcripture, by the rule of charity. 3. The determination of that rule which a Chriſtian is to walk by, it muſt be *according to this rule*. What rule? The foregoing verſe declares it is regeneration, and the law of the new creature: *as many as walk according to that rule*, when the new creature, in the principles and workings of it, is made the ground, the pattern and direction of our obedience, and we frame and ſquare all the actions of our lives according thereunto. 4. The bleſſed privileges belonging to them that thus walk: *Peace be on them, and mercy*; that is, there ſhall be peace and mercy to them; theſe ſhall be their portion, nay, they ſhall be upon them; that is, in a large and plentiful manner vouchſafed to them. Laſtly, The honourable mention which the apoſtle makes of them that thus walk by ſcripture-rule, according to the law of the new creature, written in the heart; he calls them the *true Iſrael of God*, the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, the children of his faith, which was a thouſand times greater privilege than to be the children of his fleſh: Theſe are the perſons intereſted in his bleſſings. *Learn* hence, That true and inward peace, great and laſting peace, peace with God, and peace with conſcience, is the aſſured portion, and ſhall be the poſſeſſion of all and only thoſe who walk according to the law of God, the rule of the creature: *As many as walk according to this rule.*

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.

The apoſtle having thus fully declared the mind of God in the matter controverted betwixt himſelf and the falſe apoſtles, touching the neceſſity of circumciſion; he now makes uſe of his apoſtolic authority, and charges his adverſaries to give him no further trouble or diſturbance, either by gainſaying his doctrine, or detracting from his authority; becauſe he bare in his body the marks of his ſufferings for Chriſt Jeſus, namely, the ſtripes and wounds which he patiently received for the name of Chriſt, and his holy religion, 2 Cor. xi. 23. *Learn* hence, That whatever hard meaſure we meet with for the ſake of Chriſt, what wounds and marks we receive for profeſſing faith in him, and perſevering in obedience to him, he will own them for his own, and give us leave to look upon them as his own, yea, to call them his own, as our apoſtle did here: *I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.*

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

Here our apoſtle cloſes his epiſtle with his accuſtomed valediction, moſt affectionately praying that the grace and favour of Chriſt, in the ſweet effects of it, and in the ſenſible apprehenſion of it, might remain in their ſouls, to enlighten, ſanctify, comfort, and quicken them more and more, that from thence they might derive and draw abiding conſolation, both in life and death. *Amen.*

THE

THE
EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO THE
EPHESIANS.

St. Paul *having planted a famous church at* Epheſus, *which was the metropolis or chief city in* Aſia, *where he had preached the goſpel for three years with eminent ſucceſs, and being now a priſoner at* Rome, *he juſtly feared leſt they ſhould faint in their Chriſtian courſe: and accordingly, to prevent it, he writes this epiſtle to the churches of Chriſt in and about* Epheſus, *to eſtabliſh them in the faith he had preached to them, which he was now a priſoner for, and ſtood ready to ſeal with his own blood.*

And here the good providence of God towards St. Paul *and them is every remarkable, that though he was now a priſoner at* Rome, *yet not ſo cloſe as to be denied pen and paper: God gave him favour in the ſight of the keeper, and having work for him to do in priſon, provides a keeper for his turn.*

St. Paul *is no ſooner* Nero's *priſoner, but he falls a preaching and writing too. Happy was it for* Oneſimus *that St.* Paul *was ſent to gaol, where he was begotten in his bonds by the preaching of the goſpel; and as happy was it for the* Epheſians *too, unto whom he wrote this excellent epiſtle, that they might be the more comforted and confirmed. The devil had better have let* Paul *alone, than thus impriſoned him: For no ſooner was he committed, but he falls both a preaching and writing; at which the gates of Satan's kingdom fly open, and ſinners come forth, to his ſorrow and ſhame. There are no ſuch ways to be even with the devil and his inſtruments, for all their ſpite and malice againſt us, as by doing all the good we poſſibly can wherever we come.*

This excellent epiſtle divinely ſets forth the great and aſtoniſhing myſteries of our redemption and reconciliation by Jeſus Chriſt; the freeneſs and riches of God's grace; the admirable benefits and privileges of the goſpel; the marvellous diſpenſation of God to the Gentiles, *in revealing Chriſt unto them.*

The principal parts of this epiſtle are two, doctrinal, and practical. The former is contained in the three firſt chapters, in which he treats of the ſublime privileges of our election, vocation, juſtification and adoption; the latter in the three laſt chapters, in which he exhorts them to conſtancy in the faith, to preparation for, and patience under ſufferings, and to live religiouſly in every relation, by making conſcience of relative duties one towards another, as huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, in which the life and beauty of religion lies; and ſo cloſes and ſhuts up the epiſtle, wiſhing them all peace and proſperity, and a mutual increaſe of love and charity, and adviſing them to manifeſt the ſincerity of their love to Chriſt, by the purity and incorruptneſs of their lives and converſations.

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, to the ſaints which are at Epheſus, and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus:

Note here, 1. The penman of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, *Paul*; by his office, *an apoſtle*; by his commiſſion to that office, *the will of God*; that is, by the command and appointment of God. It is matter of great conſolation to the miniſters of Chriſt, as well as great ſatisfaction to their people, that their calling is from God, and not from themſelves; that they ſpeak not in their own names, but by commiſſion received from Chriſt, whoſe ambaſſadors they are. 2. The ſuperſcription of this epiſtle, the perſons to whom it was directed and ſent, *To the ſaints at Epheſus*: So they were all at Epheſus by viſible profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by real ſanctification. All the members of the viſible church are obliged to be ſaints, and the true and real Chriſtian is a true and real ſaint: He adds, *And to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*, thoughout all Aſia. This pointed out their duty to them, to be not only holy in profeſſion, but faithful in converſation; theſe two words *ſaints* and *faithful*, conjoined, denote both their dignity and their duty; their dignity, in ſtanding near to God, as his children; their duty in being faithful to him as his ſervants. Laſtly, He ſtiles them ſaints and faithful *in Chriſt Jeſus*; intimating, that all our grace and holineſs muſt be holineſs in Chriſt Jeſus: that is, acted and exerciſed by ſtrength fetched from Chriſt Jeſus, and that all our holineſs muſt be accepted in Chriſt Jeſus.

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe words may be conſidered two ways: (1.) As a religious ſalutation, taken from the manner of the Jews, who expreſſed their deſires for one another's well-doing, by wiſhing *peace*, that is, all kind of happineſs and proſperity to each other: Chirſtianity doth neither forbid or aboliſh, but doth ſpiritualize and improve civility, humanity, and common courteſy. (2.) The words may be conſidered as an apoſtolical benediction, in imitation of the prieſt's bleſſing, Numb. vi. The apoſtles were the patriarchs or ſpiritual fathers of the church of the New Teſtament, as the ſons of Jacob were of the Old; accordingly they bleſs their children, wiſhing *grace from God the Father*, or grace from God as a Father; thereby denoting, that God beſtows not his *grace* as a Creator but as a Father in Chriſt, in a diſcriminating way and peculiar manner: *And peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: he being the purchaſer of our peace, he upon whom the chaſtiſement of our peace was laid, and he that made peace for us by the blood of his croſs; and thereupon God of his free grace accepts us, juſtifies us, and is at peace with us. *Learn*, That ſuch as have received moſt grace from God, ſtand in further need of ſupplies of grace from him: they are thankful for peace, but they cannot content themſelves with peace without grace; they deſire both to have the heart and love of God ſet upon them, as well as pacified towards them; they deſire to be pardoned, but above all, ſeek to be beloved of the Father.

3 Bleſſed *be* the God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly *places* in Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1, The work which the heart of the apoſtle was ſet upon, and that is, the work of bleſſing God; we bleſs God one way, he bleſſes us another; he bleſſes us imperatoriouſly, by commanding his bleſſings upon us; we bleſs him optatively, when with thankful hearts we praiſe him, when we wiſh well to him, and ſpeak well of him. Lord, what an infinite favour and privilege is this vouchſafed to us, not only to pray to God and receive bleſſings from him, but to admit us to bleſs him, and to account himſelf honoured by us, when we acknowledge him the fountain of all bleſſings, and bleſſedneſs to us his creatures! 2. The title under which our apoſtle bleſſeth him, namely, as the *God and father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. He doth not ſay now under the goſpel, as of old under the law, Bleſſed be the God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob; or, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael; but, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Where *note*, 1. He is a God to Chriſt, in relation to his being man: Chriſt being fore-ordained before the foundation of the word, to the work and office of a Mediator, 1 Pet. i. 20. and the Father making a covenent or federal tranſaction with him from all eternity as Mediator. 2. He is a Father to Chriſt, and that both as God and man: a Father to him as God, by eternal and ineffable generation, the one being *Deus gignens*, the other *Deus genitus*; thus he was the only begotton Son of the Father; and a Father to him as man, by virtue of the perſonal union of the two natures in Chriſt, Luke i. 32. Therefore *that holy thing ſhall be called the Son of God*. *Obſerve* 3. The reaſon why under theſe relations he ſo affectionately bleſſed God, namely for beſtowing bleſſings, ſpiritual bleſſings, all ſpiritual bleſſings; and this is in or concerning heavenly things, which tend to fit us for heaven and eternal glory. And, laſtly, All theſe bleſſings are conferred upon us in Chriſt; he, by his merit hath purchaſed them: he, as our Head and Advocate, in our name, has received them, by virtue of our union with whom we have a right unto them, and ſhall ere long in heaven be fully and finally poſſeſſed of them. Behold here the tranſcendent bounty and liberality of our heavenly Father: He has more than one bleſſing for his children, he has all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings for them, *grace* on earth and *glory* in heaven; grace, to enable them to glorify him upon earth, and glory, as the reward of grace with himſelf in heaven. Rejoice, O Chriſtian, in thy lot and portion; God himſelf hath put all things, and ſo haſt thou: Has he all ſpiritual bleſſings in heaven in full poſſeſſion? Thou haſt them alſo in right and title at preſent, and ere long ſhall enjoy them in full fruition.

4 ¶ According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love:

Our apoſtle having, in the former verſe, offered up a very ſolemn thankſgiving to God for bleſſing the Epheſians with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt, he comes in this verſe to diſcover and declare the fountain from whence all theſe ſpiritual bleſſings did proceed and flow, namely, from God's gracious purpoſe in our election before all time: *He hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy*, &c. Where *obſerve*, The favour vouchſafed, election; and the fruit and product of that favour, holineſs of life and converſation. *Note*, 1. The favour and privilege vouchſafed by God, *He hath choſen*: This denotes the freeneſs of the favour; he choſe when he might have refuſed; His book of life is a book of love, the cauſe of our love is the object, the reaſon of God's love is in himſelf. 2. The ſubject of this favour, *He hath choſen us*, us Gentiles: The Jews much gloried in their being a *choſen generation*, a peculiar people: we Gentiles are a choſen generation alſo: they were beloved for their father's ſake, Abraham's; we for Chriſt's ſake. 3. The antiquity of this favour, *before the foundation of the world*, that is, from all eternity. The apoſtle to take the Jews off from boaſting, as they did, that the world was made for their ſake, and that the Meſſiah from the beginning of the world did enter into a covenant with God to redeem them eſpecially, declares, that the deſpiſed Gentiles were elected and choſen by God to be an holy people to himſelf; and all this, in the purpoſe of God, before the foundations of the world were laid. 4. God is ſaid to have choſen us *in Chriſt*, as our head. Conſider Chriſt as God, ſo we are choſen by him: *I know whom I have choſen*, ſays Chriſt: Conſider him as a Mediator, ſo we are choſen in him, not choſen for him; becauſe, not Chriſt's undertaking for us, but the Father's good pleaſure towards us, was the ſpring and fontal cauſe of our election. The truth is, God was ſo far from chuſing the Gentiles out of faith foreſeen, that he did not chuſe them for the ſake and obedience of Chriſt foreſeen: God did not love us from eternity, becauſe Chriſt was to die for us in time, but becauſe he loved us with an everlaſting love; therefore, in the fulneſs of time, Chriſt was ſent to die for us: So that the death of Chriſt was the fruit and effect, but not the cauſe of our election: No other reaſon, ſays Biſhop Fell upon the place, can be aſſigned of this privilege, but the good pleaſure of God; and if Chriſt's ſufferings were not the cauſe of our election, much leſs our own deſervings, as *he* adds there; almighty God not chuſing us becauſe worthy, but to make us worthy by chuſing us. 5. The effect and fruit, the benefit and end of this free end ancient favour, *that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love.* (1.) Holineſs is here declared not to be the cauſe, but the effect of our election: God choſe the Gentiles from eternity to be his people, not becauſe they were holy, they were far enough from that, being afar off from God, but deſigning that they thus graciouſly choſen ſhould be holy; initially, progreſſively, and perſeveringly holy in this life, and perfectly holy in the next: Yet arriving at ſuch a perfection here in holineſs, as to denominate us *blameleſs* in the account of God, by virtue of our faith in Chriſt, and love to one another. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That God's beſtowing all ſpiritual bleſſings upon us in time, is the effect and fruit of his electing love from all eternity; *He hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings, according as he hath choſen us in Chriſt before the foundation of the world.* 2. That God hath choſen none to happineſs and glory hereafter, but only ſuch as are holy in converſation here, holy in the habitual frame and diſpoſition of their hearts, and in the general courſe and tenour of their lives and actions. 3. That ſuch as are holy before God, will endeavour to walk unblameably in the ſight of man, in the exerciſe of love, and in the practice of all the duties of the ſecond table, which are at once evidences of our ſincerity, and an ornament to our profeſſion.

5 Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, 6 ¶ To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved:

That is, "Having predeſtinated us Gentiles, who in the eſteem of the Jews were accounted dogs, to be his adopted ſons and daughters, in and by Jeſus Chriſt, in whom he hath made us accepted, to the abundant praiſe and glory of his free grace and mercy." *Obſerve* here, 1. That none are the children of God by nature; none are born ſons, but made ſons; not of their own, but God's making; and in order to this glorious privilege, we were *predeſtinated unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt.* 2. The attribute mentioned here by the apoſtle, which moved God to predeſtinate us to the adoption of children; it was the glory of his grace; he mentions not the glory of his holineſs, the glory of his juſtice, or the glory of his power; becauſe the glory of his power is manifeſted in making of the world, the glory of his holineſs in making of his law, the glory of his juſtice in turning the tranſgreſſors of that law into hell; but his *grace* he ſhews no where ſo much as in the predeſtination of his children, and in what he hath predeſtinated them unto; he ſheweth indeed all his attributes herein, but *grace* over and above all the reſt. 3. The effect and fruit of this privilege, namely, of our being predeſtinated to the adoption of children, and that is, our being made accepted in Chriſt the Beloved; the word is properly rendered, he hath made us dear, precious and delightful to himſelf: or, in one word, he hath ingratiated us. Here *note*, That as Jeſus Chriſt is in an eminent manner beloved of God, and accepted with him, ſo, in like manner, all God's adopted children do, and ſhall find favour with God, and acceptance through Chriſt.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace;

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, enumerated the great and glorious privileges which the children of God were made partakers of before all time, comes next to diſcover what they are admitted to the participation of in time: And here in this verſe he mentions two of them, namely, redemption, and remiſſion of ſin; *in whom we have redemption through his blood*, &c. Here *note*, The privilege itſelf, *redemption*; the Redeemer, *Jeſus Chriſt in whom*; the price of this redemption paid down, *his blood*; one fruit of this redemption inſtanced in for all the reſt, *the forgiveneſs of ſin*; and, laſtly, the ſpring or ſource of all this, *the riches of his grace.* *Learn*, 1. The deplorable ſtate into which the whole race of mankind was brought by ſin, namely, an eſtate of ſlavery and bondage, and ſpiritual captivity unto ſin; redemption ſuppoſes this: Slaves and captives need a Redeemer, none elſe; we are all by nature under ſlavery to ſin, to Satan, and the curſe of the law, and the wrath of God. 2. That there was no delivery to be had from this ſlavery, but by a price paid down to the juſtice of God; redemption is a delivery by ranſom and price. 3. That no other price did, or could redeem us from our miſerable captivity, but the blood of Chriſt; *we have redemption through his blood.* 4. That all believers, and only they, have remiſſion of their ſins, through the redemption purchaſed for them by the blood of Chriſt. 5. That God's free grace, and Chriſt's full ſatisfaction, do ſtand well together in the work of redemption and remiſſion of ſin: True, God had a ſatisfaction from the hand of our Surety, Chriſt Jeſus; but was it not free grace and rich mercy in God, to accept of a Surety and a Subſtitution, when the rigour of the law required none, and would admit of none, but demanded that the ſoul which ſinned ſhould die? Was it not free mercy, not only to accept a Surety, but to provide a Surety for us, as God did, and this Surety his own Son? And to deliver up this Son to a painful, ſhameful, and accurſed death, that we might have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his *grace?*

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom and prudence, 9 Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf:

That is, in which diſpenſation of his, namely, our redemption from ſin and wrath by the blood of his Son, God the Father hath diſcovered abundant wiſdom, wonderful wiſdom, riches of divine wiſdom, to the children of men. Taking the words in this ſenſe, the obſervation is, That God's ſending his Son into the world to ſuffer in our ſtead, and to ſatisfy for our ſin, was not only an act of ſpecial grace and peculiar favour, but alſo an evidence and demonſtration of wonderful wiſdom in God; *he hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom*; O what wonderful wiſdom appeared in the contrivance of the work of redemption, and in the accompliſhment of it! What wiſdom, in appointing ſuch a Mediator as was fit to reconcile God to man, and man to God! What wiſdom, in laying the platform and deſign of the goſpel in ſuch a way and manner, as at once to advance the honour and ſecure the glory of God, and to promote the holineſs and comfort of man! *Obſerve*, next, The deſcription which St. Paul gives us of the goſpel, and the preaching of it, it is the myſtery of God's will revealed and made known to a loſt world. *Learn*, That the goſpel's method for recovering and ſaving loſt ſinners by a Redeemer, was a myſtery, a hidden myſtery; it was hid where all the world could never have found it, where angels and men could never diſcover it; it was hid in God, in his breaſt and boſom, in his heart and thoughts; it was hid from angels; nay, the churches knew it before the angels; yea, the angels learnt it from the churches, Eph. iii. 10. Unto principalities and powers is *known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God*; and as it was hid from angels, ſo from the wiſe men of the world, 1 Cor. ii. 8. We preach the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom, which none of the princes of this world knew; nay, the goſpel was hid from all the ſaints of the Old Teſtament, comparatively, not abſolutely; with reſpect to that clear revelation which we have of the goſpel now, it may be ſaid to be hidden from them then. O, what obligations then do we lie under, who live under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, to acknowledge what an infinite favour it is from God clearly to know the myſtery of his will, concerning the redemption and ſalvation of poor loſt ſinners by a Mediator! God has now revealed it, and he deſires all may know and receive the revelation of it, namely, the hidden myſtery of his will. *Obſerve*, laſtly, What was the impelling and moving cauſe of God's making known the myſteries of his will to a loſt world; it was his own good pleaſure, which he had purpoſed in himſelf; God's making known the myſtery of his will by the goſpel, and his enlightening the underſtandings of men ſavingly to apprehend it, proceeds entirely from the purpoſe and pleaſure of his own good will.

10 That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even* in him.

Theſe words diſcover to us the end and deſign of God, in making known the myſtery of his will, that is, in revealing the goſpel; it was to gather into one univerſal church both angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, under Chriſt their Head, and by virtue of that union to become one with the Father, as he and Chriſt are one. Here *note*, 1. That Chriſt is the Head both of angels and men; an Head of confirmation to the angels, of redemption to fallen man; both angels and ſaints in heaven and on earth make up one family, of which Chriſt is the Head: the angels are a part of the worſhippers of Chriſt as well as we, they are a part of his family and houſhold; the angels fill our churches as well as men, and are preſent in our congregations and aſſemblies, 1 Cor. xi. 10. 2. That all mankind by nature, and as conſidered in themſelves, are under a fearful diſſipation or ſcattering: Sin hath rent and ſeparated them from God, from man, and from the bleſſed angels; *Gathering together* preſuppoſes a foregoing ſcattering. 3. That the purpoſe and deſign of God, in diſcovering the truths of the goſpel unto men, was this, that he might gather them together into union with Jeſus Chriſt; that by virtue of that union they might be one with the Father, as He and Chriſt are one; *That in the fulneſs of time he might gather together in one* body in Chriſt *all things* capable of eternal happineſs,, *both in heaven and earth*; even in him, who is the Head of that body, whereof angels as well as men are members.

11 ¶ In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will: 12 That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt.

Our apoſtle having hitherto ſpoken of the glorious privileges of the goſpel in general, he comes now to make application of this his doctrine, firſt to the Jews, and next to the Gentiles in particular. As to the Jews, who were firſt called by Chriſt and his apoſtles, and who were the firſt that truſted or hoped in Chriſt for ſalvation, before there was any conſiderable number of converts among the Gentiles, he declares, that theſe Jewiſh believers, whereof himſelf was one, had, in and through Chriſt, obtained a right to be God's portion and peculiar people; and that they ſhould not, by embracing the goſpel, loſe that ancient privilege which their forefathers ſo mightily boaſted of, and gloried in; namely, to be a choſen generation, and a peculiar people; but together with their being God's portion, they ſhould have right to an inheritance: *In whom we have obtained an inheritance*; namely, an inheritance in the Heavenly Canaan, the inheritance of the ſaints in light;

and to this inheritance, ſays he, you have been appointed, God having fore-ordained that this inheritance ſhould be the portion of all believers, and the conſequent of faith in Chriſt, by virtue of which we become the ſons of God, and all this *to the praiſe of his own glory*; that is, to the intent that his glorious attributes of wiſdom, goodneſs, and mercy, might be acknowledged, and highly praiſed. *Learn* hence, 1. That to be called to faith, and brought to believe in Chriſt, before others, is a favour and ſpecial prerogative, which ſome perſons have above others: *We who firſt believed Chriſt.* It is an high honour above all others, to be in Chriſt before others. Rom. xvi. 7. *Who were in Chriſt before me.* 2. That as all believers are God's portion, and the lot of his inheritance, ſo they do obtain from him right and title to a lot and ſhare in an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the heavens for them; *We have obtained an inheritance.* 3. That Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, is that perſon, in, by, and through whom believers are inſtituted to this inheritance; *In whom we have obtained an inheritance.* Chriſt hath purchaſed this inheritance for them; he has promiſed it to them; he has already taken, and ſtill keeps poſſeſſion of it for them; and he will put them into the full and final poſſeſſion of it at the great day. 4. That the great end and deſign of God, in all the diſtinguiſhing favours and benefits which by Jeſus Chriſt we obtain from him, is this, *That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory.* The words may be underſtood, (1.) Paſſively; the praiſe of his glory was to be manifeſted in them. (2.) Actively; that the high praiſes of God were to be ſet forth by them.

13 In whom ye alſo *truſted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation: in whom alſo after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, 14 Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, until the praiſe of his glory.

Here the apoſtle recounts the favours and privileges which the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, upon their believing in Chriſt, were admitted to the participation of: He aſſures them, that in and through Chriſt they had obtained a right to this heavenly inheritance alſo, as well as the Jews, having been brought to truſt and believe in him, by hearing the word of truth, the doctrine of the goſpel, preached to them: And next, that they were ſealed for the children of God, by the ſanctifying Spirit promiſed to the ſons of God, which produced a real renovating change in their hearts and lives, and ſo was a pledge and earneſt of, as well as made them meet and fit for the heavenly inheritance; the full enjoyment of which is not to be expected till the laſt day, when, and not before, all believers ſhall obtain complete redemption, and their bodies being raiſed, ſhall be reunited to their ſouls, and both rendered perfectly and everlaſtingly happy. The end of God, in all this diſpenſation of grace and mercy to the Gentiles, being the ſame with that before-mentioned to the Jews; namely, the praiſe of his own glorious grace. Here *obſerve*, 1. That both the Gentiles and Jews are ſaved by the ſame faith and truſt in Chriſt; *In whom ye alſo truſted*; as they have the ſame common inheritance, ſo have they the ſame common affiance and faith in Chriſt. 2. That the faith of the Gentiles came by hearing of the word: *In whom ye alſo truſted, after ye heard the word*, &c. that is, preſently after they heard, they believed and obeyed: Col. i. 6. *Ye obeyed from the firſt day that we preached the goſpel.* What a ſhame and reproach is this to thoſe amongſt us, who have heard the goſpel preached all their days, yet never did believe or obey the goſpel? 3. A double encomium which the apoſtle gives the goſpel by which theſe Gentile Epheſians were converted: he calls it, (1.) *The word of truth*; that is, a word of the moſt eminent and excellent truth. There is no truth that ever God ſwore to, but the truth of the goſpel. The law is truth as well as the goſpel, but the law was made without an oath; had it been made with an oath, it had never been recalled; the goſpel is ſealed with an oath, and therefore ſhall never be reverſed. (2.) He calls it the *goſpel of ſalvation*, and the goſpel of *their* (the Epheſians) *ſalvation*. It is called a goſpel of ſalvation, becauſe the matter of it is ſalvation, becauſe the offer of it is ſalvation; and it declares the only way and means by which loſt ſinners may obtain ſalvation; and the goſpel of *their* ſalvation, becauſe God had, by his Holy Spirit, made the preaching of this goſpel effectual for their converſion and ſalvation. *Obſerve*, 4. The privilege which the Epheſian Gentiles obtained, after they had by faith conſented to this goſpel of ſalvation, and that was their ſealing: *After ye believed, ye were ſealed with that Holy Spirit of promiſe.* Where, *note*, That the privilege of ſealing always follows the duty of believing, never goes before it. *Sealing*, doth imply that precious and excellent eſteem which they have with God: Nothing but what is precious is ſealed by us: Who ſeals up dung and pebbles in a bag? Believers are God's jewels, his treaſure, therefore ſealed. Sealing alſo is for ſafety and ſecurity, for diſcrimination, and for confirmation. The Holy Spirit, by ſanctifying of us, doth diſcriminate and diſtinguiſh us from the reſt of the world, doth ſecure and preſerve us from the fatal danger of a ruinous apoſtacy, and doth alſo confirm our hopes of the glorious inheritance. 5. That the Holy Spirit is given to believers in the nature of an earneſt; ſanctifying grace, wrought in the heart here, is a ſure earneſt of glory hereafter, *which is the earneſt of our inheritance.* An earneſt binds the bargain, and is a part of the bargain; if it be but a ſhilling given as an earneſt, it ſecures a contract for a thouſand pounds. Believers are to conſider and look upon grace not barely as grace, but as an earneſt of glory. O, be thankful to God for his ſanctifying Spirit, not only as ſubduing thy corruptions, but as a pledge and earneſt of a glorious inheritance. It is a great comfort to find grace in the ſoul, as ſanctifying, as quickening and renewing, but a greater matter of rejoicing to find it alſo there as witneſſing, as ſealing and confirming, as a part of our inheritance in glory, and as a pledge and earneſt of the whole. 6. That the Holy Spirit of God is God. To ſanctify, to ſeal, to confirm our hearts, are divine operations; he that doth theſe muſt be a divine perſon. True; how the Spirit of God is God, and how he proceedeth from the Father and the Son, cannot be comprehended by our reaſon and ſhallow underſtandings. No wonder that the doctrine of the Trinity is inexplicable, ſeeing the nature of God is incomprehenſible; our faith, then, muſt aſſent to what our reaſon cannot comprehend, otherwiſe we can never be Chriſtians. Laſtly, Heaven is here called a poſſeſſion, and a purchaſed poſſeſſion; that is, by the blood of Chriſt. A king's ranſom we account a vaſt ſum; O, what will our ranſom by the blood of the Son of God come to! Grace is purchaſed, and glory is purchaſed, both by the blood of Chriſt. Lord! what will that glory come to! in eternity we ſhall admire it, but never fully comprehend it.

15 Wherefore I alſo, after I heard of your faith
in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints, 16
Ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention
of you in my prayers;

Obſerve here, 1. The ſpecial duties which St. Paul performed on the behalf of theſe Epheſians, he gave thanks for them, he prayed for them, and both without ceaſing; *I ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.* Where *note*, How enlarged St. Paul's heart was in thankfulneſs to God for the ſalvation of others, as well as unwearied in his endeavours in order to their ſalvation. This will be one great exerciſe of our grace in heaven; namely, thankfulneſs to God for the ſalvation of others, as well as our own; and verily, it ought to be a mighty argument to move the heart of any one to work out his own ſalvation, when he ſees another, be it his miniſter, his parent, his maſter, or his neighbour, ſo ſolicitous for it, and taking ſuch care of it. *Note* farther, That the duties of prayer and praiſe, of ſupplication and thankſgiving, ought to accompany one another: We are never to pray for freſh mercies, either for ourſelves or others, without giving thanks to God for former mercies. Beſides, there is no ſuch effectual way of begging, as thankſgiving; he that is ſpiritually thankful for what he has received, engages God to confer upon him the mercies which he wanteth. Add to this, That holy thankfulneſs is an evidence of true grace in us: Need and want will make us beggars, but grace only thankſgivers. *Obſerve*, 2. The occaſion of St. Paul's prayers and praiſes on the Epheſians' behalf; namely, his having heard, (1.) Of their faith in Chriſt: (2.) Of their love to all ſaints. Where, *note*, How he joins faith and love together, as the two moſt eminent graces, and as the two great evangelical commandments, faith in Chriſt, and love to ſaints. But how comes he not to make mention of their love to God? *Anſ.* Becauſe love to God is ſuppoſed and neceſſarily included in our love to ſaints, as ſaints; for he that loves them that are begotten, much more loves him that begetteth; he that loves the child for the father's ſake, loves the father much more for his own ſake. *Note* farther, It is love to ſaints, as ſaints, and to all ſaints without exception, that is the evidence of true faith; poor ſaints as well as rich, weak ſaints as well as gifted. There are froward and fretful ſaints, paſſionate and peeviſh Chriſtians, who have many infirmities, great infirmities cleaving to them, though diſallowed by them; yet theſe profeſſing Chriſtians are loved and to be loved by us, even as a brother loveth all his brothers, for his father's ſake that begat them all, though one be little, another lame, a third crooked, a fourth ſickly. Lord, how far are the profeſſors of this day from the practice of this duty? How doth a little difference in judgment, occaſion a great deal of judging, and raſh cenſuring one another? Chriſt hath received us, why ſhould we reject one another: One heaven will hold us all hereafter, why ſhould not one communion hold us here? Verily, if children quarrel and fall out with one another at a full table, there is an enemy at their backs that will quickly take away the voider: If our hearts be not turned ſuddenly to one another, Almighty God will certainly come and ſmite the earth with a curſe.

17 That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

Theſe words give us a ſhort, but a very comprehenſive account of that affectionate prayer which St. Paul put up to God on the behalf of theſe Epheſians, newly converted to Chriſtianity; in which, *note*, 1. The perſon whom he prays unto, *God*, under a very endearing title, for the ſtrengthening of his faith; he ſtyles him, not as the Old Teſtament ſaints, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; but in the language of the New Teſtament, *The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and *the Father of glory*. *The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as he is man and Mediator, commiſſioned of him, and ſent by him: And *the Father of glory*, as being in himſelf infinitely glorious; to whom all glory is and ought to be aſcribed, and from whom alone it is communicated. *Learn* hence, That as all our prayers and requeſts are and ought to be directed unto God only, ſo in order to our having acceſs to God with aſſurance in prayer, it is our duty to apply to him as a Father, as a Father in Chriſt, as a Father in Chriſt to us, and under this notion and apprehenſion to ſtrengthen our faith for the obtaining of what we aſk in prayer: *May the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, give unto you*, &c. *Note* 2. The great and comprehenſive bleſſing prayed for, namely, divine illumination, and ſpiritual knowledge; that is, a farther increaſe of that wiſdom and ſaving knowledge of divine myſteries, whereof the Spirit of God is the author. *Learn* hence, That as ſpiritual wiſdom, or the ſaving knowledge of divine myſteries, is neceſſary to a Chriſtian; ſo thoſe who have a good meaſure of this grace already received, ought not to ſit down ſatisfied with it, but aſpire after farther meaſures and degrees of it: Spiritual knowledge is as neceſſary for increaſing grace, as it is for working grace in the ſoul. *Note* 3. The title here given to the Holy Spirit of God, he is ſtyled *the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation:* He being the author of all that knowledge in the myſteries of religion which we attain unto, and it being his proper work and office to reveal unto us the will of God for our ſalvation. *Learn* hence, 1. That believers themſelves, who are divinely enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God, have yet need of farther meaſures and fuller degrees of ſpiritual wiſdom. 2. That the way to obtain this fuller meaſure of divine wiſdom and ſpiritual illumination, is to be earneſt with God in prayer for his Holy Spirit. So the apoſtle here.

18 The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened

lightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints.

Our apoſtle proceeds in this verſe, and to the end of the chapter, in a very affectionate and fervent prayer, on the behalf of the Epheſians; namely, that the bleſſed Spirit of God, the author of all divine illumination, would *farther* open the eyes of their underſtanding, *formerly* ſhut up in heatheniſh blindneſs and darkneſs, that ſo they might know, (1.) *What is the hope of his calling*; that is, what high and glorious hopes he had called them unto; for *hope* here, is taken for the object of hope, or the great and good things hoped for; and it is ſaid to be *the hope of their calling*; becauſe, at their converſion from heatheniſm to chriſtianity, they were entitled to, and called to the expectation of theſe great and good things, which were the object of hope. Where *note*, The Epheſians deplorable ſtate before converſion, they were without hope; and the happy exchange of their condition by embracing Chriſtianity, they were begotten to a lively hope of glorious things, which before they were wholly ignorant of, and ſtrangers to. As a ſinner's miſery lies not in what he feels, but what he fears; ſo a Chriſtian's happineſs conſiſts not in what he has in hand, but in what he has in hope: *May* you *know what is the hope of his calling*. The ſecond bleſſing which he prays for on their behalf, is, that he may know *what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints*; that is, ſay ſome, what an exceeding glorious thing it is to be a Chriſtian; or, what an exceeding glory redounds to God, by his people, which are his inheritance, ſay others: But moſt underſtand the words as a deſcription of heaven, which is here called an inheritance, a rich inheritance, a glorious inheritance, in or among the ſaints; that is, the ſaints in heaven, who hold that in poſſeſſion, which the ſaints on earth have in hope and expectation. *Learn* hence, That heaven is the ſaints inheritance. An inheritance is an eſtate that belongs to children, to all ſuch, and none but ſuch. It is an undeſerved poſſeſſion, and it is a ſure and certain poſſeſſion. Here *note*, That Almighty God is ſaid in ſcripture, to make heaven as ſure to his ſaints, by all ſorts of ways, as a man can make an inheritance ſure to his child. It is theirs by promiſe, it is theirs by purchaſe, it is theirs by gift, it is theirs by bequeſt; it is given by will to them, St. Luke xxii. 29. *I appoint* by will *unto you a kingdom*. Can any thing be ſurer, or more ways made ſecure to any perſon, than this inheritance of heaven is to the holy ſervants of God? But farther, the apoſtle calls it *the riches of the glory of his inheritance*; that is, a very rich and exceeding glorious inheritance; ſuch abundant riches and tranſcendent glory are found in it, as overwhelm the mind of man, that here enters upon the cloſe contemplation of it. Heaven will appear to be a glorious inheritance, if we conſider the glory of the place, the glory of the company, the glory of the employment, and the glory that will be then and there put upon our ſouls and bodies. Lord, make us meet for this glorious inheritance of thy ſaints in light!

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; 20 Which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead,—

The next particular which the apoſtle prays for, on behalf of the converted Epheſians, is this, that they might know, or ſenſibly apprehend, the greatneſs of that divine power, which God had exerted, firſt, in their converſion; next, in carrying on that work ſtep by ſtep, in ſpite of all oppoſition; then in giving them the extraordinary gifts of his Spirit, as miracles, tongues, and prophecy; alſo, the ſanctifying graces of the Spirit, as knowledge, faith, hope, love, joy, and patience, to enable them to go on in ſuffering for Chriſt to the uttermoſt; and, laſtly, That they might know the exceeding greatneſs of that power which God will farther exert towards them as believers, in raiſing up their dead bodies to enter upon that glorious inheritance which God by promiſe inſured to them; which power, he aſſures them, would bear ſome likeneſs to, and correſpond with, that omnipotent power which God put forth, in raiſing Chriſt from the dead, and advancing him to the heavenly glory, where he is Lord of all. *Obſerve* here, What an heap of words our apoſtle makes uſe of, to ſet forth the power of God in the ſoul's converſion from the power of ſin, and in the body's reſurrection from the power of the grave; he calls it, "Power, the power of God, the greatneſs of his power, and the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power, and the power which raiſed up Chriſt from the dead." Lord! what a glorious power was that which opened our Redeemer's grave, when he lay in the heart of the earth, with a mighty ſtone rolled upon his ſepulchre! may the ſame Almighty power break aſunder all thoſe bars of unbelief, which keep our ſouls under the power and dominion of ſin now, and at the great day, break in pieces the bars of death and the grave, that it may be altogether impoſſible for us any longer to be holden by them: For towards thy ſaints, and in order to their ſalvation, thou doſt engage the uttermoſt of thine attributes, the uttermoſt of thy love, and the exceeding greatneſs of thy power.

—And ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 Far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come; 22 And hath put all things under his feet,—

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, diſcovers to us Chriſt's exaltation, or that glory and dignity, which, after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, the Father put upon him as God-man, or Mediator, far ſurpaſſing the glory of all created beings. Now, this is repreſented to us by the notion, and under the metaphor, of Chriſt's *ſitting at God's right hand*: This imports, (1.) Fulneſs of reſt and pleaſure, that he quietly, ſecurely, and everlaſtingly poſſeſſes all that happineſs and ſatisfaction in heaven, which God himſelf is poſſeſſed of, and delighted with, far above all the pleaſures and delightful ſatisfactions, which all the glorified ſaints and glorious angels do, or can poſſibly enjoy. (2.) It implies a fulneſs of honour and glory, of dignity and reſpect. When Solomon ſet Bathſheba at his right-hand, it was in token of honour and reſpect to her. Heb. ii. 9. we ſee

Jeſus to be crowned with glory and honour, ſitting down at the right-hand of the Majeſty on high. (3.) Chriſt's ſitting at God's right-hand, imports, his having all rule, dominion and power, put into his hand, to govern all things, both in heaven, and on earth. (4.) It imports and implies ability to execute that power; all thoſe royal glorious endowments, which God filled the human nature of Chriſt with, to make him fit to be the ſupreme Head of his church, and the great and wiſe Governor of the world; all this doth God's ſetting Chriſt at his own right-hand import and imply. In the next verſe (the 21ſt) the apoſtle expreſſes more plainly, what he had ſaid in the former verſe figuratively; God hath exalted Chriſt (ſays he) *far above all principalities and powers, might and dominion, and every name that is named; and hath put all things under his feet.* Where *note,* (1.) The eminency; (2.) The univerſality of our Lord's exaltation. Its eminency appears in the height of his exaltation; he is not only *above,* but *far above,* all principalities and powers, and might and dominion; and in the lowneſs of the ſubjection of all things to him, *having put all things under his feet.* And the univerſality of Chriſt's exaltation appears, by inſtancing, in *principalities and powers, might and dominion:* under which he comprehends all things that are excellent in heaven and earth, angels and men, &c. all creatures whatſoever being placed in a degree of inferiority beneath him, and in the loweſt ſtate of ſubjection under him. Whence we *learn,* 1. That the human nature of Chriſt, and his glorified body, by virtue of that unſpeakable union between the two natures of Chriſt, his Godhead and manhood, is ſo highly dignified and exalted in heaven, that all the glory of heaven and earth, of kings and emperors, of ſun, moon, and ſtars, of the ſouls of juſt men made perfect, yea, and of the ſpotleſs glorious angels themſelves, is nothing to it, nor may be compared with it. Chriſt ſits now in heaven, in our glorified humanity united to his glorious Deity; that body which hung on an ignominious croſs in blood and gore, now ſhines brighter than ten thouſand ſuns in the kingdom of his Father. All this honour and homage, glory and praiſe, dominion and power, is due to our Lord the Redeemer, as the reward of his ſufferings: God hath ſet him at his own right-hand, far above all principalities and powers. 2. That although the mediatorial kingdom of Chriſt ſhall ceaſe at the laſt day, (and be delivered up by Chriſt unto his Father) as to the way wherein he now adminiſters it, by ruling in the midſt of his enemies, whom he ſhall then have finally ſubdued and deſtroyed; yet his natural kingdom, as God, ſhall never ceaſe, but continue *in the world to come,* without end. Thoſe words here, *not only in this world, but in the world to come,* do ſhew the duration of Chriſt's kingly government, and that he is king for ever and ever, that his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion endureth through eternal ages.

— And gave him *to be* the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.

St. Paul having ſpoken of Chriſt's ſovereignty in general, over all created beings, both in heaven and earth, in the foregoing verſes, doth, in the words before us, declare, that as he is an Head of dominion and authority to the whole creation in general, ſo he is an Head of influence to his church in particular. *Note,* Chriſt was given by the Father to be the church's Head: Now, this metaphor of *an head* implies ſeveral things: As, (1.) Eminency above the church, as the head is above the members. (2.) Authority over the church; the head governs all the members. (3.) Oneneſs of nature betwixt him and his church: To ſee an head of one nature, and members of another is monſtrous. (4.) It implies a ſtrict, intimate, and cloſe union betwixt him and his church, as betwixt head and members; which union, as to the members of the viſible church, is a political union; but as to the inviſible members (real believers) the union betwixt Chriſt and them is myſtical, ſpiritual, ſupernatural, and indiſſoluble. Laſtly, This metaphor of an *head,* given here to Chriſt, implies a communication of influences from himſelf unto all his members; an influence of common gifts to the viſible members of his body, and an influence of ſpiritual life and motion to the inviſible members, true believers. Indeed, Chriſt is the head of angels as well as ſaints, but in different reſpects; to angels, he is an Head of dominion and government, an Head of authority and ſuperiority: But to his church, he is an Head of dominion and direction alſo; not only an Head of authority, but an Head of vital influence too: The angels are Chriſt's honourable ſubjects, but ſaints are the myſtical members of his body; the former are as the nobles in his kingdom, that attend upon his perſon, but the latter are the endeared ſpouſe that lies in his boſom. O glorious dignity of the meaneſt believer above the higheſt angel! For as the nobles in a prince's court think it a preferment and honour to wait upon his queen, ſo the glorious angels account it no diſhonour to them, to ſerve and adminiſter to the ſaints, to which honourable office they are appointed, Heb. i. 14. namely, to be *miniſtring,* or ſerviceable *ſpirits, for the good of them that are the heirs of ſalvation.* As the chiefeſt ſervants diſdain not to ſerve the heir, ſo the angels delight to ſerve the ſaints. 2. As the character here given of Chriſt, *the head of his church;* ſo the honourable title put upon the church, ſhe is his body; *The head over all the church, which is his body;* not his natural, but his myſtical body. This implies, (1.) The church's union with Chriſt, and her relation to him. (2.) The church's receiving influences from him, life, motion, and ſtrength; all which the members of the body receive by virtue of union with their Head. (3.) It implies the duty of ſubjection and obedience due from the church to Chriſt, as from the members to the head. (4.) It implies the union and order among the members themſelves; that as all the members of the natural body ſympathize with, and are ſubſervient to each other, ſo ſhould all the members of the church, Chriſt's myſtical body, employ their gifts, and improve their functions and offices for the general good of the whole, and the mutual benefit and advantage of each other, as becomes the body of Chriſt, and members in particular. But eſpecially, the church is ſaid here to be the body of Chriſt, and He her Head; (1.) With reſpect to a communication of influences; Chriſt our head is our fountain of life; our Head is our heart alſo, *out of it are the iſſues of life;* from him we live, by him we move, and our ſpiritual being is derived from him, ſtrengthened and ſuſtained by him; the whole church receives ſpiritual life, motion, and ſtrength from Chriſt, as the body doth from the animating and enlivening ſoul. (2.) Chriſt is called here, *the head of the church, his body*, with reſpect to a complication of intereſt, as well as a communication of influences. As the head and the body, as the huſband and the wife, ſo Chriſt and his church are mutually concerned for each other; they ſtand and fall, live and die together; whatſoever he has, is theirs; they have nothing but through him, they have all things in him, and by him; his God is their God, his Father is their Father; his blood, his bowels, his merit, his ſpirit, his life, his death is theirs; and as all that he has is his church's, ſo all that he did is for his church, called here, *his body*. He obeyed as his church's Head; he died as her Head; he roſe, aſcended, and reigneth as her Head, and hath in his church's name, taken poſſeſſion of heaven, as a purchaſed inheritance for her. How fitly then may Chriſt be called the Head of the church, and the church be called the body of Chriſt? 3. How Chriſt came to be the Head of his church. God the Father gave him this authority, ver. 22. *And gave him to be the Head over all things to the church*; that dignity and ſuperiority, that dominion and power which Chriſt has over his church, is given to him by God the Father; none elſe was fit for it but himſelf; and although it was due unto himſelf, yet it muſt be given him. Now, if Chriſt did not exerciſe any authority over the church till it was given him, what bold preſumption is it, and will it be, in any perſon upon earth to aſſume any power over, or to exerciſe any office in the church, when never called to it, nor authorized by Chriſt to undertake it? We may demand of ſuch confident undertakers, as the Phariſees demanded of the holy and humble Jeſus, *By what authority doſt thou do theſe things? and who gave thee this authority?* 4. The high honour which is put upon the church by being Chriſt's body, by this ſhe becomes Chriſt's fulneſs, *The church which is his body, the fulneſs of him.* Yet *note*, The church is not the fulneſs of Chriſt perſonal, but of Chriſt myſtical; not of his natural, but myſtical body; every ſaint, and every degree of grace in a ſaint, is part of Chriſt's fulneſs. The work of the miniſtry then, is the beſt and nobleſt work in the world, becauſe it is an adding to the fulneſs of Chriſt. God had but one Son in the world, and he made him a miniſter: And if increaſing the number of converts, and adding to perſons' growth in grace, be an addition to Chriſt's fulneſs, then how glorious a ſight will the great day afford, when Chriſt ſhall have all his fulneſs; when there ſhall not be one ſaint wanting, nor one degree of grace in any ſaint wanting; when head and members ſhall be both full, full of grace, full of joy, full of glory; when Chriſt ſhall be fully glorified in his ſaints, and they everlaſtingly filled with the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all. 5. The glorious title here given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as Head of his church: *He filleth all in all*; he filleth all perſons, both angels and men: he filleth all places, heaven with glory, earth with grace, hell with horror; he filleth all ordinances, prayer with prevalency, preaching with efficacy, &c. he filleth all relations, fathers with paternal affections, mothers with maternal bowels; he fills all conditions, riches with thankfulneſs, poverty with contentment.

CHAP. II.

AND you *hath he quickened* who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.

Note here, 1. The deplorable condition which the Epheſians were in by nature, and all perſons with them, before their converſion from ſin to God. It is a ſtate of ſpiritual death; the natural and unregenerate man is a dead man, ſpiritually dead in ſin: Our apoſtle doth not ſay they were in a dying, but in a dead condition; not half dead, but altogether dead. But how ſo? Not dead as to natural actions, they can eat and drink; not as to rational actions, they can reaſon and diſcourſe: not as to civil actions, they can buy and ſell, bargain and trade: Nor is the natural man dead to moral actions; he can pray, read and hear the word, meditate upon it, and diſcourſe of it; if he pleaſes, he can hearken to the voice of God's judgments, conſider and call his own ways to remembrance; but as to ſpiritual acts, to be ſpiritually performed, here he is dead, till quickened by a vital act of the Holy Spirit, whoſe office it is to enlighten blind eyes, and whoſe delight it is to quicken and enliven dead ſouls. But what doth this ſtate of ſpiritual death imply? *Anſ.* It doth ſuppoſe and imply a ſtate of ſeparation from God, inſenſibility of that diſmal ſtate, an impotency and inability to recover ourſelves out of that condition, and our loathſomeneſs and offenſiveneſs to Almighty God, whilſt we continue in it. In ſhort, every unregenerate man is a dead man, in a double ſenſe: He is, (1.) Legally dead, being under the condemnatory ſentence of the law: we call a man under a legal ſentence of death, a dead man. (2.) Spiritually dead, as being deſtitute of a principle of ſpiritual life, a quickening principle to enable the ſoul to perform ſpiritual operations. Thus before regeneration are we dead, in oppoſition to juſtification; and dead in oppoſition to ſanctification alſo; and the fatal inſtrument, by which our ſouls die, is here diſcovered, dead *in* or *by treſpaſſes and ſins*. This is the ſword that kills ſouls, and cuts them off from God: *you hath he quickened*, being *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*. *Note*, 2. The choice and ſingular privilege and favour vouchſafed to the Epheſians, in and under the power of ſpiritual death: They were *quickened*, that is, made ſpiritually alive, by the quickening or life-giving power of the Spirit of God. A regenerate man is a living man; he lives a life of juſtification, which conſiſts in pardon of ſin: A condemned man's pardon is his life; and he lives a life of ſanctification, having received from the holy Spirit a vital principle of grace in all the powers and faculties of the ſoul: juſtification reconciles God to us, ſanctification reconciles us to God; juſtification takes away the legal enmity, ſanctification the natural enmity between God and us. Here *obſerve*, That the perſon who is ſpiritually quickened, is univerſally quickened; there is not a faculty in the ſoul but is ſpiritually dead, and therefore not a faculty but muſt be ſpiritually quickened: As there is an univerſal pollution in every faculty, ſo muſt there be an univerſal renovation; for no ſpiritual duty can be performed without it, no ſpiritual privilege can be enjoyed without it, and we can never be ſaved hereafter, if not ſpiritually quickened here: But if quickened aright, we live a divine life, the life (in ſome meaſure) which God himſelf lives; and this muſt needs be an excellent life and a pleaſant life here on earth, and ſhall be an everlaſting life with Chriſt in heaven! *Whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me, ſhall never die. Note*, 3. The perſon quickening deſcribed, *you hath he quickened*; that is, God the Father, who, chap. i. 17. is ſaid to have given them the *ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of himſelf:* Man, in his natural ſtate conſidered, is unable of himſelf to quicken himſelf; he doth not ſo much as deſire the quickening grace of God, till God gives the grace of deſire. Alas! the underſtanding is naturally ſo blind, the heart ſo hard, and the will ſo ſtout and ſtubborn, that none but a divine power can enlighten the one, and efficaciouſly incline the other: It is a change of ſtone into fleſh; of a dead ſinner into a living ſaint. A change from nature to grace requires as much, or more of divine power, than a change from grace to glory. To ſee a creature naturally filthy, now to delight in purity; to ſee a ſinner, that by nature drinks in iniquity like water, now thirſting after righteouſneſs; to ſee a man that loathed the holy law, and holy ways of God, now longing to walk in them, and to come to an exact conformity to God in them: Theſe acts are above nature, contrary to nature, and conſequently the God of grace is the author of them: *you hath he quickened*.

2 Wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience:

Our apoſtle having in the former verſe deſcribed the Epheſians by their natural ſtate and inward condition, as dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, doth in this verſe ſet forth their miſery in reſpect of their outward converſation; they walked in, and made a conſtant trade of ſin: *Wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world*, &c. *Note*, 1. Their conſtant and continued courſe of life, ſet forth by *walking*, a metaphor frequently uſed in ſcripture, to ſet forth the tenour of a perſon's converſation; *wherein*, that is, in which ſins in time paſt ye walked. 2. The path in which they walked, in ſins and treſpaſſes; this denotes the abundance of ſin that was in them, and committed by them with facility and eaſe, with ſatisfaction and delight: Walking is a motion, a voluntary motion, a progreſſive motion, a pleaſant and delightful motion; it is natural to men whilſt unregenerate, to walk in ſin with ſome ſort of delight and pleaſure; but, alas! it is the pleaſure of the beaſt, and not of the man, a ſenſual, and not a rational ſatisfaction. 3. The guides which they are ſaid here to follow, the world and Satan. (1.) The world; that is, the corrupt courſe and ſinful cuſtoms of the men of the world according to the time and place in which they live; for though the world alters in the courſe and faſhion of it, from time to time, yet it is, and ever will be the world ſtill; and the unregenerate part of mankind will always walk according to the courſe of this world. The ſecond guide which the Epheſians followed, was Satan, ſtyled here a *prince*; in regard of that mighty power which he has in and over the men of the world; and *the prince of the power of the air*, becauſe he exerciſes his power (by God's permiſſion, in the lower regions of the air: All the elements and meteors ſtoop to his direction; when God gives him leave, he can command the fire, the water, the winds, the thunders; all theſe powers that are in the air he can command, therefore he is called their *prince*; yet here is matter of comfort to us, Satan is the prince of the air only: If ſo, when the air ſhall ceaſe, his kingdom ſhall ceaſe; when the world is ended, his dominion and power is ended. Again, there is farther comfort in this, Satan is prince of the air, but Chriſt is Prince of heaven and earth, and the air too; both our prayers whilſt we live, and our ſouls when we die, paſs through the air, but Satan can neither intercept the one, nor ſtop the other, in their paſſage thither; Chriſt, when he aſcended into heaven, went through the air, this kingdom of devils, and ſpoiled their principalities and powers; he entered heaven in the ſight of them all, and led them all captives in triumph at his chariot, ſo that they ſhall never hurt the ſouls of his people, nor ever keep them from heaven. Again, the devil is here deſcribed by the influence he has upon the minds of ſinners, *he works in the children of diſobedience*. Satan's way of working in and upon obſtinate and impenitent ſinners, is very powerful and efficacious. Hence it is here ſaid, (1.) That they are led by Satan, they *walk according to the prince of the power of the air*; that is, according to his guidance, according to his mind and will: He has them at his beck: He ſays to one ſinner, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh. (2.) They are excited and aſſiſted by Satan, *he works in them*, and ſuggeſts evil thoughts to them: He filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt; he put a lie firſt into their hearts, and then into their mouths. Now from hence we may infer, that the Holy Spirit of God doth alſo inwardly work in pious perſons, enabling them to will and to do, according to his own good pleaſure: For it is unreaſonable to conceive, that the evil ſpirit ſhould have more power over the children of diſobedience, in whom he dwells, than the good Spirit has in thoſe pious perſons, in whoſe hearts he is ſaid to dwell: Surely the Spirit of God doth more to the ſaving of ſouls, than the devil can do to the damning of them.

3 Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, is ſuppoſed to ſet forth the condition of the Jews by nature, as he had done before of the Gentiles; and that he declares, that even they had their converſation amongſt the number of diſobedient perſons, and were no leſs obſtinately rebellious againſt God, than the diſobedient Gentiles, following the motions of their corrupt luſts and vile affections: Nay, he affirms roundly, concerning himſelf and all the Jews, without exception, that as their way and courſe, whilſt unregenerate, they did whatſoever their corrupt minds willed, liked, and inclined to; and as to their ſtate, *were by nature the children* *of wrath, as much as others:* yea, even as much as the deſpiſed Gentiles were. Here *note*, 1. The caſe of all men, Jews and Gentiles, alike deſcribed, children of wrath: that is, our eſtate and courſe is ſuch by nature as deſerves deſtruction, as tends to, and will end in deſtruction, without the renewing grace of God. 2. The riſe of this caſe, expreſſed by *nature*, which implies, (1.) The term from which this commences, namely, from the firſt receiving of our beings and natures from our immediate parents, and together with the depravation of our natures, we received an obnoxiouſneſs to the wrath and curſe of God. (2.) It implies the ground for which this wrath doth impend and hang over us, namely, for that depravity of nature, which ſince the fall is found with us. *Learn* hence, 1. That original corruption is univerſal to all mankind, both Jew and Gentile. 2. That this original corruption leads to, and will lodge under eternal wrath, every perſon in whom regeneration and tranſplantation into Chriſt are not found.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 ¶ Even when we were dead in ſins hath quickened us together with Chriſt, (by grace ye are ſaved;)

St. Paul having ſet forth that miſerable ſtate, which both Jews and Gentiles were in by nature, namely, *dead in ſins*, and *children of wrath:* he doth next ſet forth their deliverance from that woeful eſtate, by the rich mercy and free grace of God: *God, who is rich in mercy*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The author of our deliverance, *God*, and the moving or impulſive cauſe of it, *rich mercy* and *great love*. Where *obſerve*, That God hath done more for us, infinitely more than he did for the angels: He ſhewed love to them, but mercy to us; they are veſſels of honour, but we are veſſels of mercy; the object of mercy, is a creature in diſtreſs and miſery. *Note*, farther, That all the attributes in God are ſubjected to his love; this is the great prevailing attribute which ſways all the reſt; which way love goes, all attributes go; mercy, power, juſtice, and wiſdom, they all work in ſubordination to love, they are all at love's beck, and love ſets them all on work for the good and benefit of the object loved. *Note*, 3. That the love which God bears to the children of men, is a *great love*; and the mercy which was ſet on work by it, is *rich mercy*; his love ſo great, that it can never be expreſſed; his mercy ſo rich, that it can never be conceived; rich mercy, is abundant mercy, inconceivable mercy, inexhauſtable mercy, ſure mercy. 4. The bleſſed effects and fruits of this great love and rich mercy in God towards the Epheſians, in quickening them when dead, in ſaving them when loſt, in doing all things for them when they had undone themſelves; *God who is rich in mercy—even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt. Learn* hence, That poor loſt ſinners do ſtand in need of all the riches of mercy that are in God, in order to their regeneration and ſalvation; if ever we be ſaved, it is the riches of mercy that muſt ſave us. *Note*, 5. How the apoſtle aſcribes the whole work of their ſalvation to God's free grace, in oppoſition to any merit or worth in the perſons to be ſaved; *by grace ye are ſaved. Learn* hence, That the dependency our ſalvation has in the whole, and in all the parts of it, upon the free grace of God, is the great thing which St. Paul delighted to diſcover and make known to us here.

6 And hath raiſed *us* up together, and made *us* ſit together in heavenly *places* in Chriſt Jeſus:

The apoſtle here inſtances in two branches more of that ſalvation, which he had in the foregoing verſe affirmed to be of grace, namely, that of our reſurrection and glorification, both which are yet to come, and yet they are ſpoken of as already paſt; when the Father raiſed and glorified Chriſt, all believers were raiſed and glorified in him; for in his reſurrection and glorification, he did ſuſtain the quality of a public perſon, repreſenting his whole church as their head and huſband; and accordingly, believers are and may be ſaid to be raiſed already, and glorified already, not in their own perſons, but in Chriſt their Head; the apoſtle ſays, *God* has *raiſed us up, and* has *made us ſit together*; not he *ſhall* raiſe us, and *will* make us ſit; to denote the dependency which our reſurrection and glorification has upon Chriſt's, as the effects depend upon the cauſe, and alſo the undoubted certainty that they ſhall come to paſs; Chriſt's reſurrection and glorification being a pledge of ours. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt roſe from the dead, and aſcended up into heaven, not as a private perſon, but as the common head and parent, root and repreſentative of his church and people; ſo that what he has done, they may be ſaid to have done; they roſe in him, and are ſet down in heaven *in* him; and bleſſed be God for the well-grounded hopes, that as we ſit now together in Chriſt, ſo ere long we ſhall for ever ſit together with Chriſt. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is the cauſe of our reſurrection and glorification; he is the efficient cauſe, the meritorious cauſe, and exemplary cauſe of our reſurrection and glorification. 3. From the phraſe here uſed of *ſitting*, and *of ſitting together in Chriſt*; that believers ſhall certainly partake of the ſame kingly ſtate and dignity, of the ſame honour and glory, of the ſame delight and pleaſure, of the ſame reſt and tranquility, of the ſame ſafety and ſecurity with Chriſt in heaven.

7 That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus.

Theſe words are expreſſive of the final cauſe or ſpecial end of that ſalvation which God propounded in his gracious workings upon the hearts of theſe Epheſians, namely, that in all preſent and ſucceeding ages, to the end of the world, he might give a convincing proof and example of *the exceeding riches of his grace*, for the encouragement of the greateſt ſinners to hope for mercy in and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That the inſtances and examples of God's mercy, grace, and goodneſs, love and kindneſs towards loſt ſinners, in one age, are and ought to be an encouragement to future generations to hope in the ſame mercy, to draw nigh to the ſame fountain of rich grace, for pardon of ſin, and ſalvation by Chriſt. O! when we conſider that others are as unworthy as ourſelves (theſe Epheſians, for inſtance) have been admitted to the participation of ſuch divine favours, Lord, what encouragement is it to us, and to others, to venture our ſalvation upon the ſame grace! Verily, the primitive Chriſtians were intended by God as patterns of grace to ſucceeding Chriſtians; nay, God did not only deſign them as patterns, but as pledges, that he would go on as he had begun, in after-ages to magnify the riches of his grace, in the converſion of the vileſt and worſt of ſinners.

8 For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves: *it is* the gift of God: 9 Not of works, leaſt any man ſhould boaſt.

In theſe words our apoſtle informs the Epheſians, and in them all ſucceeding Chriſtians, that their complete ſalvation, from the firſt to the laſt, from the loweſt to the higheſt ſtep, depends upon God's free favour and grace in Chriſt, and not upon any merit or deſert in ourſelves; works having no meritorious or cauſal influence upon our ſalvation (for they are not cauſes, but effects of that grace by which we are ſaved) to the intent that all boaſting may be excluded, and that all the ſaints glorying may be in God, and not in themſelves. *Note* here, 1. That believers are ſaved already, in ſome ſenſe; not only becauſe they have ſalvation begun in their new birth here, but they have already a right and title to, yea, a pledge and an earneſt of complete ſalvation: Believers are ſaved here. 2. That the believer's ſalvation is through faith in Jeſus Chriſt. 3. That faith by and through which they are ſaid to be ſaved, is not of themſelves, it is the *gift of God*; faith is the gift of God as well as Jeſus Chriſt, and the one as neceſſary as the other; for as the only way to heaven is by Chriſt, ſo the only way to Chriſt is by faith; as ſin has put a vanity into the creature, ſo unbelief puts a vanity in Chriſt, that he ſhould profit us nothing: Wreſtle we then with God in prayer for a believing heart.

10 ¶ For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, aſſerted the whole of our ſalvation to be of grace, and not of works, leſt by magnifying of grace he ſhould ſeem wholly to ſet aſide good works, and the neceſſity of a holy life; he declares in this verſe, that Chriſtians are ordained to them, created and prepared for them, and conſequently they are effects flowing from grace, though not cauſes producing grace: *We are his workmanſhip:* (1.) In our natural capacity, as men: (2.) In our civil capacity, as ſuch or ſuch men, high or low, rich or poor: (3.) In our ſpiritual capacity, as ſaints; this is intended here: Believers are God's workmanſhip, as ſuch, by ſupernatural renovation and ſpiritual regeneration; they are not only once made, as other perſons, but they are new made, as ſaints; not by receiving new faculties, but new qualities; for grace is not a ſubſtantial, but a qualitative change. Lord, as we are all thy workmanſhip by natural creation, let us be ſo by gracious renovation likewiſe! *Created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* *Obſerve* here, 1. The manner of this workmanſhip, *created*; this denotes two things: (1.) That in their new making, they were intended to good works; this was God's mind and meaning, in fore-ordaining that they *ſhould walk in them:* (2.) That in their new making they were fitted and prepared for good works, therefore did they receive a new nature from God, new principles, new affections, new diſpoſitions and inclinations, on purpoſe to fit them for an holy life, fruitful in good works. Here *note*, That as good works are antecedently neceſſary to ſalvation, ſo renewing grace is abſolutely neceſſary to good works; therefore, before there can be a good work, there muſt be a good workman, and that good workman muſt be God's workmanſhip, created a-new through the power of God. *Obſerve*, 2. The meritorious cauſe of this ſpiritual workmanſhip, and that is Chriſt Jeſus: *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, through the intervening mediation of Chriſt Jeſus. The life which we life in this new creation ſtate, namely, a life of holineſs, it is purchaſed by his death, produced by his Spirit; all ſpiritual life comes from God, through Chriſt as a Mediator; he is a quickening Head and life-giving Spirit; 1 John iv. 9. *God ſent his Son, that we might live by him*; Chriſt is firſt our Ranſom, and then the fountain of life unto our ſouls, *created in Chriſt Jeſus*. 3. The final cauſe of this divine workmanſhip, and that is, *to good works:* All thoſe that are new creatures are created unto good works; ſo that a holy life is the neceſſary fruit of their new creation: New creatures are not to live idly, much leſs to live wickedly, but to make conſcience of every duty, to bring forth fruit of piety towards God, of righteouſneſs towards our neighbour, of love and univerſal charity towards all mankind; *which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*; that is, God hath before prepared theſe works for us, and alſo prepared us for them; he has prepared theſe works for us, firſt by his decree and purpoſe; he that ordained the end, ſalvation, hath appointed good works as the means thereto, by his precept and command: Mic. vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good*, &c. And as God hath prepared theſe works for us, ſo he hath prepared us for them by his holy Spirit, making our hearts fit for our work, by enlightening our minds, and inclining our wills. *Learn* hence, That new creatures are both ordained and obliged to, and alſo fitted and prepared for good works; God will have his children diſtinguiſhed from others by the good they do, as well as the devil's children are characterized by the miſchief which they do. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The conſtancy of the Chriſtian's duty declared, with reference to good works; he is *to walk in them*. Now walking denotes and implies both a way and action. *Walking*, (1.) It implies a way; and intimates plainly to us, that good works are the way and means to obtain ſalvation: We can never come at heaven as the end, but by walking in the path of good works as the way and means. (2.) An action; *walking* denotes ſpontaneity in the principle, progreſs and perſeverance in the motion; he that walks, goes forward, gets ground, gives not over till he comes to his journey's end. A good man is as diligent and zealous, as conſtant and perſevering in good works, as if he were to be ſaved for them and by them; and at the ſame time relies by faith on the merits of the Mediator for his acceptance with God, renouncing all confidence in his own good works; he knows they cannot juſtify themſelves, much leſs can they juſtify him, who has a better righteouſneſs than that of his beſt obedience, to denominate him righteous in the ſight of God. Thus are we *God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus*, &c.

11 Wherefore remember that ye *being* in times paſſed Gentiles in the fleſh, who are called Uncircumciſion by that which is called the Circumciſion in the fleſh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Our apoſtle doth two things in theſe two verſes: *Obſerve* 1. He calls upon the Epheſians to remember their former miſerable condition before converſion, when they were in their heathen and unregenerate ſtate, when they were Gentiles, and reproached by the Jews for being uncircumciſed, and looked upon by the Jews as dogs; he calls upon them here, to remember their obligations to God, for bringing them out of this miſerable ſtate and deplorable condition: *Remember that in times paſt ye were Gentiles in the fleſh. Learn* hence, That believers, remembering and calling to mind the ſin they were guilty of, and the miſery they were expoſed to, in their natural and unregenerate ſtate, may many ways be of ſingular uſe and advantage to them, and be ſpiritually improved by them; namely, thus, (1.) To excite us to magnify the greatneſs of God's love, and to admire the freeneſs and riches of his grace: This we ſhall certainly do, when we remember that where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound. (2.) To inflame our love to Jeſus Chriſt: Mary loved much, when ſhe remembered that much was forgiven her. (3.) To increaſe our godly ſorrow for ſin; *then ſhall they be confounded* when they remember *that I am pacified towards them for all their abominations*, Ezek. xvi. 63. (4.) To quicken us up to greater zeal and induſtry for God: It was the remembrance of what Paul was before converſion, that fired him with holy zeal, and carried him forth with ſuch vigour and induſtry after his converſion, that he laboured more abundantly than all the apoſtles. (5.) The remembrance how bad we were ourſelves before converſion, will be a ſpecial mean to keep up our hearts, in hopes of, in prayers for, and endeavours after the converſion of others, though very bad at preſent: *What* they are, *that* thou once wert; and *what* thou art, *that* they may alſo be. *Obſerve*, 2. That as St. Paul does put the Epheſians in mind of their former miſerable condition, in their heatheniſh and unregenerate ſtate; ſo he does particularize the ſame, and branch it forth into its diſtinct parts and members. When they were unconverted Gentiles, (1.) *They were without Chriſt*; that is, without the knowledge of Chriſt, without any relation to him, or intereſt in him, without any union and communion with him, without any communications of life and light, of grace and holineſs, of joy and comfort, of pardon and protection, received from him: They did not diſcern any excellency, nor taſte any ſweetneſs in Chriſt; and conſequently had no love to him, no longings after him, no delight or ſatisfaction in him. Ah, miſerable condition of a Chriſtleſs ſoul! if thou art without Chriſt, thou art without the ſpirit and grace of Chriſt to enlighten thee, to quicken thee, to ſanctify and ſave thee. (2.) They *were aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael*; that is, they were no members of Chriſt's church, either viſible or inviſible; they did not ſo much as profeſs themſelves to be a people that ſtood in any relation to God; they were unchurched Gentiles; for in Jewry only *was God known*, and his name great in Iſrael, Pſal. lxxvi. 1. Verily, whatever the world thinks of it, it is a very great favour from God, to be born within the pale of the viſible church, and to have communion with her; for thereby we partake of many excellent privileges, namely, the word and ſacraments, the communion of ſaints, together with the offers of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him. (3.) *They were ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe*; that is, to the covenant of grace, firſt made with Adam after the fall, then with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, afterwards with Iſrael upon mount Sinai; for which reaſon it is here by the apoſtle called *covenants*, in the plural number, though it was always one and the ſame covenant in ſubſtance; and its being called the *covenants of promiſe*, ſeems to point at the promiſe made to Adam, Gen. iii. 15. that firſt grand original promiſe, of which promiſe all the following promiſes were but branches, or more full explanations. Now the Epheſians are here ſaid to be ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe; becauſe, as Gentiles, this covenant was never revealed to them, nor any offer of it made by the miniſtry of the word, and conſequently they could have no actual intereſt in the bleſſings and privileges of it. This intimates to us, that for men to live and die without an offer of the covenant of grace made unto them, is a woeful, ſad and dangerous condition, becauſe their ſalvation is rendered in an ordinary way impoſſible, foraſmuch as the terms upon which ſalvation may be had, are concealed from them. (4.) They were *without hope*; that is, they were without the grace of hope, and without the means of hope; they were without hopes of redemption, without hopes of pardon and reconciliation, and conſequently without any well-grounded hope of eternal life and ſalvation: Such as are Chriſtleſs, muſt be hopeleſs; ſuch as are without faith, muſt needs be without hope; and ſuch as are without the promiſe, muſt neceſſarily be without faith; for the promiſe is the ground of faith, and faith is the ground of hope. *Learn*, That for a perſon to be without a well-grounded hope of future happineſs is a very deplorable caſe and condition; but all ſuch as are without the pale of the Chriſtian church, without the bond of the covenant of grace, without the offer of a Saviour in the goſpel, they muſt be without hope, even in this life, and ſo are of all men moſt miſerable. (5.) They were *without God in the world*; that is, without the knowledge of the true God, without worſhipping of him as God, without any affiance or truſt in him, without performing any obedience to him: Not that the Epheſians, and other heathens, lived without all ſenſe of a deity, for they worſhipped falſe gods abundantly; but they lived without any ſenſe or ſenſible apprehenſion of the majeſty and holineſs of the true God: Now this is to live without God in the world; and verily, ſuch a life is worſe than death. The apoſtle calls all the Gentiles, not only the barbarous and ſavage, but the beſt poliſhed and civilized nations, *atheiſts*, becauſe they wanted the right knowledge of God by and through a Mediator; there is no knowing God acceptably, except we know him in Chriſt, and approach unto him by Chriſt. In this affecting manner doth our apoſtle ſet before the Epheſians their dark and diſmal ſtate whilſt Gentiles, and before brought into the Chriſtian church, by preaching the goſpel of Chriſt unto them; "they were without Chriſt, aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world." God grant that every unregenerate ſinner may think of it, till his heart and ſoul are affected with it!

13 But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye, who ſometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.

The apoſtle having ſet before the Epheſians the black and dark part of their lives, before their converſion to Chriſtianity, in the foregoing verſe; comes here in this to acquaint them with the bleſſed change which was made in their ſtate, and by whom. Now, ſays he, in or by Chriſt Jeſus, *ye, who were ſometimes afar off*, namely, from Chriſt, his church, his covenant, from ſaving hope, and from God himſelf, are made as nigh as the Jews, and have as much right to expect the aforeſaid benefits as they, the blood of Chriſt having purchaſed them for you, and ſealed them to you: *Ye, that were before afar off, are now made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.* Where *note*, That perſons who are moſt remote, and at the fartheſt diſtance from God, are ſometimes unexpectedly brought home unto him; *Ye, who were afar off, are now made nigh.* *Note*, 2. That it is owing to the blood of Chriſt, to his death and ſufferings, that any ſoul is brought into a ſtate of nearneſs unto God, and finds acceptance with him: *Ye are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.*

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 (Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments, *contained* in ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one new man, *ſo* making peace;

He is our peace; that is, (1.) He is the Mediator of our peace, the great peace-maker betwixt God and man. (2.) *He is our peace*; that is, the purchaſer of our peace. (3.) *He is our peace*; that is, the eſtabliſher of our peace. All which is to be underſtood, not only of peace betwixt God and man, but alſo betwixt man and man: *who hath made both one*; that is, both Jews and Gentiles one church. Here *note*, That there was a very great and deep-rooted enmity betwixt Jews and Gentiles, until Chriſt purchaſed the peace and reconciliation. The Jews derided, ſcorned, and hated the Gentiles, as unclean, compared them to dogs and ſwine: The Gentiles, they reproached the Jews for circumciſing their fleſh, eſteemed them, of all nations, the worſt; and would hold their noiſe at the Jews when they met them, and cry, *O fœtentes Judæi!* O ye ſtinking Jews! and turn away their eyes from them. *Learn*, from hence then, That the uniting of both Jew and Gentile into one church, was one bleſſed effect and ſweet fruit of the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood; Chriſt's offering of himſelf was intended as a ſacrifice for enmities between man and man, as well as for enmities between God and man; *He is our peace, who hath made both one.* *Obſerve* next, What Chriſt hath done in order to his making peace between Jew and Gentile; (1.) He has aboliſhed the ceremonial law, called here a *partition-wall* between the Jews and the Gentiles; in alluſion, no doubt, to that wall in Solomon's temple, which ſeparated the court of the Jews from that of the Gentiles, that they could neither come at, nor look at one another. So that this partition-wall being ſaid to be broken down, intimates to us, that Jew and Gentile, who before had two manner of religions, the one in and under a covenant with God, the other afar off, and without God, yet now by Chriſt are both adopted into the ſame church, partakers of the ſame covenants, incorporated into the ſame faith, intitled to the ſame glory. (2.) Chriſt has aboliſhed the enmity and perpetual ſtrife which was occaſioned between Jew and Gentile, upon the account of the obſervation of the ceremonial law, and the ordinances thereunto belonging; *He hath aboliſhed the enmity*; that is, the ceremonial law, which made the enmity between them. The ceremonial law was the cauſe and continuer of that enmity which was betwixt Jew and Gentile: This is called, *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; becauſe Almighty God did actually ſeparate the Jews from all the world, by giving them ordinances and commandments, judicial and ceremonial laws, containing many viſible and external obſervances, which forbade them to communicate with the Gentile world. Now Chriſt being come in the fleſh, all thoſe obſervances ceaſed, and thoſe legal ordinances vaniſhed away: All nations become bleſſed in Chriſt, and Jews and Gentiles become one church, both alike the people of God, both admitted equally into covenant, and both alike bleſſed. Here *note*, That the moral law, ſummarily compriſed and comprehended in the *ten commandments*, was no part of the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile; nor the death of Chriſt abrogate this law, or is it at all aboliſhed; but it was the law of *ceremonies* only, which the ſufferings and death of Chriſt put an end unto; for when he died, they all vaniſhed; as the ſhadow diſappears when the ſubſtance is come.

16 And that they might reconcile both unto God one body.) 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father.

Obſerve, 1. Our apoſtle had declared in the foregoing verſes, that one end of Chriſt's death was, to make peace between Jew and Gentile; here he aſſures us, a ſecond end was, to make peace between God and man, that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile, thus united, to an offended God. This he did by the ſacrifice of himſelf upon the croſs, whereby he did deſtroy that enmity which was betwixt God and man, by undergoing the puniſhment of ſin, the cauſe of that enmity. *Learn* hence, That in order to our reconciliation with God and being at peace with him, a price was paid by Chriſt upon the croſs, to ſatisfy divine juſtice and atone divine diſpleaſure. *Obſerve* next, That Chriſt having purchaſed peace, he came and preached peace to both Jews and Gentiles : to the Gentiles, ſaid here to be *afar off*, and to the Jews, that *were nigh :* But how did Chriſt preach to the Gentiles? Where do we read that he ever did ſo ? *Anſ.* Though he did not in his own perſon preach peace to the Gentiles, yet he gave commiſſion to the apoſtles to preach to them, Matt. xxviii. and they and their ſucceſſors, purſuant to ſuch commiſſion, did preach peace unto them, even to them that were *afar off, and them that were nigh*. *Learn* hence, That when the miniſters of Chriſt do come in his name, and by a commiſſion received from him, to preach peace, and offer terms of reconciliation unto loſt ſinners, it is all one as if Chriſt himſelf did come and preach; he expects the ſame readineſs from them in receiving the meſſage, as if it were delivered to them from his own mouth ; and will treat the deſpiſers of his miniſters, and the contemners of their meſſage, as if the affront were offered immediately to his own perſon. *Obſerve*, 3. The apoſtle's argument to prove that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were effectually called, by the preaching of the goſpel, to partake of peace and reconciliation with God; becauſe they had both equal acceſs and liberty to approach unto God in all holy duties, as unto a father, by the manuduction of the Spirit: *through him*, that is, through Jeſus Chriſt, *we*, both Jews and Gentiles, *have acceſs*, that is, liberty of approach, *by one* and the ſame *Spirit, unto the Father*. *Learn* hence, That through Jeſus Chriſt, all believers, of what denomination ſoever, have acceſs to God by the Spirit of grace. *Queſt.* What doth this *acceſs to the Father* denote? *Anſ.* It ſuppoſes a preceding diſtance between God and us, both a natural and a moral diſtance, as creatures, and as ſinners: It denotes a propinquity and nearneſs unto God, in oppoſition to this diſtance, and that our approach to God is free and voluntary, friendly and complacential, peculiar and privilegious, fruitful and advantageous. *Queſt.* 2. In what reſpects have believers acceſs to God as to a Father? *Anſ.* In this life they have acceſs to the Father's heart and love, to the Father's ear and audience, to the Father's care and protection: to his providing care, to his guiding and counſelling care, to his comforting and ſupporting care, but eſpecially to his ſanctifying care. *Queſt.* 3. Through whom have we this acceſs to God? *Anſ.* Through Jeſus Chriſt, through his mediation and manuduction, we have acceſs to God's heart, to God's ear, to his fatherly care on earth, and to his gracious preſence in heaven. *Queſt.* 4. What influence gives the holy Spirit unto this *acceſs unto the Father?* *Anſ.* It is by his influence, that they are at firſt brought home to the Father; he prepares them for this acceſs unto the Father; he ſtirs up holy affections, and enkindles holy deſires in them after God, and helps them to make improvement, an holy, fruitful, and advantageous improvement of all their acceſſes unto God.

19 Now therefore, ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-*ſtone*; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye alſo are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Our apoſtle began this chapter, with ſetting before the Epheſians the horror and dread of their heatheniſh ſtate before converted to Chriſtianity, here he cloſes the chapter with an account of that glorious and bleſſed ſtate which the Chriſtian religion, embraced by them, had tranſlated them into: *Now, ye are no more ſtrangers, but fellow-citizens*, &c. Where *obſerve*, 1. Their preſent happy condition is ſet forth, both negatively and poſitively: negatively, by ſhewing what they were not, neither *ſtrangers* nor *foreigners*, but freemen and *fellow-citizens*, &c. Where it muſt be remembered, that all the nations of the world, except the Jews, were called ſtrangers to the God of Iſrael, but the Jews were called *propinqui*, his neighbours, or near-ones : but, ſays the apoſtle, there is now no ſuch difference, for the believing Gentiles are equally admitted with the believing Jews, to the privileges of the new Jeruſalem, and are fellow-citizens with one another ; they are no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, but freemen. 2. The apoſtle ſets forth their happy condition poſitively, under a threefold ſimilitude; namely, that of a city, that of an houſhold or family, and that of an edifice or building. *Note*, 1. Our apoſtle compares the Chriſtian church (of which the Epheſians now were members) to a city; and ſhews, that themſelves, as believing Gentiles, had a right to all the privileges and immunities of that city, as well as the Jews, who accounted themſelves the only free members of it: *Ye are fellow-citizens with the ſaints:* that is, the patriarchs and prophets, and all other members of the church of the Jews; ye are free denizens, burgeſſes, and enfranchiſed citizens, with the reſt of that holy ſociety, ye are all members of the holy catholic church. 2. Our apoſtle compares the Chriſtian church to an houſhold or family : *Ye are fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God*. Now, this metaphor intimates a greater degree of nearneſs to, and communion with the church, than what the former metaphor did imply, there being a ſtraiter tie of familiarity and friendſhip between the members of a family, than between the members of a city. Whence we *learn*, That the church of Chriſt under the goſpel, is God's great houſhold or family, in a peculiar manner admitted to an intimate communion with him, in a ſpecial way provided and cared for by him ; and every ſincere Chriſtian becomes a member of this bleſſed family, and enjoys all the privileges thereof: *Ye are fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God*. 3. St. Paul proceeds yet farther, and compares the church of Chriſt to an edifice, or ſtately building: *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets*, &c. Now, this ſimilitude holds forth unto us, ſtill a farther degree of nearneſs to, and communion with, God and his church, than the former: What can be more cloſely united, and more ſtrictly joined together, than ſtones in a building? And our apoſtle calling the church an holy temple, ſeems to allude to Solomon's temple, which was a type of the Chriſtian church, as the tabernacle was of the Jewiſh church; the tabernacle was ambulatory and changeable, made of decaying and corruptible materials, and ſo fitly typified the Jewiſh diſpenſation, which was temporary and tranſient: the temple was made of durable and rich materials, and thereby a proper type of the Chriſtian church, which is called *a kingdom that cannot be ſhaken.* But, *obſerve*, further, How our apoſtle doth deſcribe this ſtately edifice, this ſpiritual building, the Chriſtian church, theſe ſeveral ways: (1.) By its foundation which it ſtands upon, namely, the apoſtles and prophets; that is, upon the doctrine of the prophets and apoſtles, not upon their perſons: Chriſt himſelf being the perſonal foundation and chief corner-ſtone. *Learn*, That though Chriſt himſelf be the builder of, and the chief corner-ſtone in his church, yet he employs his miniſters now, as he did the prophets and apoſtles of old, to lay the foundation, and carry on the ſuperſtructure, and no one apoſtle had a privilege in this above another; and therefore for the Pope, as St. Peter's ſucceſſor, to ſtyle himſelf the "Foundation of the Catholic church," is an impudent preſumption; for no more is here ſaid of Peter, than is ſaid of all the apoſtles and prophets. (2.) The church, as a ſpiritual building or temple, is here deſcribed by the unity and compactneſs of its parts, *in whom all the building fitly framed together:* that is, all the members of the church, are by faith firmly joined to Chriſt as the foundation, and to one another by love, and their unity is both their ſtrength and their beauty. (3.) This building is deſcribed by its growth and perpetual increaſe, *it groweth unto an holy temple.* The church groweth two ways, by an addition of new and particular converts, and by an addition of new graces in every particular convert: Where *remark*, How this ſpiritual edifice, the church of Chriſt, differs from all other buildings; both the whole of it, and all the individual parts of it, are endued with life, a life flowing from Chriſt the foundation, a life far from a ſtate of perfection, *in whom all the building groweth*, all a Chriſtian's life and ſpiritual growth flow from his union and communion with Chriſt; *in him all the building groweth.* (4.) This building, namely, the Chriſtian church, conſiſting both of Jews and Gentiles, is here deſcribed by the end and deſign of Chriſt in erecting this growing edifice; namely, to be an *holy temple* unto God, wherein now, (as in the material temple of old) he may manifeſt his gracious preſence, and be perpetually worſhipped, glorified, and ſerved: The whole church, or collective body of believers jointly, aud each believer ſeverally and apart, are a ſpiritual and holy temple unto the Lord, in and by whom all ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe are offered up, and all the duties of new and ſincere obedience acceptably performed.

CHAP. III.

FOR this cauſe, I Paul the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for you Gentiles;

For this cauſe, that was, for preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles in general; and in particular, for aſſerting, that the privileges of juſtification and ſalvation by Chriſt, belonged equally to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, though they were not circumciſed; for this cauſe I was perſecuted and impriſoned by the Jews. Where *note*, The apoſtle ſtyles himſelf Chriſt's priſoner, *I Paul, the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt:* He was at once Chriſt's priſoner, the Jews priſoner, the Romans priſoner, the Gentiles priſoner: Chriſt's priſoner, as ſuffering for his goſpel; the Jews priſoner, as ſuffering by their accuſation; the Romans priſoner, as ſuffering by their ſentence; the Gentiles priſoner, as ſuffering for his labours in order to their ſalvation. Lord, what a title of honour is here put upon the apoſtle! *I Paul, the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*: his impriſonment for Chriſt was verily a greater honour, and matter of higher glorying, than his rapture into the third heavens.

2 If ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery, (as I wrote afore in few words;

Obſerve here, 1. The title given to the goſpel; it is ſtyled *the grace of God:* partly, becauſe the glad-tidings which the goſpel brings, are the effect and product of God's grace and favour, and partly becauſe the goſpel is the inſtrument and means of working grace in the ſouls of perſons. 2. The title given to St. Paul's apoſtleſhip, he ſtyles it *the diſpenſation of the grace of God:* becauſe God had commiſſioned him to declare and diſpenſe the goſpel of grace to them; Chriſt's miniſters are the diſpenſers of his mind to the children of men. 3. The title here given to the calling of the Gentiles; he ſtyles it *a myſtery.* The calling of the Gentiles to ſalvation by faith in Chriſt, without the works of the law, was a myſtery hid from ages. 4. The way and manner how St. Paul came by the knowledge of this myſtery; it was by divine revelation from heaven: ver. 3. *How that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery.* The myſtery of man's redemption in general, and of the calling of the Gentiles in particular, to the participation of that grace, was made known by divine revelation to the apoſtles, by God himſelf. The truth is, the redemption of a loſt world, by the incarnation, death, and paſſion of the Son of God, is ſo ſtupendous aud ſurpriſing, ſo wonderful and amazing, that the very thoughts of it had been the higheſt blaſphemy, if God himſelf had not revealed it.

4 Whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel:

Our apoſtle here proceeds in ſetting forth this great myſtery of man's redemption in general, and the calling of the Gentiles in particular; he ſtyles it *a myſtery.* (1.) Now, a myſtery is a purpoſe and decree of God, unknown to, and unſearchable by, man, unleſs firſt by revelation diſcovered and made known by God himſelf; ſuch a myſtery was the whole goſpel in general, and this article concerning the calling of the Gentiles in particular. (2.) St. Paul ſtyles it a myſtery, *in other ages* of the church *not made known*, that is, not ſo plainly and clearly, unto the ſons of men, Jews or Gentiles; for the calling of the Gentiles was foretold and propheſied of under the Old Teſtament, but darkly and obſcurely; the time when, the manner how, and the means by which, were not underſtood till now the the holy Spirit of God revealed it to the apoſtles and evangelical prophets under the New Teſtament. (3.) The apoſtle amplifies and ſets forth the glorious excellency of that myſtery which here he had made mention of; namely, that the Gentiles ſhould have acceſs into the church, with an entrance by the door of circumciſion, be joint-heirs of the heavenly inheritance with all believers, and together with the Jews, taken into the bond of the covenant; and finally, that they were brought into this happy eſtate by the preaching of the goſpel, and by believing and obeying of it. *Learn* hence, That the calling of the neglected and deſpiſed Gentiles to the knowledge of Chriſt, and the participation of goſpel privileges with the Jews, was a great myſtery, awfully to be admired, and a glorious mercy, with all thankfulneſs to be acknowledged: *That the Gentiles*, &c.

7 Whereof I was made a miniſter according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; 9 And to make all *men* ſee what *is* the fellowſhip of the myſtery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Of this goſpel it pleaſed God to make me a ſucceſsful miniſter or diſpenſer, furniſhing me with ordinary and extraordinary gifts and graces from his holy Spirit, for that weighty work and ſervice; unto me, even unto me, I ſay, was this ſpecial favour granted, though unworthy, (being *leſs than the leaſt* of all ſaints, becauſe once a great perſecutor) yet unto me was the apoſtolic office committed, to preach unto the Gentiles the incomparable and incomprehenſible riches of God's mercy towards them in Chriſt, in receiving them fully, freely, and finally, into covenant with himſelf; and to make known unto all men what is the communion or fellowſhip of this myſtery; namely, that the Gentiles with the Jews ſhould have one faith, one Lord, one hope, one heavenly inheritance; which was a myſtery hid in the ſecret intention and decree of God, until diſcovered by divine revelation." *Obſerve* here, 1. How careful the apoſtle was to aſſert his authority and apoſtolical commiſſion, *I was made a miniſter*; and how he refers his calling immediately to the grace of God, *unto me was this grace given*. It was the grace of God converted him, it was the grace of God revealed the goſpel to him, and that called him to reveal it unto others. 2. How the apoſtle attributes the ſucceſs of his miniſtry to the power of God, and not to his own endeavours, *by the effectual working of his own power*. The grace of God in him, and the power of God accompanying him, was effectual to the converſion of very many ſinners, and to the producing of great ſigns and miracles which were wrought by him. 3. The noble ſubject of St. Paul's ſermons, what it was he preached amongſt the Gentiles; namely, the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt*: Riches imply abundance, and abundance of ſuch things as are of worth and value; in Chriſt are riches, all riches, eminently and tranſcendently found; riches of grace, and riches of glory; and theſe are called *unſearchable*; not as if it were unlawful to ſearch after them, but becauſe after our utmoſt ſearch after them, we can never fully diſcover them. *Learn* hence, That there are ſuch mazes, ſuch myſteries of love and goodneſs in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as, though it be our duty to be continually ſearching after them, yet we can never, by our utmoſt ſearching, fully diſcover them and find them out. 4. The humble and low opinion which this great apoſtle had of himſelf; he ſtyles himſelf, not barely the leaſt, but *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*: he was, in his own eſteem, as little as could be, *leſs than the leaſt*: a double dimunitive; a comparative made of a ſuperlative: Thus he debaſes himſelf, upon conſideration of his former enmity againſt Chriſt and his church; lower he could not lie than he lays himſelf; the greateſt and chiefeſt of ſinners: the leaſt, yea, leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints: growth in grace, and increaſe in humility, accompany one another.

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.

Note here, 1. The title given to the holy angels, they are ſtyled *principalities and powers*, becauſe God makes uſe of their powerful miniſtry in governing the kingdoms and principalities of this world; and they are ſaid to be in *heavenly places*: not as if they were never upon earth below, but becauſe the ordinary place of their reſidence is heaven above. 2. That the angels are not omniſcient and all-knowing. The wiſdom of God in the work of redemption was a ſecret unknown to the glorious angels; they did not know it until God made it known unto them. 3. That God did not make the myſtery of the goſpel, or the glorious work of redemption, known unto the angels immediately, but occaſionally; by the revelation of it firſt to the church, and by the church to them: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Had it not been for the light given to, and ſpread abroad in the church, the angels had been in the dark about the myſteries of the goſpel to this day. *By the church is made known unto the angels the manifold wiſdom of God.*" *Queſt.* But how could the church communicate this knowledge to angels? *Anſ.* Either the angels did gather up their knowledge of theſe myſteries, by the miniſtry of the apoſtles preaching them to the world in a way of information, or elſe they ſaw, as in a glaſs, the manifold wiſdom of God, and the diſpenſations of his mercy, grace and goodneſs towards his church, in a way of contemplation. 4. The title here given to the work of redemption; it is ſtyled, *The manifold wiſdom of God.* O, how full of variety was the wiſdom of God in man's recovery! It is of many folds and plaits, manifold in kind, manifold in degree, manifold in its adminiſtration; there are manifold ſecrets in this wiſdom, ſome leſs perfectly ſeen, ſome more perfectly underſtood, and ſome that will never perhaps be thoroughly underſtood: Doubtleſs, there are ſome ſecrets in the wiſdom of God, which it belongs only to God to underſtand and know. Bleſſed be God, that ſo much of the manifold wiſdom of God, in the glorious work of redemption, is made known unto us, as will eternally raviſh and delight us.

11 According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him. 13 Wherefore I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Our apoſtle here ſhews, (1.) That whatever the wiſdom of God has done in the work of redemption, was from all eternity purpoſed to be done, and that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was the perſon by whom God would in time execute his eternal purpoſe: *According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus.* Next, he ſhews the great and gracious privileges which all believers are admitted to the participation of, by and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; namely, boldneſs, acceſs and confidence: *in whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence through the faith of him. Acceſs*, that is, a liberty of approaching to God as a Father: *Boldneſs*, that is, a freedom of ſpeech in delivering our heart, our whole mind and heart, to him, in the duty of prayer and thankſgiving: *Confidence*, that is, a well-grounded perſuaſion, that both our perſons and performances ſhall find acceptance with God. All which privileges are enjoyed by the exerciſe of faith in Chriſt: *We have boldneſs, acceſs, and confidence through the faith of him.* Laſtly, He exhorts them not to faint under, or be diſcouraged at his preſent ſufferings, much leſs to backſlide from Chriſtianity upon that account, ſeeing that his tribulations were both profitable, and alſo glorious and honourable: *I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. Obſerve* here, 1. That new converts to Chriſtianity are ſubject to faintings and drooping diſcouragements at the news of ſufferings. 2. That perſecution for the goſpel of Chriſt, is a trial, not only to thoſe who are under it, but to thoſe that hear of it. St. Paul here was more afraid of the Epheſians fainting under his ſufferings, than he was of his own fainting, and therefore he doth carefully guard againſt it: *I deſire you not to faint at my tribulations.* 3. That the perſecutions and afflictions, the hardſhips and ſeverities, which the miniſters of Chriſt do for the moſt part endure and undergo, are for the ſake of their people; they might ſhift off and ſhun the croſs as well as other men, did not love to the ſouls of their people engage them to ſuffer the ſharpeſt perſecution for their ſake: I deſire ye faint not at my tribulations *for you:* that is, for preaching the goſpel to you. 4. From thoſe words, *My tribulation, which is your glory:* So honourable it is to ſuffer, that not only the miniſters of Chriſt themſelves, who ſuffer, are thereby honoured, but the people of their charge alſo are greatly honoured thereby; it teſtifying God's high eſteem of ſuch a people, in ſending his miniſters not only to teach and inſtruct them, but to ſuffer for them, yea, even to die for them. Which conſideration ought not only to prevent our people's fainting at our ſufferings, but ſhould make them glory in them, and take encouragement from them: *My tribulations*, ſaith St. Paul, *is your glory.*

14 For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

Our apoſtle having exhorted the Epheſians, in the foregoing verſe, not to faint at his tribulations for the goſpel, here he puts up a moſt affectionate prayer to God for them on the ſame account: *For this cauſe*, and in order to this end, *I bow my knees*, &c. Now, in this affectionate and moſt excellent prayer of the apoſtle, we have ſeveral particulars worthy of our notice and remark. As, 1. The humble geſture which the apoſtle uſed in his prayers, *I bow my knees*; thereby expreſſing the reverent frame of his heart in prayer. *Learn* hence, That the geſtures which we uſe in prayer ſhould be ſuch as may beſt expreſs our reverence of *God*, and denote our profound humility before him. 2. The perſon prayed to, *God*, under an appellation of a *Father*, and, in particular, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Bleſſed be God, that believers and Chriſt have one and the ſame Father; he by nature, we by grace; he by eternal generation, we by gracious adoption. By virtue of this relation, we may expect to be heard in prayer, as Chriſt was, and to be helped in our diſtreſſes, as Chriſt was, and in God's good time to be poſſeſſed of the inheritance of children, as Chriſt is. 3. The title given to the church, it is ſtyled God's *family*, his houſhold; all the ſaints on earth, whether Jews or Gentiles, and all the glorified angels and ſaints in heaven, do make but one family. There is but one catholic or univerſal church, comprehending all its members both in heaven and earth; and all within the church are of one kindred and line, deſcending of one common Father: and this family is named, that is, united under Chriſt, he being the head of all. 4. The mercy prayed for, ver. 16. *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The mercy itſelf, ſpiritual ſtrength, ſtrength in the *inner man*, to enable them to bear afflictions, to endure perſecutions, to reſiſt temptations, to grapple with all their ſpiritual enemies in the progreſs of their Chriſtian courſe. *Note*, 2. The fountain from whence all ſpiritual ſtrength flows, and that is, from the holy Spirit, *ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit.* It is the holy Spirit of God that conſtantly renews the believer's ſtrength, by upholding and actuating their graces, which otherwiſe would fade and wither, would languiſh and die. So many and ſo mighty are our ſpiritual enemies that we have to wreſtle with, and ſtrive againſt, that except we be under-propt and ſtrengthened by the Almighty power of the holy Spirit in the inner man, we cannot keep our ground, and much leſs get ground of our enemy, but ſhall become an eaſy prey to every temptation. 3. The moving, impelling, or impulſive cauſe from whence the foregoing mercy is expected to proceed and flow, namely, from the rich and glorious mercy of God: *God grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened.* In all our approaches to God for any bleſſings, eſpecially for ſpiritual bleſſings, it is our duty to direct the eye of our faith to that inexhauſtible fountain of rich mercy, and almighty power in God, whereby he is both able and willing to beſtow upon us whatever is agreeable to his holy will. *God grant you, according to the riches of his glory,* &c.

17 That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.

Our apoſtle here proceeds with affectionate ardour to pray for further ſpiritual bleſſings on the behalf of his beloved Epheſians: (1.) He prays that Chriſt may dwell in their hearts by his moſt holy faith. The phraſe of *dwelling in us,* imports a very cloſe and intimate union between Chriſt and believers; he dwells in them ſubjectively and effectively, by his gracious influences, by his powerful aſſiſtances, by his quickening impreſſions. The holy Spirit is the bond of union on Chriſt's part, and faith on our part. (2.) He prays that they may be *rooted and grounded* in love; that is, that they might be ſo deeply poſſeſſed with the ſenſe of God's love, that they might find their hearts inflamed with love to God, and one towards another; and that love might be the very habit of ſouls, and rooted nature in them. (3.) He prays that the Epheſians may comprehend what is the *breadth, length, depth, and height* of the love of God, and the myſteries of the goſpel; intimating to us, that we are not to content ourſelves with a ſuperficial view of God's free love in Chriſt, but to make an accurate inſpection into all the dimenſions of it; to view it in its breadth, as extending to all ages, Jewiſh and Chriſtian; in its length, as reaching from eternity to eternity; in its depth, as it ſtoops down to ſuccour and relieve the vileſt and the greateſt, if penitent ſinners; in its height, whereby it reaches up to heaven, and intitles us to the joy and felicity of the ſaints above. Verily, the love of God in Chriſt to a loſt world, is ſo vaſt and boundleſs, ſo rich and matchleſs, exceeding not only our comprehenſion, but conceptions alſo, that not only the natural man cannot underſtand it, but the renewed man alſo is unable to fathom it, but muſt be daily endeavouring to take dimenſions of it; for the love of Chriſt ſurpaſſingly tranſcends the knowledge of the moſt illuminated believer; it ſurpaſſes natural knowledge, apoſtolical knowledge, yea, angelical knowledge; *that ye may be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* (4.) He prays that they may know the ſuperlative love of Chriſt, which ſurpaſſeth all human underſtanding and knowledge, implying, that the love of Chriſt to a loſt world is a tranſcendent love; that the knowledge of it may be attained in ſome meaſure; that it is our duty to ſeek after it, and ſearch into it; but after all, we can never fully comprehend it: What created underſtanding can know what is unknowable, or comprehend what is incomprehenſible? *Learn,* There are ſuch dimenſions and degrees in the love of Chriſt to ſinners, which, at leaſt in this preſent and imperfect ſtate, do ſurpaſs all comprehenſion and conception; alſo, that love whereby he took our nature upon him, that love whereby he took our ſins upon him, is ſo ſtupendous and amazing, that the holy angels awefully admire it, but even their enlarged capacities cannot fully comprehend it. (5.) He prays that they might be filled with all the fulneſs of God; that is, with ſuch meaſures of grace, knowledge, faith, holineſs and love, which God hath appointed believers unto, and they are capable of in this life. *Note* here, 1. That there is a fulneſs in God, which we can neither be filled with, nor may we ſtrive to be filled with; God is eſſentially full, originally full, independently full, inexhauſtibly full of all holineſs and grace; now this fulneſs of his is undiminiſhable, and conſequently incommunicable. 2. That there is a fulneſs of God which we may, and therefore ought to pray and endeavour to be filled with, namely, to be filled with the knowledge of God, to be filled with the grace and Spirit of God, to be filled with the wiſdom of God, that we may know God more, ſerve him better, glorify him on earth, and be glorified with him in heaven: In a word, we may pray for, and ſtrive to be filled with ſuch a meaſure of the fulneſs of God and his grace, as God ſhall ſee fit to give, and as our capacities are or may be prepared to receive; God is not ſtraitened towards us, let us not be ſtraitened in ourſelves: *Open thy mouth wide,* ſays God, *and I will fill it.* Bleſſed be God for a preſent fulneſs of ſufficiency, and for the hopes of a future fulneſs to ſatiety.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Obſerve here, 1. How our apoſtle cloſes his prayer with thankſgiving and praiſe; intimating to us, that praiſe ſhould evermore conclude that work which prayer began, and that ſpiritual bleſſings principally deſerve our praiſes. 2. The title which St. Paul's faith fixed upon, in his approaches to God in prayer and praiſe, and that is, his omnipotence or almighty power. In all our addreſſes to God, it is our duty to have ſuch apprehenſions, and uſe ſuch expreſſions concerning him, as may moſt ſtrengthen our faith. *He is able,* ſaith the apoſtle, *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think.* *Note* here, The comprehenſive fulneſs of this expreſſion, he is able to *do for us,* to do *abundantly* for us, to do exceeding abundantly for us, *above what we aſk,* yea, to do exceeding abundantly for us, above what we can think, as well as aſk. O! how narrow, ſhort, and poor are our prayers, compared with the power of God! It is much that the tongue can aſk; it is more that the mind can think: But the Lord is able to do for us, not only above what we can aſk, but abundantly above what we can think. Lord, what an everlaſting ſpring of comfort is this! what encouragement doth it adminiſter to thy people! what encouragement to prayer! what encouragement in prayer! They pray to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they can aſk or think.

Obſerve, 3. That it is not God's abſolute power that St. Paul bottoms his faith in prayer upon (for God can do many things that he never will do) but it is his operative, promiſed, and formerly experienced power, *according to the power that worketh in us*; that is, according to that infinite and almighty power which God had exerted and put forth in their firſt converſion; this power was, and is a main prop for confidence in prayer. *Learn* hence, That the experience we have had of God's gracious power in working in us, by converting and quickening grace, may and ought to confirm our faith, that he will do exceeding abundantly for us, above what we can expect, yea, above what we can aſk or think, when we are upon our knees in prayer before him. *Obſerve*, 4. The concluding doxology; *To him be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.* Where, *note*, 1. The divine praiſe given to Almighty God, namely, that of *glory*; *To him be glory.* Glory is the fountain of all excellency in the creatures; they all ſhine with beams borrowed from God's excellencies, as ſtars ſhine with the light they receive from the body of the ſun: Almighty God is that infinitely glorious being, in whom all the excellencies and perfections of the creatures are eminently and tranſcendently found. 2. The perſons giving this glory unto God, the church; *To him be glory in the church.* True, it is the duty of all reaſonable creatures to ſet forth God's glory; but only the church (holy and gracious perſons alone) can perform it in an active and acceptable manner. 3. The perſon through whom this duty becomes acceptable unto God, through Chriſt Jeſus; *To him be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus.* The duty of praiſe and thankſgiving is what we owe to God for received favours, and indeed is all we have to pay him; but neither this, nor any other duty, can find acceptance with God, but by and through the mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 4. The duration and continuance of this duty of thankſgiving, *throughout all ages, world without end:* As God ſhall never want glory from his church, ſo there ſhall always be a church to the end of the world, to give glory unto God, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall never prevail. Laſtly, In this divine doxology, after what manner, and with what affection this praiſe is given, intimated in the word *Amen*; *World without end, Amen.* This *Amen*, (1.) Is a *note* of aſſent, and as ſuch uſed by the Jews and Chriſtians in all ages, at the end of their prayers, to teſtify that they aſſented and agreed to what was put up to God in their name, and on their behalf. Again, (2.) It importeth earneſt deſire. Hence Jeremiah (chap. xxviii. 6.) ſaid *Amen* to the propheey of Hananiah, concerning the return of the captives to their land, to ſhew how earneſtly he deſired that it might be ſo. (3.) It imports ſtedfaſt faith, that the thing we pray for ſhall be granted; and accordingly, in teſtimony of our deſire, and aſſurance to be heard, we ſay, *Amen*, ſo be it; ſo let it be; ſo let it be, O Lord, for ever.

CHAP. IV.

I THEREFORE the priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

As if he had ſaid, "Seeing the riches of God's grace in Chriſt have ſo abounded towards you, who were once Epheſian idolaters, but now converted Gentiles, I Paul, who am a priſoner for preaching the goſpel, and for declaring this grace to you, do moſt affectionately exhort you, that ye live anſwerably to your profeſſion, and according to the great obligation of your high and holy vocation from heatheniſm to Chriſtianity." Here *note*, 1. The perſon exhorting and beſeeching, *I Paul, the priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you*; I that am in bonds for Chriſt, I that am impriſoned for preaching the goſpel to you, and for proſelyting you by it to Chriſtianity. Nothing can more oblige a people to hearken to the exhortations of the miniſters of Chriſt, than this conſideration, that the truths which they deliver to them, they ſtand ready, both to ſuffer for, and to ſeal with their precious blood: *I the priſoner of the Lord beſeech you.* 2. The comprehenſive duty exhorted to, *That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*; worthy, that is, beſeeming and becoming your holy profeſſion, anſwerable to the dignity and obligation of your Chriſtian name; or, as he exhorteth the Philippians, chap. i. 20. Walk as becometh the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt: But when may we be ſaid ſo to do? *Anſ.* When we walk according to the precepts and commands of the goſpel; anſwerable to the privileges and prerogatives of the goſpel; anſwerable to that grand pattern of holineſs which the goſpel ſets before us, the example of Jeſus Chriſt; anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of grace which the goſpel affords: Finally, to walk worthy of our vocation, is to walk anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious hopes which the goſpel raiſes the Chriſtian up to the expectation of.

2 With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Having exhorted them to the practice of their general duty; namely, to *walk worthy of their holy vocation*, in the former verſe; in theſe two verſes he preſſes upon them more ſpecial and particular duties, the chief of which is the duty of Chriſtian unity and concord, *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.* The word ſignifies, a diligent, induſtrious, and united endeavour to preſerve and keep, to ſupport and maintain, the unity of the Spirit; that is, an union of heart and ſpirit, an unity of faith and doctrine, an unity of judgment and affection, amongſt all the profeſſors of Chriſtianity. *Obſerve*, 1. The means by which this duty may be performed, and the unity of the Spirit maintained; namely, *in* or by *the bond of peace*; a peaceable diſpoſition and temper, a peaceable deportment and behaviour, is the bond or ligament which binds Chriſtians together; whereas diſcord and diviſion cuts that bond aſunder. 2. The ſpecial graces which the apoſtle recommends unto us, as excellent helps for preſerving unity and peace; namely, humility, meekneſs, and mutual forbearance. (1.) Humility; ver. 2. *With all lowlineſs*; that is, with all ſubmiſſiveneſs of mind, and humble apprehenſions of ourſelves. What Tertullus ſaid of Feſtus flatteringly, we may ſay of humility truly, *By thee*, O humility, *we enjoy great quietneſs:* The humble man is the peaceable man; only by pride cometh contention. (2.) Meekneſs, which conſiſts in a backwardneſs to provoke others, or to be provoked by others; as lowlineſs ſtood in oppoſition to pride, ſo meekneſs here ſtands in oppoſition to peeviſhneſs; *with all lowlineſs and meekneſs.* (3.) Long-ſuffering and mutual forbearance; when Chriſtians are ſo far from reſenting every wrong, and revenging every injury that is offered to them, that they can bear with one another's weakneſſes, cover each other's infirmities, pity one another's failings, and pardon each other's provocations: And this duty of mutual forbearance ought to proceed from a principle of love to each other.

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, 6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

The apoſtle having exhorted the Epheſians to a ſtrict unity and concord amongſt themſelves, next proceeds to enforce his exhortation with ſeveral arguments; and there are no fewer than ſeven ſummed up in the three verſes now before us. (1.) Says the apoſtle, there is *one body*, that is, one univerſal church, whereof ye are all members. (2.) There is *one Spirit*, by which ye are all animated and enlivened, and therefore keep the unity of the Spirit. (3.) There is *one hope* of eternal life, by which we are all excited: Our inheritance in heaven is the ſame; God doth not give one a double portion, or a party-coloured coat, above another; but it is called an *inheritance in light*, becauſe all alike are partakers of it, and ſharers in it; the ſaints have all one hope, therefore ſhould have all but one heart. (4.) *One Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, the Head of his church, the Saviour of the body, one whom we all profeſs to ſerve and obey: Be ye therefore one, for your Lord is one. (5.) There is *one faith*; that is, either one grace of faith whereby we believe, or one doctrine of faith which is believed; ye all believe in one and the ſame Saviour, and are all juſtified by him, after one and the ſame manner; therefore be ye alſo one; one in affection, as well as one in belief. (6.) There is *one baptiſm*, one door by which we all enter into the church; both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, and by one Spirit baptized into one body. (7.) *One God and Father of all things:* And of all perſons in Chriſt, whom we all expect one and the ſame ſalvation from: And this God is tranſcendently above all, and over all; his eye penetrates and pierces through you all, and he is in and among you all, as in his holy temple; therefore ſuch as endeavour to divide you, do as much as in them lies to divide God himſelf that dwells in you. This then is the ſum of the apoſtle's argument: "Seeing ye are all members of *one body*, partakers of *one Spirit*, expectants of *one hope*, having *one Lord* and common Saviour, *one faith* and *belief*, one and the ſame *baptiſm* in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and one and the ſame God and Father in Chriſt; ſeeing you are one in all theſe particulars, be one among yourſelves, and *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" From the whole, *learn*, That ſo many are the obligations, ſo ſtrong the bonds and ties, which lie upon all the members of the church to be at unity among themſelves, of one judgment, and of one heart; that ſuch as violate theſe bonds, and culpably divide and ſeparate themſelves from communion with their brethren, Chriſt looks upon them no longer as members of his body, but as having rent and torn themſelves from it.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt. 8 Wherefore he ſaith, When he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.

Our apoſtle here, in theſe verſes, ſupplies us with another weighty argument to perſuade us *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*; namely, that it was one great and chief end which Chriſt aimed at, in inſtituting the miniſtry of the word, in appointing the ſeveral officers in his church, of apoſtles, prophets, evangeliſts, paſtors, and teachers, and alſo in the ſeveral gifts which he beſtowed upon thoſe officers: he aſſures us, it was Chriſt's great deſign, in and by all theſe, to bring his people, not only to faith and knowledge, but *to unity in the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God.* And here, (1.) Our apoſtle ſhews, that the diverſity of gifts and graces, and the different meaſures and degrees of thoſe gifts and graces beſtowed by Chriſt upon the ſeveral members of the church, do all tend to preſerve and to promote unity, they all coming from one and the ſame author, and being all given for one and the ſame end. *Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there is grace given by Chriſt to all his members, bearing ſome proportion and ſimilitude to that grace which was conferred upon Chriſt himſelf. 2. That the deſign of Chriſt, in diſpenſing his grace in different meaſures and degrees, is the general good of his church, and particularly for preſerving and promoting unity and love amongſt his members; for ſeeing every one has his ſeveral graces from God, and no one has all, if one hath that grace which another wants, and if one wants that grace which another has, it ſhews that we want the help of one another, and therefore ought to love one another: This is the apoſtle's argument. Next he proceeds to prove that Chriſt *has* diſpenſed this diverſity of gifts amongſt his members; affirming, that in the day of his aſcenſion into the higheſt heavens, *he led captivity* *captive, and gave gifts unto men.* In which expreſſion there is a manifeſt alluſion to the Roman conquerors, who in the day of their triumphs ſcattered their magnificence and bounty, their largeſſes and donatives among their ſoldiers and their ſubjects. Thus Chriſt, after he had triumphed over his own and his church's enemies upon the croſs, rode in the triumphant chariot of his aſcenſion into heaven, where he received gifts as the purchaſe of his blood, and ſhed forth thoſe gifts of his Spirit in various kinds, upon his members in general, but upon his miniſters in particular; which gifts, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, were extraordinary, as the gift of tongues and miracles, but now ordinary, and to continue to the end of the world. Now, from the apoſtle's ſcope and deſign in this argument, we *learn*, That though diverſity of gifts in the church, and divers meaſure of grace in and among the members thereof, are too often a ſad occaſion of diviſion and ſtrife, through the prevalency of envy and pride, and other dividing luſts, yet this great variety and diverſity of gifts and graces, rightly conſidered, would be found to be one of the ſtrongeſt ties and bonds of union, ſeeing we all ſtand in mutual need of the gifts and graces of each other. It is very evident, that our apoſtle's ſcope here, is, to urge and enforce unity, from the diverſity of gifts and graces which are amongſt the members of the church; God forbid then, that they ſhould occaſion envy and animoſities, ſtrife and contention, rents and diviſions. Our apoſtle's next argument for unity, is in the 11th and 12th verſes, where he proves, that as the unity and edification of the church, was the deſign of Chriſt in diſpenſing divers gifts and graces amongſt the members of his church, ſo was it likewiſe his aim and end in inſtituting ſuch variety of offices and officers in his church; for this end it was that he gave to his church by qualification and miſſion, firſt, *apoſtles*, ſent forth firſt by his own mouth, to be witneſſes of his doctrine and miracles, and then to preach the goſpel throughout all the world, having received the holy Spirit in an extraordinary manner, at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, to fit them for that ſervice, Acts ii. 1, 2. Next, *prophets*, who explained the myſteries of faith, foretold things to come, and expounded the writings of the old prophets. Then, *evangeliſts*, who were ſent out by the apoſtles, ſome to plant, others to water the churches which they had planted, without being fixed to any particular place. Laſtly, *paſtors* and *teachers*, called alſo biſhops and elders, who were ſet over the churches as guides and inſtructors. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is Chriſt's ſpecial prerogative, as Head of the church, to inſtitute and appoint ſuch offices and officers in his church, as to his own wiſdom ſeems meet for the edification and government of it. 2. That the great end and deſign of Chriſt, in inſtituting ſuch variety of offices and officers in his church, was, his church's unity, that by all miniſterial helps and endeavours, his members might be compacted and knit together, and made one entire body, by the increaſe of ſanctity, concord, and unity. *He gave ſome apoſtles, ſome paſtors and teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints,* (not for converting of ſinners only) *and for the edifying of the body of Chriſt. Obſerve,* laſtly, The apoſtle declares how long the work of the miniſtry, appointed by Chriſt for his church's edification and advantage, was to continue: namely, to the end of the world, to the day of judgment, *till all come*, by means of the ſame faith in Chriſt, and knowledge of him, *unto a perfect man, and unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*; that is, till the church, which is Chriſt's myſtical body, ſhall be complete and perfect, and attain its full ſtature from infancy to full manhood. *Learn* hence, 1. That the church of Chriſt here on earth, is labouring for, and endeavouring after perfection in grace and knowledge, to come unto a perfect man, and to attain to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. 2. That the miniſtry of the word, is an ordinance of Chriſt's own appointment, to continue to the end of the world, in order to that purpoſe and deſign. 3. That none of the moſt eminent ſaints on earth (the moſt knowing and pious miniſters of the goſpel not excepted) are above ordinances, above the miniſtry of the word, above receiving benefit and advantage by the plain and practical preaching of it; even St. Paul here puts himſelf in, and reckons himſelf among the number of thoſe who ſtood in need of the miniſtry of God's word, to bring him to a perfect man, and to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; he ſays not, till *ye*, but till *we* all come unto a perfect man. Such people then, as think themſelves above ordinances, are above God himſelf; none need ordinances ſo much, as thoſe that want them leaſt. And ſuch hearers as turn their backs upon the preaching of the word, becauſe they know more than the miniſter can teach them, and can better inſtruct the preacher, than be inſtructed by him, they betray their own ignorance both of the intent and end of the miniſtry of the word, and alſo of the ſtate of their own hearts; for if their underſtandings want no light, do their affections need no warmth? Have you no grace to be perfected, no corruptions to be weakened, no good reſolutions to be ſtrengthened? If your knowledge be imperfect, as ſure it is, do not your affections want a freſh excitement? Admit the deſpiſed preacher cannot be your inſtructor, yet ſure he may be your remembrancer, and excite you to that duty which you know already perhaps better than you practiſe it.

14 That we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men, *and* cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

St. Paul, in theſe words, declares one ſpecial end for which the miniſtry of the word was inſtituted and appointed; namely, to preſerve from error and ſeduction, to prevent inſtability of mind, and unſettledneſs of judgment, and to confirm perſons in fundamental truths: *that we henceforth be no more children toſſed to and fro*, &c. *Note* here, 1. The name which St. Paul gives to unſtable perſons, and unſettled profeſſors, he calls them *children:* Not in regard of age, but in reſpect of knowledge and underſtanding: *children*, is a word that denotes imperfection and weakneſs, inſtability and ungroundedneſs in knowledge. 2. How the unſteadineſs of theſe profeſſors is expreſſed by a double metaphor; the former is drawn from a wave of the ſea, they are *toſſed to and fro*; the latter is drawn from a light cloud hovering in the air, carried about from place to place;

neither wave nor cloud have any conſiſtency, but are both moving, if the leaſt wind be ſtirring. 3. The cauſe of this inſtability, *every wind of doctrine*, profeſſors that have no ſolid principles, every wind of doctrine has power over them to drive them to and fro, every teacher can caſt them into what mould he pleaſes, and blow them, like glaſſes, into this or that ſhape, at the pleaſure of his breath. But why wind of doctrine? Becauſe there is no ſolidity in it, but being *wind* in the preacher, it breeds but *wind* in the hearer, becauſe of its variety and novelty, and becauſe of its prevalency over unſtaid men. How ſuddenly, ſometimes, is a family, a town, yea, a whole country, leavened with a particular error? 4. The character of thoſe impoſtors and ſeducers that do thus unſettle and unhinge men, they uſe *ſlight*; a metaphor taken from gameſters, who with art and ſlight of hand, can cog the dice, and win the game. Seducers cheat with falſe doctrines, as gameſters do with falſe dice: *Cunning craftineſs*; the word ſignifies the ſubtlety and deep policy of the old ſerpent; implying, that ſeducers are old and *cunning* gameſters, ſkilful to deceive: *They lie in wait to deceive*; the word ſignifies *an ambuſhment*, or ſtratagem of war, implying, that all ſeducers *ſlight* and *craftineſs* is to this very end and purpoſe, that they may intrap and catch men within the ambuſh of their impoſtures. From the whole, *learn*, That ſeducers and falſe-teachers are crafts-maſters of ſlight and ſubtlety, and ſtratagems of deceit; they have artifices, ways and methods to take men unawares, and to make merchandiſe of the people; they wreſt and wrack the ſcriptures to make them ſpeak what they pleaſe, not what the Holy Ghoſt intended: If all this art fails, their laſt device is, to recommend their doctrines upon ſome private pretended revelation, and uncommon impulſe of the holy Spirit; by all which methods they lie in wait to deceive.

15 But ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Chriſt: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body, unto the edifying of itſelf in love.

Our apoſtle had ſet forth the excellent end of the miniſtry, in the foregoing verſe, for furthering our ſtability and ſtedfaſtneſs in grace; here he declares the admirable fitneſs of it for helping forward our proficiency and growth in grace, *Speaking the truth in love*; that is, cleaving to the truth of Chriſt's doctrine, and living in love wirh one another, you may grow up in Chriſt by making progreſs in all Chriſtian grace, being united to him as members to the head. Here *note*, How the apoſtle draws a compariſon between the natural and myſtical members, and the increaſe of both; as there muſt be a fellowſhip betwixt the natural head and members, ſo muſt there be an union betwixt Chriſt, the ſpiritual Head, and believers, his myſtical members: and as there is further required, a mutual communion and fellowſhip of the members of the body within, and amongſt themſelves, in order to growth and increaſe; ſo muſt there be concord, love, and unity amongſt believers, if they expect to ſee grace growing in themſelves, or in one another. Are the members of the natural body ſeverally diſtinct one from another, ſome principal, others miniſterial, but all concurring to the ſervice of the whole? So, in order to ſpiritual growth, muſt all the members of Chriſt's myſtical body keep their rank and order, and act in their own ſphere with ſpiritual wiſdom and humility; the eye not doing the work of the hand, nor the hand the work of the foot, but every one in the calling wherein he is called, muſt there abide with God. Again, is there a ſupply of nouriſhment from one member to another, according to the meaſure of every part in the natural body? So is there a ſupply from head to members in the myſtical body, and from one myſtical member to another; one is apt to teach, another ready to comfort, a third able to convince, a fourth willing to exhort, a fifth to adviſe and counſel; and all theſe, and every one of theſe, contributing all they can to the welfare and growth of the whole. Happy is it both for the natural ond myſtical body, when the members of both are ſubſervient to each other, and contribute all they can to the mutual growth and improvement of one another, and eſpecially for the benefit and advantage of the whole.

17 This I ſay therefore and teſtify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart: 19 Who being paſt feeling have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed his grand exhortation to love and unity amongſt all Chriſtians, and enforced it with the moſt weighty arguments and motives, in the former part of the chapter, comes now, in the latter part of it, to preſs the Epheſians to the practice of particular duties. The firſt of which is this, to take ſpecial care, that being now converted Chriſtians, they walk no more like ignorant and unconverted heathens: *Walk not as other Gentiles walk.* Next, he gives particular inſtances how, and after what manner the Gentiles, in the black night of paganiſm, did walk; namely, (1.) *In the vanity of their minds*, following their own imaginations, and not any revelation from God, in the matters of his worſhip. (2.) *Having their underſtandings darkened*, their minds void of ſaving knowledge. (3.) *They were alienated from the life of God*, that is, from a godly life; they were ſtrangers to the life which God commanded, which God approved, and which God himſelf lived. Here *note*, That holineſs is called the *life of God*, becauſe it is the life which God requires of us, it is the life which he works in us, it is the life whereby God liveth in us, the life whereby we live unto God; it is an ever-living life, not obnoxious to death, as the Epheſians were; ſo every carnal man, before converſion, is alienated from this life of God; he has no liking of it, no inclination to it, but prefers a life of ſin before it. Lord, how many that are ſurrounded with the celeſtial beams of the goſpel, are as impure and impenitent now, as theſe Gentiles were then in the black night of paganiſm! (4.) They were *paſt feeling*; their ſottiſh ſtupidity had benumbed them, the flames of their luſts had ſeared their conſciences to a deſperate degree of hardneſs and inſenſibility; they were at once inſenſible of their ſin, and of their danger by reaſon of ſin. A dead conſcience, and a deſperately diſſolute life, are inſeparable companions. (5.) *They gave themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* Here ſee, how inſenſibility of ſin begets inſatiableneſs in ſinning; they work uncleanneſs with inſatiable greedineſs, who have once abandoned themſelves to ſin, eſpecially to the ſin of uncleanneſs. Lord, this was the deplorable caſe of the heathen world, before the light of the goſpel did ariſe and ſhine upon them; but, alas! It is the caſe of multitudes that ſit under the brighteſt beams of goſpel light, they ſhut their eyes, and will not ſee; they extinguiſh all ſenſe of immortality and a future ſtate, and ſo abandon themſelves to a life of brutiſh ſenſuality, *working all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*; but let them know aſſuredly, that though they live like beaſts, yet they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their latter end be like theirs, the ſoul being under a divine ordination to an everlaſting exiſtence in a future ſtate, in which it ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as we manage our deportment in this preſent world.

20 But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt; 21 If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; 23 And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

In theſe verſes, 1. Our apoſtle acquaints the converted Epheſians, that the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, which they had received, inſtructed them better than to practiſe ſuch licentiouſneſs and wickedneſs as the unconverted Gentiles wallowed in. *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt*, that is, the goſpel of Chriſt. Nothing curbs ſin, nothing cures ſin, in a licentious ſinner, like the doctrine of Chriſt revealed in the goſpel; no moral precepts from the ſchool of the heathens, which ſome ſo much magnify and applaud, can compare with this, which lays open the root of this accurſed diſeaſe, and leads us to the remedy which the wiſdom of God has appointed for its cure, even the blood of his own Son; then bleſſed be God for revealed religion. 2. The apoſtle acquaints them what *the truth as it is in Jeſus*, that is, the doctrine of the goſpel, doth direct them to, enjoin and require of them, namely, to *put off the old man*, that is, their former heathen converſation, and manner of life, ſay ſome; but this they had put off already, at their firſt converſion to Chriſtianity: By *the old man*, then, underſtand the old corrupt nature, ſo called, becauſe it is as old as Adam, and derived from Adam, and which daily more and more corrupts and depraves us by its deceitful luſts, if it be not reſiſted and ſubdued. But this is not ſufficient, that we *put off the old man*, unleſs we put on the *new*, and be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds after God; that is, after the image of God, which conſiſteth in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. *Note* here, 1. That regenerating grace is called the new man, becauſe the perſon has a new principle infuſed into him (ſays the pious Biſhop Fell, upon the place) which enables him to lead a new life. Regenerate men, then, are new men, they have a renewed and enlightened underſtanding, they have a ſanctified and renewed will, renewed affections and deſires: old things are paſſing away, and all things becoming new. 2. That God himſelf is the pattern and exemplar, after which, and according to which, the new man is formed in the ſoul, *which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*: What is godlineſs, but Godlikeneſs? What is holineſs, but the conformity of our natures to the holy nature of God, and the conformity of our lives to the will of God? Acts xiii. 22. I have found David a man after *my own heart*, who ſhall perform *all my will*. 3. That holineſs is not only the reforming of the outward *man*, but it is the renewing of the mind; and not only of the mind, but of the Spirit of the mind; by which underſtand, the higheſt and moſt refined faculties of the mind, that part which is moſt free from the dregs of ſin, and which comes up neareſt to God, as the ſpirit of the mind and underſtanding doth; verily, not our minds only, but even the ſpirit of our minds, need renewing, becauſe corruption is got into the higheſt powers and ſuperior faculties of the ſoul, and becauſe we muſt ſerve God with all our mind; and if ſo, with the ſpirit of our mind; and bleſſed be God, that regenerating and renewing grace is an univerſal principle, as ſin was. Did ſin invade the whole ſoul, all the powers and faculties of it, and deprive us of the divine image? It is the work of grace to reſtore our depraved natures to their primitive integrity. The renewed perſon is ſanctified *totus*, though not *totaliter*; a new nature is found with him, which *after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour: For we are members one of another.

Our apoſtle cloſes this chapter with an exhortation to ſeveral duties belonging to the ſecond table, namely, to abſtain from lying, from anger, from ſtealing, from corrupt communication, from all bitterneſs of ſpirit, from malice and revenge, and to exerciſe brotherly kindneſs and mutual forgiveneſs. From whence *note*, That Chriſtians muſt make conſcience of the duties of the ſecond table, as well as of the firſt, and perform their duty towards their neighbour, as well as towards God, for the law is one copulative, *God ſpake all theſe words*: The authority of the lawgiver is deſpiſed, in the violence of the leaſt command: When therefore ſecond-table duties are performed by us, from arguments and motives drawn from the firſt table, that is, when in obedience to God's command, and with an eye at his glory, we perform our duty to our neighbour, this is both an argument of our ſincerity, and alſo an ornament to our profeſſion: *Wherefore put away lying*, &c. Lying was a vice very common among the heathens: It is likely the Epheſians, in their heathen ſtate, had been very guilty of it, for they thought it lawful, when it was beneficial, to lie; and affirmed, that a lie was better than an hurtful truth. Our apoſtle therefore exhorts them, now converted to Chriſtianity, to ſpeak exact truth one to another; and adds a forcible reaſon for it, becauſe they were members one of another; that is, of human ſociety, which by lying is deſtroyed; falſhood diſſolves the bond of human ſociety. *Learn* hence, That there is no ſin more unſeemly in a Chriſtian, more inconſiſtent with grace, more abominable to God, more like unto the devil, more injurious and prejudicial to human ſociety, than the ſin of lying; fidelity towards each other, and mutual confidence in each other, being that which makes human ſociety both ſafe and eaſy.

26 Be ye angry, and ſin not: let not the ſun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.

Some underſtand theſe words only as a cautionary direction, and ſenſe them us: If ye be angry at any time, take heed that ye ſin not, by exceeding due bounds; and if at any time it doth ſo, ſuppreſs it ſpeedily, before the ſun go down: This was a practice even amongſt the heathens; before the ſun went down, they would ſhake hands and embrace one another; to the ſhame of Chriſtians, who gave place to the devil, according to the known proverb, *Contubernalem habet diabolum, qui lectum petit iratus*; he that goes angry to bed, has the devil for his chamber-fellow, yea, for his bed-fellow; nay he lies not only in his bed, but in his boſom. Others underſtand the words as a precept and command. *Be angry*, but take heed of ſinful anger: Now, the way to be angry and not ſin, is to be angry at nothing but at ſin; it is our duty to be angry, when we ſee others depart from their duty. Meek Moſes, who was cool enough in his own cauſe, was not in God's; he has no zeal for God, that is not moved, when he ſees or hears God diſhonoured. *Learn* hence, 1. That anger being an affection implanted by God in the human nature, is not in itſelf evil or ſinful, but in ſome caſes, a neceſſary duty. 2. That there is an eaſy and ready paſſage from what is lawful, to what is ſinful. *Be angry, and ſin not*; implying, that it is a very eaſy matter to ſin in our anger, and no eaſy matter to be angry and not to ſin. 3. That it is very difficult, if not impoſſible, to avoid ſin in our anger, if we let anger hang upon our ſpirits, and continue with us; anger may paſs through the heart of a wiſe man, but reſts in the boſom of fools: Anger againſt ſin muſt continue, but continuance in anger will be ſinful. To prevent the ſin of immoderate anger, theſe rules will be uſeful. (1.) Deſire not to hear what others ſay of thee, leſt you want patience to bear what you hear; many tear themſelves with anger, when they hear themſelves torn with ſlander; we had better be in the dark concerning our own wrongs, than by knowing of them, wrong ourſelves by paſſion or deſire of revenge. (2.) What you do hear ſaid of you, interpret always in the moſt favourable ſenſe; call it an infirmity, and diſtinguiſh between the action and intention, between what is ſpoken, and the intent of the ſpeaker. (3.) In and under all provocations, caſt your eye upward: Look up to God, and caſt your eye inward, and ſee what you have deſerved, though not at your neighbour's hand, yet at God's hand. Shimei gave David provocation to boil up his anger to the height of fury, 2 Sam. xvi. 5. but by eying God: how calm and meek was his ſpirit? Thus, *Be angry and ſin not.*

28 Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſin diſſuaded from, theft, and ſtealing. This the heathen nations counted no crime; they made no conſcience, either openly or fraudently, to take away their neighbours goods. Therefore, ſays the apoſtle, let thoſe of you, who in the time of your paganiſm and unregeneracy, were given to ſtealing, now being converted to Chriſtianity, do ſo no more. 2. The remedy preſcribed for the prevention of this ſin, and that is, diligence and labour in ſome honeſt calling; *let him labour, working with his hands*: Idleneſs occaſions poverty, brings men to want, increaſes their neceſſities, and then they betake themſelves to indirect and unlawful means to ſupply them. 3. One ſpecial reaſon why perſons ſhould labour in the way of their calling that they might have *to give to him that needeth*; not only that they may have wherewith to relieve their own wants, but the wants of others. Where *note*, That God expects charity from the hand of thoſe who get their living with their hands: Day-labourers, and ſuch as have nothing to live upon but their work, muſt yet give their mite, their alms for the help of the indigent. *Obſerve*, 4. The reſtriction and qualification of this labour of the hands, he muſt *work* that which is *good*, that he may give to him that needeth: To relieve others with the gain of oppreſſion, or with the hire of an harlot, is unacceptable; the matter of our alms muſt be goods righteouſly gotten, otherwiſe it is robbery, not righteouſneſs.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers.

Here the apoſtle directs us how to manage our tongues, both negatively and poſitively telling us, what we ſhould not ſpeak, and what we ſhould: Let no corrupt, rotten, filthy diſcourſe come out of your mouth; ſuch as have rotten lungs, have a ſtinking breath; filthy diſcourſe argues a polluted heart; ſuch noiſome diſcourſe is unſavoury to an holy ear, and greatly offenſive, contagious, and infecting to common and ordinary hearers. Next, he tells them what they ſhould ſpeak, that which is profitable and edifying, and that which may miniſter increaſe of grace to the hearers: Our ſpeech ſhould be ſo gracious and ſavoury, as to diſcover grace wrought in our hearts, and be a means of working it in the hearts of others: elſewhere, St. Paul adviſes, that our ſpeech be ſavoury, ſeaſoned with ſalt, Col. iv. 6. Truth, holineſs, and prudence, is the ſalt of our words: Chriſtians muſt not ſuffer their tongues to run at random in their ordinary diſcourſe; it is not ſufficient that they do not ſpeak to evil purpoſe, but they muſt ſpeak to edifying purpoſe: that which has a tendency to make the hearers ſome way or other, either wiſer or better: This the apoſtle calls, *that which is good to the uſe of edifying.*

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption.

Note here, 1. The title given to the Spirit of God, he is ſtyled the holy Spirit, being eſſentially and infinitely holy in himſelf, and the author of all grace and holineſs in us. 2. The affection of grief, which is here attributed to the Spirit, not properly, but improperly; when we do that which would moſt certainly afflict and grieve him, were he a ſubject capable of grief, and when, upon provocations given on our parts, he carrieth himſelf towards us after the manner of a perſon grieved; namely, when we provoke him to ſuſpend his influence, to withdraw his comforts, leaving us without any preſent ſenſe or feeling of his aſſiſtances; he is alſo then grieved when he is oppoſed, interrupted, controlled, and diſturbed in his operations of grace and comfort upon our ſouls. 3. The argument uſed to enforce the exhortation, not to grieve the holy Spirit of God, becauſe by it we are *ſealed* to the day of redemption. But what doth God's *ſealing* his people by his holy Spirit, intimate and imply? *Anſ.* (1.) It intimates, that God has diſtinguiſhed them from others. (2.) That he has appropriated them to himſelf. (3.) That he has put a value upon them, and a very high eſteem. And, (4.) It imports the irrevocable purpoſe of God for their ſalvation. Seals are for theſe uſes, ends, and purpoſes: Seals are for diſtinction, for appropriation, for confirmation, and argue a high valuation and precious eſteem of the perſon or thing which the ſeal is put upon: *Grieve not the Spirit, whereby ye are ſealed to the day of redemption*, that is, to the day of judgment.

31 Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.

Our apoſtle had exhorted, in the former verſe, not to grieve the holy Spirit of God: In the next verſe, he acquaints us with the particular ſins that would afflict and grieve him; namely, *bitterneſs*, that is, a ſecret grudge, and a ſmothered diſpleaſure againſt our brother: *wrath*, or an impetuous fierceneſs of Spirit, upon ſome real or apprehended injury; *anger*, an eager deſire of revenge; *clamour*, loud threatenings, or reviling language; *evil ſpeaking*, either of others, or to others; *malice*, a rooted enmity, the rage of the devil, and renders a man as like the devil, as any ſin on this ſide hell: All theſe ſins do exceedingly grieve the holy Spirit, they make him both loathe and leave his lodgings. In the laſt verſe, as a proper remedy againſt all the foregoing ſins, he exhorts them to mutual kindneſs: *Be ye kind one towards another:* That is, of a ſweet and loving diſpoſition, affable and courteous to each other; neither carrying it loftily or moroſely, but affably and humbly; *tender-hearted*, having a compaſſionate ſenſe of the miſeries and infirmities of one another; *forgiving* one another whatever has been matter of provocation in each other, according to the example of God, who for Chriſt's ſake has forgiven us. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſtians are obliged, by the laws of their holy religion, to forbear and forgive one another. 2. That they are obliged to forgive one another, as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven them. As God forgives us univerſally, freely, heartily, and ſincerely, and when he has power in his hand to revenge, ſo ſhould we in like manner forgive one another, even as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven us.

CHAP. V.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Our apoſtle having, in the concluſion of the foregoing chapter, exhorted the Epheſians to mutual offices of love and kindneſs towards each other, in the beginning of this chapter, he makes uſe of ſeveral very cogent arguments to excite and quicken them thereunto: The firſt of which is drawn from the example of God, as he had been kind to us, and for Chriſt's ſake forgiven us; let us therefore be followers of him, not as our God only, but as our Father: *Be ye followers of God, as dear children.* Where *note*, 1. The duty exhorted to, *Be ye followers of God*; that is, in all the excellencies of his communicable attributes, and particularly, in the exerciſe of univerſal goodneſs and kindneſs, mercy and forgiveneſs. 2. The argument exciting to this duty, *as dear children:* you are children, and who ſhould children imitate but their Father? And you are dear children, will you not imitate ſuch a Father? *Learn* from both, That ſuch as lay claim to a relation to God, without imitation of him, are not children, but baſtards: They may be of his family, but not of his houſhold; of his family, by inſtruction, but not by deſcent: There is no implantation into Chriſt, without an imitation, both of the Creator and Redeemer, Heb. iii. 6. *Chriſt as a ſon over his own houſe: Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt*, &c.

2 And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.

Here we have a ſecond argument urged, to walk in love, one with, and one towards another, drawn from the example of Chriſt; he alſo, as well as God the Father, has loved us; and the inſtance given of his love, is the higheſt that ever was or can be given: He gave *himſelf* for us, an *offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour. Obſerve* here, 1. The great duty of the law, [walk in love]. This implies the exerciſe of this grace, not barely to have it in the principle and habit, but to exerciſe and exert it in the act: And it implies the univerſal exerciſe of grace; whatever we do both to God and man, muſt be done in love, 1 Cor. xvi. 14. *Let all your deeds be done with charity.* 2. As the great duty of the law, *to walk in love*, ſo the great pattern of the goſpel, *as Chriſt alſo hath loved us.* The particle [*as*] hath firſt the force of an argument, and is as much as *becauſe* Chriſt hath loved us; and it has alſo the force of a rule to direct us in the manner how we ſhould love one another, with an [*as*] of identity, but not equality; not with the ſame degree, but with the ſame kind of love wherewith Chriſt *hath* loved us. But why *hath*, rather than *doth* love us? Why in the preter, rather than in the preſent tenſe? *Anſ.* To denote both the priority of Chriſt's love, that he loved us before we loved him; yea, before we loved ourſelves; nay, before we had any being in the world, we had a being in his love, even from all eternity. And alſo to denote the indubitable certainty of his love; he hath loved you; you need not doubt it, nor queſtion it; he has given actual and undeniable proofs of it; follow him from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven again, and you will find every ſtep he took to have been in love: *Walk then in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us.* *Learn* hence, 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given an ample and full demonſtration of his great and wonderful love unto his church and people. 2. That this love of Chriſt towards us, ſhould not only be an argument and motive to excite and quicken us to walk in love one towards another, but alſo an exact rule and copy to direct and guide us in our walking. There was ſome incommunicable properties in Chriſt's love which we cannot imitate: As his love was an eternal love, an infinite love, a free love, without motive, and in deſpite of obſtacles, a redeeming love; ſuch cannot our love be one to another: But as Chriſt's love was an operative love, a beneficent love, a preventing love, a ſoul love, a conſtant love, thus we are to imitate it, and walk in love one towards another. *Obſerve*, 3. The high inſtance and expreſſion which Chriſt has given of his love unto us, *He gave himſelf for us a ſacrifice unto God*, &c. *He gave*; now gifts and expreſſions of love; *he gave himſelf*, that is more than if he had given all the angels in heaven, and all the treaſures on earth for us, more than the whole world, yea, than ten thouſand worlds; he gave himſelf an *offering and a ſacrifice*, a voluntary ſacrifice, a meritorious, efficacious, expiatory, and propitiatory ſacrifice: And this for us, to be ſtuck and bleed to death in our ſtead: And he gave himſelf a ſacrifice *to God*, as an injured and offended God; to God, as a revenger of ſin; to God, as the guardian and giver of the law; to God as the aſſerter of his truth in his threatenings; he appeared before God as ſitting upon a ſeat of juſtice, that he might open to us a throne of grace. Laſtly, *For a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour*, that is, he gave himſelf with an intention to be accepted, and God received him with a choice acceptation; our ſin had ſent up a very ill ſavour to heaven, which diſturbed the reſt of God: Chriſt expels this ill ſcent, by the perfume of his precious blood. *Learn* hence, 1. That the ſacrifice and ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt were very free and voluntary: He offered himſelf, and his offering was a free-will offering. 2. That this voluntary ſacrifice and free-will offering of Chriſt, was acceptable to God, and efficacious for men; it was acceptable to God, becauſe a complete ſatisfaction for ſin's wrong; and efficacious for us, becauſe a diſcharge from the obligation of ſin's guilt.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh ſaints;

The apoſtle, in this and the following verſes, exhorts the Epheſians to ſhun ſeveral ſins, which were frequently practiſed among the Gentiles before their converſion to Chriſtianity, as, firſt, *fornication*, and all ſorts and degrees of *uncleanneſs*: This was looked upon as an indifferent action, and no ſin at all, by the Pagan world. Next, he adviſes them to beware of *covetouſneſs*, that is, all irregular and inordinate deſires, and luſting after things forbidden in the general, and particularly all inſatiable love of riches, which in trading cities (ſuch was Epheſus) doth uſually very much abound, which ſins he earneſtly deſires may not be *named* amongſt them, that is, not named with approbation, not named without reprehenſion; not named, that is, not committed by any of them, yea, not ſo much as named by them without deteſtation. And the argument offered to diſſuade from theſe ſins, is drawn *ab indecoro*, as not *becoming* ſaints, that is, converted Chriſtians, who profeſs ſeparation from the world, and ſolemn dedication to God and Chriſt, and therefore ought to be holy in heart, chaſte in mind, heavenly in deſire, undefiled in body: A life of purity, and chaſtity well becoming ſaints; they muſt be pure in heart, pure in tongue, pure in hand, pure in intention, pure in expreſſion, pure in converſation, otherwiſe they anſwer not their name, nor walk according to their renewed nature: *Let no uncleanneſs*, &c.

4 Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.

Here our apoſtle adviſes Chriſtians to guard againſt the ſins of the tongue, to avoid all filthy diſcourſe, and all fooliſh diſcourſe, all ſcurrilous and obſcene jeſting, all exceſs in drollery, which is nothing but the foam of a frothy wit: Moderate mirth, by innocent and inoffenſive jeſting, is not here forbidden, but when we jeſt by tart reflections, upon the way, geſture, natural imperfections of others, eſpecially when we furniſh out a jeſt in ſcripture attire, and in a jocular humour make light and irreverent applications of ſcripture phraſes. Lord! what an impious liberty do ſome men take, to bring forth ſcripture, as the Philiſtines brought forth Sampſon, only to make them ſport. Theſe men, ere long, will find Almighty God in earneſt, though they were in jeſt when they played the buffoon with the moſt ſerious things in the world. *Obſerve* farther, our apoſtle's argument to diſſuade from ſuch talk, is this, *they are not convenient*; not convenient in themſelves; not convenient for the ſpeaker, not convenient for the hearers; for they poiſon inſtead of profiting the company, and pollute both the minds and manners of the hearers. O, what a great and common inſtrument of ſin is the mouth or tongue of man! The tongue of a good man is his glory, the tongue of a ſinner is his ſhame; there is no member of the body that doth ſo much ſervice for the devil as the tongue, eſpecially in common converſation; then it is that men let their tongues run-riot, then they utter oaths and blaſphemies againſt God, cenſorious, opprobrious, ſlanderous words againſt their neighbours; to prevent all which, the apoſtle exhorts, in the laſt words of the verſe, that when we meet together, we ſhould rather recount the favours received from God, and bleſs him for them: *But rather giving of thanks*. As there is at all times, and in all places, cauſe of thankſgiving adminiſtered to us by God, ſo is it our duty to take all occaſions and fit opportunities to excite both ourſelves and others to the practice of it, who are naturally very averſe and backward to it. From the whole, *note*, That ſo quick and eaſy is the paſſage from what is lawful and allowed, to what is ſinful and forbidden, that it is a taſk of no ſmall difficulty to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth, eſpecially by recreating our ſpirits by pleaſant and delightful diſcourſe, ſo that we exceed not either in matter, manner, or meaſure. Well might St. James ſay (chap. iii. 2.) *If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man*, intimating, that there are many, very many, that do thus offend; and ſuch as do not, are Chriſtians of no common attainments, but great proficients in grace: Perſons of extraordinary meaſures both of piety and prudence.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Our apoſtle, conſidering how exceeding common the forementioned ſins were among the Gentiles, and how ready perſons were to eſteem lightly of them, adviſes the Epheſians here, not to entertain in their minds light thoughts of them, or to believe any libertines which ſhould repreſent them as ſmall and inconſiderable matters; for how can a little ſin be committed againſt a great God? or that ſin be accounted light, which brings down the heavy wrath of God upon the perſon, and ſhuts him out of the kingdom of God? *Note* here, 1. The deſcription of heaven, it is a *kingdom*, for its eminency and glory, for its fulneſs and ſufficiency, for its ſafety and ſecurity, for its duration and perpetuity, ſo called: And it is the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God, that is, either the kingdom of Chriſt who is God, or the kingdom of Chriſt by purchaſe, and the kingdom of God by free donation. But mark, *the kingdom of Chriſt and of God*, of Chriſt firſt, becauſe there is no coming into the kingdom of God but by Chriſt: Chriſt is firſt named, becauſe we enter by him into the kingdom, and in his right. 2. The ſins enumerated, which will aſſuredly ſhut perſons out of this kingdom, and they are not external and corporeal ſins only, as whoredom and uncleanneſs, but internal and ſpiritual, *covetouſneſs, which is idolatry:* As a man may be guilty of adultery, and yet never touch a woman, and of murder, yet never ſtrike his neighbour, ſo he may be guilty of idolatry, and yet never bow his knee to an idol: Secret idolatry, ſoul idolatry, will ſhut out of heaven, as well as open idolatry. Any thing that has our higheſt eſteem and regard, our extreme love and delight, and is the ſpecial object of our hope, our affiance and truſt, of our fear and care, this we make our God: And thus the covetous man is an idolater, for he gives theſe acts of ſoul-worſhip to the creature, to ſomething in the world which is not God. Every natural man is an idolater; either the world, or ſome worldly luſt, is his God; and no idolater can have, while ſuch, any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. 3. The ſeaſonable advice which St. Paul gives the Epheſians, and *us* in them, not to be partakers of other men's ſins: *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*, leſt ye be alſo partakers with them in their plagues and puniſhments. *Queſ.* But when may we be ſaid to be partakers of other men's ſins? *Anſ.* When we conſent to them, connive at them, rejoice in them, give counſel or command for them, by not hindering of them, by not publiſhing and puniſhing of them if in our power, by not mourning over them, but eſpecially by joining with them in the ſinful practice of them; all theſe ways are we partakers of other men's ſins.

8 For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: Walk as children of light;

Here the Epheſians are put in mind of the darkneſs and blindneſs of their heathen ſtate, before the light of the goſpel came among them; they were not only dark, very much in the dark, but darkneſs itſelf: He next acquaints them with their happy condition, by entertaining of the goſpel of Chriſt, they thereby became *light in the Lord*, they were ſavingly enlightened by the word and Spirit of God; and accordingly he urges them to walk anſwerably to their Chriſtian profeſſion, *walk as children of light. Note* here, 1. That the ſtate which every ſoul is in by nature, and before converſion, is a ſtate of ſpiritual darkneſs; like men in the dark, they go they know not whither, they do they know not what, they ſtumble and fall they know not how nor when. 2. That all thoſe whom God calls effectually out of the darkneſs and ignorance of their natural and unregenerate ſtate, he doth enlighten them by his word and holy Spirit. 3. That ſuch as are ſo called and enlightened, ought to walk ſuitably to their privilege, and anſwerably to their high and honourable profeſſion. *Walk as children of light*; that is, holy, humbly, cheerfully, thankfully before God, exemplarily, and unblameably before the world.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodneſs and righteouſneſs and truth) 13 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Theſe words contain a reaſon why the Epheſians, who were once darkneſs, but then enlightened by the holy Spirit, ſhould walk as children of the light, namely, becauſe the fruits of that light, or of the holy Spirit, the author of that light which they had received, *is in all goodneſs, righteouſneſs, and truth*, that is, it conſiſted in theſe things, theſe are the fruits of the enlightening and enlivening Spirit of God; ſo that the force of the argument lies thus: Such a walking as is here directed to, namely, in the love and practice of univerſal righteouſneſs and goodneſs, is the genuine fruit and natural reſult of the holy Spirit, and accordingly, as ſuch, they were obliged to it; none can walk as children of the light, but ſuch as are renewed and quickened by the holy Spirit of God, and made children of light, and ſuch will be found in the practice of thoſe duties wherein that walk conſiſteth; *proving what is acceptable unto the Lord:* That is, firſt, To ſtudy the word, and find what is pleaſing unto God. Secondly, To embrace with our hearts what we find to be ſo. And, thirdly, To practiſe in our lives what we embrace with our hearts. The ſcripture acquaints us with ſome perſons and ſome performances which are very acceptable unto God; ſuch perſons as live moſt by faith, as are very upright in their walking, very ſincere in all they do, ſuch are greatly acceptable unto God; ſo the performances are alſo acceptable, namely, when we do juſtice and judgment, this is more acceptable to the Lord than ſacrifice; both commutative and diſtributive juſtice betwixt man and man, more pleaſing to God than the higheſt acts of worſhip performed to him without this, Prov. xxi. 3. To ſerve Chriſt with a pure intention, with good will, or a willing mind, and *to ſuffer patiently for well-doing*, this is highly pleaſing and acceptable unto God, 1 Pet. ii. 20.

11 And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.

Obſerve here, 1. The odious character wherewith ſin in general is branded; it is ſtyled darkneſs, a work of darkneſs, works of darkneſs, and an unfruitful work.—Sin is ſtyled darkneſs, becauſe it originally ſprings from darkneſs, it naturally delights in darkneſs, it ultimately leads to eternal darkneſs.—Sin is called a work of darkneſs, to imply the drudgery and toil, the labour and pains, that the ſinner is at in the ſervice of ſin; the work of ſin is a mere drudgery; it is not a pleaſurable ſervice, but a laborious ſervitude.—And the apoſtle calling ſin by the name of works, doth intimate to us, that one ſin never goes ſingle and alone, but has a dangerous train and retinue.—Finally, ſin is an unfruitful work; not materially and ſubjectively unfruitful, for the corrupt nature of man is a rank ſoil in which ſin thrives apace; but terminatively and ultimately, it is unfruitful in the concluſion, in the event and iſſue, Rom. vi. 21. *What fruit*, &c. 2. A dehortation, or negative precept, *Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*; it is both the duty and intereſt of every Chriſtian to have nothing to do with any ſinful work; the preceptive will of God requires this, ſin being contrary to the holineſs of his nature and will; and the dignity and purity of the goſpel calls for this, which is a law of holineſs, and a rule of holy living. 3. A poſitive injunction, *but rather reprove them.* How are we to reprove the unfruitful workers and works of *darkneſs?* Two ways, (1.) By our lips; with plainneſs, but yet with prudence; with faithfulneſs, but yet with meekneſs; in reproof never uſe ſharp words, if ſoft words will ſerve the turn. (2.) With our lives; thus Nehemiah, by his princely demeanour, did reprove the covetouſneſs of former governors, Neh. v. 15. *So did I, becauſe of the fear of the Lord*; a holy life is a viſible and daily reproof given both to ſin and ſinners.

12 For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret. 13 But all things that are reproved, are made manifeſt by the light: for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light:

Here our apoſtle aſſigns particular reaſons why the Epheſians ſhould *have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful* workers and *works of darkneſs*, but reprove them; namely, (1.) The abominable filthineſs of thoſe ſins which the wicked Pagans committed, eſpecially in their Heathen myſteries, preſcribed by the devil as parts of his worſhip; ſuch things done in ſecret, as it was even a ſhame to ſpeak of. (2.) Becauſe admonitions and reproof make the work of darkneſs manifeſt to the ſinner's conſcience, ſet ſin forth in its black and ugly colours. A diſcovery of ſin in its vileneſs, odiouſneſs, and uglineſs, is neceſſary to a ſinner's conviction of it, and converſion from it; and God doth not only bleſs the miniſtry of the word from the pulpit, but ſometimes by a word of reproof from the mouth of a private Chriſtian, and the light of his holy example, for this great end. A reproof piouſly and prudently given to open ſinners, by private Chriſtians, ſhall not miſs of its end, it will certainly have its effect, either in the ſinner's converſion and ſalvation, or in his obduration and condemnation; as all things reproveable are made manifeſt by light, ſo a prudent reproof and pious converſation put ſin to ſhame, if not to ſilence.

14 Wherefore he ſaith, Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.

The laſt argument which our apoſtle offers to conſideration, for enforcing the duty of reproving the unfruitful workers and works of darkneſs, is drawn from the example of God himſelf, whoſe great deſign it is, by his holy word, to awaken men out of the ſleep of ſin and death, that Chriſt may give them light. Here *note*, The dangerous and deplorable, though not hopeleſs and deſperate ſtate of an unconverted and impenitent ſinner, namely, ſpiritual *ſleep and death*; every man by nature is in a dead ſleep till the renovating change; he apprehends things as a man aſleep; all his thoughts of God and Chriſt, of heaven and hell, of ſin and holineſs, are ſlight and hovering notions, not real and thorough apprehenſions; the moſt ſubſtantial realities are with them but phantaſms and imaginations:—Imaginary dangers ſtartle them, like men in a dream; but real dangers, though never ſo near, do not affect them: As in natural ſleep, all the ſenſes of the body, ſo in ſpiritual ſleep, are all the ſenſes of the ſoul bound up; and accordingly, this ſleep is not caſual, but connatural to our preſent ſinful ſtate; a ſoul drenched in ſenſuality ſleeps as it were by choice, and not by chance. But how, O ſinner! canſt thou ſleep under ſuch a load of ſin and guilt, with ſo many wounds in thy conſcience, with ſo many ulcers in thy ſoul? Can a diſeaſed man ſleep? Can a condemned man ſleep? Can a man in debt ſleep? All this the ſinner is; and yet, though God thunders above, and hell gapes from beneath, and the ſinner hangs over it by the fretted thread of this life, yet he is in a profound ſleep; but his damnation ſlumbers not, if he doth not ſpeedily awake, *and ariſe from the dead, that Chriſt may give him light.*

15 See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe.

Theſe words may be conſidered two ways; either, firſt, As a direction to thoſe, who, according to the foregoing exhortation, do reprove ſinners for their unfruitful works of darkneſs, namely, to walk very circumſpectly themſelves; ſee then *how* circumſpectly you walk, ſo the words may be rendered; and it intimates to us, that thoſe only are fit to reprove ſin in others, who walk very circumſpectly and unblameably themſelves; ſuch only have authority to reprove, and ſuch only can hope for ſucceſs in reproving, ver. 11. *Rather reprove them*; *ſee then that ye walk circumſpectly.* Secondly, The words may be conſidered as a new precept, added by St. Paul to the former given in this chapter, for directing the Epheſians to an holy life; he aſſures them, that if they will walk holily, they muſt walk circumſpectly, and that circumſpect walking is wiſe walking. *Obſerve* here, 1. The neceſſity of circumſpect walking, *ſee that ye walk circumſpectly.* *Learn* hence, That it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to maintain a holy courſe of obedience to the commands of God, without great care and caution, heedfulneſs and circumſpection; none can walk holily, that do not walk circumſpectly and watchfully; ſuch is that weakneſs and inconſtancy of our nature, ſo many and ſo ſubtle are our ſpiritual enemies, and ſo intimate with us, ſo ſtrict and exact is the law of God we are to walk by, and ſo holy and jealous is that God we are to walk before, that it is impoſſible to walk before him acceptably, if we do not walk circumſpectly. 2. As the neceſſity, ſo the excellency of circumſpect walking; it is not fooliſh, unadviſed, and unaccountable walking, but it is truly wiſe walking; ſuch walking as the wiſdom of God recommends to us, and ſuch walking as beſpeaks us truly and really wiſe; ſuch as walk looſely, walk fooliſhly; careleſs walking is fooliſh walking, but circumſpect walking is wiſe walking: For it is to be wiſe for ourſelves, and wiſe as to our beſt and true intereſt; it is to be wiſe for time, and wiſe to eternity; wiſe both for this, and for the coming world.

16 Redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.

Obſerve here, 1. A moſt important and neceſſary duty exhorted to, namely, to redeem the time: This cannot be done in a natural ſenſe: Time once paſt, is irrecoverably loſt, we can no more recal it: But in a moral ſenſe, time may be ſaid to be redeemed, when our diligence to improve it is redoubled, when we do much work in a little time; to redeem time, ſuppoſes and implies a right knowledge of the uſe and end of time, and high valuation of the worth and excellence of time, and reſolution to reſcue it out of the hands of thoſe that would devour it: Idleneſs, exceſs of ſleep, inordinate adorning of the body, immoderate recreations, vain company, an exceſs of worldly buſineſs, all theſe are robbers of our time, and time muſt be reſcued out of their hands. *Queſt.* Who are the perſons more eſpecially concerned to redeem time? *Anſ.* All thoſe that are young: Such as have idly waſted a great part of their time: All that are ignorant and graceleſs; all that are weak and aged, and have but a few ſands in their glaſs; all thoſe that are recovered from ſickneſs; and all ſuch as, through poverty, reſtraint, or ſervice, are ſcanted of their time, ſhould wiſely redeem it, and induſtriouſly improve it, for God and their ſouls; becauſe upon this moment depends eternity, and according to our preſent choice, will be our eternal lot. *Obſerve*, 2. The apoſtle's argument here, to excite all perſons wiſely to redeem their time, namely, *becauſe the days are evil*; that is, full of ſin, by the ſcandalous lives of profeſſors; full of error, by the ſubtlety of heretical ſeducers; full of affliction and miſery, by reaſon of ſharp and hot perſecutions; when days are moſt evil, moſt ſinful or calamitous, then it is a Chriſtian's duty to improve his time well and wiſely, for God and his ſoul.

17 Wherefore be not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

As if he had ſaid, Seeing that the times are ſo perilous, and your opportunities of doing good ſo uncertain, be wiſe, and underſtand what are the proper duties of your place and ſtation, and know how to manage yourſelves in every relation, with reference to the duties, dangers, ſnares, and temptations which may be before you, and this according to the will of God revealed in his word. *Learn* hence, That it is a ſpecial part of divine wiſdom, to underſtand and know what is the mind and will of God concerning us, in every condition of life which his providence brings us into; to the intent that we may fill up every relation, with the proper duties of it, to the glory of God, and our own and others ſatisfaction.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit;

Obſerve here, 1. Our apoſtle's ſeaſonable dehortation, *Be not drunk with wine*; drunkenneſs, as well as uncleanneſs, and drunkenneſs with uncleanneſs, for they commonly go together, were ſins which the Epheſians and unconverted Pagans were generally guilty of; St. Paul therefore cautions theſe new converts againſt this old ſin, which tranſports men to inſolent and outrageous practices, as the next words intimate, *for therein is exceſs*; the original word may be rendered lewdneſs and luſt, to denote, that when perſons are inflamed with wine, they are liable to all manner of exceſſive wickedneſs, and particularly to the ſin of uncleanneſs. 2. The duty exhorted to, in order to the prevention of this ſin, and that is, to labour and endeavour, inſtead of being filled with wine, to be full of the holy Spirit of God, to be filled with the ſanctifying graces of the holy Spirit: Bleſſed be God, he allows us to ſeek after the greateſt and fulleſt meaſures of the holy Spirit; and injurious we are to ourſelves, if we content ourſelves with ſmall meaſures and degrees of it. The ſenſe of the words ſeems to be thus: Let no Chriſtian allow himſelf in any ſinful exceſſes; let him never fill himſelf with wine or ſtrong drink, or with meat and drink to the full, for that fulneſs will breed all manner of ſenſual luſts in him: But let his deſires and endeavours be carried out after the grace and Spirit of God, let him be filled therewith; for that fulneſs will keep the ſoul holy, the body chaſte, and render the Chriſtian fit for the ſervice of God on earth, and meet for the fruition and enjoyment of God in heaven. Take your fill of the Spirit, you can never be over-filled.

19 Speaking to yourſelves in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

The apoſtle, in the foregoing verſe, cautions the Epheſians againſt that drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs which did commonly attend them at the ſolemnities of their Heathen gods; their Bacchanalia, or feaſts dedicated to Bacchus the god of wine, were uſually concluded with exceſſive drunkenneſs

neſs and uncleanneſs. In theſe drunken feaſts, they had their drunken hymns, which they ſang to their drunken deity, in praiſe of him whom they called the god of wine: Now in oppoſition to theſe drunken and impure ſongs, the apoſtle exhorts the Chriſtian Epheſians to ſing the pſalms of David, or the hymns compoſed by ſpiritual men, ſuch as Zachariah and Simeon, or by the *afflatus* of the holy Spirit, which in thoſe times did immediately inſpire perſons both to pray and ſing in their aſſemblies, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. ſinging theſe with the mouth, and alſo *making melody in your heart to the Lord.* *Note* here, The hearts and ſpirits of good men are full of ſpiritual mirth and joy; they are as merry in the Lord, as ſinners in their luſt; that it is lawful and laudable for them to expreſs their mirth, and give vent to their ſpiritual joy, by ſinging; that pſalms and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs do beſt become their mouths, when they perform thoſe ſpiritual exerciſes; that, in ſinging theſe, there muſt be an inward harmony, and muſical melody in the ſoul and heart, as well as in the tongue; beſides, a melodious tuning of the voice, the exerciſe of the underſtanding, and the orderly motions of the affections, muſt accompany them that will make melody in the heart to the Lord in their ſinging. Singing of pſalms then, both in public aſſemblies, and in private families, and ſounding forth the high praiſes of God for mercies received, is a ſpecial duty to be jointly performed by all perſons capable of it.

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

The next duty St. Paul exhorts to, is that of ſpiritual *thankſgiving.* Where *note*, 1. The time when it ought to be performed, *always*, that is, at leaſt every day, and upon every ſolemn occaſion, keeping the heart continually in a praiſing, as well as praying frame. 2. The matter for which we are to give thanks, *for all things*; that is, firſt, For all providences, whether proſperous or adverſe; for ſickneſs as well as health, God intending our good by both. Secondly, For all mercies, for ſparing mercy, preventing mercy, recovering mercy, for common benefits, for peculiar and diſtinguiſhing favours, for mercies received, for mercies expected, for what we have in hand, and what we have in hope. 3. The perſon to whom our thankſgivings are to be offered, to God and the Father, to God our Creator, to God as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and our Father in him. 4. The perſon through whom our thankſgivings are acceptable unto God, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as all ſpiritual addreſſes, both of praiſe and thankſgiving, muſt be offered up to God, ſo their acceptance with God is only to be expected by or through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

21 Submitting yourſelves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the huſband is the head of the wife, even as Chriſt is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo *let* the wives *be* to their own huſbands in every thing.

Our apoſtle having exhorted the Epheſians to ſuch general duties as belong to all Chriſtians, comes now to exhort them to the practice of relative duties, as they are members of ſocieties, and particularly as they live in a family ſociety one with another, as huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants: much of the life and power of religion appearing in the conſcientious practice and performance of relative duties. But, firſt, he gives them a general direction, to *ſubmit themſelves one to another in the fear of God*; that is, by yielding and mutually condeſcending to each other, ſtooping to the meaneſt offices of love and kindneſs one towards another, and this *in the fear of God*; that is, either in obedience to the command of God, which enjoins this ſubmiſſion, for then we perform our duty towards one another acceptably, and as we ought, when we eye the command of God in what we do; or elſe *in the fear of God*; that is, making the fear of God the rule and meaſure of our ſubmiſſion one to another; for we are by no means bound to ſubmit ourſelves, in order to the pleaſing of our neighbour, any farther than is conſiſtent with that ſubjection and obedience which we owe to God. *Learn* hence, That where that noble and divine principle of the fear of God prevaileth in the heart, it will make a man conſcientiouſly careful of his duty towards man; the fear of God in him will have both the force of a motive to quicken him up unto, and alſo of a rule to guide and direct him in that ſubmiſſion, which, in obedience to God, is due and payable to his neighbours. Having laid down this general rule, now he comes to preſs us to the practice of particular duties: *Wives, ſubmit yourſelves to your own huſbands*, &c. *Note* here, He begins with the wife's duty firſt, before the huſband's, probably becauſe her duty of entire ſubjection is the moſt difficult duty, and that being conſcientiouſly diſcharged, is a compelling motive to the huſband to ſet about his duty in like manner. 2. The particular and ſpecial duty which the wife is exhorted to, and that is ſubmiſſion: *Wives, ſubmit yourſelves.* This ſuppoſes the wife's due eſteem of, and her affectionate love unto her huſband, as the root of this ſubmiſſion. 3. The univerſality and extenſive nature of the command, it is to all wives, to pay this tribute of ſubjection to their own huſbands; no honour, ſuperiority, or antecedent dignity in the wife, no perſonal infirmity, no moral infirmity, nay, no error in religion, can give a diſcharge from this obligation; there is no wife, whatever her birth and breeding, whatever her parts or privileges may be, that is exempted from this tie of ſubjection to her huſband, for the law of nature, the ordinance of God, and her own voluntary covenant and promiſe in marriage, do oblige and bind her to it. Yet, *note*, 4. The qualification and manner of this ſubmiſſion: it muſt be *as unto the Lord*; that is, in obedience to the command of the Lord, who has given the huſband power over the wife, and required, and will reward her obedience to him: or elſe, *as unto the Lord*, it pointed out a ſimilitude, and likeneſs, and reſemblance, in the wife's ſubjection to the huſband, with that which they owe to Chriſt the Lord, that is, it muſt not be feigned, but ſincere, it muſt not be conſtrained, but willing, from a complacency taken in the doing of this duty. And, laſtly, *As unto the Lord*, that is, in all lawful things: the wife is by no means to obey the huſband in any commands which are contrary to that ſubmiſſive obedience which ſhe owes to Chriſt, her ſupreme Lord. Now with this limitation, the wife, in ſubjecting herſelf to her huſband, is ſubject unto the Lord. 5. The reaſon given by the Holy Ghoſt for enforcing this duty of ſubmiſſive obedience upon wives, ver. 23. *For the huſband is the head of the wife, even as Chriſt is the head of the church*, &c. that is, the wife ought to ſubmit herſelf to her huſband, becauſe, (1.) He is her head: and, (2.) Therein doth reſemble Chriſt's headſhip over his church. *Obſerve* here, That this metaphor of an head, applied to the huſband, denotes both the dignity and duty of the huſband: it implies his eminency, by reaſon of his ſex; it implies his authority to govern and direct, as the head has power to guide and govern the whole body, and it points out his duty, as well as his dignity: as the head is the ſeat of wiſdom and knowledge, ſo huſbands ſhould be endowed with greater meaſures of knowledge and prudence, to enable them to guide and govern in the place God has ſet them. And further, the apoſtle would have wives conſider and obſerve, that God will have ſome reſemblance of Chriſt's authority over the church, held forth in the huſband's authority over the wife. Is Chriſt an Head of dominion and direction alſo to his church? So ſhould the huſband be to his wife. Doth Chriſt exerciſe his dominion and power over the church, not rigidly and tyrannically, but with meekneſs and gentleneſs? So ſhould the huſband rule. In a word, Is Chriſt the Saviour of the body meritoriouſly? So ſhould the huſband be miniſteriouſly, to defend the wife from injuries, to ſupply her neceſſities, and to improve his whole power and authority over her for her good. 6. The manner of this ſubjection ſpecified and declared: as the church is ſubject, ſo let the wife be ſubject. Is the church ſubject to Chriſt willingly, cheerfully, dutifully, delightfully? So let the wife be ſubject. Doth the church ſubject itſelf to Chriſt univerſally? So let the wife be ſubject *in all things:* Not abſolutely in all things, but in all things lawful, godly, and honeſt: nothing is excepted out of the wife's ſubjection to her huſband, but that which is contrary to her duty to Him who commanded this ſubjection; when there appears little diſcretion in the huſband's command, then there will appear a great ſenſe of duty in the wife's obedience.

25 Huſbands, love your wives, even as Chriſt alſo
loved the church, and gave himſelf for it; 26 That
he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of
water by the word, 27 That he might preſent it
to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or
wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be
holy and without blemiſh.

The apoſtle having propounded the wife's duty firſt, recommends the huſband's duty next: her's was the duty of ſubmiſſion, his of love and intire affection. This the apoſtle mentions, becauſe the huſband, for want of love, is too ready to abuſe that ſovereignty and ſuperiority which God has given him over his wife, by proving rigorous and bitter unto her: therefore, ſays he, *Huſbands, love your wives*, that is, with a ſpecial, peculiar, conjugal love, ſuch as no other muſt ſhare in. This duty of love is very comprehenſive, and it includes a very affectionate regard to her, a tender care over her, co-habitation with her, contentment and ſatisfaction in her alone, a patient bearing with her weakneſſes, a prudential hiding of her infirmities, a providing a ſupply of her wants ſuitable to her rank, a readineſs to inſtruct and direct her, a willingneſs to pray for her, and with her: Where true conjugal love is found, theſe duties included will be performed. *Obſerve* next, As the apoſtle propounded the church for a pattern of ſubjection to the wife, ſo he propounds Chriſt as a pattern of love to huſbands: *Huſbands, love your wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the church.* Did he love his church with an active and operative love, with a real and ſincere love, with an intire and undivided love, with a laſting and conſtant love, notwithſtanding all his church's weakneſſes and failings? Such ought the huſband's love to be; that is, every huſband to his own wife: No meanneſs of birth, no want of education, no homelineſs of perſon, no frowardneſs of diſpoſition in the wife, will diſcharge the huſband from the obligation of this duty towards her; Chriſt's example hath both the force of an argument to excite us to it, and is alſo an exact rule to guide and direct us in it: *Huſbands love your wives, as Chriſt alſo loved the church.* *Obſerve* farther, The inſtances and evidences which Chriſt has given of his love unto his church: He gave himſelf for her, *that he might ſanctify and cleanſe, and preſent her to himſelf a glorious church, without ſpot or blemiſh.* Here *note*, 1. The church's polluted and impure condition, ſuppoſed before Chriſt gave himſelf for her; the church in herſelf was, as the world is, polluted, otherwiſe ſhe had ſtood in no need of Chriſt's waſhing and cleanſing. 2. The care of Chriſt to purify and cleanſe his church from this pollution; he gave himſelf for her, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe her; he loved her, and waſhed her from her ſins in his own blood. 3. The inſtrumental means of the church's ſanctification, it was with the *waſhing of water by the word*; the word and ſacraments are the great inſtrumental means, in the hand of Chriſt, by which he applies the virtue and efficacy of his death, for the ſanctifying and cleanſing of his church and children. 4. The holy and glorious condition which the church ſhall be found in at the great marriage-day, *without ſpot or wrinkle, that he might*, at the laſt day, *preſent her to himſelf a ſpotleſs ſpouſe*, a glorious church, having no ſpot of ſin, or wrinkle of deformity, or any ſuch imperfect thing, but be perfectly beautiful, holy, and without blemiſh; intimating, that the church hath her ſpots and wrinkles now in her militant ſtate; but when Chriſt ſhall at laſt preſent the church triumphant to himſelf, then ſhall ſhe be like himſelf, without ſpot. Bleſſed be God, believers have now a righteouſneſs in Chriſt, without ſpot or wrinkle; then ſhall they have an holineſs in themſelves, without ſpot or wrinkle; nothing of imperfection cleaving to them, or inhering in them. The blood of Chriſt has already perfectly juſtified, and thoroughly cleanſed believers from ſin's guilt; ere long the Spirit of Chriſt will perfectly cleanſe them from all ſin's filth. Oh, what a pure and ſpotleſs, what a perfect and beautiful creature will the church come out of Chriſt's hands, and be preſented to the Father, at the great day, in the ſhining beauty of perfect holineſs! God ſtrengthen our faith in the belief of it, and prepare us for the full fruition and final enjoyment of it.

28 So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himſelf. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh; but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the church; 30 For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.

Our apoſtle here propounds a farther argument to enforce this duty of love from huſband to wife, taken from that near conjunction between them, ſhewing that they are one fleſh, and one body, not in a natural, but in a relative ſenſe; and accordingly a man ſhould ſo love his wife, even as himſelf: Doth a man love himſelf ſuperlatively, cordially, tenderly, induſtriouſly, perſeveringly? So ought he to love his wife. Will a man be out of love with himſelf, much leſs hate himſelf, though he be deformed, or by ſome accident maimed? In like manner ought not any natural defect, or accidental miſchance, to cauſe a remiſſion, much leſs a ceſſation of the man's love unto his own wife; as it is an unnatural thing for a man to hate his own fleſh perſonal, ſo his own fleſh relational. Again: A man is ſo far from hating his own fleſh, that he nouriſheth and cheriſheth it with the utmoſt care and tenderneſs; in like manner ought he to be kind to, and tender over his civil-ſelf, the wife of his boſom; in imitation likewiſe of Chriſt's example, who nouriſhes and cheriſhes his church, as being *fleſh of his own fleſh, and bone of his own bone*: that is, as near to one another by a myſtical and ſpiritual union, as Adam and Eve were by a matrimonial union. O ſtupendous privilege, for believers and Chriſt to be as one fleſh! Huſband and wife are not ſo near, ſoul and body are not ſo near, as Chriſt and believers are to each other.

31 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wife, and they two ſhall be one fleſh. 32 This is a great myſtery: but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church. 33 Nevertheleſs, let every one of you in particular ſo love his wife, even as himſelf; and the wife *ſee* that ſhe reverence *her* huſband.

Here the apoſtle uſes a further argument to excite the huſband's love to his eſpouſed wife, taken from the law of marriage, which maketh them two one fleſh in a civil ſenſe, therefore the man ſhould leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife: Not that their obligations ceaſe to their parents, or as if they were to caſt off natural affection to them; but he ſhews, that there is a nearer union betwixt huſband and wife, than betwixt parents and child, and that the bonds of matrimonial love are ſtronger than thoſe of nature. Their being ſaid to be *one fleſh*, implies a moſt ſtrict union, and moſt intimate communion, whereby they have one intereſt, common goods, common friends, yea, and all things common, as if they were but one perſon; but the apoſtle further intimates to us, at the 31ſt verſe, that this matrimonial union betwixt man and wife was deſigned by God, to ſhadow forth and repreſent that myſtical union which is betwixt Chriſt and his church. Doth the conjugal union give the wife an intereſt in the eſtate and honour of the huſband, be ſhe never ſo meanly deſcended in herſelf? In like manner from the ſaints union with Chriſt, does there immediately reſult a ſweet and bleſſed communion or fellowſhip with Chriſt in graces and ſpiritual privileges; all that Chriſt is, and has, is theirs by communication to them, or improvement for them; well might the apoſtle therefore ſay, *This is a great myſtery*, &c. In the 33d verſe, the apoſtle ſhuts up his diſcourſe upon this argument, with a repeated exhortation to *the huſband to love his wife*, and to *the wife to reverence her huſband*; *Let every one of you in particular, ſo love his wife even as himſelf: So love*, that is, with an extenſive love, reaching the whole perſon, ſoul and body; with an intenſive love, above all perſons and relatives whatſoever; with an hearty love, without diſſimulation; with an holy love, without pollution; with a conſtant love, without alteration; and with great love, beyond compariſon.—*And let the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband.* The great duty which the wife owes to her huſband is *reverence*. This is made up of three ingredients; namely, eſtimation, love, and fear; the wife that reverences her huſband, eſteems him, and dares not think meanly of him; her eſteem of him provokes her love unto him; and her love of him is accompanied with an ingenuous fear to offend and grieve him; and the wife expreſſes this reverence in her geſtures, by a reſpectful demeanour towards him, in her ſpeeches to him when with her, and of him when abſent from her, always mentioning him with reſpect and honour; in her actions, by complying with his deſires, by following his directions, by hearkening to his reproofs, and by her cheerful and reſpectful behaviour towards him at all times, and in all places, as well at home, as abroad before the world. And that the wife may thus reverence her huſband, let her be earneſt with God in prayer, for wiſdom and underſtanding, for prudence and patience, for humility and meekneſs; a proud ſpirit would not agree with an angel, but the humble will agree with any perſon

CHAP. VI.

CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: For this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother, (which is the firſt commandment with promiſe) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.

Our apoſtle, in the foregoing chapter, began to treat of relative duties, and concluded that chapter with the duties of huſbands and wives; he begins this with the duty of children and parents to each other: And here we have obſervable, that he begins with the duty of the inferior firſt, of the child to the parents, as he did before with the duty of the wife, chap. v. 22. He firſt puts them in mind of their duty who are to obey; that being the moſt difficult duty, and the perſons concerned in it uſually more defective, and the work leſs eaſy and pleaſing to our nature. 2. The important duty which children are directed to, the duty of obedience and honour; *Children, obey*; *honour your father and mother*; this duty of honour and obedience implies inward reverence, and a lawful eſtimation of their perſons, and honouring of them in heart, ſpeech and behaviour; it implies alſo outward obſervance, a pious regard to their inſtructions, executing all their commands which are not ſinful, depending on their counſels, and following their good examples, owning with thankfulneſs their parents care and concern for them, and recovering the failings and infirmities found in them. 3. The object of this duty, both parents; not the father alone, or the mother only, but both father and mother jointly; *Children, obey your parents*; *honour thy father and thy mother*; as obedience belongeth to all children, of what age or ſex, or condition ſoever, ſo are children obliged to obey both parents, the mother as well as the father, yea, ſhe is named firſt, Lev. xix. 3. her ſex being weaker, ſhe is the more ſubject to contempt; and becauſe the mother, in old age, is liable to be deſpiſed, God has particularly guarded about her, by his poſitive and expreſs command, to free her from contempt, Prov. xxiii. 22. ſaying, *Hearken to thy father who begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old.* 4. The noble principle from whence this obedience in children to parents ought to flow, namely, from the fear of God; *obey them in the Lord*, that is, in obedience to his command, and in all things agreeable to his will, fearing his diſpleaſure in caſe of diſobedience; let not your obedience be barely natural and prudential, but chriſtian and religious. 5. The arguments uſed by our apoſtle to excite to the practice of this duty. The firſt argument is drawn from the equity of it, *this is right*, that is, the law of God and nature requires it. The great motive which ought to excite us to the practice of any duty, is not ſo much the advantageouſneſs, as the righteouſneſs and equity of the duty, as being commanded by God, and well-pleaſing in his ſight; *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* A ſecond argument is, becauſe this is the firſt commandment of the ſecond table, which has a particular promiſe annexed to it: *This is the firſt commandment with promiſe*, that is, with an explicit and expreſs promiſe; for every commandment hath both a promiſe and a threatening implied in it, and annexed to it; but this is the firſt commandment with a promiſe expreſſed, and that is a a promiſe of long life, *that thy days may be long*; and this promiſe is always fulfilled, either in kind or in equivalency, either by enjoying a long life on earth, or a better life in heaven. *Learn* hence, That although our firſt and chief motive to obedience, be the equity and righteouſneſs of what God requires, yet we may, as a ſecondary encouragement, have reſpect to the promiſed reward, and particularly to the temporal advantage of our obedience. Long life is here promiſed to children, as an encouragement to obedience, which is in itſelf a very valuable mercy and bleſſing; and having eyed the command of God in the firſt place, they may and ought to have reſpect to the recompence of reward in the next place.

4 And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Here the duty of *both* parents to their children is laid down. Where *note*, 1. The apoſtle's dehortation, or negative precept, *Provoke not your children to wrath*, that is, be not too ſevere towards them, abuſe not your parental power over them, provoke them not, nor imbitter their ſpirits againſt you, by denying them what is convenient for them, by inveighing with bitter words againſt them, by unjuſt, unſeaſonable, or immoderate correction of them. To provoke or ſtir up any to ſin, eſpecially young ones, and particularly our children, renders us guilty before the Lord, of all that ſin which they have committed through our provocation; *Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. Note*, 2. St. Paul's poſitive injunction given unto parents; *Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:* Where, (1.) He directs to their education; *Bring them up.* (2.) To join nurture and admonition with their education; *Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:* That is, give them good inſtruction, with-hold not early correction, ſet before them good example, begin with them betimes, and ſuffer not the devil, the world, and the fleſh, to beſpeak them for their ſervice, before you engage them for God's; and remember, that there is a tie of nature, a tie of intereſt, and a tie of religion, which parents are under thus to do.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt;
6 Not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good-will doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Obſerve here, 1. The general duty incumbent upon ſervants, that of obedience *to their maſters, according to the fleſh*, that is, in temporal things only; obey your earthly maſters in things pertaining to the world, leaving the ſoul and conſcience to God only, who alone is the ſovereign Lord of it. Chriſtian liberty is not inconſiſtent with civil ſubjection; ſuch as are God's freemen may be ſervants to men, though not the ſervants of men; and, as ſervants, obedience is their duty in all lawful things. 2. The qualifications and properties of this obedience, which is due and payable from ſervants to maſters. (1.) It muſt be with *fear* and *trembling*, that is, with fear of diſpleaſing them; yet they muſt not act barely from fear, but out of love both to God and their maſter. (2.) It muſt be in *ſingleneſs of heart*, in great ſimplicity and ſincerity of ſpirit, without guile, hypocriſy and diſſimulation. (3.) They muſt eye their great Maſter in heaven in all the ſervices they perform to their maſters here on earth, *not with eye-ſervice.* But how ſhould ſervants have an eye to their great Maſter in heaven? *Anſ.* They ſhould have an eye to the preſence of their great Maſter, to the glory of their great Maſter, to the command of their great Maſter, and to the aſſiſtance and acceptance of their Maſter in heaven. *Learn* hence, That our eyeing of God in all the ſervices we perform, and making him the judge and ſpectator of all our actions, will be a ſingular help to make us ſincere and ſingle-hearted in all we do, and in all we deſign. Again, (4.) Their ſervice muſt be performed *with good-will*, that is, with cheerfulneſs and delight, not grudgingly, unpleaſantly, or from fear of puniſhment only; eyeing the Lord Chriſt in all that ſervice they do for men. *Learn* hence, That the meaneſt and baſeſt ſervices and employments, in the place and ſtation which God ſets us in, being done with right qualifications, with faithfulneſs and cheerfulneſs, from right motives, and for right ends, is ſervice done to Chriſt, and, as ſuch, ſhall be accepted and rewarded by him, *with good-will, doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to man.* *Obſerve*, laſtly, The reward which the Holy Ghoſt propounds, as an encouragement to poor ſervants, in their obedience to their maſters; and that is, the aſſurance of a reward from God, whatever diſappointment they may meet with from men: *knowing that whatever a man* doth out of obedience to the Lord, a reward of the ſame ſhall he receive, whether he be a poor bond ſervant, or a free man and maſter. *Note* here, How the baſeſt drudgery of ſervants, when performed in obedience to God, and with an eye at his glory, is called here a *good* work, and ſhall not fail of a good reward: *Whatſoever good thing any man doth*; when a poor ſervant ſcours a ditch, or does the meaneſt drudgery, God will reward him for it; for he looketh not at the beauty, ſplendour, and greatneſs of the work, but at the integrity and honeſty of the workman; the mean and outwardly baſe works of poor ſervants, when honeſt and ſincere, ſhall find acceptance with God, and be rewarded by him, as well as the more ſplendid, honourable, and expenſive works of their rich maſters.

9 And ye, maſters, do the ſame things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven, neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.

Here the maſter's duty to his ſervant is directed to, both generally, and more particularly; in general, he directs maſters *to do the ſame things to* their ſervants; not the ſame things for kind, but for manner of doing them; that is, in obedience to the ſame command of God, with an eye to the ſame glory of God, with the ſame ſingleneſs of heart, with the ſame love and good-will. Here *note*, That the greateſt maſter, yea, the greateſt prince and potentate upon earth, lie under obligations, in point of duty, to their ſervants and inferiors; and it ought to be as much their care to diſcharge their duty ſincerely, cheerfully, with good-will, and eyeing their great Maſter in heaven, as it concerns the pooreſt ſervant to obey them in and after the ſame manner; *Ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them.* Next follow the particular directions given to maſters, namely, To *forbear threatenings*; that is, let them not exerciſe their authority over them imperiouſly and with rigour, but mildly, and with gentleneſs: Rule them not tyrannically, but govern with moderation and temper. Lord! how ordinary is it for men in place and power a little above others, to inſult over, and trample upon others, forgetting that there is one above them, whom they muſt be accountable unto themſelves! *Forbearing threatenings, knowing that your Maſter alſo is in heaven*, with whom there is *no reſpect of perſons.* Here we have Almighty God deſcribed two ways: (1.) From his magnificence and ſtately palace, in which his illuſtrious glory ſhineth; *your Maſter is in heaven*; not as if he were only there, and no where elſe, but eminently there, though every where elſe. (2.) God is here deſcribed by his juſtice and impartiality in judging; *There is no preſect of perſons with him*, that is, when the rich maſter and poor ſervant come to ſtand upon a level before him, he will not reſpect either of them for their outward circumſtances, but, as a juſt judge, reward them both according to their works. Thus our apoſtle concludes his exhortation to the practice and performance of relative duties, between huſband and wife, parent and child, maſter and ſervant. He now cloſes his epiſtle with a ſpecial exhortation to all Chriſtians, to look upon themſelves as ſpiritual ſoldiers, liſted under Chriſt's exalted banner, engaged in a continual warfare with the world, and the prince of the world; and accordingly, he beſpeaks them in martial phraſe to the end of the chapter.

10 Finally, my brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil.

Our apoſtle, calling us here forth to the Chriſtian warfare, gives forth firſt the word of encouragement to battle, *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in his mighty power.* A Chriſtian, above all men, needs reſolution, and a daring courage; if he be poſſeſſed with fear, he is unfit to go into the field; if diſpirited with ſtrong impreſſions of danger, how unready for the encounter; Cowards win neither earth nor heaven. But where lies the Chriſtian's ſtrength? Verily, in the Lord, and not in himſelf; the ſtrength of the whole hoſt of ſaints lies in the Lord of hoſts, and accordingly, it ought to be the Chriſtian's great care, in all difficulties and dangers, to ſtrengthen his faith on the Almighty power of God. *Obſerve*, 2. A direction given how a ſaint may come to be *ſtrong* in the Lord, namely, by putting *on the whole armour of God*; that is, by being clothed with the following graces, which are hereafter mentioned in this chapter; as, *the ſhield of faith, the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, the ſword of the Spirit*, &c. Now theſe are called armour of God, becauſe they are of his appointment and inſtitution, and of his make and conſtitution; and this armour muſt be put on, that is, our grace kept in continual exerciſe; it is one thing to have armour in the houſe, and another to have it buckled on in the field; it is not ſufficient to have grace in the habit and principle, but it is grace in act and exerciſe that muſt conquer ſpiritual enemies. 3. A reaſon aſſigned why the Chriſtian is to be thus completely armed, *that he may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil*; intimating, that the devil is one chief enemy we have to combat with in the Chriſtian warfare, and that this enemy is a wily, ſubtile enemy, diſcovering his dangerous policy, firſt by tempting and alluring into ſin, and then by vexing and tormenting for ſin: But Satan, with all his wits and wiles, ſhall never finally vanquiſh (though he may, in a particular battle, overcome) a ſoul clad with ſpiritual armour; nay, he that hath this armour of God on, ſhall certainly vanquiſh and overcome him: *Put on the whole armour of God*, &c.

12 For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high *places*.

The apoſtle mentioned our enemy in the former verſe; here he deſcribes the combat in this verſe, *We wreſtle:* A Chriſtian's life is a perpetual warfare, a continual wreſtling; but with what? and with whom? *Anſ.* Negatively, *not with fleſh and blood*; that is, not only or chiefly with fleſh and blood, with human enemies, but we muſt grapple and contend with angelical powers, with devils, who are principalities and powers, &c. *Note* here, How the devil and his angels are deſcribed; (1.) By their prince-like authority and government which they exerciſe in the world, called therefore principalities and powers, to denote that Satan is a great and mighty prince; a prince that has the heart and knee of all his ſubjects. (2.) By the ſeat of his empire, he rules in this world, not in the other; the higheſt the devil can go, is the air; heaven fears him not: And he is *a ruler of the darkneſs of this world*, that is, in ſuch ſinners as labour under the darkneſs of ſin and ignorance. (3.) Satan and his angels are here deſcribed by their ſpiritual nature, called *ſpiritual wickedneſſes*, that is, wicked ſpirits, intimating to us, that the devils are ſpirits; that they are ſpirits extremely wicked; and that theſe wicked ſpirits do chiefly annoy Chriſtians with, and provoke them to ſpiritual wickedneſs. (4.) They are deſcribed by their reſidence or place of abode, in *high places*; that is, in the air, of which he is called the prince. From the whole, *note*, How plainly Chriſt our Captain deals with all his ſoldiers, and the difference between Chriſt's dealing with his followers, and Satan with his; Satan durſt not let ſinners know who that God is whom they fight againſt, but Chriſt is not afraid to ſhew his ſaints their enemy in all his power and ſtrength; well he might, becauſe the weakneſſes of God are ſtronger than the powers of hell.

13 Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs; 15 And your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints;

Obſerve here, 1. How our apoſtle having deſcribed the enemy in the foregoing verſe, and ſet him forth in all his formidable ſtrength and power, comes forth at the head of his Epheſian camp, gives them a freſh alarm, and bids them arm, arm! *Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to ſtand in the evil day*; intimating, that an evil day is before us; that it ſhall be of mighty advantage to us to be able to ſtand in the evil day; and without the help of divine armour, we cannot ſtand in that day. The ſanctifying graces of God's Spirit, are this armour; he that has not theſe, let his common gifts be never ſo gay and glorious, he will never hold out to fight the laſt battle, but fall into the enemy's hand, and be taken captive by him at his will. 2. How our apoſtle comes to deſcribe the armour of God, piece by piece, which the Chriſtian is to put on before he takes the field againſt the enemy: Here is the ſoldier's girdle, his breaſt-plate, his ſhoe, his ſhield, his helmet, and his ſword, all deſcribed; his offenſive and defenſive weapons, wherewith ſoldiers of old uſed to arm their bodies from head to foot; now the apoſtle aſſigneth to particular graces, an uſe and excellency anſwerable to theſe pieces of armour, and ſhews, that there is ſome reſemblance between every grace and that piece of the bodily armour to which it is here compared; but *obſervable* it is, that although there be pieces of armour for all other parts of the body, here is none aſſigned for the back, nor back-parts, becauſe there muſt be no running away, no hope of eſcaping by flight in this ſpiritual warfare; if we turn our back upon our enemy, we lie open to his darts, and are in danger of deſtruction; if we fight on, we have our ſecond in the field, and are ſure of victory, provided we enter the field in order, and ſtand to our arms, maintain our watch, keep our ground, and appear armed *cap-a-pee*, from head to foot, with the ſeveral pieces of armour here recommended: The firſt of which is the girdle of truth, ver. 14. *Having your loins girt about with truth*, that is, ſincerity of heart. Doth a girdle or belt adorn the ſoldier? So doth ſincerity adorn the Chriſtian. Doth the girdle ſtrengthen the ſoldier's loins? So doth ſincerity ſtrengthen the ſoul, and every grace in the ſoul; it is ſincere faith that is ſtrong faith; it is ſincere love that is mighty love. Secondly, *The breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs*; by which is to be underſtood the love and practice of univerſal holineſs. But why is this compared to a breaſt-plate? *Anſ.* Becauſe, as the breaſt-plate defends the moſt principle parts of the body, where the heart and other vitals are cloſely couched together; thus holineſs preſerves the ſoul and conſcience, the principal parts of a Chriſtian, from the wounds and harms of ſin, which is the weapon that Satan uſes, to give conſcience its deadly ſtab with. The third piece of Chriſtian armour, is the ſpiritual ſhoe, fitted to the ſoldier's foot, and worn by him, ſo long as he keeps the field againſt ſin and Satan; the ſoldier's way is ſometimes full of ſharp ſtones, and ſometimes by the enemy ſtrewed with ſharp iron ſpikes ſtruck into the ground; the ſoldier will ſoon be wounded, or foundered, if not well ſhod; therefore, the direction here is, Let your *feet be ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace*; that is, maintaining an holy readineſs of ſpirit, and a reſolute frame of heart, to undergo any ſuffering, and endure any hardſhip in your Chriſtian warfare; which frame of ſpirit being wrought in us by the doctrine of the goſpel, is therefore called the *preparation of the goſpel of peace*. The fourth piece of armour recommended above all, to be put on, is the *ſhield of faith*; this is that grace, by which we believe the truth of God's word in general, and depend upon Chriſt in particular, as crucified for pardon and life, and this upon the warrant of the promiſe. But why is faith compared to a ſhield? *Anſ.* Becauſe, as the ſhield defends the whole body, ſo faith defends the whole man; the underſtanding from error, the conſcience from ſearedneſs, the will from rebellion againſt the will and command of God: And, as the ſhield defends the whole armour, as well as the ſoldier's whole body; it defends the breaſt-plate, as well as the breaſt; ſo faith is our armour upon armour, a grace that preſerves all other graces whatſoever. The fifth piece of armour is mentioned, ver. 17. *The helmet of ſalvation*; by which the grace of hope is underſtood, which has for its object ſalvation, called therefore the hope of ſalvation; ſalvation is the ultimate and comprehenſive object of the Chriſtian's expectation; and it is compared to an helmet; becauſe, as the helmet defends the head, ſo doth the hope of ſalvation defend the ſoul; it keeps the head above water, and makes the Chriſtian bold and brave: Hope is a grace of ſingular uſe and excellent ſervice to a Chriſtian, in the whole courſe of his Chriſtian warfare; it puts him upon noble ſervices, it keeps him patient under the greateſt ſufferings, and it will enable the ſoul to wait long for the performance of divine promiſes. The ſixth piece of ſpiritual armour is the *ſword*, ver. 17. The former were defenſive, but this is both an offenſive and defenſive weapon, ſuch is the word of God: But why compared to a *ſword? Anſ.* In regard both of its neceſſity and excellency; the ſword was ever eſteemed a moſt neceſſary and uſeful part of the ſoldier's furniture; of ſuch uſefulneſs, neceſſity, and excellency, is the word of God, by which the Chriſtian doth defend himſelf, and offend his enemies: But why is it called the *ſword of the Spirit? Anſ.* Becauſe the Spirit was the author of it; the Spirit of God is the interpreter of it; and it is the Spirit that gives the word its efficacy and power in the ſoul; the word of God, contained in the ſcriptures, is the ſword by which the Spirit of God enables his ſaints to overcome and vanquiſh all their enemies. The ſeventh and laſt piece of ſpiritual armour is mentioned, ver. 18. and that is, *prayer*; *praying always with all prayer*, &c. Here *note*, The time for prayer, *praying always*; the ſorts and kind of prayer, *praying always with all prayer*; the inward principle of prayer, from which it muſt flow, *in the Spirit*; the guard to ſet about the duty of prayer, *watching thereunto*; the conſtancy to be exerciſed in the duty, *with all perſeverance*; the comprehenſiveneſs of the duty, *for all ſaints*. *Learn*, That prayer is a neceſſary duty for all Chriſtians, and to be uſed, with all other pieces of ſpiritual armour, by the Chriſtian ſoldier.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel: 20 For which I am an ambaſſador in bonds: That therein I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak.

Our apoſtle having directed the Epheſians to the duty of prayer in general, deſires them here to pray for himſelf in particular. Where *obſerve*, 1. His exhortation and direction to pray for himſelf, and all the miniſters of the goſpel; *and for me*. *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of Chriſt are and ought, in a ſpecial manner, to be remembered in the ſaints prayers. *Obſerve*, 2. The mercy which he deſires them to pray for, *that utterance may be given*; namely, a readineſs to deliver to others what God has handed into us. Miniſters depend upon God for utterance, and it is their people's duty to be earneſt with God to give it to them. 3. The end why he deſires this *utterance*, *that he may open his mouth boldly*, *to make known the myſtery of the goſpel*. Where *note*, 1. The ſublime nature of the goſpel, it is a myſtery. 2. The work of the goſpel-miniſter; and that is, to make known that goſpel-myſtery. 3. The manner how he is to perform this work, *that I may open my mouth boldly*; namely, in aſſerting truth, and in reproving ſin, with a wiſe and prudent, with a meek and humble, with an active and zealous boldneſs. *Obſerve*, 4. A double argument to back and enforce his requeſt, to pray for him; (1.) From his office, *for which I am an ambaſſador*: The miniſters of the goſpel are God's ambaſſadors; and ſhall not their people pray for the ſucceſs of their embaſſies? (2.) From his afflicted ſtate, *he was an ambaſſador in bonds*; his zeal for God, and his truth, confined him to a priſon; he preached himſelf into a gaol; well therefore might they pray for him, who had now loſt his liberty, and ſoon after, was to loſe his life for them; no prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts of ſuch as ſuffer tribulation and perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt.

21 But that ye alſo may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Obſerve here, 1. The tender love and affectionate regard which St. Paul bore to theſe Epheſians, in the midſt of his ſufferings, and during his impriſonment; he not only wrote, but ſent to them; no doubt, the apoſtle had but few, very few faſt friends with him at Rome, whom he could repoſe an entire confidence in, and receive great conſolation from; however, he will deny himſelf, to ſerve them: A faithful miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, is ſo tenderly affectionate towards his flock, that he prefers their ſpiritual edification before his own private and particular advantage; though St. Paul was now a priſoner, and under a daily expectation of death, and had few to attend him, yet he ſends one of his moſt beloved friends away to them, chuſing rather himſelf to want an attender, than that they ſhould want a comforter; nothing better becomes a miniſter of Chriſt than a public ſpirit. 2. The character of the perſon whom St. Paul ſent unto them; he is deſcribed, (1.) By his name, Tychicus. (2.) By his ſtate, he was a brother, that is, a Chriſtian, a beloved brother, a brother in Chriſt. (3.) By his office, he was a miniſter, yea, *a faithful miniſter in the Lord*, that is, in the work of the

Lord; between whom and St. Paul there was a ſweet harmony, an happy union of hearts, a joint care and endeavour in carrying on the intereſt of Chriſt amongſt the churches: Behold! how good and pleaſant a thing it is, when miniſters of Chriſt are dear to each other; when, inſtead of diviſions, emulations, and ſtrife amongſt them, they can give teſtimonials of each other, as well deſerving; without endeavouring to conceal and obſcure the gifts and graces of God, which are eminent in any of their fellow-labourers, on purpoſe only to ſet off themſelves, that their own performances may be the more taken notice of. St. Paul was far from this ſpirit, as appears by the character which, upon a fit occaſion, he gave of Tychicus. 3. The deſign and end which St. Paul had in ſending Tychicus unto them, and that was two-fold: (1.) That he might acquaint them with St. Paul's condition and ſtate; *that ye might know my affairs, how I do*, and what I do, I have ſent Tychicus to declare *unto you all things*. What! all things without exception? Yes, both doings and ſufferings, the apoſtle was aſhamed of neither. *Learn* thence, That the life and converſation of miniſters, both public and private, muſt, and ought to be ſuch, that they need not be aſhamed to have it known, or concerned that the church ſhould know what they do, how they manage, to the intent that their people may be edified by their converſation, as well as inſtructed by their preaching; *Tychicus ſhall declare unto you all things*. The ſecond end St. Paul had in ſending Tychicus from himſelf to the Epheſians, was, that he might *comfort their hearts*. But how could Tychicus do this? Theſe ways: (1.) By making known to them the true cauſe of his ſufferings. St. Paul's enemies had laid heavy things to his charge, theſe might perhaps fly as far as Epheſus; now, though the apoſtle regarded little what the wicked world ſaid of him, yet he deſired to be ſet right in the thoughts of the churches, and accordingly ſends Tychicus to acquaint them with the cauſe of his impriſonment. (2.) To keep them from diſcouragement, and being inordinately caſt down at the report of his ſufferings: No doubt, St. Paul's chain entered into their ſouls, and his ſufferings were their ſorrows; he therefore ſends Tychicus to prevent their immoderate ſorrow and mourning upon his account. (3.) To comfort their hearts with the report of that holy joy and cheerfulneſs of ſpirit which was found with him in and under all his ſufferings. Oh! it is an excellent ſight to behold the ſaints at liberty mourning over their afflicted brethren; and they that are ſufferers become comforters of them that are at liberty. Lord! never doth thy holy religion appear more glorious, than when thy miniſters commend it by their ſufferings for it; and no way can they commend it higher, than by an holy, humble cheerfulneſs of ſpirit in their ſufferings for it; thy miniſters preach with far greater advantage from a priſon, than they can from a pulpit. (4.) Might not St. Paul ſend Tychicus now to the church at Epheſus, to engage the churches to pray with earneſtneſs for himſelf, as well as to comfort them? Oh! none ſo covetous of prayers as the miniſters of Chriſt, and no miniſters like ſuffering miniſters. St. Paul ſets all the churches at work to pray for him in priſon; and great reaſon for it: A priſon has its temptation as well as a palace; when men play the perſecutors, the devil forgets not to be a tempter; ſometimes he will attempt to ſoften them with impreſſions of fear; at another time he hopes to overcome them, and weaken their courage, by their friends tears and intreaties; ſometimes the devil hopes to imbitter a ſuffering ſaint's ſpirit againſt his perſecutors, and to ſour him with the leaven of malice and wrath. Oh! it is no eaſy matter to receive evil, and yet wiſh none to him from whoſe hands we have received it; to reſerve love for him that ſhews wrath and hatred to us, is a glorious, but a difficult work. But if all this fails, yet the devil hopes to blow him up with pride, and a high conceit of himſelf, who dares ſuffer, when others ſhrink, and is ready to lay down his head, when others pull in their heads, and ſeek to ſave themſelves in a whole ſkin. Pride is a ſalamander, that can live in the very flames of martyrdom; if any ſaint need the humility of many ſaints, it is he that is called to ſuffer for Chriſt. St. Paul was very ſenſible of this; he well knew that a ſuffering condition is full of temptation; that a Chriſtian's ſtrength to carry him through it is not in his own keeping; God muſt help, or the ſtouteſt champion will quail: He alſo knows that prayer is the beſt means to fetch in that help, and accordingly St. Paul here ſends Tychicus to Epheſus, to engage the auxiliary forces of the ſaints prayers on earth, and the *poſſe cœli* from heaven, that he might glorify God in a ſuffering hour.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Our apoſtle being now come to the cloſe and concluſion of this excellent epiſtle, he ſhuts it up with very fervent and affectionate wiſhes and prayers for them. (1.) He wiſhes the brethren, the converted Chriſtians, in and about Epheſus, *peace*, peace with God, peace with conſcience, peace eſpecially one with another, and all manner of outward proſperity, comprehended in the word *peace*. (2.) Mutual love among themſelves. (3.) the grace of faith, the fountain of the former; all which he wiſhes from God the Father, not excluding, but including, the Son and Holy Ghoſt, and from Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, through virtue of whoſe merit and interceſſion all ſaving benefits are conveyed unto believers; St. Paul's example is inſtructive to the miniſters of Chriſt in all ſucceeding ages. Would we have our miniſterial endeavours attended with manifeſt ſucceſs? We muſt be much in prayer, in ſerious and fervent prayer to God, to work thoſe graces in our people, *faith*, *love*, and *holineſs*, which we have been by our miniſtry recommending to their care and practice; that miniſter who is moſt prayerful, is uſually moſt ſucceſsful.

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Amen.

Still our apoſtle goes on praying; he began and cloſes his epiſtle with prayer; and the bleſſings prayed for, are grace and peace; peace in the former verſe comprehending all temporal felicity; and grace in this, comprehending the ſpecial favour and loving-kindneſs of God; this he prays may be the portion of all thoſe that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, or incorruption, as the word ſignifies, that is, not for time only, but for eternity; not in ſhow and appearance only, but in reality. Sincere love to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a ſure character and undoubted mark of ſuch a perſon as has found grace in God's ſight, and is very high in the divine favour. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; he doth not ſay with a ſeraphim's, but with a ſincere love. *Queſt.* But when, and how, may a perſon know that he loves Chriſt in great ſincerity? *Anſ.* If Chriſt be enthroned in thy heart as a chief commander; if he be eſteemed by thee as thy chiefeſt excellency, and thy choicheſt treaſure; if he be thy chiefeſt refuge, unto which thou fleeſt in all dangers and diſtreſſes; thou mayeſt conclude, thy ſupreme love is placed upon him, that thou loveſt him in ſincerity: And the more thou loveſt him, the more lovely wilt thou be unto him, and the more will thy heart be let out in deſires after him, and in fervent longings for the full fruition and final enjoyment of him; for thoſe whom we love, we long to be with.

Come then, Lord! down to me,
Or take me up to thee.

THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

St. Paul *being warned by the Holy Ghoſt to go into* Macedonia *and preach the goſpel, as we find,* Acts xvi. *he plants firſt a church at* Philippi, *a principal city in* Macedonia, *ſo called from* Philip *king of* Macedon, *who beautified and enlarged it.*

But St. Paul's *charge being to preach the goſpel to all the* Gentiles, *he travels from place to place till he came at* Rome, *where he was in bonds, and conſequently in neceſſity and ſtraits; which the* Philippians *underſtanding, they ſent* Epaphroditus, *their biſhop or chief miniſter, to him, with a liberal contribution to ſupply his wants: By whom St.* Paul *ſends this affectionate letter to them, partly to teſtify his thankfulneſs for the relief received from them, but principally to confirm them in the faith, to prevent their being offended at his ſufferings for the goſpel, to encourage them to walk worthy of the goſpel, to warn them againſt ſeducers and Judaizing teachers, and to quicken them to divers Chriſtian duties: And ſo concludes his epiſtle with particular ſalutations, and an apoſtolical benediction.*

CHAP. I.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this firſt chapter, is, to encourage the Philippians *to conſtancy in the faith, to perſeverance in holineſs; and not to be diſcouraged at his ſufferings for the goſpel, ſeeing Chriſtianity had already gained very much by the ſufferings he underwent.*

PAUL and Timotheus the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the biſhops and deacons:

Note here, 1. The penman of this epiſtle, St. Paul, joining Timotheus with him in the ſalutation, becauſe his companion and fellow-labourer, and one that had aſſiſted in the inſtructing of the Philippians, and was a perſon much valued and eſteemed by them. 2. The great modeſty of St. Paul, in the character he gives of himſelf; he doth not ſtyle himſelf here an apoſtle, but the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt; in his other epiſtles which he wrote alone, he ſtyles himſelf an apoſtle, Rom. i. 1. Gal. i. 1. &c. He doth not ſay here, Paul an apoſtle, and Timotheus a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, magnifying himſelf above Timothy, but ſets himſelf upon a level with him, ſaying, *Paul and Timotheus the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.* *Learn* hence, 1. That true humility teaches Chriſtians to ſpeak ſparingly of themſelves, and of their own authority and credit, except upon a juſt and neceſſary occaſion, and when weighty reaſons do urge and oblige them to it. 2. That the miniſters and diſpenſers of the goſpel are, in a ſpecial manner, the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, wholly devoted to his ſervice, and diſcharging themſelves faithfully in the performance of it. *Note* 3. The ſuperſcription of this epiſtle, or the perſons to whom it was directed, *To all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus*, in general, *which were at Philippi, and to the biſhops and deacons*: *To all the ſaints at Philippi*; ſo he calls them, becauſe they were all holy by viſible profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by real ſanctification, being inherently, as well as externally holy; and the denomination is here taken from the better, though not the greater part, for whoſe ſake the whole community are here called ſaints: But why ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus? Becauſe, as it is neceſſary to make a man internally holy, that he be in Chriſt Jeſus by real implantation; ſo to denominate a man externally and federally holy, requires a viſible profeſſion, and an external union with Chriſt, John xv. 2. In particular, this epiſtle is directed to the *biſhops and deacons*; they were both the church's overſeers; the biſhops to overſee and inſpect the lives and manners of perſons; the deacons to overſee the neceſſities of perſons, and to ſerve the church in taking care of the poor. *Note* here, The great and ſpecial care which our holy Lord has taken of his church, in appointing ſtated officers to undertake the overſight of his whole family, to rule and govern, to direct and inſtruct it; yea, not only has he appointed officers for the overſight of the ſouls of his people, but others to inſpect their bodily neceſſities, that thoſe who are indigent might be ſupplied by their care, and the charity of the church.

2 Grace *be* unto you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Grace from God the Father, or Grace from God as a Father; intimating, that God beſtows not his grace as a Creator, but as a Father, as a Father in Chriſt: *And peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; he being the purchaſer of our peace, he, upon *whom was laid the chaſtiſement of our peace*, and in whom, and for whoſe ſake, God becomes reconciled to us, and at peace with us. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as have received moſt grace from God, do yet ſtand in need of further meaſures, and freſh ſupplies of it: Grace to pardon ſin, and grace to ſubdue ſin. 2. That peace, as well as grace, may and ought to be the ſubject of a Chriſtian's prayer and care, to obtain peace with God, peace with conſcience, peace with one another, and if it be poſſible, peace with all men.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making requeſt with joy, 5 For your fellowſhip in the goſpel from the firſt day until now;

Note here, 1. The proper character of a goſpel-miniſter, he is his people's conſtant remembrancer, and the rememberer of all his people: *I remember you all*, ſays the apoſtle, *I remember you always, and in every prayer*. This a very great part of our miniſterial duty, to pray for the people; not in our public offices only, but in our private addreſſes alſo, and this continually, and without ceaſing: we ſhould never riſe off our knees, without bearing our people upon our hearts before the Lord. Did miniſter and people more ſtrive together in their prayers one for another, there would be leſs ſtrife and contention between them, one with another, miniſters muſt be their people's remembrancers: St. Paul here remembered the Philippians, *all the Philippians always*, and in *every* prayer. 2. St. Paul could and did remember the Philippians with joy; though he was in ſadneſs himſelf, *in a priſon*, yet he could think of them, as a people converted by his miniſtry, with joy, *making requeſt with joy*. When the miniſters of Chriſt ſee any ſucceſs of their labours in the lives of their people, it is matter of inexpreſſible joy to them, how ſad ſoever the caſe is with them, as to their outward circumſtances: when they ſigh in a priſon with reſpect to their perſonal ſufferings, they can ſing and rejoice, if they find their people's proficiency in knowledge and growth in grace: *I thank my God for you, making requeſt with joy*. 3. The ground and occaſion of this his joy, ver. 5. *For your fellowſhip in the goſpel*; that is, for your ready embracing of the goſpel at my firſt preaching of it to you, for the real ſubjection of ſome, and the profeſſed ſubjection of all to the faith of Chriſt, whereby you were brought into fellowſhip with Chriſt and his church, and alſo for the continuance of you in the faith and profeſſion of the goſpel, *from the firſt day until now*. *Learn* hence, That when a people, upon the plain and perſuaſive preaching of the goſpel, do readily receive and obey it, and remain conſtant in their profeſſion of it, and obedience to it, it is matter of unſpeakable thankſgiving and praiſe to the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: *I thank God for your fellowſhip in the goſpel, from the firſt day until now*; that is, for continuing in the faith, and perſevering in your profeſſed ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt, I bleſs God for this.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jeſus Chriſt:

Here we have a further cauſe aſſigned of St. Paul's joy on the Philippians behalf, namely, the firm and full aſſurance which he had of their perſeverance in grace unto the end: God, that has begun, will perfect, that is, augment and increaſe it, till it arrive at perfection in glory. *Note* here, 1. The nature of grace deſcribed, or the proper title deſervedly given to the grace of God, it is called a *good work: he that hath begun a good work*, &c. Well may regenerating grace be called *a good work*, becauſe it is the living foundation and vital principle, from whence all good works do proceed and flow: the grace of God in the heart is the root of all true holineſs in the life; as good works are neceſſary to ſalvation, ſo renewing grace is neceſſary to good works. 2. As the nature of grace deſcribed, ſo the author and augmenter of grace declared, and that is God, *he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it*, that is, augment it, and increaſe it; as the good work of grace in the heart is God's work, and he is the author of it, ſo he will maintain it, and carry it on unto perfection, and be both the increaſer and perfecter of it: God never doth his work by halves. 3. The certainty of grace aſſerted, *being confident of this very thing*: But what ground had St. Paul for this

this confidence? *Anſ.* Becauſe grace is the care of the whole Trinity; all the perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, do concern themſelves, both in the production, preſervation, and perfection of it; the Father decrees it, the Son purchaſes it, the Spirit infuſes it; the Father begets it, the Son excites it, the holy Spirit conducts it; and as they did all concur in its production, ſo do they all co-operate and work together for the preſervation of it. *Learn* hence, That ſuch perſons, in whoſe ſouls Almighty God has begun a good work of grace, may with much aſſurance expect, by the influence of God's care, and the exerciſe of their own endeavours, that they ſhall hold out and perſevere in a ſtate of grace unto the end: *until the day of Chriſt*, that is, the day of judgment.

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe I have you in my heart, inaſmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the goſpel, ye are all partakers of my grace.

In theſe words, our apoſtle aſſigns a ground and reaſon of that confidence which he expreſſed himſelf to have of the Philippians perſeverance in grace and holineſs, in the foregoing verſe, namely, becauſe they were partakers of the ſame grace with himſelf, and were ready to ſuffer for Chriſt, as he was; we may warrantably be perſuaded of their perſeverance in grace unto the end, in whom we ſee both readineſs of obedience to the goſpel, and alſo zealous and cheerful ſuffering for and in defence of the goſpel. Thus did St. Paul here: Where *note*, The apoſtle accounted it a grace and favour from God, that he was thought worthy to ſuffer for the goſpel, and the Philippians with him: *Ye are partakers of my grace. Learn* hence, That to ſuffer bonds and impriſonment for the goſpel's ſake, is a ſpecial grace and favour of God, not conſidered in itſelf, but in the fruits and conſequence of it. A ſecond ground of his confidence was their reſpect to him, *I have you in my heart*, and I find you *have me in* your hearts; you partake of the miſery of my bonds, you ſuffer with me in my ſufferings, and ſympathize with me in my ſorrows: they relieved and refreſhed him in his impriſonment, which he underwent for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel; and from hence he had a good confidence that they would perſevere unto the end. An operative love to the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially when they are under perſecution, is a good evidence of the ſincerity of their love to Chriſt, and of their ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance in grace unto the end.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe words are expreſſive of that paſſionate degree of Chriſtian love which St. Paul bore to the Philippians; he durſt appeal to God, as to the ſincerity and fervency of it: *God is my record*, I call him to witneſs, and can appeal to him, as the ſearcher of hearts, *how greatly I long after you*; that is, how paſſionately and ſincerely I love you, with the moſt intenſe and hearty affection, *in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*. The expreſſion may denote both the efficient cauſe, and the exemplary cauſe of his love: (1.) That the author of this his love unto them was Chriſt, he was the ſpring and procurer of it; and conſequently, it was no carnal or ſelfiſh love, to ſerve his own ends and deſigns upon them, but truly ſpiritual. (2.) That Chriſt's love to him was the pattern and example, according to which he loved them, with no common love, but with an intire and intenſe affection, from the ground of the heart, and the moſt intimate *bowels*: no words can be more expreſſive of that fervent love and earneſt longing, which St. Paul had for the welfare of the Philippians; a love which not only exceeds the love of all relations; he doth not ſay, I long after you in the bowels of a Father, or in the bowels of an huſband, but in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt; humbly comparing his love towards them to the love of Jeſus Chriſt; not for the degrees of it, not for the fruits and advantages of it, but for the truth and ſincerity of it: *I greatly long after you all, in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt. Learn* hence, That there is no ſtronger love, no more endeared affection between any relations upon earth, than between ſuch miniſters of Chriſt, and their beloved people, as they have been happily inſtrumental to convert to God; when preſent with them, they paſſionately love them, when abſent from them, they affectionately long after them; imitating, as much as they can, their Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both in the reality and ſincerity, and alſo in the meaſure and degree of endearing affection: *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all*, &c.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere and without offence till the day of Chriſt; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, unto the glory and praiſe of God.

After ſalutations given by St. Paul to his beloved Philippians, he next pours out his ſoul in fervent prayer and ſupplication for them; and the mercy which he prays for, is *obſervable*, firſt, namely, growth and proficiency in grace: *This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment:* that their love to God, their love to him, and their love to one another, may yet more and more abound. Love is the root-grace from which moſt graces ſpring; therefore, he prays for the ſtrengthening of that grace in particular, and that there may be found with them judgment, as well as affection in the exerciſe of it; we ought to love judiciouſly, as well as affectionately: The more judicious a ſaint grows in his Chriſtian courſe, and the more underſtanding and judgment is found with him in the way of his duty, the ſtronger his grace is, and the more glory will he bring to God. The underſtanding and judgment being the guiding and leading faculties in man, there can be no more acceptable holineſs in the will, than there is knowledge in the underſtanding; I can hate ſin and love God, no more than I know of the evil of ſin, and of the perfections that are in God: The more judicious then a Chriſtian grows, the more his holineſs grows; and accordingly, St. Paul's prayer is, that they *may grow more and more in knowledge and in all judgment*. 2. The great ends mentioned by the apoſtle, for which he did ſo earneſtly deſire their proficiency in knowledge and judgment, and their growth in love, and every other grace, namely, (1.) *That they might approve things that are excellent*, that is, all ſuch things as the goſpel requires: implying, that the things preſcribed to us in the goſpel, are things excellent and good for us, things worthy to be preſcribed by God, and things reaſonable to be practiſed by us; and that the approbation of theſe things, by a ſteadineſs in judgment and practice, is every Chriſtian's duty, and ought to be their great endeavour. (2.) That they might be *ſincere* in their holy profeſſion, incorrupt and pure, both in doctrine and manners. (3.) That they might be *without offence*, unblameble in converſation, and be kept from being occaſions of ſtumbling unto others, even to the end of their days. (4.) He prays, that they may not only be inoffenſive perſons, but fruitful Chriſtians, *being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God*; that is, that they may abound in good works, undertaken in Chriſt's ſtrength, and with an eye at God's glory. *Learn* hence, 1. That a negative holineſs is not ſufficient to ſalvation; it is not enough that Chriſtians be harmleſs and inoffenſive towards others, but they muſt labour after an holy fruitfulneſs in good works; they muſt be *filled with all the fruits of righteouſneſs*. 2. That our works be truly good, and fruits of righteouſneſs; it is neceſſary that they be done by Chriſt's ſtrength and aſſiſtance, and with an eye at the glory and praiſe of God, in order to their acceptance: *filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs*, &c. 3. That no ſhorter time ought to be aſſigned for our inoffenſive walking, and fruitfulneſs in converſation, than the day of our death: *unto the day of Chriſt*, ſays our apoſtle, that is, till the great reckoning-day, when Chriſt will render to us our complete reward; if we be faithful and fruitful to the death, we ſhall then receive the crown of life.

12 But I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the goſpel; 13 So that my bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the palace, and in all other *places*; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear.

Our apoſtle's deſign in theſe words, is to prevent the Philippians ſtumbling, and being ſcandalized at his preſent ſufferings, aſſuring them, that the things which happened to him, through the malice of his perſecutors, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the goſpel, than any ways to the hinderance of it, as they feared. *Learn* hence, That the ſufferings and perſecutions which the meſſengers and miniſters of Chriſt do undergo for the ſake of the goſpel, are oft-times ſo over-ruled by the wiſdom of God, that they rather increaſe than diminiſh the church, and rather promote than prejudice the intereſt of the goſpel. Next, he declares the ſpecial and particular advantages which had redounded to the goſpel, by thoſe ſufferings which he had patiently endured for the goſpel's ſake. (1.) His bonds in Chriſt, that is, his impriſonment for the goſpel of Chriſt, were manifeſt in the *palace*; that is, were manifeſtly taken notice of in Nero's court, and elſewhere in the city; ſo that people, inquiring into the cauſe of his ſufferings, found, that it was not any miſdemeanour, but that his preaching and practiſing the doctrine of Chriſtianity, was the only reaſon of his ſufferings. (2.) Another advantage which accrued to the church by his bonds, was this, namely, that many miniſters of Chriſt, who preached the word of God far and near, hearing of his conſtancy under ſufferings, were both encouraged and emboldened thereby; encouraged to ſhake off fear, and emboldened to preach Chriſt with greater reſolution. *Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds*, &c. *Note* here, The title given by this great apoſtle to the inferior miniſters of the goſpel, he calls them *brethren*, and *brethren in the Lord*, putting himſelf and them in mind of their mutual and reſpective duties, which was to live and love as brethren; to admoniſh, exhort, and encourage one another, to ſtand up in defence of the juſt credit and reputation of one another, and jointly to ſet their ſhoulders to the work of Chriſt together. 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt, obſerving how God upholds ſome of their brethren under ſufferings and perſecutions, ſhould encourage themſelves to go on with reſolution in the work of the Lord, not fearing their own perſonal ſufferings, knowing, that the ſame aſſiſtance which ſupported one, ſtands ready to ſuccour others.

15 Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtrife; and ſome alſo of good-will. 16 The one preach Chriſt of contention, not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel. 18 What then? notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Our apoſtle had declared in the foregoing verſes, that ſeveral of his brethren in the work of the miniſtry, through his conſtancy in ſuffering, were emboldened to preach Jeſus Chriſt with more reſolution than before. But here he diſcovers, that there was a vaſt difference between thoſe preachers; all did not preach Chriſt alike, with the ſame mind, from the ſame motives, for the ſame ſincere ends. Some, alas! preach Chriſt *out of envy and ſtrife*; that is, envying the ſucceſs of the apoſtle's miniſtry, and endeavouring to draw people off from approving him, to applaud them, hoping to grieve and gall him thereby; but others preached the goſpel of Chriſt *of good-will*, with a purity of intention, and ſincerity of affection, both towards Chriſt, and towards himſelf, who, for the defence of the goſpel, now lay in priſon. However, ſeeing Chriſt was preached and made known by both, by ſome in pretence, by others in truth, the apoſtle rejoiced at it, and took comfort in it. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch miniſters of the goſpel are gladly and joyfully to be heard, who preach Chriſt and his pure word ſoundly and truly, with what mind ſoever, from what motive ſoever, and for what end ſoever they preach Chriſt and his holy goſpel. The word is his which they bring, how vicious ſoever the perſon, and how bad ſoever the intention be of him that brings it; and, if the meſſage be his, it is our duty to receive it without prejudice, be the principle what it will in him that delivers it. Many preach in

Chriſt's name, who periſh in his wrath; for Chriſt takes notice of the inward intention, as well as of the outward action, and obſerves not only the matter which miniſters preach, but the end for which, and the motive from which they preach, whether from love and good-will, or from envy and ſtrife. 2. That ſuch Chriſtians who find their hearts inflamed with zeal for the glory of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of ſouls, do, and will rejoice exceedingly, that Chriſt is preached, whoever the perſon is, or whatever the principle may be in him that preaches.

19 For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayer and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, 20 According to my earneſt expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but *that* with all boldneſs, as always, *ſo* now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

Still our apoſtle purſues and proſecutes his former deſign, namely, to prevent the Philippians being offended at his ſufferings; and accordingly he ſhews, that as the goſpel of Chriſt had gained much already, it ſhould gain yet more, by his impriſonment and afflictions, which he was very confident would tend to the furtherance of his ſalvation, through the help of their prayers, and the ſupplies of grace from the Spirit of Chriſt; where, by *ſalvation*, is meant deliverance out of his preſent ſufferings, which he fully expected by the help and benefit of the church's prayers. Great are the expectations of the ſaints, even as to temporal ſalvation and outward mercies, from the joint prayers and interceſſions of the church of Chriſt; *this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayer*. But if, by *ſalvation*, be meant eternal happineſs, then his confident perſuaſion was this, That all the deſigns of his adverſaries againſt him ſhould be ſo over-ruled and ordered by God, that through the influences and ſupplies of the holy Spirit, all ſhould work together for good, and his eternal ſalvation be advanced thereby, through the concurrence and aſſiſtance of their prayers. In the 20th verſe he tells them, that according to his former expectation and hope, he was reſolved that no terror ſhould ever make him aſhamed to own the truth of Chriſt, but that with a convincing boldneſs, he would now, as heretofore, appear in the defence of it, and that Chriſt ſhould be *magnified by him, in the body, whether by life or death*; that is, whether my life be further prolonged, or be now, by martyrdom, ended: Chriſt will be magnified, if I live; the power of Chriſt will be magnified in my deliverance from death: If I die, his power will be magnified in enabling me to undergo death for his name and ſake; ſo that I am at a point, either to live or die, as the wiſdom of Chriſt ſhall determine; I am, as to myſelf, indifferent for either, well knowing that Chriſt will be glorified in me, and by me, both by life and death. *Learn* hence, That nothing lies ſo near the heart of a ſaint, as the honour and glory of Chriſt; this he reſolves ſhall be promoted by him, living and dying, by his great ſervices, ſuppoſing his life, and by his extraordinary ſufferings and martyrdom, in caſe of his death.

21 For me to live *is* Chriſt, and to die *is* gain.

Our apoſtle had declared, in the foregoing verſe, his firm expectation that Chriſt would be magnified and glorified by him, both in life and death; in this verſe he diſcovers what reaſon he had to think ſo; for, ſays he, *To me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain*; that is, if I live, Chriſt ſhall be the ſcope of my life, and the end of my living; I reſolve to live to his ſervice; if I die, death will be a real gain and advantage to me: Intimating, that both life and death are gain to a good man, and that it is Chriſt that makes both life and death gainful and advantageous: *To me to live is Chriſt, to die is gain.* Words both ſhort and ſweet, few in expreſſion, but large in extention; in them we are taught both how to live, and how to die. *Obſerve*, 1. The ſcope and end of a Chriſtian's life, *To me to live is Chriſt.* 2. The hope and fruit of a Chriſtian's death, *To die is gain. Learn*, That Chriſt is the believer's life, and death the believer's gain. The life of a real Chriſtian is reſolved into Chriſt, and his death is reſolved into gain. *Note*, 1. Chriſt is the believer's life; both his life of grace, and his life of glory is reſolved into Chriſt. As to his life of grace, Chriſt is the life of this life; he is the efficient or principal cauſe of this life; he is the exemplar cauſe or pattern of it; he is the final cauſe or ſcope of it; and he is the conſerving cauſe, or preſerver and maintainer of it. So for the life of glory, which believers have in reverſion, Chriſt is alſo the life of that life; thus he has purchaſed it for them, he has given it to them, he has taken and keeps poſſeſſion of it in their names, he has prepared it for them, and them for it, and will put them into the full and actual poſſeſſion of it, in his own time. 2. That death is the believer's gain; death in general, violent as well as natural death; it is not only not injurious, but advantageous; no hurt, but profit; no loſs, but benefit; not only to die for Chriſt, but *to die in Chriſt is gain*; *bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord*, as well as thoſe that die for the Lord. Death appears gain to the believer, if we conſider the private evils it frees and delivers him from, namely, from ſin, from all temptations to ſin, from all inclinations to offend, from all poſſibility of ſinning, from all temporal afflictions, from all ſufferings for God, from all ſufferings from man for God's ſake; eſpecially if we conſider the poſitive good that the believer gains by death, namely, perfection in grace, fulneſs of joy, the bleſſed viſion, the ſociety of glorified ſaints and angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. So then, if a ſtate of perfect holineſs and purity be better than a ſtate of corruption and temptation, if a ſtate of reſt and peace be better than a ſtate of labour and ſorrow, if it be better to be triumphing above, than ſighing and groaning below; then *dead* ſaints are better where they are, than where they were, and death to them is gain, and infinitely advantageous. 3. That the gain which comes by death to the believer, is procured by Chriſt, namely, by his meritorious ſatisfaction, by his glorious aſcenſion and poſſeſſion, by his prevailing interceſſion.

22 But if I live in the fleſh, that *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what ſhall I chuſe, I wot not. 23 For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better:

24 Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh *is* more needful for you.

But if I live in the fleſh, that is, if I ſhall continue to live longer in this mortal body, *this is the fruit of my labour*; that is, I foreſee what will be the bleſſed fruit of my labour, namely, the converſion and gaining of more ſouls unto God and Chriſt; at leaſt, as it is worth my labour, ſo ſhall it be my endeavour to glorify Chriſt, by my continuance in the world. *Learn* hence, That as it is the end of a miniſter's life, ſo he makes it the end of his living, to glorify Chriſt, by gaining ſouls unto him: and in order to the obtaining this great end, he is willing, for the preſent, to deny himſelf the advantage of being with Chriſt. *Obſerve* next, St. Paul's ſtrait which he was now in, which to chuſe, either life, or death, if God ſhould leave it to his choice; *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*, that is, I am divided in my thoughts and deſires, whether to wiſh for life, or death; his ardent love to Chriſt and himſelf inclined him to deſire a diſſolution, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*; but his affectionate regard to his beloved Philippians inclined him to deſire a continuation of his time and talents; *nevertheleſs, to abide ſtill in the fleſh is more needful for you. Learn* hence, 1. That the life of pious miniſters is far more profitable for their people than death. 2. That their death being a departure unto Chriſt, is far better, and more deſirable to themſelves than life; their life is profitable to civilize ſome, to convert others, to convince the erroneous, to confirm the weak; the world wants them, the church wants them, their flocks want them, their families want them, and they want them moſt, that think they could ſpare them beſt. But their death being a departure, an immediate departure unto Chriſt, is far better, and more deſirable to themſelves than life; *having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better:* Better in point of honour; for as they here laboured in the work of the miniſtry for him, they ſhall there ſit down upon the throne with him, Rev. iii. 21. Better in point of profit; *He is heir and poſſeſſor of all things*, and they ſhall be joint heirs, and joint poſſeſſors with him: Thus may the words be conſidered, with relation to St. Paul, as a mihiſter of the goſpel; but they may be further conſidered, with reference to him as a private Chriſtian; *I deſire to depart*. Hence *learn*, That it is not only warrantable, but highly commendable, for a Chriſtian to be not only fearleſs, but deſirous of death. There are, (1.) Unwarrantable and ſinful deſires of death; as when they are raſh and haſty, when they are poſitive and peremptory, when they are directing and preſcribing to God, either as to the time, or kind, or manner of our diſſolution, and when our deſires are purely ſelfiſh, deſiring death only as a freedom from preſent evils, and as a prevention from future ſufferings. (2.) There are warrantable and juſtifiable deſires of death and diſſolution; namely, when we deſire it to free us from the indwelling preſence of ſin, to put us into a ſtate of perfect holineſs, to bring us to the ſight of Chriſt, to give us the poſſeſſion of that happineſs, which was contrived by infinite wiſdom, purchaſed by infinite merit, prepared by infinite power, and beſtowed by infinite love. (3.) There are alſo commendable deſires, or, the laſt-mentioned deſires are highly commendable; they commend our faith, and proclaim our certain belief of a future ſtate; they commend our love to God, to Chriſt; they commend our obedience, &c. *Learn*, 2. That the ſouls of believers, at their departure from the body, are with *Chriſt*. *Queſt*. What is it to be with *Chriſt? Anſ*. It implies *intuition*, we ſhall ſee him, and ſee him as he is, not as he once was, in a ſtate of abaſement; it implies *fruition*, we ſhall enjoy him, as well as ſee him, and enjoy him to ſatisfaction, Pſal. xvii. *ult*. and it implies *duration*, we ſhall for ever be with the Lord. *Queſt*. But how doth it appear, that the ſouls of good men, upon their departure from the body, are *with Chriſt? Anſ*. Thus; they are immediately capable of his preſence and enjoyment upon their departure, and they are fully prepared for it: If we be not fit for heaven when we die, we ſhall never be fit; all is done upon us that was ever intended to be done; and neither Chriſt's ardent deſires to have his children with him, nor the vehement longings of their ſouls for the fruition and enjoyment of him, can or ſhall be delayed; ſuch delays would make their hearts ſick; no, they expect ſatisfaction, and God will not diſappoint their expectation.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt for me, by my coming to you again.

St. Paul having in the foregoing verſes, told the Philippians how needful it was for him to abide in the fleſh, with reſpect to them, he here gives them a ſort of confident aſſurance (which was given him by immediate revelation) that his life ſhould at this time be preſerved for the benefit of the church, and he be ſet at liberty, and that he ſhould come and ſpend a part of his time amongſt them, for the furtherance of their faith, and the increaſe of their joy, that ſo they might have more abundant matter of rejoicing in Chriſt, having received a new proof of his power and good-will towards them, in delivering him their apoſtle from death, and ſending him to them again. *Learn* hence, 1. That God always can, and ſometimes will, ſo calm the rage of perſecutors, that they cannot execute the evil by them intended and reſolved againſt his faithful miniſters and ſervants: Notwithſtanding Nero's cruelty, St. Paul had a confident perſuaſion, that he ſhould come out of priſon, and once more viſit the churches. 2. That Almighty God, in great mercy to his church, doth ſometimes prolong the lives of his faithful miniſters, and moſt uſeful ſervants, and keep them longer out of heaven, that his people may reap the greater advantage by their labours here on earth. 3. That the more unexpectedly the life of a laborious miniſter, or a pious and extraordinary Chriſtian, is given him by God, the more abundant ought the church to be in their expreſſions of joy and thankſgiving to God for ſuch an invaluable bleſſing.

27 Only let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt: that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs,

that ye ſtand faſt in our ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The general charge given by the apoſtle to his beloved Philippians, that their lives ſhould anſwer their light, and their practices correſpond with their profeſſion: *Let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel.* A goſpel-profeſſion requires and calls for a goſpel-converſation; as the goſpel is a goſpel of truth and faithfulneſs, of ſincerity and plainneſs, ſo our converſation ſhould be ſincere and upright, without deceit or fraud; as the goſpel is a goſpel of peace, ſo a Chriſtian converſation is a quiet, calm, and peaceable converſation: Chriſtians ſhould be men of peace, peace-makers, peace-preſervers, lovers of peace, and livers in peace. The goſpel is a goſpel of love and mercy, of grace and goodneſs; the badge and cognizance of Chriſt's diſciples, the mark and brand of Chriſt's ſheep, is love unfeigned; thus a goſpel-converſation is an amicable, loving, and charitable converſation. Again, the goſpel of Chriſt is a goſpel of meekneſs and humility, and its chief leſſon is humility: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. xi. 29. and *be ye clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. In a word, the goſpel of Chriſt is a goſpel of holineſs and purity; a Chriſtian converſation muſt be a pure, and holy, and ſpotleſs converſation: Saints by profeſſion ſhould be ſaints indeed; and there is a comelineſs in a goſpel converſation, both as to the inward and outward man; walk *as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt*, that is, anſwerable to the precepts and commands of the goſpel, anſwerable to the promiſes and encouragements of the goſpel, anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of grace which the goſpel affords, anſwerable to that grand pattern of holineſs which the goſpel ſets before us, and anſwerable to that high and glorious hope which the goſpel raiſes us up to the joyful expectation of? this is to walk as *becometh the goſpel of Chriſt*. 2. The apoſtle, having given a general injunction to walk as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt, next gives a particular injunction for concord and unity amongſt themſelves, *That ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind. Learn* hence, That all thoſe who would walk worthy of the goſpel, ſhould endeavour after a cloſe, holy, and laſting union among themſelves. We can never expect to thrive in grace, if we do not live in peace; let us prize unity and peace as the beauty and ſtrength of the body, and let us purſue peace and union with the utmoſt ſtrength of our ſoul. *Obſerve*, 3. Another duty exhorted to, and that is, an united contention, *ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel:* Before, he exhorted them to an holy union; now, to an united contention; unite, but ſtrive; yet let your ſtriving be in communion, not in contention; ſtrive together in all holy and united endeavours to comfort and confirm one another in the faith of the goſpel. 4. He exhorts them, as to an holy union, and an united contention, ſo to an humble boldneſs, *in nothing terrified by our adverſaries*; in nothing, that is, terrified at nothing they can do, and terrified in no degree at any thing they ſhall do. Be not afraid to be holy; for your adverſaries can never hurt you, if they do not hinder you in your duty; the leſs they fear God, the leſs you need to fear them. 5. A double argument to perſuade them to the foregoing duty, *in nothing terrified by their adverſaries.* (1.) This will be *to them an evident token of perdition*; that is, an united, humble, peaceable boldneſs in your holy courſe, whereby you walk in the ſpirit and power of the goſpel, without fright or fear, will be to your perſecutors *an evident token of perdition.* Perſecution is a black mark of a ſon of perdition, and a very evident token to a man's own conſcience that he is in the way of deſtruction. (2.) *But to you of ſalvation*; that is, ſuch as ſuffer patiently, yet reſolutely, for the goſpel, are in the way of ſalvation, and their ſufferings ſhall promote their eternal ſalvation; it is added, *Salvation, and that of God*; now this implies two things: (1.) That the ſalvation of ſuffering Chriſtians ſhall be ſure, they ſhall certainly be ſaved, for God has undertaken for it: Now, if it be God that ſaves, who ſhall deſtroy? Satan will ſay, "Serve me, and I will ſave you;" but he is feeble, and cannot; falſe, and will not ſave: The world will ſay, "Caſt in your lot among us, and we will ſave you harmleſs;" but there is no more truſt to be given to the children, than to the father of lies: But if the God of truth and power ſays, "I will ſave;" who will ſay nay? (2.) That their ſalvation ſhall be great, as well as ſure; he will ſave them with a mighty ſalvation, from their mighty ſufferings and mighty fears: Suffer for Chriſt, and then fear none of thoſe things which you ſhall ſuffer.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake;

Theſe words come in by the way of encouragement to the practice of the forementioned duty, namely, of courageous ſuffering for the goſpel of Chriſt; he tells them, that as ability to believe on Chriſt, ſo likewiſe power to ſuffer for Chriſt, were both the gift of God, and, as ſuch, purchaſed by Chriſt for them, and freely beſtowed upon them. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is the duty of all the diſciples and followers of Jeſus, not only to believe in him, but cheerfully to ſuffer for him, when he calls them to it; *not only to believe, but to ſuffer.* 2. That ſuffering for Chriſt is the gift of God, as well as faith in Chriſt; *unto you it is given, not only to believe, but to ſuffer*; afflictions are the donatives of the goſpel; ſuffering for Chriſt is the gift of Chriſt. (1.) Ability to ſuffer is his gift; it is the purchaſe of his merits, it is the fruit of his mediation. Preparation for ſuffering, and patience under ſuffering, are the gift of Chriſt. (2.) As abilities for ſuffering, ſo the comforts of ſuffering, are the gift of Chriſt; through him it is that his ſaints glory in tribulation, and their trials are not only tolerable, but joyous. In ſhort, to ſuffer for Chriſt is, firſt, a free gift; and, ſecondly, an honourable gift; and, thirdly, a ſpecial and peculiar gift: It is a gift peculiar to ſaints, yea, peculiar only to ſome ſaints: It is only peculiar to ſaints; the angels glorify Chriſt by doing, but not by ſuffering. I doubt not, but had the angels bodies of fleſh, as ſaints have, they would be glad to lay their necks on the block for Chriſt, as ſaints do: But this is the peculiar privilege of believers, *unto you it is given, and not to them.* And although a ſuffering diſpoſition, a readineſs and preparation of mind to glorify Chriſt by ſuffering, is given to all believers; yet the honour of actual ſuffering death for Chriſt, is given but to a few. 3. That faith in Chriſt muſt go before ſuffering for Chriſt; it muſt *firſt* be given to us to believe on him, before we can ſuffer for his ſake; then only are ſufferings truly Chriſtian, and an evidence of ſalvation, when the ſufferer is firſt a believer; without the ſhield of faith, we can no more reſiſt the fury of the perſecutors, than we can repel the fiery darts of the deſtroyer.

30 Having the ſame conflict which ye ſaw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

Here is the laſt argument made uſe of by the apoſtle to encourage them unto patient ſuffering for the goſpel of Chriſt; as it would render them comfortable to Chriſt their head, ſo to him their apoſtle, who ſuffered many hard things when he was at Philippi, as they had ſeen; and ſtood ready to ſuffer, not only bonds, but death itſelf, now he was at Rome, which they heard of: *Having the ſame conflict which you ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me.* Here *obſerve*, 1. The title given by St. Paul to his ſufferings for the goſpel, he calls them a conflict. *Learn*, That Chriſtian courage under ſufferings cannot be kept up without a mighty conflict: We muſt conflict with our enemies, with the rage of our perſecutors; we muſt conflict with ourſelves, and with our own ſpirits, to keep them from fainting under perſecution; and we muſt even conflict with God himſelf, wreſtle with him, by prayers, for extraordinary meaſures of ſtrength to ſupport us under ſufferings, and to enable us to glorify God in and by them. Well might the apoſtle then call his ſufferings a *conflict*. *Obſerve*, 2. St. Paul encourages the Philippians to conflict with ſufferings from his own example before them, *having the ſame conflict which you ſaw in me.* *Learn*, That the prudent and patient ſufferings of the miniſters of Chriſt for the truth of the goſpel are, and ought to be, a powerful encouragement to all their people to conflict with the like difficulties and trials for the teſtimony of Chriſt; the captain goes firſt, leads the van, his miniſters follow, and their people bring up the rear; and, having ſuffered together, they ſhall be alſo glorified together; a ſuffering head, and ſuffering members, ſhall never be ſeparated.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter urges the Philippians *with a moſt elegant obteſtation, to be found in the exerciſe and practice of unity and humility.*

IF *there be* therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

Here we have *obſervable*, 1. The important duty which the apoſtle exhorts the Philippians to, and that is love and unity; unity in judgment and opinion, unity in heart and affection, unity in deſign and endeavours; ſo neceſſary and advantageous is the duty of unity and concord among all the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, that all the cautions and warnings, all the advice and counſel, all the melting intreaties and paſſionate importunities of the miniſters of Chriſt are little enough to excite perſons to it, and direct them in the practice of it. 2. What an heap of arguments the apoſtle makes uſe of to excite and quicken the Philippians to the love and practice of this duty: *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt, any comfort of love, any fellowſhip of the Spirit, any bowels and mercies.* As if he had ſaid, If ever you have taſted, by means of my miniſtry, any ſweetneſs and conſolation in Chriſt and his holy religion, if ever you have found any comfort in his love, if ever you have enjoyed any communion with his Spirit, if ye be men, and have any bowels of mercy for yourſelves, if ye be Chriſtians, and have any pity for me in my bonds, *fulfil ye my joy in this, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, and of one mind.* O the tenderneſs, the gentleneſs and meekneſs of ſoul which was in St. Paul, and ought to be in every ſpiritual paſtor towards his people, to win them, and to prevail upon them to love the truth and peace! *Fulfil ye my joy*, ſays the apoſtle; as if he had ſaid, Sufferings I have enough already; O do not you, by your diviſions and diſſentions add more: I am already a priſoner, expecting the ſentence of death, preparing for the ſword of perſecution, but none of theſe things move me; I can rejoice in a dungeon, ſing in the ſtocks, triumph in death, if I can but hear you ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel: But, if I hear that you are broken by diviſions, my heart is broke; the news of differences and diſſentions among you will be heavier to me than my chain, darker than my dungeon, ſharper than Nero's ſword: Do not thus add to my ſorrow and ſufferings; but as you have begun and occaſioned joy in me, I beſeech you fulfil and complete my joy, by your being of one heart, of one mind, entirely one.

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through ſtrife, or vainglory,--

Here our apoſtle diſſuadeth the Philippians from a double vice, deſtructive to unity, namely contention and vainglory, which are the very bane of unity and unanimity; let nothing be done amongſt you through emulation and envy, through contention and vainglory: Pride and ambition are uſually attended with ſtrife and contention; a vainglorious perſon over-rates himſelf, undervalues others, and breaks the peace with all.

—But in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.

Here our apoſtle directs to humility, in order to peace and unity; which humility he ſtyles *lowlineſs of mind*, a grace whereby a man thinks meanly of himſelf, and highly of others, having a better opinion of others wiſdom and piety than his own; now this a man may do, and not ſin, though he be miſtaken; the publican judged the Phariſee better than himſelf: and though it was not ſo, God did not diſapprove him for it, but he went away juſtified. It is no crime to judge another better than ourſelves, though he he be not ſo; but it is pride to judge another worſe than ourſelves, though he be really ſo. *Learn* hence, That true humility doth not conſiſt in lowlineſs of expreſſion, but in lowlineſs of mind and opinion; not the man that ſpeaks meanly of himſelf, but he that thinks ſo, is the humble man. 2. That the humble or lowly-minded man is ſo conſcious to himſelf of his own infirmities, ſo modeſt in the eſtimating of his graces and virtues, and ſo forward to hope and believe the beſt of others, that not only in outward expreſſion, but in real eſtimation, doth he give others a preference before himſelf.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.

The apoſtle here diſſuadeth from another ſin, which is very deſtructive of unity and peace, of concord and love, and that is the ſin of inordinate ſelf-love, whereby we regard only our own honour and profit, wholly neglecting the concerns of others: *look not every man on his own things*, that is, his own private advantage only or chiefly, but take care of the things which tend to the advantage of others; not but that a Chriſtian may and ought to look at his own things, but not wholly: Our regard muſt extend further than ourſelves, and our own things; we muſt look on the things of others alſo; we muſt be as juſt and true to another's reputation as to our own, and regard both the honour and profit of our neighbour as well as our own: And where Chriſtians are of this public ſpirit and temper, it contributes much, very much, towards the preſerving and maintaining of unity and peace among them.

5 Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus:

That is, this humble mind. Here the apoſtle preſſes the duty of humility, from Chriſt's example; he was a perfect pattern of humility when here on earth; example therefore ſhould recommend this grace and virtue to us, which was ſo orient in the life of Chriſt, whoſe humility was as conſpicuous as his innocency; and acccordingly the apoſtle deſcends, in the next verſe, to give particular inſtances of the humility and humiliation of the Son of God.

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: 8 And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.

Behold here the greateſt example of humility, of lowlineſs and abaſement, that ever the world was acquainted with; the mighty God become leſs than man! To make a due eſtimate hereof, we muſt firſt *obſerve*, What Chriſt was before his incarnation and humiliation, namely, the great and mighty God; for, ſays the apoſtle, he was in the *form of God*, and *equal with God*; that is, being the ſubſtantial form, and eſſential image of the Father, enjoying the divine nature, with all its glory, and all the enſigns of majeſty which God himſelf had eternally and invariably. As to be in the form of a ſervant, ſignifies that he was a ſervant; ſo to be in the form of God, ſignifies that he was God: And *obſerve*, 2. He was in the form of God, before he was in the form of a ſervant: *And, being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God:* Now if *he thought it no robbery*, it could be no robbery, and if no robbery, he muſt be equal, and if equal, he muſt be God by nature, as the Father is. *Learn* hence, That our Saviour poſſeſſed that glory which is truly divine, before he aſſumed our nature as man; he had a peerage or equality with his Father in glory; the angels adored him in heaven before his incarnation on earth, Iſa. vi. 1, 2. *Obſerve*, 3. What mighty abaſement the holy Jeſus, God, bleſſed for evermore, underwent, when he humbled himſelf: *He was found in faſhion as a man; he took upon him the form of a ſervant, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs.* Behold here, the ſun of righteouſneſs under an (almoſt total) eclipſe: He that was eternally beautiful and glorious, being the brightneſs of his Father's glory, was ſo veiled, clouded and debaſed in the day of his humiliation, that he appears not like a God, ſcarce like a man. *Note*, 1. *He took upon him the form of a ſervant:* now this was a lower degree of condeſcenſion, than the aſſuming the naked human nature; for a ſervant is not ſimply a man, but a mean man, a man in a low eſtate. Lord, what abaſement was here, that Chriſt, who was in the form of God, ſhould degrade himſelf into the form of a ſervant, and take the human nature without honour, after it had loſt its primitive innocency, after ſin had blotted the original glory of it, and withered the beauty and excellency thereof! O inconceivable condeſcenſion! 2. He emptied himſelf, *or made himſelf of no reputation*; that is, in the day of his incarnation he laid aſide the robes of his glory, he emptied himſelf of that divine ſplendour and majeſty which before he had; not by ceaſing to be what he was, but by aſſuming ſomething to himſelf which before he was not, the Son of God deſcended from his throne, and put on our vile mortality; he parted with his glory, that he might part with his life for our ſalvation. 3. *He was made in the likeneſs of man, and found in faſhion as a man*; that is, he was truly and really man, made in the likeneſs of other men, without any viſible outward difference: *he was in all things like unto us, ſin only excepted*, Rom. viii. 3. He is ſaid to *appear in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, that is, in fleſh that had the marks and miſerable effects of ſin upon it: Not that Chriſt aſſumed ſinful fleſh, or fleſh really defiled by ſin, but he aſſumed the human nature, attended with a whole troop of human infirmities, which ſin firſt let into that nature, as hunger and thirſt, wearineſs and pain, mortality and death: By reaſon of which, though he was not a ſinner, yet he looked like one, and they that converſed with him took him for one, ſeeing all theſe effects of ſin upon him. Lord, what a ſtoop was this! To be made in the likeneſs of innocent fleſh, had been much; but to be made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, rebellious fleſh, fleſh though not *defiled*, yet miſerably *defaced* by ſin! O, what is this! and who can declare his humiliation? 4. The nature of this humiliation; *he humbled himſelf:* The word imports both a real and a voluntary abaſement: Real; Chriſt did not perſonate an humble man, nor act the part of one in a debaſed ſtate, but was really and in very deed humbled, both in the ſight of God and man. And, as it was real, ſo alſo was his humiliation voluntary: It is not ſaid, he *was* humbled, but that *he humbled himſelf*; he was willing to ſtoop to this low and abject ſtate for us; and it was the voluntarineſs of his humiliation that made it ſo acceptable to God, and ſo beneficial and ſerviceable unto us. 5. The degrees of our holy Lord's humiliation: *he became obedient unto death*, *even the death of the croſs*. Here we have the depth of Chriſt's humiliation ſpecified; it was *unto death*, and alſo aggravated, *even unto the death of the croſs:* he humbled himſelf, not only to become a mortal man, but a dead corpſe, and that too hanging on a tree, dying the death of a malefactor: There was pain, ſhame, and a curſe, in the death of the croſs; Chriſt underwent the pain patiently, the ſhame meekly, the curſe obediently, all of them willingly and cheerfully, that the juſtice of God might be ſatisfied, his wrath pacified, his majeſty reconciled, death and hell vanquiſhed and deſtroyed. Behold the tranſcendency of Chriſt's love to the children of men! *Greater love has no man than this*, *that a man lay down his life for his friend*; but greater love had the Son of God than this, that he laid down his life for his inveterate enemies.

9 Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; 10 That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11 And that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The former verſes ſpake of the depth of Chriſt's humiliation, theſe, of the height of his exaltation. Where *note*, 1. The dignity itſelf, conferred by God upon Chriſt; God *exalted* him, highly exalted him, exalted him above all exaltation, as the word ſignifies. Chriſt, in his reſurrection, was exalted, in his aſcenſion, he was very highly exalted; in his ſitting at God's right hand, he was very highly exalted, above all exaltation. 2. How the *ſteps* of Chriſt's *exaltation* did punctually anſwer the ſteps of his *humiliation:* the firſt ſtep of his humiliation was his incarnation, by which he was made man, and, as our Surety, was made ſin. The firſt ſtep of his exaltation, was his reſurrection, by which he was declared to be the *Son of God with power*, and as our Surety, having paid our debt, was releaſed from the priſon of the grave. The ſecond ſtep of his humiliation was his poor and contemptible life, and his painful, ſhameful, and accurſed death: anſwerable thereunto is Chriſt's aſcenſion into heaven, and ſitting there at God's right hand, advancing him above all principalities and power, that is, above all the angels, and placing him next to himſelf in dignity and honour. 3. The connection between Chriſt's humiliation and exaltation, *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the death*; *wherefore God hath highly exalted him.* Where *obſerve*, That ſome make the humiliation of Chriſt the meritorious cauſe of his exaltation, and his exaltation the reward of his humiliation: others make the humiliation of Chriſt only the antecedent of his exaltation; he humbled himſelf, and God has exalted him to a dignity above all dignities and pre-eminency whatſoever, making him king and head of his church, and giving him all power, both in heaven and earth, requiring, that the divine honour due to God, ſhould be given to him alſo. *Note*, 4. The particulars of our Lord's exaltation declared, and they are three. (1.) God hath *given him a name above every name*; that is, dignity and power, majeſty and authority, over all creatures both in heaven and earth. (2.) *That every knee*, *of things in heaven*, and things in *earth*, and things *under* the earth, ſhould *bow* to the name of Jeſus: every *knee*, that is, every creature, in heaven, earth, and hell, ſhall *bow*, that is, yield ſubjection to Chriſt, ſome voluntarily, others unwillingly; the good angels and good men paying a cheerful homage, the evil angels and bad men yielding a forced and conſtrained ſubjection to him. (3.) That *every tongue* muſt *confeſs*, that *Jeſus Chriſt is Lord:* every *tongue*, that is, every perſon, men of all nations and languages, ſhall confeſs Chriſt crucified, to be the Lord and judge of the world, acknowledging his royal ſovereignty and dominion. 5. The end of Chriſt's glorious exaltation, it was *to the glory of God the Father*; that is, it pleaſed God the Father, for his own glory, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, after he had been deeply humbled, ſhould be highly exalted. Laſtly, The apoſtle's great deſign and ſcope in ſetting before the Philippians the humiliation and exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt, and that was to excite them to the grace and duty of humility, that the ſame humble mind ſhould be in them which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus: As if he had ſaid, Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt humbled himſelf greatly for us, and afterwards was highly exalted by God above us; ſo in proportion may you expect to be exalted by God, if you humble yourſelves, in order to maintain and preſerve the church's peace and unity; for before honour is humility.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence, work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleaſure.

Note here, 1. The commendation given by St. Paul of his beloved Philippians, for their cheerful obedience to the precepts of the goſpel; they *always* obeyed, that is, ever ſince their firſt converſion to Chriſtianity, not only while the apoſtle was upon the ſpot with them, but ſince the providence of God neceſſitated his abſence from them, not in my preſence only, but now *much more* in my abſence. But how came it to paſs, that their obedience was greater, when they wanted the apoſtle for their inſtructor? *Anſ.* In the abſence of one teacher, they had another, and him a better than the inſpired apoſtle, even the inſpiring Spirit of God, who, in the apoſtle's abſence, was more immediately preſent with them by his inward motions, to excite and enable them, both to will and to do what is well-pleaſing to him. O how good is God, at the ſupplying the wants, and making up the loſſes of his people! If perſecution drives his church's miniſters into dungeons, and they cannot hear a voice behind them, they ſhall have the preſence of his holy Spirit, and hear a voice within them, ſaying, *This is the* *way walk in it.* *Note*, 2. A ſpecial duty which St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to be found in the practice of, namely, *To work out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling*: implying, that it ſhould be every Chriſtian's great work, to be daily working out his own ſalvation, that is, diligently making uſe of all means and faithfulneſs, practiſing all duties in order thereunto. *Obſerve* here, 1. The excellency of the object propoſed, and that is, ſalvation; there is ſalvation held forth and tendered by God to loſt ſinners, in the goſpel. 2. The difficulty of ſalvation, ſuppoſed and implied in the word *work*; which ſignifies an exerting our utmoſt endeavours, in order to the attaining of it: The work of ſalvation is no lazy man's buſineſs, but a work of labour and difficulty, though the difficulties may be overcome by an induſtrious diligence. 3. The neceſſity of perſeverance, in order to our attaining of ſalvation: *Work out your ſalvation*, that is, perfect and conſummate the work which you have happily begun. 4. The manner how we ſhould work out our own ſalvation, namely, *with fear and trembling*; intimating that an holy fear of God, and an humble fear of ourſelves, will be of ſingular uſe and advantage to us in the working out of our ſalvation. *Note*, 3. The argument or motive to excite unto this labour and diligence in and about the work of ſalvation; and this is very encouraging, becauſe God works with us, and in us, ver. 13. *For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do:* That God works with us, is great encouragement to us to work, but we muſt remember God works arbitrarily, and not neceſſarily; he worketh but of his own *good pleaſure*, as a free agent, who can ceaſe when he pleaſes; therefore work with fear and trembling. *Learn* from the whole, (1.) That we can do nothing without God. (2.) That he will do nothing without us: We can do nothing without his aſſiſtance, he will do nothing without the concurrence of our endeavours: he worketh in us both *to will and to do*, and we muſt work with him, in order to the working out our own ſalvation.

14 Do all things without murmurings and diſputings; 15 That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world, 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Here our apoſtle ſeems to reſume the exhortation which he began to preſs before, namely, to love and concord, to unity and peace among themſelves; he exhorts them, as to do all things without contention, ſo without *murmurings*, and hot *diſputings*, in which uſually the laws of charity are violated, and the peace of the church, and quietneſs among Chriſtians interrupted: And, to provoke them thereunto, he diſcovers to them the many great and bleſſed advantages which would redound unto them by their unity and concord. (1.) Hereby they ſhould be *blameleſs* and *harmleſs*, the ſons of God *without rebuke*, that is, very inoffenſive perſons, or, as the Greek word renders it, that ye may be the ſpotleſs ſons of God; not abſolutely ſpotleſs, pure, and perfect, but without ſuch ſpots as are inconſiſtent with your ſonſhip; there is a ſpot which is, and a ſpot which is not, the ſpot of God's children, Deut. xxxii. 4. Sins of infirmity, are ſpots found upon the beſt of his children; ſins of preſumption, if at any time found upon you, they are not the ſpots of his children. (2.) Hereby they ſhould ſhine as *lights* in the world, that is, in the Pagan world, and in the Chriſtian church: This imports both the high dignity, and ſpecial duty of Chriſtians, to be as ſo many ſuns, to ariſe and ſhine like mighty luminaries in the firmament of the world, caſting out their rays and beams in a holy and heavenly converſation. (3.) Hereby they would *hold forth* the word of life; not only hold it faſt for their own comfort, but hold it forth for others benefit, that is, in their Chriſtian practice and profeſſion; the lives of Chriſtians ſhould publiſh the word of life, to the intent, that the enemies of it may fall in love with it. Perhaps, as many have been converted to Chriſtianity, by holding forth the word of life in practice, as by holding it forth from the pulpit: An holy life is the loudeſt proclamation, and the beſt way of holding forth the word of life. (4.) Hereby he ſhould have joy and rejoicing, as well as they reap benefit and advantage: *that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain:* that is, that I have not preached the goſpel unprofitably amongſt you. Here *note*, That the work of the miniſtry is a laborious work, a ſpending work; the apoſtle here ſets it forth by running a race, which is a waſting and ſtrength-conſuming exerciſe: *I have run, I have laboured.* 2. That the labour and pains of the moſt faithful and indefatigable miniſters of Chriſt may be, and too often are, loſt upon, and *in vain*, unto the people that are conſtantly made partakers of them: They may run in vain, and labour in vain, as to their people; but, bleſſed be God, it ſhall not be *in vain* as to themſelves, Iſa. xlix. 4. *Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall they be glorious.* *Note*, 3. That the glory which ſhall be put upon our people in the day of judgment, who were converted to God by our miniſterial endeavours, will add to our joy as miniſters, and be our crown of rejoicing in that day: *that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt*, &c.

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18 For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Behold here, how St. Paul, the under ſhepherd, imitates Chriſt, that great and good Shepherd, in his readineſs to lay down his life for the ſheep; not for their reconciliation, but for their confirmation: *If*, ſays he, it ſhall pleaſe God that *I be*, by martyrdom, *offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith*, that is, to eſtabliſh you in the faith which I have taught you, and to confirm and ſeal the truth of it, with my blood, I will rejoice therein for your ſakes, and I deſire you to rejoice with me, and to bleſs God for me in ſo doing. *Note* here, The emphaſis and elegancy of the apoſtle's words, *If I be offered up*: a manifeſt alluſion to the Jewiſh ſacrifices, in which there was wine poured out as a libation upon the ſacrifice, and then offered up to God. Thus, ſays he, If my blood, like wine, be poured forth, whilſt I am employed by the preaching of the goſpel, to render you Gentiles an acceptable ſacrifice, and a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto God, I ſhould rejoice even thus to die in your ſervice, and for the confirmation of your faith. Hence *learn*, That life itſelf is not, and will not be thought too dear, or accounted by the miniſters of Chriſt too much, to lay down in the ſervice of their people's ſouls, and for the confirmation of their faith: *If I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy and rejoice.* 2. That the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould not preach any thing to their people, but what they dare ſeal and confirm the truth of with their very blood, if God calls them thereunto: St. Paul had before preached the doctrine of the goſpel to the Philippians, and now he ſtood ready to ſeal it with his blood.

19 But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus to ſend Timotheus ſhortly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort, when I know your ſtate. 20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate. 21 For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that as a ſon with the father, he has ſerved with me in the goſpel. 23 Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me.

Our apoſtle, having finiſhed the firſt part of the chapter, which contained exhortations to duty, comes now to the ſecond part of it, containing arguments of comfort; and here, firſt, he comforts the Philippians, by promiſing to ſend Timotheus unto them ſhortly. *Note* here, 1. The greatneſs of St. Paul's ſoul, widened with deſires to advance the kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt; his pious zeal put him upon contriving ſome way of making a ſupply of his neceſſitated abſence from the Philippians; what he could not do by himſelf, he deſires and endeavours to do by another, even Timothy: him he promiſes to ſend as a living epiſtle, to inſtruct and exhort, to quicken and comfort the church at Philippi, in his conſtrained abſence from her. "Bleſſed apoſtle! So that Chriſt might be advanced, thou caredſt not by whom it were, whether by thyſelf, or by another: thou wert willing to ſtand in the crowd and be hidden, ſo that Chriſt might ſtand upon another's ſhoulders, and be ſeen!" *I truſt in the Lord to ſend Timotheus to you ſhortly.* 2. St. Paul, being about to ſend Timothy to Philippi, ſends firſt a commendation of him: and that which he particularly commends Timothy for, was, his affectionate love unto the Philippians, and his tender care and concern for them: *I have no man like-minded, who will care for your ſtate:* now, this care in Timothy, for and towards the Philippians, is here recommended by St. Paul in ſeveral obſervable inſtances of it. (1.) It was a ſpiritual care chiefly, he careth for *your ſtate*, that is, for your ſpiritual ſtate; not that he was without concern for their temporal happineſs, but the proſperity of their ſouls was the prime object of his care. (2.) It was a ſolicitous care, the Greek word ſignifies an anxious care, a ſoul-cutting, a ſoul-rending care; his care was not to cut and wound the ſouls, to vex and grieve the ſpirits of his people, but he cuts his own ſoul with caring for his people. (3.) It was a ſincere care, a natural genuine care, *he naturally careth for your ſtate:* naturally, that is, heartily, ſincerely, not artificially, and in appearance only: Some can artificially act the part of a zealot, when their own intereſt or applauſe make it neceſſary; but Timothy was unſkilful in ſuch arts, he did naturally, cheerfully, and conſtantly care *for their ſtate*; there was a reality, yea, a large quantity of love, and hearty affection towards the Philippians found with him. (4.) St. Paul commends this care in Timothy towards them, for the rarity of it: *I find none like-minded*, that is, few, very few, like-minded with him, and equal-hearted to him in the cauſe of Chriſt: St. Paul had divers miniſters now with him, but one Timothy; others ſought their own things, but he the things of Jeſus Chriſt: Yet, I conceive this is not to be underſtood univerſally, but ſynechdochically; not as if all miniſters, except Timothy only, ſought themſelves, and regarded their own private intereſt, but the moſt and far greateſt part did ſo, refuſing to undertake ſuch a tedious journey from Rome to Philippi, as Timothy ſtood ready to undertake. *Learn* hence, That it is a great ſin in all, but eſpecially in the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, to be of a ſelf-ſeeking ſpirit. 3. He commends this care of Timothy's towards them, by their experimental knowledge of it, and acquaintance with it; for, when old Paul was at Philippi, young Timothy was an aſſiſtant to him, as a ſon to a father, obeying his counſel, following his directions, imitating his example, in all things tending to the edification of the church. Now from the whole, that is, from St. Paul's care to ſend Timothy, thus qualified, to labour in the goſpel at the church in Philippi, we *note*, That ſuch as have power to ſend forth miniſters to flocks, and paſtors to take care of the ſouls of a people, ſhould ſend ſuch as are both able and willing to ſpend and be ſpent for the good of ſouls, and, if it may be, ſuch as are well known unto, and approved of, by the flock, for their zeal and diligence in the work of Chriſt. St. Paul here is a pattern for all patrons, laying before them the qualifications of the perſons whom they ſhould recommend to the cure of ſouls, ſuch as, with Timothy, have a compaſſion for ſouls, a truly ſolicitous care and concern for the happineſs and welfare of ſouls, ſuch as the people have had ſome knowledge of, or at leaſt a liberty to enquire after; the man of good miniſterial abilities, not of great ſimoniacal gifts: For if patrons, in the execution of that vaſt truſt, (but little conſidered) do ſeek only their own things, no wonder that their clerks ſeek not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.

24 But I truſt in the Lord that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly. 25 Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-ſoldier, but your meſſenger, and he that miniſtered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heavineſs, becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick. 27 For indeed, he was ſick nigh unto death: But God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, declared his reſolutions to ſend Timothy to the Philippians as ſoon as he ſhould ſee how it would go with himſelf at Rome, and what would be the iſſue of his bonds; and having alſo diſcovered his own purpoſe to come himſelf to them, as ſoon as the providence of God ſhould ſet him at liberty; in the mean time, he aſſures them, he would no longer detain their own ſpecial miniſter Epaphroditus from them, whom they had ſo kindly ſent with a liberal ſupply unto him, in the priſon at Rome; *I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend unto you Epaphroditus, my brother, my companion in labour, my fellow ſoldier, your meſſenger, and he that miniſtered to my wants.* Here *note*, 1. How copious St. Paul is in the commendation of Epaphroditus; he calls him *his brother*, his brother in Chriſt, his brother in the miniſtry, his *companion in labour*, his fellow-labourer in Chriſt's vineyard, travelling from one part of it to another, to plant and propagate the goſpel of Chriſt; his *fellow-ſoldier*, alſo, a faithful and conſtant aſſociate with him in the Chriſtian warfare: Their apoſtle or meſſenger, the biſhop of Philippi, ſay the ancient fathers; their meſſenger, to carry the church's alms to St. Paul, ſay others: Behold here, in St. Paul's ſending away Epaphroditus laden thus with commendation, the great modeſty, ſincerity, and humility, of this chief apoſtle. St. Paul had many prerogatives above Epaphroditus, he was immediately called by Chriſt, extraordinary fitted and furniſhed for his calling; he laboured more abundantly, and ſuffered more abundantly than all the reſt; yet he almoſt equalizes and levels Epaphroditus with himſelf, calling him *brother*, *fellow-labourer*, *fellow-ſoldier*, and highly magnifies the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in him, without the leaſt diminution; teaching ſuch as are dignified in the church, and exalted by their merits above others, not to deſpiſe the perſons, nor to extenuate and leſſen the gifts, and graces, and uſefulneſs of their inferior brethren. Pride in any perſon is odious, but in a miniſter it is monſtrous; they that have received more than others, and know better than others, ought to be patterns of humility unto others. 2. The reaſons here aſſigned, why St. Paul judged it neceſſary to ſend Epaphroditus back to his charge at Philippi. (1.) He longed after his flock, ver. 26. *He longed after you all*, even unto heavineſs; we do not read of his longing after his family, or his friends, or the fleece, but his flock, his church and charge at Philippi; this lay near his heart, this he longed to be with. (2.) This longing and heavineſs was mutual, the Philippians longed for him, and were full of heavineſs becauſe of his ſickneſs. When the head of a faithful miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt akes, his people's hearts ake; mutual longings between miniſters and people in caſe of abſence, and mutual heavineſs and mourning in caſe of ſickneſs, is a certain argument and evidence of mutual love one towards another. *Note*, 3. How our apoſtle confirms the report of Epaphroditus's ſickneſs, and celebrates the mercy and goodneſs of God in his unexpected recovery; *indeed he was ſick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him*, &c. Here *obſerve*, 1. The eminency of the perſon who was ſick, Epaphroditus, a great man, a good man, a man of God, St. Paul's *brother*, *companion*, *fellow-ſoldier*, falls ſick, when engaged in Chriſt's and the church's ſpecial ſervice: Saints as well as ſinners, miniſters as well as people, are ſubject to ſickneſs, diſeaſes, nay, death itſelf may meet them in the work of Chriſt. 2. As the eminency of the perſon, ſo the extremity of the diſeaſe, *he was nigh unto death.* But why did not St. Paul, who had the gift of healing, help Epaphroditus now ſick, as well as raiſe Eutychus when dead? Acts xx. 9. *Anſ.* The apoſtles had not the gift of healing to make uſe of it at their pleaſure, but as God was pleaſed by a ſpecial inſtinct and a ſtrong faith to excite them to it, when it was his pleaſure to have them uſe it: Theſe gifts were given for the ſake of unbelievers, to convince them of the truth of Chriſtianity, but God did not think fit to have them ordinarily exerciſed upon believers. 3. The recovery of Epaphroditus, and the author of it, *God had mercy on him*; he who is Lord of life and death, ſaid in mercy to him, "Return, and live." When God preſerves the lives, and reſtores the health of his faithful miniſters, it is an act of no ſmall mercy both to their people and themſelves: To their people, as they become the greater inſtruments of their good: To themſelves, as it increaſes their own reward; the longer a miniſter lives, the more glory he brings to God; and the more glory he brings to God on earth, the more glory ſhall he partake of with God in heaven; in ſhort, the longer he lives, the more ſouls he converts, and every ſoul is as a new gem added to that crown, which ſhall one day be put upon his head, Dan. xii. 3. *They that turn many to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever.* Laſtly, The ſhare which St. Paul had in the mercy of Epaphroditus's recovery, *God had mercy, not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow:* Paul had much ſorrow, a great load of ſorrow upon him at that time; he was now among ſtrangers, yea, among priſoners, in the midſt of perſecutors, and his mind oppreſſed with ſorrow, partly for the Philippians, partly for Epaphroditus; therefore the Lord, in tender pity to him, did not take away by death his dear and uſeful companion, leſt he ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow, and cauſe his wounds to bleed afreſh. *Learn* hence, So compaſſionate is God towards his dear children, that, though he often cauſes them grief and ſorrow, yet he will not overcharge them therewith, nor add affliction to the afflicted, nor ſuffer them to be exerciſed and tried above what they are able.

28 I ſent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs, and hold ſuch in reputation: 30 Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to ſupply your lack of ſervice toward me.

Here, firſt, St. Paul aſſigns the reaſon why he was ſo careful to ſend back Epaphroditus to the Philippians, namely, to aſſuage his own grief, and to increaſe their joy, *that when ye ſee him ye might rejoice, and I be the leſs ſorrowful.* Next, the apoſtle exhorts them to receive him with all joy and gladneſs, and to give him, and all ſuch as he was, due honour, and deſerved reſpect; and, doubtleſs, the Philippians received him with inexpreſſible joy, as the miniſter of Chriſt riſen from the dead, recovered from the grave; received to life and ſervice, when all hopes of enjoying him were cut off. O the folly and frailty of human nature! We prize our mercies more by the want, than by the worth of them. Laſtly, He aſſigns a ſpecial reaſon why he would have them receive him with ſuch demonſtrations of joy, namely, becauſe it was in their and his ſervice that he was brought to the very brink of the grave, *for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death*; the work here meant is properly his journey to Rome, which was long and tedious; his watchings and pains-taking with and for the apoſtle there were very ſpending, he endeavoured to ſupply the abſence and want of the whole church to St. Paul; his zeal for God, and his affection to St. Paul, carried him out beyond himſelf, beyond his ſtrength, to the apparent prejudice both of his health and life. *Learn* hence, 1. That to relieve the members, but eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, in their neceſſities and wants, is the work of Chriſt; *for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death:* Miniſters are not only engaged in the work of Chriſt when they preach, &c. but when they viſit their flock, inquire into the wants of the poor, and adminiſter to the neceſſities of the diſtreſſed, this is the work of Chriſt. 2. That ſickneſs may overtake, yea, death itſelf may meet the faithful ſervants and miniſters of Chriſt, when they are engaged in his own work: It was *in the work of the Lord* that Epaphroditus met with his ſickneſs; and had he met with death itſelf, he had been happy; for, *Bleſſed are they that die in the work of the Lord, they ſhall reſt from their labours, and their works ſhall follow them.*

CHAP. III.

The deſign of our apoſtle, in this chapter, is to arm the church of the Philippians *againſt thoſe falſe Judaizing teachers, who confounded* Chriſt *and* Moſes, *circumciſion and the goſpel together; which he doth by ſeveral arguments.*

FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.—

There is no duty which believers do more willingly hear, or more difficultly obſerve, than the duty of ſpiritual rejoicing; had our apoſtle called upon the bleſſed angels to rejoice, who have neither ſin, nor ſorrow, nor fear, nor ſufferings, nor enemies to annoy them, that might have ſeemed agreeable; but is it at all congruous to perſuade ſinners, loaded with guilt, and defiled with corruption, clothed with infirmities, aſſaulted with temptations, perſecuted by the world? To bid them rejoice, may ſeem ſtrange: But the wonder will ceaſe, if we conſider the object which he directs them to rejoice in, and that is, *the Lord*; not in themſelves, but in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *My brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great, ſure, and perpetual joy of his own people; the object of joy is a preſent good, a precious good, a proportionable good, a perpetual good, ſuch is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the duty of all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians to joy and rejoice in him. *Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord*; rejoice in his perſon, in the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge that are found in him, which render him an object worthy of angelical adoration; rejoice in his mediation, in the great things he has done and ſuffered for you in the graces of his Spirit conferred upon you, and in the hopes of that glory to which he has intitled you.

—To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* ſafe.

To write the ſame things, that is, not the ſame things which I wrote before, but the ſame things which I preached to you before, and which you often heard by word of mouth from me before; though I inculcate and preſs the ſame truths upon you by my writing, which I have done by my preaching, it is neither grievous nor burdenſome to me, nor unneceſſary or unprofitable for you. *Learn* hence, That the often repeating, and frequent inculcating of ſuch truths as are moſt uſeful and neceſſary for the inſtruction and edification of the hearers, ought to be eſteemed neither burdenſome by the miniſter, nor weariſome by the people. *Learn* farther, That we have here St. Paul's judgment againſt oral tradition, which the church of Rome prefers before the written word; ſo did not St. Paul, knowing that what is delivered by word of mouth might ſoon ſlip out of the memory, but what is written, is remaining: Bleſſed be God for his written word.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the conciſion.

Obſerve here, 1. The cautionary direction given the Philippians to beware of falſe teachers, who adulterated and corrupted the doctrine of Chriſt, by joining the works and obſervances of the law with the doctrine of the goſpel, in point of juſtification, making them at leaſt the partial ground of their confidence and rejoicing; beware of ſuch, ſays our apoſtle. 2. The cutting reproof given to theſe Judaizing teachers, in that odious character he gives of them, and in that brand of infamy which he claps upon them. (1.) He calls them *dogs*; a term, not of diminution only, but of utmoſt diſgrace; *Is thy ſervant a dog?* 2 Kings viii. 13. ſuppoſing that nothing could be thought more vile and baſe. The Jews called all the Gentiles dogs, becauſe unclean; St. Paul here calls the falſe teachers dogs, fitly, becauſe, as dogs, they did rend and tear the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and divide the glory of man's ſalvation betwixt faith and works; becauſe, as dogs, they did bark out reproaches againſt the apoſtles and their doctrine, delivered in its native purity and ſimplicity; becauſe, as dogs, they did take a great deal of pains to compaſs abundance of ground to gain their game; or, in our Saviour's words, *They compaſs ſea and land to make proſelytes.* (2.) *Evil-workers*, becauſe, pretending to labour in the goſpel, they did ſubvert and overthrow the great deſign of the goſpel, pretending to be fellow workers with the apoſtles, but pulling down what they built up. (3.) *The conciſion*; ſo in contempt he calls circumciſion, which theſe Judaizing teachers pleaded the neceſſity of; as Hezekiah called the brazen ſerpent *Nehuſhtan*; becauſe circumciſion, being no longer an ordinance of God, was no better than a cutting off the fleſh; and they that made it neceſſary to juſtification, cut themſelves off from Chriſt, and from the church of Chriſt; by urging the neceſſity of circumciſion, they cut and rent aſunder the church of God. *Note* here, 1.

How different the temper of this apoſtle was in different caſes; in things of an indifferent nature, and leſs neceſſary, who more mild, indulgent, and complying, breathing forth the ſpirit of the meek Jeſus? But when opinions were broached, which tend to pervert ſouls, and to ſubvert the goſpel, then he ſpeaks fire and thunder, and no terms are bad enough for ſuch ſeducers: Let us follow St. Paul, as he followed Chriſt, and learn when to be mild, and when to be zealous. 2. With what an exceſs of care he cautions the Philippians againſt theſe falſe teachers, ſaying, *Beware, beware, beware*; three times together in one ſhort verſe; thereby inſtructing the miniſters of Chriſt, that their utmoſt zeal and diligence is neceſſary in warning their people to guard againſt ſeducers.

3 For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.

That is, we Chriſtians are alone the true and ſpiritual circumciſion, and accounted circumciſed by God, becauſe we have that which the outward circumciſion ſignified, namely, the circumciſion of the heart, and the mortification of all carnal luſts and deſires; we have the ſubſtance of that ordinance, which is infinitely more pleaſing to God than the ceremony and the ſhadow; though you have the ſign, we have the thing ſignified. But how doth that appear? Three ways; we worſhip God in the Spirit, we rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, we have no confidence in the fleſh. (1.) We worſhip God in the Spirit; that is, 1. We give him the worſhip of our ſouls and ſpirits, and do not put him off with mere bodily worſhip, or with the old antiquated Jewiſh worſhip. 2. We worſhip God in the Spirit; that is, through the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit; he excites and quickens to the duty, he aſſiſts and enables in the duty, and he encourages and emboldens the ſoul to expect audience and acceptance after the duty. Again, (2.) We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus; this was a ſecond evidence of their being the true circumciſion. Let them glory in their carnal ordinance of outward circumciſion, we will rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, who had freed us from the ſlavery of that ordinance. (3.) We have no confidence in the fleſh, not in circumciſion, or any fleſhly privileges, or carnal prerogatives; we confide only in Chriſt, and in nothing but Chriſt. *Note*, That by *fleſh* here, is meant particularly, the circumciſion of the fleſh; but more generally, by *fleſh*, may be underſtood, all the externals of religion, which men place their truſt and confidence in, all outward privileges and ordinances are fleſh, in the apoſtles ſenſe here; prayer is fleſh, ordinances are fleſh, the righteouſneſs of the law is fleſh; nay, grace itſelf, truſted to and confided in, is fleſh: The ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian rejoices in Chriſt Jeſus, confides in him, but dares not place any confidence in the fleſh.

4 Though I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, I more: 5 Circumciſed the eighth day, of the ſtock of Iſrael, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Phariſee; 6 Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church; touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Let no man think that I undervalue the Jewiſh privileges, becauſe I want them; ſhew me ever a Judaizing teacher of them all that can pretend to more, or ſo many of them as myſelf; ſo that, were this a ground of confidence, I can vie with any one of them in carnal privileges, Jewiſh prerogatives, and outward performances; yea, I can boaſt of as much ſelf-righteouſneſs as the beſt of them, and beyond them all, for I was *circumciſed*, and had the ſeal of the covenant applied to me, yea, I was circumciſed the *eighth day*, the very day preſcribed by the law; (the Jews maintaining that circumciſion before the eighth day was of leſs value): *Of the ſtock of Iſrael*, one of that nation which God ſet apart for himſelf, when he rejected all the nations of the earth beſide: *Of the tribe of Benjamin*, of a noble tribe, as well as deſcended of an honourable people; a tribe which kept cloſe to God, when other tribes revolted to the worſhip of Jeroboam's calves; a tribe honoured with the firſt of Iſrael's kings, king Saul: *An Hebrew of the Hebrews*, that is, born a Jew both by father's ſide and mother's ſide: *As touching the law, a Phariſee*; that is, as touching the interpretation and obſervation of the law, a Phariſee; or one of the ſtricteſt ſects among the Jews for the profeſſion of religion: *Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church*; that is, as touching zeal for the Jewiſh religion, I have ſhewed that above others in my fiery and furious perſecution of the church of Chriſt; I was active according as my judgment and conſcience directed me: *And as touching the righteouſneſs which is in and by the law*, thas is, as to my perſonal obedience unto the law, I was *blameleſs*, without ſpot, as the original word ſignifies, that is, in my own account, and in man's eſteem, my converſation not ſtained with any groſs ſin, but very exact in my deportment and behaviour, living up to my knowledge, my practice correſponding with my profeſſion." Behold here a man that had a large ſtock of Jewiſh privileges and prerogatives: All theſe grounds of confidence the apoſtle had before his converſion; and he might have reſted there, and have gloried, and confided therein, as well as the Jewdaizing doctors did, who gloried in their external privileges: But how far St. Paul was from this ſpirit and temper, the next verſes inform us.

7 But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt. 8 Yea doubtleſs and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt,

That is, the forementioned privileges, which heretofore he accounted gain, and thought to gain juſtification and ſalvation by, now, ſince his illumination, he counted them all *loſs*; he ſaw he had loſt his ſoul for ever, had he truſted to theſe; but Chriſt being made known to him as the only way to gain pardon of ſin and acceptance with God, he renounces all his former privileges, his former legal righteouſneſs, he durſt not lean upon theſe broken reeds, he would have no more confidence in the fleſh, but in Chriſt only; *what things were reputed gain to me, thoſe I accounted loſs for Chriſt's ſake.* And he repeats the words over again with confidence and aſſurance, that he might not be thought to ſpeak unadviſedly, and in a heat; *yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs*: He did not only count them loſs, but he had actually renounced them as ſuch: An alluſion to a merchant, who is content to ſuffer the loſs of all his goods, to ſave his life. But how did St. Paul ſuffer the loſs of them? *Anſ.* He did not make ſhipwreck of holy duties, and caſt off the performance of them, but he caſt off all dependency upon them, and caſt away all expectation of happineſs and ſalvation from them, which he had before. *Obſerve* farther, He did not only count them loſs, but caſt them away as dung, as filthy carrion, as garbage caſt to dogs, as the word ſignifies. Such things as theſe, the falſe teachers (whom he called *dogs*) might delight in; but as for himſelf, he could reliſh and ſavour nothing in them, in compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt. In the words, *obſerve*, 1. The low eſteem and mean account which St. Paul had, and every enlightened Chriſtian has, of the greateſt advantages which this world doth or can afford; *in compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, I count all things but loſs*; all my ſpiritual privileges, with all my worldly advantages, I do, upon the greateſt deliberation and thought, undervalue them all for the ſake of Chriſt and his grace. 2. The high and honourable eſteem which he had of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt; he declares there was a tranſcendent excellency in it; *for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.* The knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of the way and method of ſalvation by and through him, is an excelling knowledge; every thing of Jeſus Chriſt is excellent and worthy to be known; the dignity of his perſon, as God, as man, as God-man, or Mediator between God and man; the dignity of his offices, as the great King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his church; the eminency of his example, the depth of his humiliation, the height of his exaltation, the tranſcendency of his love in all his undertakings for us, and the way and method of his juſtification of us by faith in his blood. We may conclude of the act, by the object; Chriſt is the moſt excellent object, therefore the knowledge of Chriſt is, and muſt be, the moſt excellent knowledge; not only all the excellencies of the creatures are found in him in the moſt excellent manner, but all the excellencies of the God-head, the fulneſs of the God-head, dwell in him bodily, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially. 3. The effect which this knowledge of Chriſt had upon our apoſtle; it enabled him *to ſuffer the loſs of all things:* Thoſe that have attained the excellent knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, will not think much to ſuffer the loſs of any thing, yea, of all things, for the obtaining of him, and ſalvation by him. 4. The end and deſign of St. Paul, in parting with all for Chriſt, or the motive and encouragement which induced him thereunto, namely, that he *might win Chriſt*; that is, that he might obtain an intereſt in him, and the bleſſings purchaſed by him; for this was he willing to part with all his privileges, all his accompliſhments, all his enjoyments, all his own righteouſneſs, his exactneſs in the outward obſervation of the law; he renounced it all, not in point of performance, but in point of dependence; he renounced all confidence in it for his juſtification before God.

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith:

Obſerve here, 1. The ſubject-matter of St. Paul's deſire was to be found *in Chriſt.* Beza, upon the place, brings in the juſtice of God purſuing Paul as a malefactor; and Chriſt, as a city of refuge which he deſires to flee unto, and be found in. By being found *in Chriſt*, then, underſtand ingrafting and incorporating into him by faith, to find acceptance with God, through him, as our ſurety and repreſentative, and to perſevere in our obedience to him to the end of our lives. *Learn*, That ſuch as deſire, above all things, to be found *in Chriſt*, are willing to do, to ſuffer any thing, yea, all things; and care not in what condition they be found, how poor and low, how afflicted and deſpiſed ſoever, ſo they may be found *in Chriſt. Obſerve*, 2. The manner how St. Paul deſired to be found *in Chriſt*; this is expreſſed both negatively and poſitively. (1.) Negatively, *not having mine own righteouſneſs which is of the law*; that is, not depending upon any thing that he could call his own, neither upon his ſpiritual privileges, nor natural accompliſhments, nor religious performances, nor upon his moſt perfect righteouſneſs, and beſt obedience, for his juſtification before God, knowing it to be both unwarrantable and unſafe ſo to do; unwarrantable, becauſe our good works never had the impreſs of God's ordination for that end; they were never deſigned to juſtify our perſons, but to juſtify our faith; and unſafe it is to truſt to our own righteouſneſs and beſt ſervices, becauſe of the many ſinful imperfections cleaving to them: Alas! they cannot juſtify themſelves; how then ſhould they juſtify us? Our beſt duties deſerve to be thrown as ſo much dung upon our faces: Surely, we may plead the excellency, and preach the neceſſity of good works, though we do not ſet them in Chriſt's chair: Such then as would be found *in Chriſt*, though they are ever ſo careful to maintain good works (which it is their duty and intereſt, their daily care and endeavour to do) yet they dare not reſt in them, nor rely upon them for juſtification, or make any thing in themſelves, or done by themſelves, the ground of their confidence. Chriſt's perfect obedience, intitles us to heaven; our own imperfect (if ſincere) obedience, will evidence that title. Some rely upon a natural righteouſneſs, that which they call good nature; others rely upon a negative righteouſneſs, becauſe they are not ſo unrighteous as ſome; others rely upon a poſitive righteouſneſs, a moral righteouſneſs, in obſerving the duties of the ſecond table, a religious righteouſneſs, in performing the outward duties of prayer, hearing the word, receiving the ſacraments. But though St. Paul was one of the moſt religious men that the Jewiſh religion ever had, yet he durſt not be found with this righteouſneſs alone, but deſires to be found *in Chriſt, not having his own righteouſneſs, which is of the law. Obſerve* farther, The way how the apoſtle deſired to be found in Chriſt, is not only, (1.) Negatively; but, (2.) Poſitively declared, *that which is through the faith of Chriſt, that righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* Here *note*, 1. The righteouſneſs which ſecures a guilty ſinner from the dint of God's wrath is Chriſt's righteouſneſs; he is made unto us of God *righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 30. Now, this righteouſneſs is here called, (1.) The righteouſneſs of God, becauſe of his appointing, ordaining, and accepting it. (2.) The righteouſneſs of faith, becauſe this righteouſneſs is made ours by faith: faith apprehending and applying the death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, the fruit and benefit of his undertaking, becomes the believing ſinner's, and God is at peace with him: Such as will be found in Chriſt, muſt have a righteouſneſs, the meritorious righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to anſwer the demands of the law, and a perſonal righteouſneſs of their own, to anſwer the commands of the goſpel. St. Paul here, though a tranſcendent ſaint, though an eminent apoſtle, yet diveſts himſelf of his own righteouſneſs, that he might be clothed upon with the righteouſneſs of the Mediator, be found in him as his Surety in the day of account, and obtain pardon for the ſake of his ſatisfaction. 2. That there is no gain to be had from this righteouſneſs by a loſt ſinner, except it be apprehended by faith; it was not a righteouſneſs of his own that St. Paul deſired to be found in, but faith was his own, inherent in him, and acted by him, which did intitle him to that righteouſneſs, called therefore here, *the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.*

10 That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made comformable unto his death;

Our apoſtle had in the foregoing verſe, expreſſed his earneſt deſire to be found in Chriſt, with reſpect to his juſtification; in this verſe, with reſpect to his ſanctification, he deſires to *know Chriſt*, as the Meſſiah and Mediator, that he might experience *the power of his reſurrection*, raiſing him from the death of ſin, to a life of grace and holineſs, and taſte ſomething of that comfort and joy which is found in ſuffering with him and for him; and to be made *conformable to his death*, by a daily dying unto ſin: Knowing, that if he were conformed to him in the likeneſs of his death, he ſhould be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection. Here *note*, 1. What it is that a perſon juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt doth moſt deſire, namely, a ſpirit of holineſs, and ſanctification, flowing from Chriſt, to enable him to live unto him: *that I may know the power of his reſurrection*, that is, experience that divine power in my ſoul, quickening me to a life of grace, which Chriſt experienced in quickening his dead body when it lay in the grave. "It is as great a work of the Spirit to form Chriſt in the heart of a ſinner, as it was to faſhion him in the womb, or to raiſe him from the grave," (ſays the pious biſhop Reynolds upon the place.) 2. That ſuch as are juſtified and ſanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, are willing to have fellowſhip with him in his ſufferings, not ambitious to ſhare with him in the merit of his ſufferings, but deſirous to participate with him in the benefit of his ſufferings, and alſo, to be conformed to him in their own ſufferings; the members think it an honour to be like their head, their ſuffering head, as well as their glorified head; and well they may; for in and under all their ſufferings, eſpecially for him, they have his preſence with them, his compaſſion to moderate them, his ſtrength to bear them, his interceſſion to preſerve from falling away in them; and his crown, after they have ſuffered a while, to reward them for them.

11 If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead:

By *the reſurrection of the dead*, here, is not to be underſtood the general reſurrection, for all men ſhall attain that, whether they ſtrive for it or no; but he intends, that complete holineſs, and abſolute perfection in grace, which ſhall attend the ſtate of the reſurrection; ſo he explains it himſelf in the next verſe, *Not that I have already attained*, &c. or am *already perfect*; and he ſhews how diligent he was endeavouring, in the uſe of all poſſible means, to arrive at it, and *attain unto it*. *Learn*, That the glorious reſurrection of the juſt, or grace conſummated in glory, is attainable, and deſerves and requires the utmoſt care and diligence of the moſt holy and zealous Chriſtians, to be exerted and put forth, in order to the attaining of it.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. 13 Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, 14 I preſs toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

Our apoſtle here compares himſelf to a perſon running in a race: the prize which he did contend and run for, was perfection in grace. The higheſt degree of which in this life, conſiſts in a deſire and endeavour to obtain the largeſt meaſures and fulleſt degrees of holineſs, that are here attainable: The manner how he ran for this prize, he tells us, was, by *looking forward*, not backward; he did not look back to the things which he had left behind, namely, to the privileges of Judaiſm, not to his paſt performances; but, like a racer, kept himſelf continually upon the ſtretch, with his eye fixed firmly upon the prize at the end of the goal, that he might lay hold upon it, and be crowned with it. *Note* here, Chriſtianity is a race; every Chriſtian in his life muſt run this race; in his running he muſt *look forward*, and not backward, not reckon how much of the way is paſt, but make the beſt of the way to come: He muſt keep heaven, as the mark and prize he runs for, continually in his eye, to hearten him on againſt all hardſhips and diſcouragements whatſoever, and, in a word, muſt be *apprehended* before he can *apprehend*: St. Paul was apprehended by Chriſt, and caught hold of by him, when he fled from him, otherwiſe he had never apprehended; Chriſt takes hold on us, before we have any deſire to lay hold on him; we move as moved of him, and aſſiſted by him.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus

minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.

Let as many as be perfect, that is, grown Chriſtians, inſtructed thoroughly in their Chriſtian duty, who, compared with others, may be called *perfect*, *be thus minded*, as I am, namely, to believe the circumciſion of the fleſh aboliſhed, and that no confidence is to be placed in any righteouſneſs of our own, *but in the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith only*; and if any, ſeduced by the Judaizing teachers, be otherwiſe minded, and think that the ceremonial law is not abrogated, nor the practice of circumciſion aboliſhed, God, in his due time, will ſhew them their error, and convince them, that none of thoſe things are now neceſſary for the obtaining of his favour. Nevertheleſs, in the mean time, he exhorts all perſons, according to the meaſures of light and knowledge which they had received, to walk according to the rule of the ſcriptures, preſerving mutual love, and avoiding further rents and diviſions. *Obſerve* here, That in the firſt and beſt age of the Chriſtian church, there was, and we cannot expect but there ever will be, a variety of opinions, and differences in judgment, amongſt the members thereof. 2. That, in this caſe, of unavoidable differences amongſt good men, there ought to be mutual charity and meekneſs, moderation and forbearance, no cenſorious judging of each other, but look firſt at what is wanting in ourſelves, and next, at what is uſeful in others; the one will make us humble, the other charitable, and both peaceable.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt; 19 Whoſe end *is* deſtruction, whoſe God *is their* belly; and *whoſe* glory *is* in their ſhame, who mind earthly things.

Here our apoſtle propounds his own exſample to their imitation; *follow me*, who have renounced all my Jewiſh privileges, all confidence in any thing of my own; and mark them for your patterns, who walk ſo as to have us for an example. O! how happy it is when the miniſters of Chriſt go before their people, and tread out the ſteps which they are to take towards heaven, when they can ſay to their people, (without any upbraiding from their own conſciences) be followers of us, and of all ſuch as have us for an example. Next, he warns them againſt following the doctrines and practices of the falſe teachers, the Judaizing doctors, thoſe great zealots for the obſervation of the ceremonial law, and the rite of circumciſion; theſe he paints out in their proper colours: (1.) He calls them the *enemies of the croſs of Chriſt*, becauſe they preached up the neceſſity of circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law; and ſo, in effect, denied Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, or affirming, that he died in vain: *Whoſe end is deſtruction*, if they perſiſt in their wicked doctrines and practices, their end will be everlaſting deſtruction: *Whoſe God is their belly*, who chiefly mind the gratification and pleaſing of a ſenſual appetite: They who ſerve their belly before God, or as they ſhould ſerve God, do make a god of their belly; we may provide for the belly, but not ſerve it, that is to ſerve us, by fitting us to ſerve God, our neighbour, and ourſelves. *Whoſe glory is their ſhame*; that is, they gloried in their wicked practices in general, whereof they ought to be aſhamed, and the circumciſion of the ſhameful member in particular; they are puffed up with that which ſhould rather make them bluſh: *They mind earthly things*: The riches, honours, pleaſures, applauſe of the world, are things wholly upon their hearts, *counting gain godlineſs*, not regarding Chriſt's intereſt, but only promoting their own deſigns. Lord! what a diſmal character is this of thoſe men that undertake to be teachers of others? With what a black coal doth the apoſtle draw their picture, and yet his hand was guided by the Spirit of God, whoſe judgment of them was according to truth.

20 For our converſation is in heaven; from whence alſo we look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "As you love your ſouls follow not thoſe falſe teachers afore deſcribed, for they are citizens of this world; but imitate and follow us who are citizens of heaven, where our Head is, where our heart is, where our happineſs is: It is true, we live here below, but we belong to the corporation and ſociety above, our citizenſhip is in heaven; for we have an high eſteem of that happineſs, and our chief concern is to make ſure of it, and we pleaſe and delight ourſelves with the joyful expectation of it, and will live anſwerably to our expectation; as we hope hereafter to live like angels in glory, ſo we now endeavour to live like the angels in holineſs." *Learn* hence, All the faithful, both miniſters and people, have a right to heaven, as to their city; they are therefore with their hearts and affections to be daily aſpiring after it, and live in hopes of getting, ere long, the full poſſeſſion of it.

21 Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

Obſerve here, 1. All the faithful who have their converſation in heaven, do expect and look for Chriſt coming from thence, not as a terrible Judge, but as a gracious and powerful Saviour. 2. What they do expect at the coming of this Saviour, namely, the changing *of their vile body*, *that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body*. *Note* here, 1. The preſent condition of the body of man, it is in a vile condition, vile in its original; our body is made of vile duſt; vile in regard of its moral vileneſs, and ſinful vileneſs; vile in regard of its accidental vileneſs, as their body is the ſeat of their vile diſeaſes, and ſubject to vile abuſes; vile, conſidered with reſpect to its ultimate vileneſs at death; how does a body, as beautiful as ever was Abſalom's, when death comes, run into rottenneſs and putrefaction! our ſin made us vile in the ſight of God whilſt we lived, and renders our bodies viler in the ſight of men when we die. 2.

The future condition which the bodies of good men ſhall be in, at the appearance of Chriſt; this vile body ſhall be a beautiful and a bleſſed body, the body we lay down ſhall be rebuilt, formed and faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious body; reſembling his incorruptibility and immortality, in purity and ſpirituality, in power and activity, and in happineſs and felicity. 3. The efficient cauſe of this great and glorious change, with reference to the body, and that is Chriſt, *he ſhall change our vile bodies*, together with the means by which all this is to be effected and accompliſhed, namely, the wonderful power of Chriſt, *according to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* Surely, it is as eaſy for Chriſt to give a body to a ſoul at the reſurrection, as to breathe a ſoul into a body every day in the work of creation. But the power of Chriſt is but a weak argument to build our hopes of the body's reſurrection upon, without a revelation of his will; he can quench all the fire in hell in a moment; but where has he ſaid he will do it? But now in the caſe before us, Chriſt is not only able to raiſe, but has declared he will raiſe and change our vile bodies: ſo that faith is enabled to make a ſufficient reply to all the aſtoniſhing difficulties that reaſon can muſter up; and thoſe Chriſtians that can now ſay, *Our converſation is in heaven*, may add, *from thence we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned*, &c.

CHAP. IV.

Our apoſtle, coming now to the concluſion of this excellent epiſtle, exhorts the Philippians *to the practice of ſeveral duties of great importance to the honour of God, the credit of religion, and their own benefit and comfort.*

THEREFORE, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

Note here, 1. The loving, affectionate and endearing compellations, which St. Paul beſtows upon his beloved Philippians; he calls them his *brethren* twice in one verſe, *his dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown*; thereby teſtifying his fervent affection towards them, his paſſionate longing for their ſpiritual welfare, and that their converſion, by his preaching, was matter of great joy and comfort to him, yea, the crown and honour of his miniſtry, *my joy and crown:* that is, my chief joy, and crown of rejoicing, that which he rejoiced in more than he could in any earthly crown. Behold in this glaſs the heart of every faithful ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt. It would not pleaſe them ſo much to have an imperial crown ſet upon their heads, and to be made the emperors of the world, as to ſee ſouls brought off from the world, by their miniſtry, to the obedience of the word. This made the Philippians St. Paul's joy and crown at preſent, and gave him hopes that they would be his crown of rejoicing in the day of Chriſt: May the ſame mind be in us, which was in this great apoſtle. 2. The great and important duty which St. Paul here exhorts the Philippians to, and that is, ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith and doctrine of the goſpel in general; and in particular, in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, without obliging themſelves to obſerve circumciſion, or any part of the ceremonial law: *Stand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved, my joy and crown. Learn* hence, 1. That ſtedfaſtneſs in the true religion, and perſeverance in the faith of Chriſt, is the great and indiſpenſible duty of every Chriſtian that has a due regard to his ſalvation. 2. That ſuch a ſteadineſs in the faith of Chriſt, and his holy religion, is a preſent joy, and will be an eternal crown of rejoicing to the miniſters of God.

2 I beſeech Euodias, and I beſeech Syntyche, that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow, help thoſe women which laboured with me in the goſpel, with Clement alſo, and *with* other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names *are* in the book of life.

The former verſe was an exhortation to conſtancy; this, to concord. Here *note*, 1. The perſons exhorted to duty, two women of eminent note in the church, Euodias and Syntyche, who *laboured* with him in the goſpel, that is, in offices proper to their ſex, not in public preaching, but in private teaching of youth, and inſtructing other women in the principles of religion: Between theſe two good women, it ſeems, there was ſome difference, a want of love and unanimity; it is but too frequent for perſons truly pious and painful in the work of the Lord to be at odds amongſt themſelves; and ſuch are the fatal conſequences of ſuch differences, though between two perſons only, that they are looked upon as worthy to be taken notice of by a great apoſtle. 2. The great care and pains which St. Paul takes timely to compoſe this petty difference between theſe two perſons; he writes to an eminent miniſter of the church at Philippi, whom he calls his *true yoke-fellow*, (becauſe they had faithfully laboured together in planting a Chriſtian church in that city) to exert his utmoſt endeavours in reconciling theſe two diſagreeing parties. Such as are ſenſible of the dangerous miſchiefs of ſtrife and contention, of diſcord and diviſion, will account it their duty to look to breaches betimes, to quench ſuch fires at their firſt kindling, and will call in all the help they can, by engaging the prayers and tears of God's miniſters, and the endeavours of all faithful Chriſtians, in order thereunto; and all this care, God knows, is little enough in order thereunto. 3. The charitable thoughts and good opinion which St. Paul had of his fellow-labourers at Philippi, he believed *their names were in the book of life*; that is, he adjudged them truly gracious perſons, and in a ſtate of ſalvation; though none can paſs a certain and infallible judgment upon others, yet ſuch as are holy in converſation in themſelves, and contribute their utmoſt endeavours to promote holineſs in others, may, in the judgment of charity, be pronounced perſons whoſe names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I ſay, Rejoice.

Note here, 1. The duty exhorted to, Chriſtian cheerfulneſs and joy, a duty which glorifies God, adorns religion, is beneficial to ourſelves, by enabling us to bear afflictions, to glory in them, and to triumph over them. 2. The object of this duty, a glorious and repleniſhing object, Chriſt the Lord : *Rejoice in the Lord.* 3. The perpetuity and conſtancy of the duty, *Rejoice alway*, that is, at all times, and in all conditions. 4. The difficulty of the duty, implied in the repetition of the command : *Again I ſay, Rejoice.* From the whole, *obſerve*, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great, ſure and perpetual joy of his children and people. 2. That it is their duty to be joying in him always, and always rejoicing for him, and to rejoice in their knowledge of him, in his undertaking for them, in their intereſt in him, in their influences of grace and comfort derived from him, in their hopes of glory, to be eternally enjoyed with him. 3. That to get the heart up to this duty, at all times, and in all conditions, is no eaſy work, therefore the exhortation is doubled, *Rejoice alway; and I ſay again, Rejoice*; pointing out how averſe we are to this ſpiritual and very beneficial duty.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

That is, Let your mildneſs and gentleneſs towards others, your meekneſs and patience under your own trials, be very conſpicuous, becauſe the Lord is at hand to execute judgment on his own crucifiers, and on the perſecutors of his own people. *Learn*, That the conſideration of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of Chriſt's coming to judgment, ought to be improved by us as an argument to all mildneſs and gentleneſs towards others, and to all meekneſs and patience under our preſent ſufferings : *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, &c.

6 Be careful for nothing: But in every thing by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus.

Note here, 1. The duty exhorted to, namely, to be anxiouſly and ſolicitouſly careful for nothing; it is not care, but carefulneſs, that is, inordinate care, heart-cutting, diſtracting, ſoul-rending care and ſolicitude, which is here forbidden; there is a prudent provident care for the things of this life, which is an unqueſtionable duty. 2. The remedy preſcribed for the prevention of ſolicitous care, and that is fervent prayer : *in every thing, by prayer and ſupplication, let your requeſts be made known.* The people of God may and ought to have recourſe to him in every thing. 3. The apoſtle directs to thankſgiving in every thing, as well as to prayer, *In every thing by prayer and thankſgiving*, &c. when afflicted, we are to be thankful for the expected benefit of afflictions; when tempted, to be thankful that God will not leave us to be tempted above what we are able; when we fall into ſin, there is cauſe of thankfulneſs that we are not left to run into all ſin, that we were not cut off in the very act of ſin, and did not die in our ſins; thus are we in every thing to give thanks. 4. The benefit and advantage which St. Paul aſſures them would redound unto them, by the practice of the forementioned duties, namely, ſweet *peace which paſſeth all underſtanding*; that is, which none can conceive that have not felt it, and none can expreſs that have experienced it. This peace, he tells them, will keep and guard their hearts and minds; a ſound peace is the ſoul's guard againſt all inward terrors and outward troubles; as the perſons of princes are ſecured by guards of armed and valiant men, who watch while they ſleep; ſo are Chriſtians guarded and ſecured by the peace of God, better than any prince ever was by a guard of forty thouſand men. *The peace of God ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, through the aſſiſtance of Chriſt Jeſus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things *are* honeſt, whatſoever things *are* juſt, whatſoever things *are* pure, whatſoever things *are* lovely, whatſoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praiſe, think on theſe things.

Here we have a very comprehenſive precept, deſcribing the duties of all Chriſtians : *Whatſoever things are true:* truth is the principal character of our profeſſion, and is to be expreſſed in our words and actions; *whatſoever things are honeſt*, venerable or grave, that is, anſwer the dignity of our high calling, and agree with the gravity and comelineſs of the Chriſtian profeſſion; *whatſoever things are juſt*, according to divine and human laws; *whatſoever things are pure and chaſte*, intimating, that we muſt preſerve the heart, the hand, the tongue, the eye, from all impurity; *whatſoever things are lovely*, and *of good report*, as eaſineſs to pardon, readineſs to oblige, compaſſion to the afflicted, liberality to the diſtreſſed, ſweetneſs of converſation, without gall and bitterneſs; theſe are of univerſal eſteem with mankind, and ſoften the moſt ſavage tempers and diſpoſitions. *Note* here, 1. That there are things naturally honeſt, juſt, and lovely in their own nature, and praiſe-worthy in themſelves, which do raiſe and refine the human nature; and, without a command, their goodneſs is a ſtrong obligation to obſerve them. 2. That Chriſtianity doth adopt morality, or precepts of good life and manners, into its frame and conſtitution, and it is indeed an integral part of the Chriſtian religion; not that any moral precepts, though never ſo good, can raiſe a ſoul from the death of ſin to a life of holineſs, without faith in Chriſt, and aſſiſtance from his Spirit; but the morality which the ſcriptures teach us, is founded not barely upon principles of reaſon, but divine revelation, and obliges us to the practice of moral duties, in obedience to Chriſt's command, in conformity to his example, in the ſtrength of his aſſiſtance, and with an eye at his glory.

9 Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do : And the God of peace ſhall be with you.

Note, 1. With what great confidence and good aſſurance St. Paul here recommended his own practice and example to his people's imitation; all thoſe things which he had by his doctrine and life commended to them, were to be carefully obſerved and imitated by them : It is a bleſſed thing, when a people's eyes are taught by their miniſter's holineſs of life, and their ears by the ſoundneſs of his doctrine. Our people have eyes to ſee how we walk, as well as ears to hear what we preach; therefore it is a miniſter's great duty, by ſtrictneſs and gravity of deportment to maintain his eſteem in the conſciences of his people, yet always tempering gravity with a condeſcending affability: That miniſter only can go off the ſtage with honour and comfort, who has left behind him the good ſeed of ſound doctrine, and the good ſavour of an holy example; that can ſay with our apoſtle, *The things which you have both heard and ſeen in me, do.* 2. The promiſe annexed to the foregoing precept, *Theſe things do, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.* Where *note*, 1. Who will be with us, the God of peace: now he that is the God of peace, is the God of power; he that is the God of peace, is the God of patience, who, though he can puniſh, yet will pardon the infirmities of his people. 2. How he will be with us; the heart of God will be with us, the help of God will be with us, and the preſence of God will be with us, to guide and direct us, to lead and conduct us, to cover and protect us; and, if God be with us, we ſhall ſhortly be with him. *Learn* hence, That thoſe which obey the goſpel, whatſoever or whomſoever they want, ſhall ever abide in a peaceable and bleſſed condition.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now
at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again;
wherein ye were alſo careful, but ye lacked oppor-
tunity: 11 Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want:
For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, *there-
with* to be content. 12 I know both *how* to be
abaſed, and I know *how* to abound: Every where,
and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full
and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer
need. 13 I can do all things through Chriſt which
ſtrengtheneth me.

Our apoſtle being now come to the concluſion of his epiſtle, acquaints the Philippians with what great joy he had received their charity ſent unto him; and that it came no ſooner, he believed did not proceed from any diſreſpect towards him, but only for want either of ability or opportunity of ſending to him; yet withal gives them to underſtand, that he could bear want, or a ſtrait condition, very well; for, having Chriſt for his teacher, *he had learned in whatſoever ſtate he was, therein to be content*; he could bear either plenty or ſcarcity, fulneſs or want; yea, *could do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him. Obſerve* here, 1. The viciſſitude and great uncertainty of St. Paul's outward condition; at one time he abounds, at another time he is abaſed; at one time he is full, at another in want; teaching us, that the deareſt of God's children, in regard of their outward condition, are ſubject to variety of changes. 2. The general leſſon which they have learnt, with reference to this variety of conditions, and that is the leſſon of contentment; *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* 3. The particular leſſons learnt by him, *both how to abound, and how to be abaſed:* They are both hard leſſons, but, of the two, perhaps it is harder to know how to *abound*, than how to be *abaſed*. *Queſt.* (1.) When may a man be ſaid to know how to abound? *Anſ.* When he ſets a due value and a right eſteem upon the things of the world, and neither prizes them too high nor too low; when a man ſo uſes his abundance, as to avoid the temptations which do attend and accompany that abundance; when he is willing to part with his abundance, at the call and command of God; and, in a word, when he attends more to the duties of his proſperous ſtate, than to the ſenſual pleaſures and ſatisfaction of it. *Queſt.* 2. What is it to know how to be abaſed? *Anſ.* Not to be diſcouraged, or ſuffer the ſpirit to ſink or faint in the day of adverſity; to be not only humbled by affliction, but humble under it; to ſuffer what God inflicts, without impatience or complaint, without ſourneſs of ſpirit or diſcontent; to believe firmly that whatever we meet with, is from the hand of a father; that whatever we part with, is but a periſhing creature; that God is able to reſtore all our loſt comfort with advantage to us, and will do it, if it be good for us, either in kind or equivalency; this is to know how to be abaſed. *Queſt.* 3. How doth it appear harder to know how to abound, than how to be abaſed? Thus; there are more duties, and harder duties, required of thoſe that abound, than of them that want. There are more temptations, and ſtronger temptations, which attend thoſe in abundance, than them that want. Hence it is that God gives ſo many ſolemn charges and commands to thoſe that abound, to take heed to themſelves, more than to thoſe that are in want. See Deut. vi. 12. *When thou art full, then beware leſt thou forget the Lord thy God, and thy heart be lifted up.* In a word, I do not remember one inſtance in all the Scripture, of a full or proſperous condition, which was ever ſo much as the remote occaſion of a ſinner's converſion unto God; but I find in Scripture, that an afflicted condition has been bleſſed to many for this end, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. Hoſ. v. 15. Job xxiii. 14. *Obſerve*, 4. The ſchool which St. Paul learnt this great leſſon in, to know how to be abaſed, and how to abound, and to be thoroughly content in every condition; it was not at Gamaliel's feet, but Chriſt's feet; *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*; Chriſt was both his tutor and ſtrengthener, he taught him his leſſon and enabled him to practiſe it. *Note* here, 1. That a real Chriſtian is able to do all things, all things that concern a Chriſtian, all things that belong to the glory of God, and his ſoul's ſalvation; all things, not in a legal, but evangelical ſenſe; not all things, nor indeed any thing with a ſinleſs perfection, but all things in reſpect of his love to the whole law, in reſpect of his purpoſe and reſolution, in reſpect of his deſire and endeavours. Again, *I can do all things*; underſtand it in active ſenſe, I can deny myſelf, believe in a withdrawing God, conquer the world, ſubdue unmortified corruption, and live a life of evangelical perfection: Take it alſo in a paſſive ſenſe, I can ſuffer all things, I can bear Chriſt's croſs, wear his yoke, endure any thing for him, or from him, when called forth to ſuffer. 2. That as a Chriſtian can do all things, ſo his ability to do all things, lies not in himſelf, but in Chriſt. A believer receives an active power from Chriſt to enable him to do whatever he requires him to do; ability to ſubdue corruption, to conquer temptation; to bear affliction, and to glorify God in every condition; all this is from Chriſt; and the ſincere Chriſtian may ſay with this eminent ſaint, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.*

14 Notwithſtanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now, ye Philippians, know alſo that in the beginning of the goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Theſſalonica ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity.

Although our apoſtle had declared, in the foregoing verſes, that he had fully learnt the leſſon of contentment in all conditions, and could bear poverty and want without complaining; yet withal he aſſures them here, that they did well in ſending ſuch ſupplies to him in priſon by Epaphroditus, as they had done; and thereby teſtifying, by their Chriſtian commiſeration, that they ſhared with him in his afflictions and ſufferings for Chriſt. Where *note*, 1. The apoſtle's thankful acknowledgment of the Philippians preſent liberality towards him, now in bonds, for preaching the goſpel to them; and how he takes occaſion from thence to make an honourable mention of their former bounty towards him, even from his firſt preaching of the goſpel to them; nay, when he was gone from them at Philippi, and preached to thoſe at Theſſalonica, yet did the Philippians ſend their bounty after him more than once, which no other church had then done beſides themſelves. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a rule of equity to be obſerved, as between other relations, ſo between miniſters and people, that as they beſtow labour and pains, ſo they ſhould receive encouragement and maintenance, and this not barely as a gratuity, but as a due debt. 2. That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, though they may challenge a ſupply of temporal things from their people, for their ſpiritual things, as a due debt, yet do they fully receive it, and gratefully acknowledge it, to the honour and commendation of their people, with fervent prayer to God, that it may be fruit redounding to their account in the great day of account.

17 Not becauſe I deſire a gift: But I deſire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were ſent* from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God. 19 But my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.

Here *remark*, The modeſty and great ingenuity of the apoſtle, in aſſuring them, that his praiſing their liberality ſo much was not upon deſign to get more; *not becauſe I deſire a gift*; that is, any further gift for my own private advantage; I am far from the thought of ſpunging upon you: But I aim at your advantage in this, that your liberality may afford you the fruits of a plentiful reward in the day of Chriſt, who *will not forget your work and labour of love in miniſtering to the ſaints.* Having thus guarded againſt all ſuſpicion of greedineſs in himſelf, and evidenced that his commending of their liberality was not upon deſign, he proceeds again to praiſe their liberality yet farther, and extols it in ſuch words as may cauſe admiration. *Note*, 1. How abundantly ſatisfied the apoſtle was with what he had received, *I have all, and abound, I am full*; as if he had had the treaſures of the Indies in his coffers: Grace is content with a little, and thinks that little an abundance; the contented man is only rich. 2. How St. Paul gives an acknowledgment, under his hand, that Epaphroditus had faithfully delivered to him the whole of their charity ſent by him; *I have received of Epaphroditus all the things which were ſent from you:* Epaphroditus was their chief miniſter, or biſhop, a perſon of great reputation, whoſe fidelity none could ſuſpect; yet St. Paul gives it under his hand that he had executed his truſt faithfully. Though a man be never ſo truſt-worthy in himſelf, and be never ſo much intruſted by others, yet he ought, in wiſdom, to guard againſt any ſuſpicion which may be taken up againſt his honeſty and faithfulneſs. 3. The high expreſſions which St. Paul makes uſe of, in ſetting forth the Philippians charity towards him; he calls it, *an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable and well-pleaſing to God*; the very ſame words here which he makes uſe of, Epheſ. v. 2. where he calls the death of Chriſt *a ſacrifice, and a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.* The expreſſion is borrowed from the Levitical ſacrifices, which were of God's appointing and approving; and it imports, that our charity expreſſed towards the members, but eſpecially the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, now under the goſpel, is as acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God, as the ſweeteſt incenſe and the fatteſt ſacrifices were under the law. Here *note*, That the Socinians, to leſſen the meritoriouſneſs of Chriſt's ſacrifice, do parallel this text with that other, Eph. v. 2. "Is the death of Chriſt, ſay they, called a ſacrifice and ſweet-ſmelling ſavour? ſo is the Philippians charity here called a ſacrifice, but both in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe only." But mark the difference; St. Paul, Eph. v. ſays, Chriſt gave himſelf a ſacrifice, which being once offered, was ſufficient to take away ſin, Heb. x. 10. but the Philippians are not ſaid to give themſelves a ſacrifice, but their alms were as grateful to God as incenſe: If it be ſaid, from Rom. xii. 1. That believers are required to preſent themſelves living ſacrifices unto God, and acceptable; I anſwer, So they are, and ſo they do preſent themſelves gratulatory, but not expiatory ſacrifices unto God, 2 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye are a royal prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt.* Chriſt's oblation and ſacrifice was acceptable for itſelf; believers, and their euchariſtical ſacrifices, are acceptable to God only in, by, and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Heb. xiii. *By him let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe continually. Note* laſtly, The aſſurance which St. Paul gives the Philippians, that God would abundantly recompenſe their charity into their own boſoms, ver. 19. *My God will ſupply all your need*, &c. As if he had ſaid, "Do not think you ſhall want, becauſe you have liberally ſupplied my wants; no, my God will ſupply you, for your ſupplying me: *According to his riches,* *in glory*, that is, according to his rich mercy and glorious grace:" There is no need to be ſupplied in the glory of the next life, but there is a glory in rich grace, which readily and plentifully ſupplies all our needs in this life. *Note* here, 1. That ſuch as adminiſter now to the wants of others, may fall into want, and be driven to ſtraits themſelves. 2. That the more forward they have been to ſupply the wants, and adminiſter to the neceſſities of others, in the time of their abundance, the more may they expect from the bountiful hand of God, in the day of their neceſſity and diſtreſs.

20 Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Note here, 1. The endearing title given to Almighty God, *God our Father*; the word *father* is a title of great honour; the word *our* is a word of ſingular comfort. The appropriating, poſitive terms, *mine*, *thine*, *ours*, have a great ſweetneſs in them, and breathe abundance of affection. As Luther uſed to ſay, "The comfort of the goſpel lay in pronouns poſſeſſive, when we can ſay with believing Thomas, *My Lord and my God*; with bleſſed Paul, who loved *me*, and gave himſelf for *me*." *Learn*, That God is a Father in a more peculiar and ſpecial manner to all that are intereſted in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. The word *father* implies ſpiritual generation, that we are begotten by him, and like unto him; it implies vehemency of affection, no bowels comparable unto a father's; it implies deſigned benefit by correction that he exerciſes unto profit. And in the word *our* is implied, that God is the Father of every believer, the weakeſt, as well as the ſtrongeſt; we are all the children of God, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus; and it points out our duty alſo, that as there is one God and Father of all, ſo all believers ſhould be of one heart and one mind amongſt themſelves. *Note*, 2. What it is which our apoſtle attributes and aſcribeth unto God, namely, *glory*, and that *for ever and ever*: *Glory*, that is, the manifeſtation of all his glorious excellencies and perfections. *Learn* hence, That it is the fervent deſire of all believers to have the worth and excellencies of God everlaſtingly acknowledged, and in a boundleſs manner diſplayed: *Unto God be glory for ever and ever*. This word, *for ever and ever*, is, upon different accounts, the ſaddeſt and ſweeteſt word in all the Bible; when applied to the excellencies of God, and our intereſt in them, no word like this for comfort, This God is our God *for ever and ever*. O raviſhing conſolation! But when applied to ſinners, and what they ſuffer from God as the deſert, the due deſert of their ſins, then it is a word of the ſaddeſt weight, Rev. xiv. 11. the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up *for ever and ever*, 2 Theſſ. i. 9. *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord.* It is the word *for ever and ever* that ſets all hell a roaring, and it is the ſame word that fills heaven with joy and rejoicing.

21 Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the ſaints ſalute you, chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold.

Our apoſtle cloſes his letter with reſpectful ſalutations; he ſalutes in his own name all and every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus; the ſoul of the pooreſt and meaneſt ſaint was not neglected by this great apoſtle: He loved the brotherhood, the whole fraternity of believers, the whole ſociety of ſaints: All church-members are ſaints by external and viſible profeſſion, and ought to be ſo by internal renovation and ſpiritual regeneration, and one as well as the other are here ſaluted by the apoſtle: *Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus.* Next, he ſends the ſalutations of all the brethren that were with him, and of all the ſaints that were at Rome, all thoſe whom he had there converted to Chriſtianity, and particularly ſome of thoſe that were in Nero's family, and called here Ceſar's *houſhold*. Where *note*, 1. That ſuch a mighty efficacy had the preaching of the goſpel, accompanied with the influences of the holy Spirit, that it entered the houſes of the greateſt perſecutors, and changed the hearts of ſome who were moſt unlikely to receive and entertain it. Behold, here are ſome in bloody Nero's family converted to Chriſt, by the preaching of the goſpel, thoſe of Ceſar's *houſhold*. 2. That ſometimes God endues the profeſſors of the goſpel in general, and young converts in particular, with ſuch a ſpirit of zeal and courage, magnanimity and holy reſolution, that they dare lift up a banner for truth, and publicly own the deſpiſed members of Chriſt, without either ſhame or fear: *Thoſe of Ceſar's houſhold* do *greet* and *ſalute* you.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

He ſhuts up all with his uſual apoſtolical valediction: By *grace*, we are to underſtand the free favour of God, as the fountain; and all good things, as ſo many ſtreams flowing from that fountain: This is called *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe purchaſed by his merit, and applied by his interceſſion. This grace he prays may be with them in the ſweet effects of it, and in the ſenſible apprehenſions of it, to enlighten, ſanctify, comfort, and quicken them more and more. Knowing then the exceeding riches of grace which we have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, let us glorify him, eminently, abundantly; and as we have all things by him, let us do all things for him, and to his glory.

THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

This epiſtle was written by St. Paul *when he was priſoner at* Rome, *about the ſame time in which he wrote the foregoing epiſtle to the* Philippians. *It is directed to the* Coloſſians, *that is, the church of Chriſtians newly gathered in and about the city of* Coloſſe *in* Phrygia, *by the preaching of* Epaphras; *St.* Paul not having ſeen their face in the fleſh, *chap.* ii. 1.

Epaphras *having founded a church here, and inſtructed the* Coloſſians *in the great and fundamental principles of the Chriſtian religion, he left them for a time, and went to* Rome, *and was fellow-priſoner with St.* Paul *there. In his abſence from them, the* Coloſſians *were inſeſted with falſe teachers of two ſorts; ſome were the Judaizing doctors, that is, perſons converted from Judaiſm to Chriſtianity, who ſought to impoſe upon them, circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law, long ſince aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt; againſt theſe falſe teachers, moſt of the foregeing epiſtles were written and directed. The other ſort of falſe teachers againſt whom this epiſtle is written, were ſuch perſons as were converted from Gentiliſm to Chriſtianity, who obtruded upon the* Coloſſians *their philiſophical ſpeculations, and ſome of their heatheniſh practices, particularly, their worſhipping of angels; under the notion* then (*as the church of* Rome now) *That Almighty GOD is ſuch an infinitely glorious Being, that man, ſinful man, muſt not dare to approach him without the interpoſure of the angels, as Mediators between God and them. Now, in oppoſition to both theſe ſorts of falſe teachers, St.* Paul *writes this epiſtle, ſhewing the former, that Chriſtians, ſince the death of Chriſt, lay under no obligation to obſerve circumciſion, or any part of the ceremonial law; and convincing the latter, that Chriſt, and not angels, was the appointed Mediator between God and man; and that we, being reconciled to God by him, have acceſs through him unto God in all our neceſſities.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter our apoſtle gives thanks to God for the ſpiritual graces conferred upon the Coloſſians, *and prays fervently for their increaſe in knowledge, growth in holineſs, courage under ſufferings, &c.*

PAUL an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother, 2 To the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſe: Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. That this epiſtle to the Coloſſians contains many of the ſame things, and often the very ſame words, with that to the Epheſians, particularly the ſalutation here is the ſame with that to the Epheſians; in which, *note*, 1. The perſon ſaluting, *Paul*, once a perſecutor, now a profeſſor, yea, a zealous preacher of the faith of Chriſt, dignified with the title and office of an apoſtle, *an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, called and ſent immediately by him to plant and propagate the Chriſtian faith throughout the Heathen world, but *by the will of God*: Chriſt, as Head of the church, is intruſted with ſending out miniſters into his church; but the Father's will, and Chriſt's will, do both concur and fully agree in ſending forth his miniſters to inſtruct and edify his church; and woe to ſuch as intrude themſelves into any office in the church without their call and commiſſion; let them expect a blow inſtead of a bleſſing. 2. The apoſtle joins Timothy in the ſalutation; though Timothy was not an apoſtle or a penman of any part of the Scripture, yet becauſe he was well known to the Coloſſians, and much valued and eſteemed by them, and was a perſon of eminent worth and excellency in himſelf, and of ſingular ſerviceableneſs to the apoſtle, he therefore calls him his *brother*, being his *fellow-labourer in the work of the goſpel*. Where the great humility of St. Paul is remarkable, and worthy of imitation;

who, though an inſpired apoſtle, extraordinarily and immediately called by Chriſt himſelf, an aged perſon, long engaged in the work of Chriſt, yet is ſo far from deſpiſing young Timothy, his inferior, greatly his inferior in all reſpects, that he gives him all fitting reſpect, and puts honour upon him, in calling him his *brother*, they being fellow-labourers in the work and ſervice of the goſpel. 3. The perſons ſaluted, the *ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſe*. He calls all the members of this Chriſtian church by the name of *ſaints*, they all making an outward and viſible profeſſion of ſanctity and holineſs; and many of them, no doubt, were what they profeſſed, not only relative, but real ſaints; he ſtiles them alſo *faithful brethren in Chriſt*, that is, implanted into Chriſt, ſome by outward profeſſion, others by inward ſanctification; or the expreſſion, *ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus*, may intimate to us, that all our grace and ſanctity muſt be exerciſed and acted by ſtrength derived from Chriſt, and all our holineſs be accepted in Chriſt Jeſus. 4. The ſalutation itſelf, *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. By grace, underſtand the free love, and gracious favour of God, together with all the effects and fruits of it; theſe are wiſhed from God as a Father intimating, that God beſtows not his ſpecial grace as a Creator, but as a Father in Chriſt; next he wiſhes them *peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, he being the purchaſer of our peace, upon whom was laid the chaſtiſement of our peace, and by whom God is at peace with us, and reconciled to us. But why is there no mention of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as of God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Becauſe it is by the Spirit, that God the Father and Jeſus Chriſt dwell in us, and do communicate this grace unto us; ſo that praying for this grace, is praying for the communion of the Holy Ghoſt.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, praying always for you; 4 Since we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the ſaints;

Our apoſtle to give the Coloſſians a full aſſurance of the firmneſs of his love unto them, acquaints them, that himſelf and Timothy from the time they heard of their converſion, did never ceaſe to give ſolemn thanks to God for it, and particularly, for their faith in Chriſt, and for the love which they bare to all ſaints, to all their brethren and fellow-members in Chriſt. Where *note*, 1. The perſon whom St. Paul offers up his prayers and praiſes, his ſupplications and thankſgivings to, and that is *God*; intimating, that religious invocation and adoration belong only to God; not to any creature, who can neither know, nor is able to ſupply our wants. This God whom St. Paul prayed to, is called the *Father of our Lord Jeſus*; ſo he is, with reſpect both to his divine and human nature; in reſpect to his Deity, he is of the ſame eſſence with the Father, begotten of him from all eternity; and, in reſpect of his humanity, he is his Father, being, as man, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghoſt. 2. The mercies and bleſſings which St. Paul offers up his thankſgivings to God for, and this on the behalf of the Coloſſians; in general, they are ſpiritual bleſſings: In particular, (1.) For their *faith in Chriſt Jeſus*; Chriſt alone is the proper object of our affiance and truſt; and by faith we repoſe the intire truſt and confidence of our ſouls upon the ſufficiency of his merits. (2.) *For their love to all the ſaints.* Where *obſerve*, That faith and love are inſeparable companions: There is a neceſſary connection between them: Faith without love, is no living grace; love without faith, is no ſaving grace. *Obſerve* alſo, The proper object of a Chriſtian's love, it is the ſaints as ſaints, that is for their ſanctity and holineſs: And to all the ſaints, let their private opinions and perſonal infirmities be what they will: We have *heard of your love to all the ſaints*: Love is that brotherly affection which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt, for grace's ſake; now the love of grace in another, being ſo good an evidence of the life of grace in ourſelves, hence it was that St. Paul, hearing of the Coloſſians love to all the children of God, ceaſes not to give thanks unto God for it, as the fruit and evidence of their converſation. *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel; 6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit as *it doth* alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Here *note*, 1. St. Paul diſcovers the motive which excited the Coloſſians to ſuch ſteadineſs and conſtancy in the faith of Chriſt, and in love one to another: and that was *the hope laid up for them in heaven*; that is, the great and good things here hoped for, and there to be enjoyed. As the ſinner's miſery conſiſts not in what he feels, but what he fears; ſo the believer's happineſs lies not in what he has in hand, but in what he has in hope: the reward which encourages his perſeverance in faith and love, is *laid up in heaven*, that is, ſafely and plentifully, as a parent lays up his treaſures for the uſe of his children: It is both lawful and laudable then for Chriſtians to have an eye to the promiſed reward, as an encouragement to duty, *for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*. 2. The means by which they came to the knowledge of this hope, it was by *the word of truth*, the preaching of the goſpel to them by the miniſtry of Epaphras; this was ſo exceedingly bleſſed by God, that thereby the ſaving hope of this reward was wrought in them. Where *note*, The title given to the goſpel, it is eminently *the word of truth*, having Chriſt for its main ſubject, who *is the way, the truth and the life*, and being confirmed by Chriſt the Teſtator's blood. *Note* farther, That the preaching of this word of truth, the doctrine of the goſpel, is the great inſtrumental mean, appointed by God for begetting in us a lively hope of the reward laid up for us in heaven: *for the hope laid up for you in heaven, whereof you have heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel*. 3. The commendation here given of the goſpel, which had begot in theſe Coloſſians a lively hope of the heavenly reward: It is commended, (1.) For being one and the ſame goſpel which was preached by the apoſtles throughout all the world, *which is come unto you*, *as it is in all the world*; that is, with incredible ſwiftneſs into the moſt eminent parts and places of the world then known; an infallible proof of the divinity of the goſpel, that it was thus owned and bleſſed of God. The goſpel, at all times, and in all places, is one and the ſame; and Chriſt, when he pleaſes, can ſwiftly drive the chariot of the goſpel round about the world, and bring in not only perſons and families, but cities, nations, and kingdoms, to the obedience of it. (2.) The goſpel preached to them is commended for its fruitfulneſs, *it bringeth forth fruit, as it doth alſo in you*; that is, fruits of piety and holineſs towards God, and fruits of righteouſneſs and charity towards man. *Learn* hence, That it is matter of praiſe, and unſpeakable thankſgiving, to the miniſters of Chriſt, when the light of the goſpel breaks forth among a people, where it never before ſhined, and is accompanied with early and conſtant fruits of piety, humility, faith and love, in the hearts and lives of thoſe to whom it is preached.

7 As ye alſo learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-
ſervant, who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt;
8 Who alſo declared unto us your love in the Spirit.
9 For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard *it*,
do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye
might be filled with the knowledge of his will in
all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding;

Note here, 1. The perſon who firſt preached the goſpel of Chriſt to the Coloſſians, and converted them to the Chriſtian faith, it was Epaphras: *As ye learned of Epaphras.* 2. The commendation given to Epaphras, and his character by St. Paul: he was regularly called to the work, and a diligent fellow-labourer with St. Paul in the work of preaching and diſpenſing the myſteries of the everlaſting goſpel to a loſt world: *who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt*. *Learn* hence, That the knowledge of life and ſalvation is ordinarily wrought in perſons by the preaching of the goſpel, by men called of God to that ſacred function. *Note*, 3. A particular inſtance of the faithfulneſs of Epaphras towards the Coloſſians, he declared unto St. Paul their *love in the Spirit*; that is, their ſpiritual love, and fervent affection to him, though they had never ſeen his face nor heard his voice. The faithful miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt do affectionately love one another, though they ſee not the face of each other; there is no ſuch loadſtone of love as the grace of God: This will draw forth the heart and affections of a believer to the ends of the earth, to pray for, to mourn over, and to rejoice with ſuch of their brethren as they never ſaw, but of whoſe condition they have heard. 4. The kind return which St. Paul makes to them, for their love in the Spirit toward him; *for this cauſe we do not ceaſe to pray for you*: there is no ſuch way to attain an intereſt in, and to obtain conſtant benefit and advantage by the prayers of the miniſters of God, as to be expreſſive of our love and affection both to God and them. 5. The eſpecial bleſſings which he prays for on the Coloſſians behalf, namely, that they might be filled with *the knowledge of his will*, that is, attain to a more perfect and comprehenſive knowledge of God's will and their duty, furniſhed with all divine *wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding*, to regulate their lives according to their knowledge. *Learn* from hence, That there is a fulneſs of divine knowledge, which is attained by none, but ſhould be aimed at by all, ſeeing they that know moſt of God's word and revealed will, come far ſhort of what they ſhould know. *Learn*, 2. That the knowledge, wiſdom, and underſtanding which Chriſtians ſhould eſpecially labour after, and attain unto, is of things ſpiritual: *that ye be filled with knowledge and ſpiritual underſtanding*. O let divine and ſpiritual knowledge be our chief care and principal buſineſs! It is called here ſpiritual underſtanding, becauſe it is from the holy Spirit, and converſant about ſpiritual things, which far exceeds the moſt refined notions concerning other things; and Chriſt tells us, that eternal life depends upon it, John xvii. 3. ſpiritual knowledge fits us for the ſervice of God on earth, for the ſight of God in heaven: And Chriſt has told us, that he will take a ſecond journey from heaven, to render vengeance on them which know not God, and on them which do know *(notionally)* but obey not practically the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus, 2 Theſſ. i. 8.

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God;

Here the apoſtle ſets down the end of his prayer in the forementioned manner for the Coloſſians, why he deſired that their knowledge ſhould ſo exceedingly increaſe; it was in order to practiſe, that they might *walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleaſing, and be fruitful in every good work*; this is the true end of knowledge, practical obedience. All knowledge without this, makes a man like Nebuchadnezzar's image, with an head of gold, and feet of clay: Some perſons ſtudy to know, only to know, that is curioſity; others endeavour to know, only to make themſelves known, that is vain-glory: But to know, that we may practiſe what we know, this is goſpel duty. *Queſt.* But how can any perſon be ſaid to *walk worthy of the Lord? Anſ.* Not with a worthineſs of merit, but with a worthineſs of meetneſs, when we walk as it is meet and fit for perſons profeſſing godlineſs to walk, when we walk *as becometh the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, in obedience to his precepts, in imitation of his pattern, anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of grace which the goſpel affords, and anſwerable to the high and glorious hopes which the goſpel raiſes us to the expectation of, this is to *walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing.* The ſecond branch of the apoſtle's prayer, on the behalf of theſe Coloſſians, was, that they might be *fruitful in every good work*, that is, labour after an univerſal fruitfulneſs in good works. By good works, he undoubtedly means works of piety towards God, works of righteouſneſs towards our neighbours, works of ſobriety towards ourſelves, works of charity towards all. By fruitfulneſs in theſe good works, he means an unwearied diligence, and perſevering conſtancy in the doing of them, that our fruitfulneſs be an univerſal fruitfulneſs, an humble and ſelf-denying fruitfulneſs, a proportionable fruitfulneſs, an abounding and abiding fruitfulneſs; this is to be fruitful in every good work. The third requeſt, which in this verſe he puts up for them, is, That they may increaſe in the knowledge of God. As fruitfulneſs in good works makes much for the increaſe of knowledge, ſo increaſing in knowledge will contribute very much towards our fruitfulneſs in good works; the way to grow in grace is *to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. iii. 18.

11 Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs;

In the former verſes, prayer was put to God by St. Paul, to enable the Coloſſians to do his will, his whole will, acceptably in this verſe he pleads with God, to ſtrengthen them with an almighty power to bear afflictions, the ſharpeſt and longeſt afflictions, patiently and joyfully: *Strengthened with all might, unto all patience with joyfulneſs. Learn* hence, 1. That the croſs of Chriſt, or ſufferings for Chriſt, are unavoidable, but not unſupportable; though they will ſhock an ordinary patience and conſtancy of mind, yet *might, all might, power, glorious power*, which is here prayed for us, and elſewhere promiſed to us, can and will enable us to ſtand under them! Glorious power will be victorious power. 2. That patience, much patience, very much patience, yea, all patience is needful, nay, abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to enable a Chriſtian to bear ſome trials, and to glorify God in an afflicted condition. All patience, I ſay, is neceſſary in order to the cheerful bearing of afflictions, that is, patience at all times, patience under all croſſes, patience, if poſſible, without any mixture of impatience; patience that may give a man the poſſeſſion of himſelf, and quiet the whole man, the tongue, the hand, and the heart. Such meaſures and degrees of patience as will keep the heart from ſinking, the tongue from complaining, the hand from revenging. Lord! grant, that whenever any of thine are called forth, to ſuffer either for thee, or from thee, they may be *ſtrengthened with all might.*

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light:

Our apoſtle having prayed for the Coloſſians in the foregoing verſes, here breaks forth into the duty of thankſgiving on their behalf, *Giving thanks unto the Father*, &c. Where *note*, 1. A deſcription of heaven, or the bleſſed ſtate of good men in another world: It is an *inheritance*, an *inheritance of ſaints*, and an *inheritance in light*. (1.) It is an *inheritance*, now that is a poſſeſſion only proper to children, *Hæreditas filiis debetur, non ſervis.* It is an unmerited and undeſerved poſſeſſion, and it is the beſt donative that a father has to give unto his children: Particularly, this inheritance of heaven, which God gives to all, and yet to every one of his children, is the freeſt inheritance, the ſureſt, the moſt ſatisfying, and the moſt delightful, and the moſt durable inheritance. (2.) Heaven is the inheritance of the ſaints, or of holy perſons only; ſuch as are really holy, univerſally holy, perſeveringly holy, to them, and only to them, does it belong, it is purchaſed for them, it is promiſed to them, it is given to them, they have already the firſt fruits of it in the Spirit's inhabitation, which is given to them as an earneſt of heaven; it is prepared for them, and they are prepared for that; and it ſhall be finally adjudged to them at the great and laſt day. (3.) It is an inheritance *in light*, that is, an inheritance with God; an inheritance in joy, an inheritance in glory, and a common inheritance for all the ſaints: As the light of the ſun is a common bleſſing to all that have eyes to ſee it, and every perſon in a room has the benefit of the light of the candle, as if he enjoyed it by himſelf alone; ſo is the inheritance of heaven, it is fully and entirely enjoyed by all the ſaints, as if there was but one to poſſeſs and enjoy it. *Note*, 2. The qualification of the perſons who may, upon good grounds, expect to be made partakers of this glorious inheritance when they die, namely, ſuch, and only ſuch, as, by the aſſiſtance of God's grace, and the concurrence of their own care and endeavours, are made *meet*, that is, fit, prepared and ready for this inheritance whilſt they live. Our perſons muſt be juſtified by the blood of Chriſt, our natures renewed by the grace and Spirit of Chriſt, and our lives daily more and more conformed to the doctrine and example of Chriſt, or we can never partake of this inheritance; without likeneſs to God, we can have no expectation of living with him. 3. The duty belonging to and expected from them whom the Father has made meet for this glorious inheritance, and that is the duty of eternal thankſgiving, *Giving thanks to the Father who has made us meet.* As none ſhall enjoy this inheritance but ſuch as are made meet for it; ſo thoſe, all thoſe who are made meet for it, muſt aſcribe their meetneſs unto God, and give him thanks for it. It is a ſpiritual bleſſing, it is a tranſcendent favour, it is a diſcriminating favour, it is an everlaſting favour; eternity will be too ſhort to ſpend in the admiration of it, and in gratulations for it; let ſuch of us as are intereſted in it, now begin the work upon earth, of giving thanks to the Father, for making *us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.*

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In theſe words our apoſtle declares how God makes his children and people meet for the inheritance of heaven and eternal glory, namely, by bringing them out of that dark ſtate of heatheniſm, ſin and miſery, in which they lay, and tranſlating them into a ſtate of grace, called here *the kingdom of God's dear Son. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs:* Here we have the deliverer, *God* the Father, ver. 12. he delivered *us*; all that are made meet for the inheritance in light, were once under the power of ſpiritual darkneſs: The deliverance itſelf, and the manner of the deliverance; he hath reſcued us by a ſtrong hand, as the word imports, as Lot was delivered out of Sodom. *Note*, 1. That the ſtate which every ſoul is in by nature, is a ſtate of darkneſs; ſin originally ſprings from darkneſs, it naturally delights in darkneſs, it ultimately leads to eternal darkneſs. 2. That it is God, and God alone, that can deliver a ſoul from the power of ſpiritual darkneſs. 3. That no power, ſhort of Almighty power in God, is able to deliver a ſinner from the dominion of ſin, and the power of ſpiritual darkneſs; ſuch is the ignorance and blindneſs of the underſtanding, ſuch is the rebellion that is found in the ſinner's will, ſo great the irregularity and diſorder of the affections, and indeed of the whole ſoul, that the ſinner is not only unable to deliver himſelf, but ſtands in a direct oppoſition to the grace of God, which offers to work deliverance for him, till, of unwilling, he is made willing, in the day of Chriſt's power, Pſal. cx. 3. *And tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*; that is, brought us into a goſpel ſtate, made us members and ſubjects of his kingdom of grace, and heirs of his kingdom of glory. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt was God's Son, his dear and only Son, the Son of himſelf, and the Son of his boſom-love: He is called his Son, being ſo by an eternal and ineffable generation; not upon the account of his miraculous conception only, nor in regard of his ſanctification and miſſion only, nor in regard of his reſurrection chiefly, nor in regard of the dignity of his perſon, nor in regard of the dearneſs of his perſon; but he is very God of very God, begotten of his Father, by whom all things were made; and accordingly he is, for nature, co-eſſential, for dignity co-equal, and for duration, co-eternal with the Father, and conſequently truly and really God; and he that denieth the divinity of the Son, in God's account, denieth the Father alſo. 2. That Chriſt, as God's dear Son, is a ſpiritual King, and exerciſes a kingly power in and over the ſouls of thoſe whom he hath delivered from the power of darkneſs. 3. That ſuch as are ſubjects of his kingdom of grace, ſhall certainly be tranſlated into his kingdom of glory.

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveneſs of ſins.

Here our apoſtle further declares how we are made *meet for the inheritance of heaven, and delivered from the power of darkneſs*, namely, *by our redemption in Chriſt* from ſin, Satan, death, and wrath; by a price paid by the Mediator to the juſtice of God his Father. *In whom we have redemption*, that is, the fruit and benefit of Chriſt's redemption, which eminently conſiſts in remiſſion of ſin. *Note* here, (1.) The deplorable ſtate into which the whole race of mankind was brought by ſin, namely, a ſtate of ſlavery, and ſpiritual captivity unto ſin; redemption ſuppoſes this; ſlaves and captives need a redeemer, none elſe. (2.) That there was no delivery from this ſlavery but by a price paid down to the juſtice of God: Redemption is a delivery by ranſom and price. (3.) That no other price did, or could redeem us from our miſerable captivity, but the blood of Chriſt; we have *redemption through his blood.* (4.) That although Chriſt did pay this ranſom unto God, and not to Satan, whoſe enſlaved captives we are, yet, by virtue of the ranſom paid, we are delivered from Satan's ſlavery, and ſin's dominion: when God the judge was once ſatisfied, Satan the gaoler had nothing to do to detain and keep us any longer in priſon. (5.) That forgiveneſs of ſin, or a full and final diſcharge from ſin's guilt, and from all obnoxiouſneſs to God's wrath, was one ſpecial fruit of Chriſt's redemption; he died to deliver us from the wrath of God, and from the rage of our luſts too, otherwiſe he had but ſealed us a patent to ſin with impunity.

15 Who is the image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature:

The apoſtle having mentioned our redemption in the former verſe, deſcribes the perſon of our Redeemer in this and the following verſes, in ſuch lofty characters, as evidently beſpeak him to be a divine perſon, truly and really God, and conſequently the fitteſt perſon to undertake ſo great and glorious a work, as the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt and periſhing world. *Note* here, 1. The Redeemer deſcribed by his eternal relation to God, he is *the image of the inviſible God*, that is, his natural and eſſential image; thus he is, in reſpect of his eternal generation as God; as a child whom we call the expreſs image of the father, is of the ſame nature with his father, ſo is Chriſt of the ſame eſſence and nature with God; his nature is the ſame, his attributes are the ſame, his works the ſame, the worſhip given him the ſame; faith and affiance in him the ſame: John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Again, Chriſt is the image of the inviſible God, as God-man; by him, as as a lively image, did God the Father ſet forth unto us his glorious attributes of wiſdom, mercy, righteouſneſs, and power. The firſt perſon in the God head is called inviſible to the patriarchs; but the Son frequently appeared as a *preludium* to his incarnation, in which he appeared viſibly to all. 2. Chriſt is here deſcribed, as by his eternal relation to God, ſo by his eternal relation to the creatures: *He is the firſt-born of every creature*; that is, (1.) He was before every creature, aad therefore he himſelf cannot be a creature: The apoſtle ſays expreſly, ver. 17. *That he is before all things*, that is, Chriſt had a being before there was any created: he was before all creatures, both in point of dignity, and in point of duration. Thus, Rev. iii. 14. Chriſt calls himſelf the *beginning of the creation of God*, that is, the principal and efficient cauſe of the creation, and ſo could not be a creature himſelf, but conſequently moſt of neceſſity have been God from all eternity with the Father: Or elſe, (2.) By the *firſt-born of every creature*, may be underſtood, that he was Lord and heir of all the creatures; in alluſion to the firſt-born among the Jews of old, who were Lords over their brethren, Gen. xxvii. 37. *Behold, I have made him thy Lord:* the firſt-born is natural heir, and *heir* did anciently ſignify *Lord*. Now Chriſt is ſaid in Acts x. 36. *to be Lord of all*, and Rom. iv. 14. *He is called heir of all things:* Now, how well may Chriſt be ſaid to be the Lord and heir of all things, when *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made!* *Learn* hence, That the Socinians have no ground from this text to reckon Chriſt amongſt the number of creatures, he having a being antecedent to all creatures, yea, being Lord of the whole creation; and accordingly the apoſtle ſtyling him here the *firſt-born of every creature*, never deſigned to inſinuate, that the Son of God is a creature, as moſt evidently appears by the next verſes.

16 For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.

Mark the connexion: The apoſtle affirms Chriſt to be the firſt-born of every creature, namely, becauſe *by him* *were all things created, and by him all things conſiſt:* Now, if all things were created by him, ſurely he himſelf cannot be a creature. And thus the ſenſe of the apoſtle's words runs eaſy; Chriſt is the image of the inviſible God, the Heir and Lord of the whole creation, for by him all things were created; he that created all creatures, cannot himſelf be a creature; for it is impoſſible that any creature ſhould create itſelf. Mark further, Chriſt is here repreſented as Creator of the univerſe; *all things were created by him in heaven and in earth,* all the angels in their ſeveral orders, degrees and dignities. (2.) As he is repreſented the Creator, ſo likewiſe the upholder of every creature; as *by him were all things created,* ſo *by him do all things conſiſt.* (3.) He is ſet forth as the laſt end of all the creatures; *all things were created for him,* as well as *by him. Learn* hence, 1. That all created beings, from the vileſt worm to the brighteſt angel, are the workmanſhip of Chriſt's hand; they are not only creatures, but his creatures; he is their omnipotent Creator, and their rightful Lord. 2. *That all things were created for him,* as well as *by him,* for the manifeſtation of his own glory, as God; he that was the firſt cauſe, muſt be the laſt end: And accordingly, all the creatures throughout the whole creation do give glory unto Chriſt, ſome in an active way, as angels and ſaints; ſome in a paſſive way, as damned men and devils; ſome in an objective way, as ſun, moon, and ſtars, giving us occaſion to glorify the power and wiſdom of the great Creator. 3. That ſeeing the whole creation was at firſt made, and is ſtill upheld by the power of Chriſt, it proves him to be evidently and undeniably God: *He that created all things, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power,* is and muſt be God. Vain here is the Socinian evaſion, who, by creation, underſtand a renovation of the mind, and a reformation of the manners of men by the goſpel; for Chriſt is here ſaid to create all things in heaven, that is, particularly the angels in heaven; but they having kept their firſt ſtation, wanted no renovation, ſo that it muſt be underſtood of the firſt creation of the natural world, and not of the renovation of the moral world. God forgive theſe men's perverting and bold practiſing upon the ſcriptures. Can any ſenſible man perſuade himſelf, that when St. Paul ſays, that *all things were created by Chriſt in heaven and earth, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,* that the apoſtle ſhould mean no more than the moral renovation of the world below by the preaching of the goſpel, in which the angels were not concerned? For though Chriſt was an Head of confirmation to them, yet had they no need of a renovation, or being made new, having always kept their firſt ſtation.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, deſcribed what Chriſt is in himſelf, comes next to deſcribe him with relation to his church; ſhewing, 1. That he is her Head, he is the Head of the body, the church; as the head and the members make one body, ſo Chriſt and his people conſtitute one church; he is of the ſame nature (as man) with his church, he poureth forth of the ſame Spirit upon his church, he is both an Head of authority, and an Head of influence to his church; he ſympathizes with her in all her ſufferings on earth, and longs for the full fruition and final enjoyment of her in heaven. 2. He is the beginning of the Chriſtian church, the root, the fountain and foundation of it, the active beginning, or the firſt principle and author of it, and of all thoſe influences of grace and ſpiritual life which do animate and enliven it. 3. He is called the *firſt-born* from the dead, (1.) Becauſe he was the firſt that aroſe to an immortal life, never to die more; all others that were raiſed to life, beſides him, died again, but death had no more dominion over him. Again, (2.) Becauſe he was the principal and efficient cauſe of their reſurrection; all that were raiſed before him, were raiſed by him, by a power derived from him: And, (3.) Becauſe he is the pattern and exemplary cauſe of the reſurrection; his members are not only raiſed by him, but like unto him, Phil. iii. 21. *Faſhioned like unto his glorious body.* Was his body raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame? So ſhall ours be. Was his body wonderfully improved by the reſurrection? So ſhall ours, in point of purity and ſpirituality, in point of power and activity, in point of immortality and incorruptibility. Was his body raiſed to be eternally glorified? So ſhall ours. How fitly then is our Lord here called the *firſt-born from the dead?* Even herein he had *the pre-eminence.*

19 For it pleaſed *the Father,* that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;

Still our apoſtle proceeds in deſcribing the perſon of our Redeemer, and the admirable qualifications found in him for the work and ſervice of our redemption; he declares here, that there was a perfect and complete fulneſs of all divine graces and excellencies dwelling in the Mediator, and that by the pleaſure and appointment of God the Father; there is in him a fulneſs of merit for our juſtification, a fulneſs of grace for our ſanctification, a fulneſs of wiſdom for our direction, a fulneſs of power for our preſervation, a fulneſs of mercy, pity, and compaſſion, to relieve and ſuccour us in all our diſtreſſes. And this fulneſs which is in Chriſt, is an original and independent fulneſs, and it is an infinite and inexhauſtible fulneſs; it is a complete and comprehenſive fulneſs, and it is a miniſterial fulneſs; the fulneſs that is in him of grace and comfort, is on purpoſe to communicate unto us, to be diſperſed and given forth to all his members. No ſooner had our apoſtle ſaid, that he is the *Head of the body, the church;* but he inſtantly ſubjoins, that *it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell,* namely, for his church's benefit and advantage. *Learn* hence, That for any one to be, or pretend to be the church's head, it is neceſſary that he be endued with all the fulneſs of the Godhead, and of all miniſterial graces; and therefore it is the higheſt degree of blaſphemy in the Pope, a vain ſinful man, to aſſume this title to himſelf, being deſtitute of this divine fulneſs; full indeed he is, but full of pride, full of ſin, full of himſelf; and, without repentance for this and his other blaſphemies, will, at length, be full of wrath.

20 And (having made peace through the blood

of his croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf; by him, *I ſay*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

Here one ſpecial reaſon is aſſigned why all fulneſs dwelt in our Lord the Redeemer, namely, to fit him for the great work and office of a Mediator or reconciler, that ſo he might happily make up that breach which ſin had made between God and the world, having removed the enmity which was betwixt them by his death and ſufferings, called here the *blood of his croſs*, that is, the blood which he freely and voluntarily ſhed upon the croſs. *Note* here, 1. That God and man were once friends, though ſoon by ſin made enemies; *reconciliation* doth ſuppoſe an antecedent friendſhip. 2. That though man was firſt in the breach, yet God was firſt in the offer of reconciliation; *It pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile all things to himſelf.* 3. That as there was no poſſibility of ever making up this breach, but by a Mediator; ſo no perſon in heaven or earth was or could be found, in all things fitted or furniſhed for the work of a Mediator, but only Chriſt; *By him*; to reconcile all things to himſelf. 4. The univerſality of the ſubject reconciled, *all things*, *both in heaven and earth:* By *things in heaven*, (1.) Some underſtand the bleſſed angels; but there being no breach between God and them, Chriſt was not the author of reconciliation, though he was an head of confirmation to them. Others underſtand it of a reconciliation between the angels and man, thus: Whilſt man continued in his obedience to God, angels and men were in a ſtate of perfect friendſhip one with another; but when man rebelled againſt God, the angels became averſe to man for that rebellion; but God being reconciled to man by the death of his Son, the angels are become friends and miniſtering ſpirits to us, and both they and we conſtitute one church under Chriſt the head thereof; thus Chriſt reconciled all things in heaven and earth, that is, the angels in heaven he has reconciled to man on earth. But, (2.) Others, by *things in heaven*, do not underſtand the angels, but the ſaints departed; the patriarchs, prophets, and all the faithful now in heaven, or here on earth, they were all reconciled, in order to their being ſaved; intimating, that the blood of Chriſt did expiate the guilt of thoſe perſons who lived before him, as well as of thoſe that died after him: He reconciled all things in heaven and earth, capable of reconciliation, appointed to it, and that ſtood in need of it. *Note*, laſtly, The inſtrumental means by which all this was effected, namely, by *the blood of the croſs*; to make up the breach betwixt God and the fallen creature, coſt the Mediator no leſs than his precious blood. Lord! Who can look upon ſin as any other than an infinite and immenſe evil, which coſt the Son of God his life to expiate the guilt of it? How can a little ſin be committed againſt a great God?

21 And you that were ſometimes alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, 22 In the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his ſight:

St. Paul having treated of Chriſt's work of reconciliation in general, in the preceding verſe, in this he applies it to the Coloſſians in particular: Where *obſerve*, 1. He deſcribes to them the miſerable ſtate and deplorable condition they were in before they were converted to the Chriſtian faith; they were ſtrangers, nay enemies unto God: *Enemies in their minds*, which implies a deep rooted enmity, advancing ſo high as to hate God, not as a Creator, but as a law-giver; not as a Benefactor, but as a judge and revenger of ſin. O deplorable degradation, to be at enmity in our minds againſt him who is the author of our being, and the fountain of our happineſs! 2. The gracious change wrought in their condition by virtue of Chriſt's mediation, *you hath he reconciled*; not only laid down his life to purchaſe reconciliation for them, but by the miniſtry of his word, accompanied with the operation of his holy Spirit, working upon their hearts, even then when they had a ſtrong averſion from God, to accept of terms of peace and reconciliation with him: *You, who were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, now hath he reconciled.* 3. The way and means by which Chriſt effected this work of reconciliation for them and us, namely, by taking upon him a true body, ſubject to fleſhly infirmities, though without ſin; and in that body ſuffering death for us, that we might be preſented at the laſt day, perfectly holy unto God. In order to our reconciliation with God, it pleaſed Chriſt, the ſecond Perſon in the ever-glorious Trinity, to aſſume a body of fleſh, that he might be of the ſame nature with us, and in that body of fleſh to die for ſin; that the ſame nature which had ſinned, might give ſatisfaction for ſin. And further, to make us completely happy, he has not only taken away the legal enmity on God's part, but the natural enmity on our part; for he ſanctifies thoſe whom he reconciles initially in this life, but perfectly and completely in the next, where and when they ſhall be preſented holy, unblameable, and unreproveable, to his heavenly Father.

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled, and be not moved away from the hope of the goſpel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a miniſter:

Here our apoſtle declares to the Coloſſians, how they may know whether they were indeed of the number of thoſe who were actually reconciled to God by the blood of his Son, namely, if they perſevered in the faith, and continued grounded faſt in their holy religion; *If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled*; implying, that it is the great duty of Chriſtians, who have ſat under the preaching of the goſpel, to be well ſettled in the doctrine of faith, which they have heard and received; and that the beſt way to be ſettled, is to be well grounded; if we are not ſettled in religion, we can never grow in religion; an ungrounded Chriſtian can never be a growing Chriſtian? and if we are not well grounded in the faith, we can never ſuffer for the faith; for ſuch as are *ſceptics* in religion, will never prove martyrs for the ſake of religion. *Obſerve* next, The univerſality of that tender, which by the preaching of the goſpel is made unto all ſorts of ſinners, of reconciliation with God, and acceptance through Chriſt; *which goſpel was preached to every creature under heaven*; that is, to loſt mankind, to ſome of all ſorts; not in Judea only, but amongſt the Gentiles alſo; to every human creature, no perſon, no nation being refuſed or paſſed by; plainly intimating, that an indefinite and univerſal tender of reconciliation with God, and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, is made unto all perſons, by the preaching of the goſpel. Happy they, whoſe hearts are inclined and diſpoſed to accept of, and comply with them, who in the day of the goſpel's viſitation, do know the things of their peace.

24 Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake, which is the church:

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "I am not only contented with, but I greatly rejoice in, my ſufferings for you converted Gentiles, and help, as much as in me lies, to fill up ſome part of that which is, by God's decree, behind unfulfilled of the ſufferings of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake, which is the church." *Note* here, 1. That Almighty God has decreed ſuch a meaſure of ſufferings to his church, whereof Chriſt, as the Head, underwent a conſiderable part and proportion, when he was here upon earth, in his poverty, in his labours, in his ſufferings, both in life, and at his death. 2. That there is yet a remainder of ſufferings, aſſigned over by Chriſt unto his members, which muſt be filled up by them, whereof St. Paul had a great ſhare, and every believer muſt have ſome ſhare; for, as long as Chriſt has a member upon earth, there will be ſomething for that member to ſuffer. 3. That thoſe ſufferings which Chriſt's members ſuffer, are the ſufferings of Chriſt; the ſufferings of the members are the ſufferings of the Head, being undergone for the ſake of the Head. Chriſt, in his natural body conſidered, can ſuffer no more; but in his myſtical body, in his members, he daily ſuffers, and will ſuffer, until the meaſure of ſufferings is filled up which God hath determined. *Queſt.* But why are Chriſt's ſufferings in and by his members thus to be prolonged, yea, perpetuated? *Anſ.* Not by way of ſatisfaction for ſin, not in order to reconciliation with God, but in order to the converſion of the world, for example to others, for perfecting of their own graces, and for the increaſing of their glory.

25 Whereof I am made a miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 *Even* the myſtery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles; which is Chriſt in you, the hope of glory:

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, ſeems to aſſign a reaſon why he underwent the ſufferings mentioned in the former verſe ſo cheerfully, as even to rejoice in them; namely, becauſe he was a miniſter of the church, by the ſpecial diſpenſation of God, to preach the myſteries of the goſpel to the Gentile world. *Learn* thence, That ſuch as are eminent in the church, and, as miniſters of the goſpel, do lay out themſelves more abundantly in the church's ſervice, they muſt expect to meet with a meaſure, and a full meaſure of ſufferings beyond others. There are no ſuch enemies to the devil's kingdom, as the zealous and faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; therefore he will be ſure to revenge the ruins of his own kingdom. *Obſerve* farther, What it was that St. Paul was appointed by God to preach to the Gentiles, namely, that great myſtery of their vocation and calling; this he calls here a myſtery, a rich myſtery, a glorious myſtery, a myſtery hid from ages, but now made manifeſt. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, as a Redeemer, was long hid from the knowledge of the Gentiles; and that at laſt they were brought to the knowledge of Chriſt, and the participation of goſpel privileges, was a great myſtery awfully to be admired, and a glorious mercy with all thankfulneſs to be acknowledged, *to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles—which is Chriſt, in you, the hope of glory*,—which goſpel, preached amongſt you, and received and entertained by you, is an earneſt and ground of your hope of glory. *Note* here, 1. That Chriſt is in, and among believers; he is among them by the preaching of the goſpel, he is in them by the inhabitation of his holy Spirit. 2. That all true believers, whilſt here on earth, have an hope of glory. 3. That Chriſt's indwelling preſence in the ſouls of believers by the holy Spirit, is an earneſt of that glory, and an evident demonſtration of their hope of it: Believers have in them a glorious hope, they have before them a glory hoped for; Chriſt is the ground of both, by him we obtain the end of our hope, even the ſalvation of our ſouls.

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſdom; that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus: 29 Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Obſerve here, 1. What was the principle ſubject of the apoſtle's preaching, it was Chriſt; *whom we preach*; Chriſt was the matter of his preaching, and the great end of his preaching. 2. The manner of St. Paul's preaching; it was by informing the underſtanding and judgment, by directing the practice, *warning* men of the evil of ſin, and of the danger of continuing in it. 3. The end of his preaching, it was to preſent every man *perfect* in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, to render them complete both in knowledge and obedience. 4. The indefatigable pains and diligence uſed by the apoſtle in that work of preaching, intimated in the words labouring and ſtriving, *whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving*. 5. The gracious help and bleſſed ſucceſs which he had in his preaching, humbly and thankfully acknowledged, and aſcribed unto God, *according to his working which worketh in me mightily*. From the whole, *learn*, 1. What was the ſum of St. Paul's preaching, and ought to be of ours alſo, to bring men to repentance and faith in Chriſt, to advance them towards a perfection in knowledge and obedience, by informing their judgments, and directing their practice. 2. That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt do judge no labour and pains too great, no ſtrivings or ſufferings too much, no contending with the errors and ſins of men ſufficient, in order to the bringing of them unto God by converſion and repentance. 3. That ſuch miniſters as thus indefatigably labour and ſtrive for the good of ſouls, ſhall not labour and ſtrive alone, they ſhall be accompanied with divine aſſiſtance: Chriſt will ſtrive with them, and work with them; *Striving according to his working.* 4. That when miniſters have met with ſucceſs in their ſtriving, by Chriſt's working with them, they muſt aſcribe nothing of praiſe to themſelves, to their own piety, parts, or pains, but aſcribe all to him that ſtriveth by them, *and worketh in them mightily.*

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter cautions and warns the Coloſſians *againſt all ſuch corrupt doctrines as any ſort of falſe teachers might be ready to obtrude upon them.*

FOR I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh;

Obſerve here, 1. The holy agony which our apoſtle was in, and the mighty conflict he had with himſelf, upon the account of the Coloſſians; *I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you*; namely, by prayer, care, ſtudy, and endeavour to do you good: Here we ſee how paſſionately good men long for the good of thoſe whom they never ſaw; as members of the catholic church, they wiſh well to the whole, and to every part. 2. What was the ground and occaſion of St. Paul's inexpreſſible agony and concern of ſpirit, for and on behalf of theſe Coloſſians; namely this, there was a number of men riſen up who began very early to corrupt the purity and ſimplicity of the goſpel and the Chriſtian religion: A ſort they were, partly of Judaizing, and partly Paganizing Chriſtians; the former joined the Jewiſh ceremonies, the latter the Gentiles impurities, even in worſhip with the Chriſtian religion. Now the urgency of this caſe put the ſolicitous and concerned ſpirit of this great apoſtle into an inexpreſſible agony, as his words here intimate; *I would you knew what a conflict I have for you* and your near neighbours of *Laodicea, and for as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh.* The men of the world little underſtand, and leſs conſider, what burden of ſolicitous care lies upon the miniſters of Chriſt, for, and on behalf of the whole church of Chriſt in general, which is continually in danger of being corrupted by falſe teachers, who every where lie in wait to deceive.

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt:

Our apoſtle having diſcovered, in the former verſe, that inward anxiety of mind which he laboured under, on the behalf of theſe Coloſſians, doth, in theſe words, propoſe an expedient how the threatening danger might be averted, namely, by mutual love to one another, and by a clear and efficacious faith of the goſpel; by theſe he reckons they would be ſo cloſely compacted together, as that no ſubtlety or violence could endanger them: If, by faith, they did cleave cloſe to God and Chriſt, and by love keep cloſe to one another, he firmly believed they would give no enemies an opportunity, either to be the ſucceſsful authors, or the delighted ſpectators of their ruin. *Learn* hence, That the maintaining of ſincere love amongſt Chriſtians, and the improving of their faith to greater meaſures of certainty and efficacy, in reference to the ſubſtantials of Chriſtianity, are the beſt means to unite, eſtabliſh, and preſerve them againſt the fatal danger of a ruinous apoſtaſy.

3 In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.

That is, in Jeſus Chriſt, and in his goſpel, *are all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, laid up as in a ſtore-houſe, and from thence only are they to be expected and derived. The knowledge of Chriſt and his goſpel is an extenſive and comprehenſive knowledge, a rich and enriching knowledge; the chiefeſt gain is loſs, and the richeſt treaſure is dung, when Chriſt's riches are diſplayed; and after all that we have or can attain unto, of the knowledge of Chriſt, his work is unſearchable, no finite underſtanding can reach the depth thereof; for in him *are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.*

4 And this I ſay, leſt any man ſhould beguile you with inticing words. 5 For though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt.

Note here, How exceedingly deſirous the apoſtle was, that the Coloſſians might continue ſound in the Chriſtian faith, and be preſerved out of the hands of falſe teachers, who, by falſe arguments, and enſnaring perſuaſions ſought to beguile them in matters of religion: We are in greater danger from the ſubtle ſeducer, than we are from the fiery perſecutor; ſophiſtical arguments, and inſinuating perſuaſions, captivate thoſe perſons whom violence could never have brought over to their party; therefore is our apoſtle ſo earneſt with the Coloſſians, that none ſhould *beguile them with inticing words.* *Note* farther, How our apoſtle gives another reaſon of this his ſolicitous care for them, namely, his fervent affection towards them, notwithſtanding his great diſtance from them, for though not in body, yet in mind he was preſent with them, and having received from Epaphras an account of the good order and government of their church, and of the ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith in Chriſt, the notices thereof were matter of exceeding joy and rejoicing to him; *Though abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying,* &c. *Learn* hence, That a church's ſteadfaſtneſs in the faith of Chriſt, and unity amongſt themſelves in goſpel-order, doth render a church a joyful object to all beholders, and particularly to the miniſters and ambaſſadors of Chriſt, who greatly rejoice therein.

6 As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, *ſo* walk ye in him; 7 Rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving.

That is, “As you have received the doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, by the preaching of Epaphras, and therein have embraced Chriſt by faith, ſo do you conſtantly adhere to that doctrine, conforming your lives thereunto; and ſeeing you are thus implanted into Chriſt, be like trees, well and deeply rooted in him, or like a houſe, firmly built upon him, as the only ſure and abiding foundation.” *Learn*, That ſuch as have received the grace of God in truth, ought to labour after ſtability in grace and eſtabliſhment in the true religion, that they may ſtand like a rock, immoveable in aſſaults, and unſhaken amidſt all the batteries that may be made upon their faith by heretics and ſeducers.

8 Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt;

Our apoſtle comes now in a particular and ſpecial manner to warn the Coloſſians, that they beware of all the enemies of Chriſtianity, whether Pagan or Jewiſh, for Chriſtianity was oppoſed by both: The heathen philoſophers and wiſe men did amuſe the Chriſtians with their vain ſpeculations: The Jewiſh teachers were for impoſing upon them the Levitical rites, which he calls *rudiments* or elements fitted for the infancy of the church; but theſe things were not now after Chriſt, that is, not according to the doctrine and mind of Chriſt. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit*, &c. Where *note*, That it is not philoſophy, as ſuch, which St. Paul warns them againſt; for true and ſound philoſophy is the improver of our reaſon, the guide of our faculties, and teaches us the true knowledge of God, and ourſelves, and is no hindrance, but a great help to religion; but it was the philoſophy of the Greeks at that day which is here condemned, becauſe it was vain and empty, fallacious and deceitful: It was vain, becauſe it conduced nothing to true piety, and making them better; it was deceitful, becauſe it hazarded their ſouls, and robbed them of happineſs. *Note* farther, That the Moſaic rites and legal ceremonies, as they were preſcribed by God, and adapted to the infant ſtate of the Jewiſh church, had a goodneſs, yea, an excellency in them; but the obſervation of them, ſince the coming of Chriſt, is ſinful, as being an implicit denial, that he is come in the fleſh; accordingly, he warns them to beware of the philoſophy of the Greeks, and the ceremonial rites of the Jews; neither of which, he tells them, were after Chriſt, that is, not according to the inſtitution or injunction of Chriſt, but did draw away the heart from him, therefore, they were both unwarrantable and unſafe.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily: 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Here St. Paul gives a reaſon of the foregoing caution againſt philoſophy; for *in him*, that is, in Chriſt, *dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*: As if he had ſaid, “Let no man impoſe upon you by a lame and imperfect philoſophy, there is no need of that, for now there is introduced an abſolute and complete doctrine, namely, that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which has the fulneſs of all divine wiſdom in it, and the *fulneſs of the Godhead* dwelling *bodily* in himſelf, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially.” Where *note*, That the apoſtle ſays not, that the Godhead is aſſiſtant to Chriſt, but, that it reſideth or dwelleth in him; as the Deity dwelt in the ark ſymbolically, ſo it dwelt in Chriſt bodily. *Note* farther, That Chriſt is not here ſaid to be filled with the fulneſs of God, as the church is ſaid to be, Eph. i. 23. in regard of the gifts and graces which ſhe had received from him; but the whole fulneſs of the Godhead is here ſaid to reſide in him, which can argue him to be no leſs than really and truly God, his complete eſſence dwelleth in him: Well might the apoſtle therefore add, ver. 10. *Ye are complete in him*, wanting no requiſite to ſalvation; ye need not go to the philoſophers for knowledge, for in Chriſt you have complete wiſdom; he is above all Pagan philoſophers and Jewiſh Rabbies; nay, he is the *Head of all principalities and powers*, that is, above the higheſt angel in heaven. Here *obſerve*, That it was the opinion of the Paganiſh, as it is now of the Popiſh part of mankind, That Almighty God was too high to be immediately approached, and therefore, they applied themſelves to angels as mediators betwixt God and them; but the apoſtle acquaints them, that the angel-mediatorſhip is vain, ſince Chriſt is alſo their Head and Lord.

11 In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh by the circumciſion of Chriſt:

The apoſtle had aſſerted before, that we *are complete in Chriſt*: He proves it now, thus; we want not circumciſion: Why? Becauſe we have in Chriſt the thing ſignified by circumciſion, namely, the ſpiritual circumciſion of the heart, which conſiſts in putting off, by the power of Chriſt's Spirit, the body of natural corruption; which done, there was no need of the outward circumciſion made with hands, or the cutting off the fleſh of the fore-ſkin. *Obſerve*, Original corruption is a body, or, as a body to us, it cleaves as cloſe to the ſoul as the fleſh to the bones. This body, with all its members, we muſt be cutting daily by ſpiritual circumciſion, or real mortification; and, where that is done, God is well pleaſed: He regards not that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh, which is made with hands, but that which is inward, the circumciſion of the heart, and of the ſpirit, whoſe praiſe is not of man, but of God.

12 Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.

Our apoſtle here compares Chriſtian baptiſm with the Jewiſh circumciſion, and ſhews, that the ſignification and ſpiritual intention of both was one and the ſame, obliging all perſons who took the outward ſign upon them to put off the old man and put on the new; to die unto ſin, and live unto God. Accordingly, the ancients made uſe of divers ceremonies in baptizing adult and grown perſons, thereby to repreſent the death, burial, and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; immerſion, or putting the perſon three times under water, either as our Saviour was under the earth three days, or in alluſion to the three perſons in the Trinity, in whoſe name we are baptized; and likewiſe emerſion, their coming up out of the water, reſembling our Lord's ariſing out of his grave. *Note* here, 1. That baptiſm under the New Teſtament, ſucceeds circumciſion under the Old, and is a rite of initiation to Chriſtians, as circumciſion was to the Jews: For the apoſtle here proves, that by virtue of our ſpiritual circumciſion in baptiſm, we have no need of the outward circumciſion in the fleſh. 2. That baptiſm is undoubtedly Chriſt's ordinance for infants of believing Chriſtians, as circumciſion was of old for the infants of believing Jews: For if under the goſpel, infants be not received, by ſome federal rite, into covenant with God, they are in a worſe condition than children under the law; and the apoſtle could not truly have ſaid, we *are complete in Chriſt*, that is, as complete without circumciſion, as ever the Jewiſh church was with it, if we had not an ordinance, to wit, baptiſm, as good as their abrogated ordinance of circumciſion. And the Jews would certainly have objected it to the reproach of Chriſtianity, had not the Chriſtians had a rite of initiation for their children, as they had of circumciſion, which ſealed the covenant to themſelves, and their little ones, and was the door, by which all perſons entered into the Jewiſh church. 3. The ſpiritual fruits and effects of baptiſm, namely, mortification of ſin, and vivification in grace, by virtue of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, apprehended by ſuch a faith as is of the operation of God, that is, produced by the energy of the goſpel, and the efficacy of the holy Spirit. *Learn* hence, That neither ſacraments, nor the death or reſurrection of Chriſt, in themſelves, will avail to the mortification of ſin, and the quickening of grace, if Chriſt himſelf be not applied to by ſuch a faith, as is of the ſpecial operation of God, the faith of his working, and of his approving: This alone will effectually enable us to die unto ſin and live unto God.

13 And you, being dead in your ſins and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes,
14 Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs: 15 *And*
having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in proving, that we are complete in Chriſt, and that the Coloſſians had no need of circumciſion in the fleſh, having all in Chriſt that was neceſſary for juſtification as well as ſanctification. To ſatisfy them herein, *note*, 1. He acquaints them with their deplorable condition by nature, *you being dead in your ſins*, without any hope of ſpiritual life, and by reaſon of *uncircumciſion of your fleſh*, aliens from the church of God (and ſtrangers to all the promiſes made unto it) hath he quickened and pardoned, having freely forgiven you *all your treſpaſſes*. O bleſſed privilege of juſtification, to have ſin forgiven, treſpaſſes forgiven, all treſpaſſes univerſally forgiven, all treſpaſſes freely forgiven! 2. What it coſt Chriſt to purchaſe pardon for us, to diſcharge us from our obligation to wrath, and our obnoxiouſneſs to the curſe and condemnation of the law; no leſs than his precious life laid down upon the croſs, *blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances againſt us, and contrary to us*, &c. An alluſion to a practice amongſt men, who cancel bills and bonds, and all obligations, wherein they ſtood bound, when once the debt is ſatisfied. Now, ſays the apoſtle, your debt of ſin is paid to the juſtice of God, by the death of Chriſt; and ſeeing the obligation is cancelled, it would be madneſs and impiety to renew it again, as thoſe do, who plead for circumciſion, and practiſe the legal ceremonies. *Note* 3. There was an obligation upon every man to undergo the curſe of the law; for violating the commands of the law, there was *an hand-writing againſt us*. The obligation muſt be cancelled, before the condemning power of the law can be aboliſhed, and ſin pardoned: None but Chriſt could cancel this obligation; and not he neither, without paying the full ſum payable from us: Chriſt when hanging on the croſs, did *nail this hand-writing* to his croſs, which ſhall never be produced in judgment againſt the penitent believer; but this obligation remains upon the file uncancelled, with reſpect to all ſinners who live and die in their ſins, and they ſhall always lie in priſon, ever ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfy this obligation. *Note*, 4. That Chriſt hath not only by his death cancelled this hand-writing, and nailed it to his croſs, but has vanquiſhed and triumphed over all our ſpiritual enemies: Satan, and all the powers of hell, are led as ſo many pinioned captives before the triumphant chariot of his croſs, making them a ſpectacle of ſcorn and ſhame in the eyes of God, angels and men: *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly*, &c. *Obſerve* here, 1. Chriſt's bloody croſs was a chariot of triumph unto him. Lord! whilſt thou wert bleeding and racking upon the gibbet for us, thou wert then rejoicing and triumphing for the benefits redounding to us. 2. That Satan, that great conqueror, was conquered by Chriſt, and led in triumph before the chariot of the croſs. O Satan, thou wert never thus baffled, befooled, and diſappointed before! When thou and thy agents were ſpoiling Chriſt, even then was he ſpoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them, when they were inſulting over him: The ſerpent now bruiſed our Lord's heel, but had his own head and power for ever broken: *triumphing over them in it*, that is, in and by his croſs.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath-*days*: 17 Which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Chriſt.

Here we have an inference or concluſion drawn by our apoſtle from the foregoing argument, that ſeeing the ceremonial law was now aboliſhed, therefore none ſhould take upon them to judge or condemn another for not obſerving any of the legal ceremonies, either thoſe that related to meats, that is, the difference obſerved in meats, or the other relating to the difference to be obſerved in days. Here *note*, That the days obſerved amongſt the Jews, were of three ſorts: *Anniverſary*, which returned every year, called here an *holy day*: *Lunary*, which returned every month, the firſt day of every new moon: *Weekly*, which returned every week, and on the ſeventh day of the week: All which are abrogated, even the Jewiſh ſeventh day ſabbath; and the *Lord's day*, or the Chriſtian's firſt-day ſabbath, ſubſtituted in its place, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. *Obſerve* here, 1. That there is both a ſinful and a lawful abſtinence from meats; that abſtinence is ſinful, when men abſtain from ſome meats, upon pretence of holineſs and conſcience, as if ſome meats were unclean, or leſs holy in their own nature than others, 1 Tim. iv. 4. or as if ſimple abſtinence at any time were a thing acceptable to God in itſelf, without reſpect had to the end for which it is ſometimes required. But there is a threefold abſtinence from meats, which is lawful; *Political*, enjoined by the magiſtrate for civil ends; *Medicinal*, preſcribed by the phyſician for health's preſervation; *Eccleſiaſtical*, when God by his providence, and the voice of his church, calls his people to faſting. 2. The reaſon alledged by the apoſtle, why Chriſtians ſhould not judge one another, with reſpect to meats and drinks, times and ſeaſons, namely, becauſe thoſe legal ceremonies were but dark ſhadows of things to come; but the body and ſubſtance, repreſented by thoſe ſhadows, is *Chriſt come in the fleſh*: And conſequently, to obſerve the ceremonies, and regard theſe ſhadows under the goſpel, is in effect to ſay, That Chriſt the body is not yet come. Here *note*, 1. The title given to the ceremonial worſhip, it is ſtyled a *ſhadow*, becauſe it was a dark and imperfect repreſentation of the truth: What is a ſhadow, but the coming of a thick body between us and the ſun? The legal ceremonies were interpoſed between Chriſt *the true light* and us, and ſo caſts a ſhadow of him. 2. The title given to Chriſt with reſpect to the ſhadows of the ceremonial law, he is the body and ſubſtance of them; now as the ſhadow vaniſhes when the ſubſtance is come, ſo theſe ceremonial ordinances were to ceaſe upon the coming of Chriſt, and to obſerve them now, under the goſpel, is in effect to ſay, that Chriſt is not yet come in the fleſh. 3. That the Jewiſh ſabbath was a ceremonial ordinance, and part of that hand-writing of ordinances which was to be blotted out by Chriſt; and conſequently the Chriſtian is not obliged to obſerve it. As the diſtinction of meats and drinks, and the obſervation of the new moons, were confeſſedly cermonial; ſo was alſo the Jewiſh ſabbath, which with the reſt was equally cancelled by Chriſt, as a part of the hand-writing of ordinances; ſo that to obſerve the Jewiſh ſabbath, or to condemn the Chriſtian for not obſerving it, is as much a denial that Chriſt is come in the fleſh, as to obſerve circumciſion, or any other part of the ceremonial law.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puffed up by his fleſhly mind: 19 And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.

Our apoſtle having warned the Coloſſians againſt the errors of the Judaizing teachers, comes next to warn them againſt the practice of the Paganizing Chriſtians, who were directed by their guides to worſhip the angels, covering their error with a plauſible ſhew of humility, pretending it was preſumptuous to go to God immediately, without the mediation of thoſe excellent creatures; but this the apoſtle tells them was a bold *intruding into things* they knew nothing of, God having neither revealed nor taught any ſuch thing; and argued, that they were *vainly puffed up* with the fooliſh imaginations of their own *fleſhly minds*. Next he ſhews, that theſe angel worſhippers do not acknowledge Chriſt for the Head of the church, while they apply themſelves to angels as mediators; whereas he alone diſcharges the office of the Head, completely giving life and growth to his whole church, and to every member thereof; which members being furniſhed with ſpiritual life from him, and knit to him and one another by the joints and bands of charity and other graces, they grow and increaſe with ſuch an increaſe of holineſs as is from God, and tends to his glory. *Note* here, 1. That the nature of man is prone, extremely prone, to idolatry and falſe worſhip. 2. That it is as really idolatry to worſhip an angel, as it is to worſhip a worm; for divine worſhip is only due to a divine perſon. 3. That it is a renouncing of Chriſt, to make uſe of angels, or any other Mediator, beſides Chriſt, unto the Father, *not holding the Head*. It was a notion, that early, and indeed univerſally poſſeſſed the minds of mankind, that God was not to be immediately approached to by ſinful men; but that their prayers were to be preſented by certain mediators and interceſſors, who were to procure for them the favour of God, and the acceptance of their prayers. Hence they worſhipped angels, and the ſouls departed of their heroes, whom they canonized, and tranſlated into the number of their inferior gods, by whom they addreſſed their ſupplications to their ſuperior gods. With this notion Almighty God was pleaſed to comply ſo far, as under the Jewiſh inſtitution to appoint Moſes a mediator betwixt him and them; and now under the Chriſtian diſpenſation to appoint Jeſus Chriſt to be the only Mediator betwixt God and man. 4. That it is uſual for idolaters, and falſe worſhippers, to cover themſelves with a more than ordinary ſhew of humility: *let none beguile you in a voluntary humility*. True it is, that all duties of worſhip ought to be *voluntary*, as voluntary is oppoſed to conſtrained; but they muſt not be voluntary, as voluntary is oppoſed to inſtituted or appointed; God doth no more approve of that worſhip we give him according to our will, than he doth approve of our neglect of that which is according to his own will. But man, vain man, likes any way of worſhipping God which is of his own framing, much better than that which is of God's own appointing.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances; 21 Touch not; taſte not; handle not; 22 Which are all to periſh with the uſing; after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip and humility, and

neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.

Our apoſtle being now in the cloſe of this chapter, returns to expoſtulate, and argues the caſe with thoſe who were willing to ſubject themſelves to the obſervation of the old Jewiſh rites and ceremonies. He argues thus: "If ſays he, you profeſs yourſelves in your baptiſm to be ſpiritually dead with Chriſt, and to be freed by his death from the Levitical ordinances, why are ye ſubject to thoſe ordinances? Such are, *touch not*, *taſte not*, *handle not:* touch not any unclean thing, taſte not any forbidden meat, handle not any conſecrated veſſel; all which obſervances were to periſh neceſſarily with the very uſing: And whereas they were ſet off with a ſpecious ſhew of wiſdom, as if they were voluntary ſervices and free-will offerings to God, he acknowledges, that they had indeed a ſhew of wiſdom, a ſhew of humility, and a ſhew of mortification and auſterity to the body, and not ſeeming to give any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh; but all this had nothing of ſpiritual devotion and piety in it." *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as do by baptiſm profeſs themſelves to be *dead with Chriſt* to the ceremonial law, may certainly conclude, that the Jewiſh ceremonies have no more any power over them, or that they ought to yield themſelves to the obſervation of them: *If ye be dead to Chriſt, why are ye ſubject to ordinances?* 2. That though God approveth and accepteth willing worſhip, yet not will-worſhip, what fair ſhew ſoever it may ſeem to have, either of wiſdom, humility, or mortification; whatever is the product of our fancies, is a very fornication in religion, and an abomination in the ſight of God, how pleaſing ſoever it may be in the ſight of men; and yet men are moſt forward to that ſervice of God which is of man's finding out and ſetting up; man likes it better to worſhip a god of his own making, than to worſhip the God that made him; and likes any way of worſhipping God which is of his own framing, more than that which is of God's appointing. Ah! Wretched heart of man, which whilſt it ſeems very zealous to worſhip and honour God, hath not zeal to do it in any other way than in that which reflects the higheſt diſhonour upon him.

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle comes now to the practical part of this epiſtle, exhorting the Coloſſians *to a converſation in all things anſwerable to the doctrine of Chriſt.*

IF ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Note here, 1. The nature of the duty to which we are exhorted; this is expreſſed both affirmatively and negatively; affirmatively, Seek the things above, and ſet your affections on them; negatively, Not on the things here on earth; it being impoſſible to ſeek and ſet our affections upon both in an intenſe degree. *Queſt.* But what is it to *ſeek thoſe things that are above*, and to *ſet our affections* upon them? *Anſ.* In theſe two words, four things are comprehended: (1.) An act of our underſtanding, that we know the worth of theſe things. (2.) An act of the will, to chuſe theſe things, and with the ardour and vehemency of our affections to love them. (3.) An act of induſtry and endeavour in the purſuit of theſe things, if by any means we may attain them. Our affections are ſo many ſprings of motion to ſet our endeavours on work for the obtaining of what we love and deſire. (4.) It implies a clear preference of the things above to things below, when they come in competition; ſet your affections more on things above than on the things below, and ſhew it by your readineſs to part with theſe things. *Note*, 2. What is the object of this act, or what it is that we are to ſeek and ſet our affections upon, namely, the *things which are above*; God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, together with the bleſſed ſtate and condition of heaven, and the happineſs above; as alſo thoſe diſpoſitions and qualifications which are requiſite for the obtaining of this happineſs, and bringing us to the fruition of it; all theſe are comprehended in the latitude of the object, *the things which are above.* 3. The arguments which our apoſtle uſes to excite us to this duty: (1.) *If ye be riſen with Chriſt*, that is, if ye believe that Chriſt is riſen, and if ye will bear a conformity and reſemblance to him in his reſurrection, and be made partakers of the power and virtue of it; for Chriſt's reſurrection is not only a pattern, but a principle; it has a power and efficacy in it to raiſe us up to a ſpiritual life: *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above.* (2.) A ſecond argument is drawn from Chriſt's exaltation in heaven; he *ſitteth at the right hand of God*; which words declare the exaltation of his human nature, and his being advanced to be the ſupreme King and Governour of his church. Now the force of this argument lies in the relation that is between the Head and the members, between Chriſt and Chriſtians; as the head has an influence upon the members, ſo the members have an affection for the Head, which makes them aſpire heavenwards, where their Head is; becauſe their glorified Saviour, ſitting at the right hand of God, by the power of his Spirit, draws out their affections towards him: *If ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek the things above.* As if St. Paul had ſaid, "Is Chriſt our Head riſen, and aſcended into heaven? Let us in our hearts and affections follow him thither, and patiently wait till he receive our ſouls, and raiſe our bodies, and take us wholly to himſelf, that we may be for ever with the Lord."

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.

Here we have a freſh argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, Seek the things above, *for ye are dead*, that is, dead to ſin, dead to the world, therefore be not over-eager in purſuit of the things below. How affrighting a ſight would it be, to ſee a dead man riſe out of his grave, and converſe with the world, and follow the things here below! As affecting is it to ſee Chriſtians, who by baptiſmal profeſſion do own themſelves to be dead to the world, yet buried in the world; and, inſtead of ſetting their affections on things above, purſuing, with the full bent of their deſires, the things below. *Ye are, dead*,—it follows,—*your life is hid with Chriſt in God:—Your life,* that is, your ſpiritual life of grace, and your eternal life of glory, they are both hid with Chriſt, now with God in heaven. Hid in Chriſt, (1.) As the effect is in the cauſe, as the life of the branches is hid in the root, ſo is the life of a Chriſtian hid in Chriſt; he is our root. Again, *hid in Chriſt,* that is, (2.) Depoſited and laid up with Chriſt, committed to his care and cuſtody, ſecurely put into his hands. (3.) *Hid with Chriſt,* that is, diſpenſed by him, and derived from him at his pleaſure; of his fulneſs we receive, when and in what meaſure he pleaſeth. *Note* here, 1. Our life of grace only deſerves the name of life; our natural life, ſhort and uncertain in itſelf, and common to us with the brutes, deſerves not comparatively, the name of life. 2. That Chriſt is the believer's life, he is both the author and efficient cauſe of it, the meritorious cauſe of it, and the exemplary cauſe and pattern of it. 3. That the Chriſtian's life is *hid with Chriſt.* The phraſe imports, (1.) Security and ſafety; what is hidden in Chriſt, and with him, muſt be ſafe, and out of the reach of danger; grace is incorruptible ſeed, that ſhall never die: The world, Satan, and ſin, may aſſault, but ſhall not overcome; neither luſt within, nor the devil, nor the world, ſhall be able to vanquiſh that life which is hid in Chriſt. (2.) It imports obſcurity; what is hidden, is concealed: The life of grace is totally hidden from the wicked, and hid, in ſome ſort, from the believer himſelf, under ſpiritual deſertion, under the winnowings of temptation, under the prevalency of corruption; much more is the life of glory hidden, it doth not yet appear; we can no more conceive of it by all we have heard, than we can conceive what the ſun is by ſeeing of a glow-worm. (3.) Our life being *hid with Chriſt,* it imports plenty and abundance: *I am come, that ye may have life more abundantly,* John x. 10.

4 When Chriſt *who is* our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.

That is, "When Chriſt, who is the author, and purchaſer, and preſerver of our life, ſhall appear to judge the world at the great day, then ſhall all believers, who have received ſpiritual life from him, be ſharers in glory with him." Here *note,* 1. That Jeſus Chriſt, by whom believers live a life of grace, and from whom they expect a life of glory, ſhall certainly appear, yea, and have a very glorious appearing; he ſhall be glorious in his perſon, glorious in his attendants, glorious in his authority, &c. 2. That when Chriſt appears in glory to judge the world, then it is that all believers ſhall enjoy a full glorification with him. 3. That the faith of approaching glory, at Chriſt's ſecond appearance, is a ſtrong argument to take off our *affections from things below, and place them on things above.* St. Paul's argument is, to preſs the Coloſſians to *ſet their affections on things above,* becauſe Chriſt is above, and, when he appears, they ſhall *appear with him in glory.*

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry:

Note here, 1. That although the apoſtle told them in the third verſe, that they were dead to ſin, yet here, in the fifth verſe, he bids them mortify ſin; intimating, that the work of mortification, at the beſt, is but imperfect, and muſt be carried on daily and progreſſively; they were mortified but in part; the old man has a ſtrong heart, and is a long time a-dying, after it has received its deadly wound: Sin lives a dying life, and dies a lingering death; *Mortify therefore,* &c. 2. What it is they are called upon to mortify, *their members upon earth;* where, by *members,* we are to underſtand all the luſts and corruptions of our hearts and natures, all the relics and remains of ſin unſubdued and unpurged out of the ſoul; he inſtances in *fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affections and deſires, and covetouſneſs,* which loveth the world above God, and is therefore no better than idolatry. But why are theſe called members, and members upon earth? *Anſ.* They are called members, in alluſion to what St. Paul had called ſin before, chap. ii. ver. 11. namely, *a body of ſin;* therefore he calls particular luſts members of that body; and alſo becauſe they require and call for the members of the body, as inſtruments to bring them into act; likewiſe, becauſe theſe luſts are naturally as dear to men as their bodily members, they can as ſoon part with a right hand or a right eye, as with a boſom and beloved luſt; they are alſo called members upon the earth, becauſe they are converſant about earthly things, becauſe they will cleave to us as long as we live upon earth; and to intimate, that none of theſe muſt be carried to heaven with us, but be mortified on the earth. But what is it to mortify theſe members? *Anſ.* To mortify ſin, is to deny our conſent to the ſolicitations of ſin, to ſuppreſs the firſt motions of ſin, to enervate the power and activity of ſin. *Learn* hence, 1. That, in the holieſt and beſt of God's children and ſervants, there are relics and remains of ſin, to be daily mortified, and gradually ſubdued. 2. That after God has brought a perſon into a ſtate of grace, it is his duty, and ought to be his endeavour, daily to mortify ſin, and all the remains of unſubdued corruption. A *caution,* Take heed of concluding ſin is mortified, becauſe it is reſtrained, becauſe the acts of ſin are intermitted, becauſe ſome particular ſins are ſubdued: Is all ſin hated of thee, loathed and left by thee? It is more to loathe a ſin, than it is to leave a ſin; ſin may be left, and yet be loved; but no man can loathe a ſin, and love it at the ſame time. 3. That covetouſneſs is a ſin, which, above others, a Chriſtian ſhould ſet himſelf againſt, and endeavour to mortify and ſubdue, it having a ſort of idolatry in it, drawing our love, our truſt, our fear, our joy, from God, and placing the ſupremacy of our affections in and upon the creatures. True, the covetous man does not believe his money to be God; but by his inordinate loving of it, and fiducial truſting in it, he is as truly guilty of idolatry, as if he bowed his knee unto it; for God more regards the internal acts of the mind, than he doth the external acts of the body. In like manner, the Papiſts do not believe their ſaints and angels to be gods; but by praying to them, and truſting in them for relief and help, they give them the inward worſhip of the ſoul, and conſequently they are as guilty of idolatry, as if they did believe them to be God.

6 For which things ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience. 7 In the which ye alſo walked ſome time, when ye lived in them.

Here our apoſtle backs his exhortation to mortify ſin, with ſtrong arguments and motives; the firſt is taken from the wrath of God, which, in its diſmal effects, falls upon thoſe who continue in, and under the power of thoſe ſins: *For which things ſake*, that is, for the committing of which things, and for continuing impenitent after the commiſſion of them, *the wrath of God cometh upon them.* Here *note*, 1. God's wrath is the due deſert of man's ſin; yet it is not ſo much ſin, as obduration and impenitency in ſin, that draws down wrath. 2. That believers themſelves do ſtand in need of arguments drawn from the wrath of God, to make them afraid of ſin, and to excite them to mortify and ſubdue it; for here the apoſtle propounded the terrors of divine wrath to theſe believing Coloſſians. The ſecond argument is taken from their former continuance, yea, long continuance in theſe ſins; *in which ye alſo walked ſome time, when ye lived in them*; that is, in the forementioned ſins ye yourſelves alſo walked before your converſion, *when ye lived in them*, and took delight in the practice of them. *Learn* hence, That no argument will prevail more with a Chriſtian to follow on the work of mortification cloſely for time to come, than the remembrance of his long continuance in ſin in time paſt; *in which ſins ye walked ſome time*, &c.

8 But now ye alſo put off all theſe; anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

In the foregoing verſes, St. Paul exhorted the Coloſſians to mortify external and outward ſins, as fornication and uncleanneſs; here he preſſes them to mortify internal and ſpiritual ſins, ſuch as anger, wrath, and malice, ſins of the heart. The axe of mortification muſt be laid to the root of inward corruption, ſpiritual ſins, heart ſins: Though they are *minoris infamiæ*, of leſs infamy and reproach before men, yet they are *majoris reatus*, of greater guilt in the ſight of God; therefore a ſincere Chriſtian has a ſpecial reſpect to theſe in the work of mortification; put off all theſe, *anger, wrath, malice: Anger*, or the ſudden motions and riſing of paſſion: *Wrath* is anger advanced to an height; and *malice* is anger accompanied with deſire of revenge, a rooted diſpleaſure: As jealouſy is the rage of a man, ſo malice is the rage of the devil; it is the very ſoul and ſpirit of the apoſtate nature. No ſin renders a man ſo like to Satan as wrath and malice. A malicious deſire of revenge is ſo far beneath a Chriſtian, that it is the baſeneſs of man, yea, the ſpawn of a devil. This ſin indulged, deſtroys the ſoul, as ſure as murder, yea, it is no leſs than murder in the account of God, 1 John iii. 15. *He that hateth his brother is a murderer. Obſerve* next, The apoſtle exhorts the Coloſſians to guard againſt the ſins of the heart. *Put off blaſphemy, filthy communication, and lying*; that is, evil ſpeaking, filthy ſpeaking, and falſe ſpeaking. Sins of the tongue are to be guarded and watched againſt, as well as ſins of the heart; they are moſt ſcandalous, they diſhonour God, and diſcredit religion, and wrong our own ſouls. The ſins of the tongue are little conſidered, their great guilt not apprehended, but men muſt account for their open reproaches, ſecret backbitings, ſcoffings, deriſions, whereby they endeavour to fix an ignominy upon their neighbour: And particularly, the ſin of lying is here cautioned againſt, *Lie not one to another.* All lying is here condemned; the officious lie, tending to our own or our neighbour's profit; the pernicious lie, tending to our neighbour's prejudice; the jocular and jocoſe lie, tending to recreation and ſport. The ſcripture condemneth all, without reſtriction, Rev. xxi. 8. *All liars ſhall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone*, Rev. xxii. 15. *Whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie.* Lying makes a man like the devil, who was a liar as well as a murderer from the beginning. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The argument to enforce the exhortation to mortify all ſin, the ſins of the heart, the ſins of the tongue, the ſins of the life, and that is drawn from the conſideration of their preſent ſtate; they had in their baptiſm made a profeſſion to *put off the old man with his deeds*, that is, their own ſinful nature, and *put on the new man* in baptiſm, which being renewed by illumination and divine knowledge, and ſo conformed to the image of God, rendered them now the objects of his ſpecial love. *Note* here, That there were many ceremonies in baptiſm uſed in the primitive church, to which St. Paul alludes in ſeveral places in his epiſtles; as drenching in water, ſo as to ſeem buried in and under it, Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptiſm:* Likewiſe putting off their old clothes at going in, and putting on new at their coming out of the water, to which St. Paul alludes here, when he tells them they had, namely, in their baptiſm, put off the old man, and put on the new. Whence *learn*, That there is no argument more moving and effectually exciting unto holineſs of life, than that which is taken from our baptiſmal vow and profeſſion; the obligation of this is very ſtrong, if duly conſidered. The apoſtle makes uſe of it here as a potent argument, to quicken them to the mortification of all ſin, ſeeing they had in baptiſm *put off the old man*, that is, profeſſed and ſolemnly engaged ſo to do, and *had put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs*, &c.

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, barbarian, Scythian, bond, *nor* free: But Chriſt *is* all, and in all.

Where, that is, in which ſtate of renovation, or under the preſent goſpel-diſpenſation, there is found with God no reſpect to any man's perſon or nation, as before there was under the legal diſpenſation; now Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, circumciſed and uncircumciſed, every one that *feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of God, through Chriſt, who is all, in all things, to all believers:* But how is Chriſt all in all unto his people? Thus, his teaching is all in all in the work of illumination, his Spirit is all in all in the work of converſion,

verſion, his death is all in all in the work of ſatisfaction, his righteouſneſs is all in all in the matter of our juſtification, his grace is all in all in our ſatisfaction, his interceſſion is all in all in our acceptation, his peace is all in all in our conſolation, his power is all in all in our reſurrection, his preſence is all in all in our glorification. O bleſſed Jeſus! art thou thus all to me? I will labour to be all to thee; I will give thee all that I am, my ſoul with all its faculties, my underſtanding, my heart, and my affections, particularly my love and my hatred, my joy and my ſorrow, my hope and my fear, my body with all its members: For thou haſt created, redeemed, and wilt glorify the body as well as the ſoul; and therefore I will glorify thee with my body and with my ſpirit, which is thine; I will alſo give thee all that I have, by conſecrating it all to the ſervice of Chriſt, and reſigning up all to the will of Chriſt, and will intitle thee to all that I do, by making thy word my rule, and thy glory my end, in all my actions and undertakings.

12 Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo *do* ye.

Our apoſtle having now finiſhed his exhortation to the practice of that great duty of mortification of ſin, called here, a *putting off the old man*, comes next to mention ſeveral graces and virtues, which he exhorts them to be found in the practice of; and this he ſtyles, a *putting on the new man*; teaching us hereby, that a negative holineſs is not ſufficient to ſalvation; it is not enough that we ceaſe to do evil, but we muſt learn to do well; a man may go to hell for not doing good, as well as for doing wickedly. Farther, The particular graces and virtues which they are exhorted to put on. (1.) *Bowels of mercy and kindneſs*, that is, a tender pity towards, and an inward ſympathy with, thoſe that are in miſery; and this expreſſed in outward acts of ſuccour and relief, according to our ability. There is a natural pity which man can hardly put off, it is ſeated in the very nature of man; and accordingly, unmercifulneſs is a ſin againſt the light of nature, as well as againſt the law of God: But there is, beſides this, a ſpiritual pity, which flows from pure love, and that a divine love; now, this is more an act of grace than of nature; this the apoſtle here exhorts the Coloſſians to, *Put on bowels of mercy*, they who have put on, and are clothed with, garments of holineſs, will alſo put on bowels of mercy as a garment. (2.) *Humbleneſs of mind*, whereby a man, ſenſible of God's goodneſs, and his own infirmities, hath an humble apprehenſion, and a modeſt eſtimation of himſelf: The more holineſs any perſon has, the more humility he has; humility is a certain evidence of our holineſs, becauſe it is a great part of our holineſs (3.) *Meekneſs and long-ſuffering*, which moderate anger, and enable us to put up affronts and injuries. This is a ſpirit and temper divine, and truly Chriſt-like; none ſo abuſed and affronted as he; but being reviled, he bleſſed, and committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly. When another hurts thee by unjuſt provocation, why ſhouldeſt thou hurt thyſelf by ſinful paſſion? Chriſt was a Lamb for meekneſs; it doth not become any of his followers to be like lions for fierceneſs. (4.) Forbearance, and mutual forgiveneſs: *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* No Chriſtians are ſo perfect, but they are liable to offend one another; he muſt have no friends, that will have a friend with no faults, and conſequently they ſtand in need of forgiveneſs from each other. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſtians are obliged, by the laws of their holy religion, to forbear and forgive one another. 2. They are obliged to imitate Chriſt in this duty of forgiveneſs: Chriſt forgives us univerſally, freely, ſincerely, ſo as never more to upbraid us with the fault he has forgiven us; ſuch a forgiveneſs are we to exerciſe towards our brother. *As Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* Laſtly, The argument which St. Paul makes uſe of to preſs the Coloſſians to the practice of the forementioned duties, and that is drawn from their election and vocation: *Put on as the elect of God, bowels of mercy.* You that had the favour to be choſen of God out of the heathen world, to be his church and people, and are now *holy* and *beloved* of God, let the ſenſe of this divine favour oblige you to humility and meekneſs, to long-ſuffering and mutual forgiveneſs, yea, to the love and practice of univerſal holineſs. *If any man have a quarrel againſt any*, &c.

14 And above all theſe things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.

Still our apoſtle makes uſe of the former metaphor, comparing the graces of the holy Spirit to garments, which he exhorts Chriſtians to put on; he had mentioned the putting on of mercy, meekneſs, humility, &c. before, now he adviſes, to *put on* charity, or the grace of love, as the upper garment over and above all the reſt, comparing it to a bond or ligament, which ties and knits all the members of the church together. *Queſt.* But what is this grace of charity? *Anſ.* It is a brotherly affection, which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt for grace ſake; or a gracious propenſity of heart towards our neighbour, whereby we will, and do, to our power procure all good for him. *Queſt.* But why does St. Paul compare charity to an upper garment? *Above all, put on charity.* Becauſe, (1.) The upper garment is larger and broader than the reſt, ſo ought charity to extend itſelf to all perſons, and upon all occaſions. (2.) The upper garment is uſually fairer than the reſt, ſo doth charity ſhine brighteſt amongſt all the graces. (3.) The upper garment diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral orders and degrees of men; thus Chriſtians are known by love as by a livery, it is the bond that Chriſt's ſincere diſciples wear. *Queſt.* But how is charity *the bond of perfectneſs?* The meaning is, that it is the moſt perfect bond of union among Chriſtians, it knitteth together all the ſcattered members of the church, and makes their graces and gifts ſubſervient to the good of one another, ſo that the church is hereby made a complete intire body, which was lame without it: In this ſenſe, charity is called *the bond of perfectneſs.*

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,

to the which ye alſo are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, “ Let that peace which God has given you within, and calleth you to exerciſe without, govern your lives, and direct you in all your actions towards men, and live in continual thankfulneſs to God.” Here *note*, That the original word to *rule* in the heart, ſignifies to umpire, or to act the part of an umpire, in appeaſing ſtrife. Now, this peace, (1.) Inwardly huſhes and ſtills all in the ſoul, when tumultuous affections are up, and in an hurry; when anger, hatred, and revenge begin to ariſe in the ſoul, this calms and compoſes all. (2.) Outwardly, peace of conſcience produces peaceableneſs of converſation; where the peace of God rules in the heart, it diſpoſes to peaceableneſs in the life. Now, this conſiſts in theſe things, namely, in an unwillingneſs to provoke others, in an unaptneſs to be provoked by others, in a readineſs to be reconciled when provoked, and in a forwardneſs to reconcile others that are at variance.

16 Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom;—

Theſe words come in by way of direction and advice, to help the Coloſſians in the exerciſe of the foregoing graces; ſeeing it is the word of Chriſt, or the holy ſcriptures, which teach the forementioned duties, he adviſes that the word of God may dwell in, and take up its abode with them, richly and plentifully, that they may be furniſhed thereby with all true and ſound wiſdom. *Note* here, 1. The title given to the holy ſcriptures, they are *the word of Chriſt*, becauſe they have Chriſt for their author, Chriſt for their object, and Chriſt for their end. 2. The advice given with reſpect to the word of Chriſt, *Let it dwell:* Not come for an hour, but to tarry; not to tarry for a night, but to take up its fixed reſidence and abode. 3. Where it ſhould dwell, not in the ear, nor in the head only, not in the memory barely, nor in the affections, but in the heart and ſoul, Pſal. cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee. The law of God is in his heart, none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide*, Pſal. xxxvii. 31. 4. How the word ſhould dwell in us, richly, copiouſly, and plentifully, in its commands, in its promiſes, in its threatenings; let the word, the whole word, *dwell in you*, being diligently ſearched, heartily received, and carefully obſerved. 5. The perſons to whom this advice is given by the apoſtle, all the ſaints at Coloſſe, the whole body of the people are injoined an holy familiarity with the Bible, it is to be in their houſes, in their hands, and in their hearts, that it may dwell richly in them. Why then, and with what face dare the church of Rome forbid the common people to read the Bible, calling it an heretical book? For a reaſon they very well know, namely, Becauſe it is the moſt dangerous book againſt Popery, that ever was written in the world.

—Teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms and hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Here our apoſtle declares one ſpecial benefit which the Coloſſians would receive, by having *the word of Chriſt dwell richly in them*; it would enable them to teach and admoniſh one another, and alſo to excite and ſtir up the affections of each other, by ſinging thoſe *pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs* therein contained, or ſuch others as were compoſed by the inſpiration and direction of the holy Spirit of God; always remembering, not to ſing gracefully only, but with grace; that is, with attention and devotion in our hearts to the Lord. *Learn* hence, That ſinging pſalms, both in public aſſemblies, and private families, and therein praiſing and bleſſing of God for mercies received, is a great and neceſſary duty, to be jointly performed by all perſons capable of it. 2. That in ſinging, a ſpecial regard muſt be had, that there be an inward harmony, and gracious melody in the ſoul, by the exerciſe of the underſtanding, and the orderly motion of the affections; if the heart and affections be not ſtirred up in this duty, the outward grace, though never ſo graceful, availeth nothing.

17 And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Here our apoſtle lays down a general rule for the right management of all our words and actions, in the whole courſe of life; *Whatſoever ye do, do all in the name of our Lord Jeſus*, giving thanks to God for all the mercies you receive by Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, 1. That all our thoughts, words and actions, muſt and ought to be done in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to do all by the authority and command of Chriſt, to do all in the power and ſtrength of Chriſt, to do all for the honour and glory of Chriſt, to do all after the pattern and example of Chriſt. 2. That all prayers and thankſgivings, as they are only due to God, ſo they muſt be performed by us through Jeſus Chriſt, that ſo they may find acceptance with God: *Giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

18 Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. Paul, in the former part of this chapter, having laid down general exhortations, to live ſuitably to the goſpel which the Coloſſians had received, comes now, in the cloſe of the chapter to exhort them to the practice of particular duties in their reſpective places and relations, as huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of the goſpel lays the higheſt and ſtricteſt obligations upon all thoſe to whom it is revealed, to perform every perſonal and relative duty in an holy and acceptable manner, both to God and man. 2. The wives duty of ſubjection here required: *Submit yourſelves to your own huſbands.* This implies and comprehends in it, a reverend eſteem of them, an affectionate love unto them, ſpeaking reſpectfully of them, and to them, and yielding obedience to their commands. *Obſerve* alſo, The qualification and manner of this ſubjection, *as it is fit in the Lord*, that is, in all lawful things, and in obedience to the Lord's commands, and not in any thing contrary to his will. Thus obeying, the woman's ſubjection is ſervice done to Chriſt; which may comfort her, in caſe of any unkind returns from her huſband to her.

19 Huſbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter againſt them.

Note, 1. The general duty of the huſband declared, to love his wife with a ſpecial, peculiar, conjugal affection, and to diſcover this love by a tender care over her, an affectionate regard to her, cohabitation with her, contentment and ſatisfaction in her, a patient bearing with her weakneſſes, or prudential hiding of her infirmities, a cheerful ſupplying of her wants, a readineſs to inſtruct and direct her, a willingneſs to pray for her, and with her; where true love is found theſe duties will be performed. 2. A particular ſin, which all huſbands are to avoid in their converſation with their wives, and that is being *bitter againſt them*; not bitter in affection towards them, that is, cold and indifferent in their love to them; not bitter in expreſſion towards them, ſpeaking reproachfully to them; not bitter in their actions towards them, giving them bitter blows, which is contrary to the law of God and nature. *Learn* hence, That it is the will and command of God, that huſbands ſhould not behave themſelves, churliſhly, ſourly, or imperiouſly towards their wives; nor ruling with rigour, or being moroſe and rough, ſtern and ſevere in their carriage towards them, but to treat them with that endearing familiarity that is due to them, as part of ourſelves.

20 Children, obey *your* parents in all things: For this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord.

Note here, The duty bound upon all children, and that is, obedience to their parents; this implies inward reverence, outward obſervance, a pious regard to their inſtructions, a following their good examples. 2. The object of this duty, *Obey your parents*, that is, both parents; as obedience is due from all children, ſo it is payable to all parents, to mothers as well as fathers; nay, Levit. xix. 3. the mother is named firſt, becauſe in regard of the weakneſs of her ſex, ſhe is moſt liable to contempt. 3. The extent of the duty, *in all things*, that is, in all lawful things, and in all indifferent things, in every thing that is not ſinful; though to the child it may ſeem unneceſſary or unreaſonable, yet the parents' command is to be obeyed. 4. The argument and motive to excite and quicken to this duty, *It is well-pleaſing unto the Lord*; hereby they do acceptable ſervice unto the Lord, who will reward it with long life on earth, and eternal life in heaven. God takes a mighty pleaſure in the performance of relative duties; they are not only pleaſing, but well-pleaſing to him; we are no more really, than what we are relatively in the account of God; that which we call the power of godlineſs, conſiſts in a conſcientious performance of relative duties.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, leſt they be diſcouraged.

Here the parents' duty, that is the duty of both parents, is laid down, *provoke not your children to wrath*, that is, abuſe not your power and authority over them, by being too ſevere unto them; imbitter not their ſpirits againſt you, by denying them what is convenient for them, by inveighing with bitter words againſt them, by unjuſt, unſeaſonable, or immoderate correction of them; give them no juſt occaſion to be angry. The reaſon is added, *leſt they be diſcouraged*; either diſpirited or heartleſs, or deſperate and hardened; leſt by dejection of ſpirit, they become ſtupid. A parent's conduct muſt be moderated with prudence, ſhunning the extremes of too much indulgence on the one hand, and too great rigour and ſeverity on the other.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* maſters according to the fleſh; not with eye-ſervice, as menpleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatſoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance. For ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.

Note here, 1. The general duty incumbent upon all ſervants, and that is obedience to ſuch as are their maſters according to the fleſh, to execute all their lawful commands; ſuch as are God's freemen, may be ſervants to men, though not the ſervants of men. 2. The qualifications and properties of this obedience which is due and payable from ſervants to maſters, it muſt be in *ſingleneſs of heart*, in great ſimplicity and ſincerity of ſpirit, and with an eye to their great Maſter in heaven; with an eye to the command of their great Maſter, with an eye to the preſence of their great Maſter, to the aſſiſtance and acceptance of their great Maſter, and to the honour and glory of him alſo; and it muſt be done heartily, and with good will, as to the Lord, and not to men. *Learn* hence, That the meaneſt and baſeſt ſervices in the place and ſtation in which God ſets us, being done with right qualifications, and from ſincere motives, and for ſincere ends, is ſervice done to Chriſt, and, as ſuch, ſhall be accepted and rewarded by him. 3. The mighty reward which the Spirit of God propounds as an encouragement to poor ſervants in their obedience to their maſters, *Of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance*. No ſervice ſo mean but ſhall be rewarded, if conſcientiouſly performed; no diſtinction in heaven between ſervants and ſons, all ſhall receive the inheritance there, who have done faithful ſervice here: and as the meaneſt ſervice done with right qualifications, is ſervice done to Chriſt, ſo ſhall it be accepted of him, and rewarded by him: *Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive*, &c.

25 But he that doeth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no reſpect of perſons.

That is, "Such ſervants as have wronged their maſters, or ſuch maſters as have oppreſſed their ſervants, God, who reſpects no man's perſon, nor regardeth the rich no more than the poor, will take his time to revenge the injuries and wrong, done by either to each other." *Note* here, The ſeverity and impartiality of divine juſtice; God, the righteous judge, will revenge the wrong, every wrong, whenſoever, and by whomſoever it is done; he will revenge it impartially, he will revenge it proportionably; a juſt retribution, according to the wrong done, ſhall be rendered to every one by the righteous and juſt God: *He that hath done wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no reſpect of perſons.*

CHAP. IV.

MASTERS, give unto *your* ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.

Our apoſtle concluded the foregoing chapter with an exhortation to ſervants, to diſcharge their duty with all fidelity to their maſters, remembering, that whatever wrong is done by them, ſhall, ſooner or later, be revenged by God; he begins this chapter with advice to maſters, to give unto their ſervants, *that which is juſt and equal*; that which is *juſt*, or that which is according to compact and agreement, either explicitly or implicitly made; as work, wages, food, clothing, and all fitting accommodations; alſo that which is *equal* in reaſon and charity, as to oblige them to ſerve God faithfully, to ſerve their maſters cheerfully, not exerciſing a magiſterial, much leſs a tyrannical power over them; and the argument to enforce it is ſtrong, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven*; remembering they have one above them, from whom they muſt expect the like. *Learn*, That juſtice is to be obſerved towards poor ſervants, and that there are ſeveral offices of humanity and charity which are due unto them by the command of God: Such are theſe, (1.) That we look upon them not barely as ſervants, but as brethren, partakers of the ſame common nature, and capable of the ſame grace with ourſelves, conſequently not to treat them as vile perſons. (2.) That we wink at ſome of their miſcarriages which are not apparently ſinful, and do not puniſh every tranſgreſſion committed by them: He muſt keep no ſervant that will have a ſervant with no faults. (3.) That we do not rule with rigour, without giving ſome reaſon for what commands ſeem hard and difficult, and that we permit them to plead their cauſe, and to defend their right, provided they do it with humility, not contradicting, or refuſing to execute the command of their maſter. (4.) That to well deſerving ſervants we give ſomething above their wages, allowing them all fitting encouragement whilſt they are with us; and when they go away, not ſuffering them to go empty from us. Thus doing, maſters will *give unto their ſervants that which is juſt and equal:* But how ordinary is it for them that are a little above others, to forget there is one above them?

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving.

Note here, 1. The duty exhorted to, and that is prayer; a tranſcendent privilege, as well as an important duty. 2. The manner of the duty, and how it muſt be performed, with conſtancy and perſeverance. (1.) *Continue in prayer*; that is, continue inſtant in prayer; not that every other duty is to be neglected, that we may always perform this, but we are always to keep our heart in a praying frame, and be found in the practice of the duty at all fitting ſeaſons; we are then ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably; what a man does out of conſcience, he will do with perſeverance. Nature will have her good moods, but grace is ſteady. (2.) Watchfulneſs in prayer is here directed to, *Watch in the ſame*: particularly we ought to watch for the duty, in the duty, and after the duty: to watch for the fitteſt praying ſeaſon, to watch our hearts in the ſeaſon of prayer, that our thoughts do not wander, nor our affections flag; to watch after the duty, that our hearts be not lifted up by any aſſiſtance received in the duty; nor be too much dejected, upon the ſcore of thoſe infirmities that mingle themſelves with our prayers; but direct the eye of our faith to Chriſt as our interceſſor, who pleads for the gracious acceptance both of our perſons and ſervices, notwithſtanding the imperfections of them both. Laſtly, What muſt always accompany prayer for mercies we want, namely, Thankſgiving for mercies received: *Watch in the ſame with thankſgiving*. There is no ſuch effectual way of begging, as thankſgiving; God is offended, when we are loud and clamorous in aſking favours, but dumb and tongue-tied in returning thanks: Need will make us beggars, but grace only thankſgivers.

3 Withal, praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt, for which I am alſo in bonds:
4 That I may make it manifeſt as I ought to ſpeak:

Our apoſtle having directed the Coloſſians to the duty of prayer in general, here he requeſts an intereſt in their prayers for himſelf, and all the miniſters of Chriſt in particular. Whence *note*, 1. That the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt are, and ought in an eſpecial manner to be remembered in the ſaints prayers. 2. The mercies he deſires may be prayed for, on his behalf, namely, utterance and boldneſs: Miniſters depend upon God, as for other miniſterial gifts, ſo particularly for the gift of utterance, and it is their people's duty to be earneſt and inſtant with God for the ſame: And as for utterance in delivering their meſſage, ſo for boldneſs in ſuffering for it, when called to it. No prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts of the miniſters of Chriſt unto an holy boldneſs, who ſuffer perſecution for what they preach; therefore is St. Paul ſo earneſt here with the Coloſſians, as he was before with the Epheſians, chap. vi. 18. and with the Romans, chap. xv. 30. deſiring *them* to ſtrive together in their prayers for him: Where, by the way, *remark*, That the apoſtle thus paſſionately deſiring the living ſaints to pray for him, but never deſiring once the prayers and interceſſions of the ſaints departed, nor of the Virgin Mary, is an evidence that he approved not of their prayers, nor looked upon them as mediators and interceſſors with God then, as the church of Rome does now.

5 Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without,--

By *them without*, are meant the Heathen, who are yet without the pale of the viſible church, to *walk in wiſdom toward them*, is a duty of great latitude, but imports particularly here, an endeavour to the uttermoſt to promote their converſion and ſalvation, by begetting in them a due veneration for the goſpel, and a love and liking to the Chriſtian religion. *Learn* hence, That private Chriſtians, by walking wiſely before them that are yet unconverted effectually to Chriſtianity, may be exceedingly helpful to promote the entertainment of the goſpel amongſt them. They may pray, and pray in faith, for their converſion, and the further ſpreading of the goſpel, in order to that end. The ardent devotions and the holy converſations of private Chriſtians are excellent means to recommend the goſpel and the Chriſtian religion, and to repreſent them as moſt amiable and deſirable.

— Redeeming the time.

Having in the former part of the verſe, directed the Coloſſians to walk wiſely before the unconverted Gentiles that were among them, in this latter part of the verſe, he adviſes them to redeem every opportunity, for gaining over thoſe infidels to the Chriſtian religion. A Chriſtian that knows the worth of time, will redeem it, will improve it for the ſoul, for the benefit of his own ſoul, and for the advantage of others: How this is done, ſee the *note* on Eph. v. 16.

6 Let your ſpeech *be* always with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.

Direction is here given to all Chriſtians for the right government of the tongue, and well ordering of the ſpeech, that it be not corrupt and rotten, filthy or frothy, vain and unprofitable, but mild and courteous, ſavoury and gracious, wiſe and diſcreet. *Note* here, 1. That we are not left at random in our ordinary diſcourſe, to let our tongue run riot and talk what we pleaſe, without any regard to the edification of others. 2. That there ought to be both a a gracefulneſs and grace in our ſpeech, ſome ſavour of piety, ſomething that may teſtify there is grace wrought in ourſelves, and tends to the working of grace in others. 3. That our ſpeech may be thus ſavoury at all times, it muſt be *ſeaſoned with ſalt*. (1.) With the ſalt of truth: There muſt be an agreement betwixt the thing and our words, without falſhood; and an agreement betwixt our tongue and our hearts, without diſſimulation. (2.) With the ſalt of wiſdom and prudence; this will teach us the time when, the manner how, and the meaſure how much to ſpeak: thoſe words muſt needs be unſavoury, that have neither truth nor prudence in them. The people wondered of old at the gracious words which came out of Chriſt's mouth; and we may juſtly wonder at the graceleſs words which come out of the mouth of many that are called Chriſtians.

7 All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful miniſter and fellow-ſervant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Oneſimus a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They ſhall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

Note here, 1. That although St. Paul had now with him but a few friends at Rome to comfort him in his bonds, yet he ſpares two of them to viſit and comfort theſe Coloſſians. See the public ſpirit of our apoſtle, who preferred the common good of the church at Coloſſe, before his own comfort at Rome. 2. The perſons whom St. Paul ſent to them, Tychicus and Oneſimus, whom he ſtyles brethren, *faithful* brethren, *beloved* brethren: Nothing endears perſons ſo much to one another, as religion and the grace of God. Theſe ties are ſtronger than thoſe of nature: No ſuch love as likeneſs occaſions, eſpecially likeneſs to God. 3. The deſign and end of St. Paul's ſending theſe two perſons to them, namely, (1.) *To make known unto them all things done at Rome*: All things, without exception, both in doings and ſufferings, both in public and private, the apoſtle was aſhamed of neither. Happy it is, when the converſation of Chriſt's miniſters is ſuch, both in public and private, that they need not be aſhamed to have it known, or that the church may underſtand it. (2.) That he might comfort their hearts: But how could Tychicus and Oneſimus do this? 1. By making known to them the true cauſe of his ſufferings, that it was for the goſpel's ſake. 2. To keep them from diſcouragement at the report of his ſufferings, that they might not be offended at his chain, nor ſink under the burden of immoderate ſorrow upon his account. 3. To comfort their hearts with the report of that holy joy and cheerfulneſs which the apoſtle had in his own ſpirit, under the preſent burden of his ſufferings. See the *note* on Eph. vi. 22.

10 Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and Marcus, ſiſter's ſon to Barnabus, (touching whom ye received commandments. If he come unto you, receive him.) 11 And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion. Theſe only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Our apoſtle coming now to the concluſion of his excellent letter, ſendeth (as his manner was) particular ſalutations to thoſe he wrote to. Theſe ſalutations were both from others and himſelf. Here we have three of St. Paul's companions ſending ſalutations to the church at Coloſſe, namely, Ariſtarchus, a fellow-priſoner, Mark, ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas, who, though he did deſert St. Paul and Barnabas, and went not with them to the work, yet returning to his duty, he is recommended to the church's reception; and Jeſus, who was called Juſtus, poſſibly from his juſt converſation. Jeſus is the ſame with Joſhua, ſignifying a Saviour: However, we do not find that any Chriſtians, ſince their Lord's reſurrection, did ever give their children the name of Jeſus, out of a due reverence to their Lord and Maſter, who is God-man, bleſſed for evermore. Now we *learn*, That neither diſtance of place, nor length of time, ought to cool that love and good-will, that hearty and ſincere affection, which Chriſtians ſhould bear to one another. *Note* farther, That, as in the large catalogue of ſalutations which St. Paul wrote to the ſaints at Rome, Rom. xvi. in which particular perſons are mentioned, St. Peter's name is not once named: So here, in this catalogue of ſalutations ſent from Rome, no mention is made of St. Peter's name neither; doubtleſs had he been now at Rome, he had ſent ſalutations as well as the reſt: here are ſalutations from Ariſtarchus, Mark, and others, none from Peter. Behold here the weak ground which the Pope builds his pretended ſupremacy and headſhip upon, namely, that he is St. Peter's ſucceſſor, who was biſhop of Rome; now, though it can never be proved that St. Peter exerciſed any ſupremacy over the reſt of the apoſtles, it can leſs be proved that ever he was biſhop of Rome; nor is there any word in ſcripture to prove that he ever was at Rome, but rather the contrary; it is certain he was not at Rome when St. Paul wrote this epiſtle, there being only theſe, he ſays, whom he mentions, who are his fellow-labourers unto the king- of God.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a ſervant of Chriſt ſaluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Our apoſtle next mentions the particular ſalutation ſent from Rome to the church at Coloſſe by Epaphras, who is deſcribed from his own country; he is *one of you*, that is, a citizen of Coloſſe; by his office, *a ſervant of Chriſt*, that is a miniſter of the goſpel; by his fervour of affection towards theſe Coloſſians, evidenced by his prayers for them, *he labours fervently for you in his prayers.* The word ſignifies to ſtrive as in an agony, pointing out our miniſterial duty to us, not only to preach unto, and to pray with, but fervently to pray for our people. God forgive our forgetfulneſs of, our backwardneſs to, our remiſſneſs in this part of our duty. Too ſeldom do we bear our people upon our hearts, when we go in and out before the Lord: Oh! how far are we from praying ourſelves into an agony for them, when our petitions freeze within our lips, which we put up for our own ſouls! One thing might here be noted further concerning Epaphras, he was miniſter of (ſome think biſhop of) Coloſſe; yet was he born there, he is *one* of you, that is, of your city. Now, Chriſt tells us, a miniſter is in hazard to meet with diſreſpect in his own country, he is uſually of no honour there: However, Epaphras being called to the work of God in the place where he was born, embraces it, and God gives him reputation with the people for his faithfulneſs in his place. Laſtly, What was the ſubject-matter of Epaphras's prayer for his people at Coloſſe, namely, *That they might ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God:* it is the deſire and prayer, the care and endeavour of every faithful miniſter of Chriſt, that his people may ſtand faſt in their obedience, in univerſal obedience, in perfect and complete obedience to the will, the whole will of God, in all things; yet one thing more is obſervable in Epaphras, he had not only a great zeal for his own people at Coloſſe, but for them at Laodicea and Hierapolis, which were neighbouring churches. *Learn* thence, That the miniſters of Chriſt are to look upon themſelves as miniſters of the whole church; and although they take care of a particular congregation, yet it is their duty to deſire and endeavour, that all Chriſtians within the reach of their miniſterial labours, may find ſome ſpecial benefit and advantage by them. Epaphras had a fervent zeal for the churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis, as well as at Coloſſe, and it was his commendation that he had ſo.

14 Luke the beloved phyſician, and Demas, greet you.

Still the apoſtle is ſending ſalutations from Rome to the Coloſſians. 1. From St. Luke, who, of a phyſician for the body, becomes a phyſician for the ſoul, as Matthew of a publican, became a preacher. Luke well deſerved the title here given him of *beloved*, in that he undertook the miniſtry at a time when civil authority did allow no maintenance for miniſters, and when his employment as a phyſician would probably have advantaged him much more. *Luke the beloved phyſician, greets you.* 2. Demas alſo, who when perſecution grew hot, his affections grew cold; yet now he ſends ſalutations with the reſt to the church at Coloſſe. St. Paul complains of his forſaking of him, 2 Tim. iv. 10. for the ſake of this preſent world: Let no profeſſor judge of himſelf by his external profeſſion, by his performance of outward duties, by his aſſociating himſelf with the people of God, nay, by his ſufferings with the ſervants of God, (Demas did all this) but by their ſincere love to Chriſt, and perſevering faithfulneſs in the trying hour of temptation; we know not what we are, till ſufferings appear.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his houſe.

Our apoſtle had ſent the ſalutations of others to them before, he ſends his own now. 1. Generally to all the Chriſtian brethren which were in Laodicea, to whom he directs this epiſtle to be read in the next verſe. Now, to prepare them to hear it with greater attention, he ſends ſalutations particularly to them, *Salute the brethren in Laodicea.* No particular people muſt deſire or expect to monopolize and engroſs the whole of a miniſter's affections to themſelves; but as he is the miniſter of the catholic church, ſo it is both his duty and deſire, that all particular churches, yea, individual Chriſtians, ſhould ſhare in his affectionate love towards them, in his care and concern for them. He ſalutes Nymphas in particular, a perſon perhaps very eminent for piety and charity, as may be gathered from the following words, *And the church which is in his houſe.* By which, 1. Underſtand his family and houſhold, who were ſo piouſly inſtructed, ſo religiouſly governed, ſo devoutly diſpoſed, as if they had been a church. *Learn* thence, That maſters of families ſhould train up their houſhold in religion and godlineſs, inſtructing, reproving, exhorting, all that are under their care, that their houſe may deſerve the name of a church: *The church which is in his houſe.* 2. Some, by *the church in his houſe*, underſtand a material houſe, or ſome particular room in his houſe, which he had given to a certain number of Chriſtians for a place of public worſhip. Although the church, in the apoſtle's times, had not the countenance of civil authority, to provide either places for worſhip, or maintenance for miniſters; yet ſuch fervour of zeal was found in the breaſts of Chriſtians, that then, ſuch as were of ability, wanted not for inclination to contribute largely and freely unto both; charity moved to give more then, than force of law can compel and conſtrain now; Nymphas gives his houſe to be a place of public worſhip to the church. *See the learned Mr. Mede on* 1 Cor. xi. 22.

16 And when this epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans;—

Here St. Paul directs to the reading of this epiſtle themſelves, which the Spirit of God had directed him to write unto them, *Let this epiſtle be read amongſt you.* All holy ſcripture is to be read and peruſed by every private Chriſtian; the ſame Spirit that did indite the ſcriptures, requires the reading and underſtanding of them. And further, St. Paul deſires this epiſtle, being read amongſt the Coloſſians, ſhould next be read *in the church of Laodicea*; who being their neighbours, received the ſame poiſon or errors from the falſe teachers, crept in amongſt them, and conſequently ſtood in need of the ſame antidote. That doctrine which is directed to ſome particular church or perſon, recorded in ſcripture, was of univerſal uſe then, and may be now, to all particular perſons and ſocieties.

—And that ye likewiſe read the epiſtle from Laodicea.

Much controverſy has riſen in the church about this epiſtle from Laodicea; ſome have affirmed that it was written by St. Paul to the Laodiceans, but loſt; from whence they would infer, that the canon of the ſcripture is not entire: But ſuppoſing it were ſo, yet it follows not but that we have all things neceſſary to ſalvation in the holy ſcriptures. It is very probable that St. Paul himſelf, and ſeveral other apoſtles, wrote more epiſtles than are in the Bible: What then? We have what the wiſdom of God thought fit to hand down to us, and what is ſufficient to make the ſerious reader of it wiſe unto ſalvation. Surely Almighty God was not bound to bring down all that they wrote to us, but only what his own wiſdom ſaw fit and neceſſary for us. Others underſtand it of an epiſtle from Laodicea to St. Paul, and that he anſwered it fully in this epiſtle to the Coloſſians, and ſending it back, deſired the Coloſſians might read it, for better clearing of ſome paſſages in his epiſtle to them. Laſtly, Some underſtand it of the epiſtle to the Epheſians, Epheſus being the metropolis, or the chief city of Laodicea; and accordingly, ſome called the epiſtle to the Epheſians, the epiſtle to the Laodiceans: The truth is, there is a very great affinity betwixt the epiſtle to the Epheſians, and this to the Coloſſians; the doctrines, exhortations, and many expreſſions are the very ſame; ſo that it is no wonder if he deſired they ſhould be both read at Coloſſe, to let them ſee that he wrote the ſame doctrine to other churches which he had done to them.

17 And ſay to Archippus, Take heed to the miniſtry, which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

This Archippus is, with good reaſon, ſuppoſed to be the miniſter at Coloſſe, in the room of Epaphras, now with St. Paul at Rome. Some think, that in the abſence of Epaphras, he was grown ſomewhat remiſs and ſlack in his miniſterial duty; he directs therefore the Coloſſians to admoniſh him to the exerciſe of greater diligence in diſcharging all the parts of his truſt committed by Chriſt unto him, *Say unto Archippus, Take heed,* &c. *Obſerve* here, A double charge, (1.) A charge of meſſage, *Say unto Archippus:* The Coloſſians muſt ſay it. St. Paul could have wrote a private letter to him; but they muſt excite him, yea, ſay to him to his face, not of him behind his back: It is the people's duty to ſtir up their miniſters to the faithful performance of their duty; the fire of our miniſterial zeal doth not burn ſo bright, but we may need our people's bellows to inflame it; but this muſt be done with prudence by the people, in a way of exhortation, not by the way of exprobration; ſo ſtir up your miniſter to his duty, that you forget not your own. 2. The charge of an office, *Take heed to the miniſtry which thou haſt received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* Here *note*, 1. A duty enjoined, to fulfil the miniſtry: But what is that? Negatively, not to ſecure the ſucceſs of our miniſtry, we may deliver our own ſouls, though our people's be not delivered; the nurſe is not charged with the life of the child, but with the care of the child; ſhe ſhall be paid whether it live or die: Nor is it abſolutely to perform every part of our miniſterial duty without the leaſt deficiency; no, we rejoice in the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have done our duty: Poſitively, to fulfil the miniſtry, is to perform all the parts of our duty with care and faithfulneſs, perſevere in diligence, particularly public preaching and private inſpection. A non-preaching miniſter is no miniſter, a breaſtleſs nurſe, a murderer of ſouls, a bell without a clapper, a cryer without a voice; yet doth not his work lye all in the pulpit, but the greateſt part out of it: He is ſtyled a watchman: For what? becauſe he is to watch one hour with his people in a week? No, ſurely, but becauſe he is to watch over them, and converſe with them all the week, upon occaſion. Is not the phyſician to viſit his patient, as well as to preſcribe his phyſic? Doth the huſbandman caſt his ſeed into the ground, and never come into his fields to ſee whether it comes up, or how it grows? Verily, our people are great gainers by our profitable converſe with them, and we ſhall be gainers by them too. We may gain more experimental knowledge by an afternoon's viſiting our people, than by a week's ſtudy. *Note*, 2. The means here directed to, for the fulfilling of the miniſtry, *Take heed to the miniſtry:* What doth that import? (1.) Take heed to thy ſtudy; miniſterial abilities are not rained down like manna upon us. The apoſtles did not ſtudy indeed, but one reaſon was, they had no time to ſtudy, they were itinerary preachers. (2.) Take heed to thy doctrine, that it be the true word of God, and delivered purely; not only in oppoſition to error, but in oppoſition to levity. (3.) *Take heed*, that is, to thy life and practice, that we may tread out the ſteps before our people, which they are to make towards heaven. *Note*, 3. The motive to ſtir us all up to the fulfilling our miniſterial truſt: (1.) We have received it: There is the importance of a ſpecial favour, and alſo the importance of a ſtrict account; what we have received, we muſt give an account for. (2.) We have received it of or from the Lord; this implies aſſiſtance, that God has called us to it, will aſſiſt us in it: *Lo, I am with you always unto the end of the world*; with you to aſſiſt, with you to ſucceed, with you to reward. Let Archippus then, and every one in the work of Chriſt, *take heed to the miniſtry* which he has received of the Lord, that he fulfil it.

18 The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. *Amen.*

Here our apoſtle cloſes his epiſtle with a general ſalutation under his own hand, intimating thereby, that he had wrote the whole with his own hands. He begs them to *remember his bonds*; that is, (1.) To ſympathize with him in his bonds. (2.) To pray for him in his bonds. (3.) To receive the word of God, which he had written to them in his *bonds*. (4.) To prepare for ſufferings themſelves, his bonds being but the forerunners of their bonds. Thus it is the people's duty to remember the pious miniſters in their bonds. He adds, *Grace be with you*, wiſhing them an abiding intereſt in the ſpecial favour of God, with a multiplied increaſe of all ſpiritual bleſſings flowing from thence; increaſe of all grace to enable them to glorify God on earth, and to prepare them for glory with God in heaven. *Amen.*

THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

This epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, *though placed laſt, yet is ſuppoſed to have been written firſt by St.* Paul *to this particular church; and not without probability, becauſe the goſpel was more early preached at* Theſſalonica, *than either at* Rome *or* Corinth, *as appears by the* Acts of the Apoſtles.

Theſſalonica *was the chief city in* Macedonia, *whither St.* Paul, *in a viſion, was directed to go and preach the goſpel; accordingly he went,* Acts xvi. *and* xvii. *and laid very early the foundation of a Chriſtian Church in this city, which conſiſting partly of* Jews, *and partly of* Gentiles, *they were ſeverely perſecuted by both. Now the apoſtle, hearing what hard things the* Theſſalonians *ſuffered, he writes this epiſtle to confirm them in the faith, and to prevent their being ſhaken by thoſe perſecutions.*

To encourage them to perſeverance in the faith, and patience under their preſent perſecutions, he firſt informs them, that it was nothing ſtrange that they ſhould thus ſuffer from thoſe Jews and Pagans, who had killed the Lord Jeſus, and their own prophets, and were contrary to all men; *and then puts them in mind of the tranſcendent reward laid up for them, and the ſevere puniſhments that were prepared for their perſecutors. And, laſtly, He animates and encourages them, by the example of his own conſtancy, to perſeverance in their holy profeſſion; and concludes his epiſtle to them, with particular exhortations to holineſs of life, and unblameableneſs in converſation.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL and Silvanus and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

St. Paul begins this epiſtle, as he does the reſt, with a very kind and gracious ſalutation; in which we have *obſervable*, the perſons ſaluting, the parties ſaluted, and the ſalutation itſelf. *Note*, 1. The perſons ſaluting, Paul, Silvanus and Timotheus: Paul only was the inſpired writer of the epiſtle, the other two were his aſſociates and aſſiſtants, inſtruments with him in converting the Theſſalonians to Chriſtianity, and whom they had a deſervedly great affection for; he joins them therefore with himſelf, as aſſerters and approvers of the truth contained in this his epiſtle, that ſo he might procure the greater reſpect to the doctrines it contained; he therefore names them with himſelf, Paul, Silvanus, or Silas, as he is called, Acts xvii. and Timotheus: But why not *Paul an apoſtle*, or *Paul a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*, as in other epiſtles, but bare Paul only? *Anſ.* Becauſe his apoſtleſhip was not at all queſtioned by them; the Theſſalonians had a ſeal of it in their hearts; and there were no falſe apoſtles among them that denied his apoſtleſhip, as the Galatians and other churches had. The prudent and faithful miniſters of Chriſt know, both how and when to uſe thoſe titles of honour and reſpect which God hath given them, and alſo when it is convenient to forbear the aſſuming of them. 2. The perſons ſaluted, *The church of the Theſſalonians:* Theſſalonica was the metropolis, or the mother-city of Macedonia, where a Chriſtian church was planted by the miniſtry of St. Paul and Silas, but with great oppoſition from the Jews, who forced Paul to fly to Berœa for his own ſafety, Acts xvii. and Jaſon, with others that entertained him, had like to have been ſacrificed in their own houſes; yet there, in deſpite of the devil's rage, and perſecutor's malice, doth God erect a glorious church, a Chriſtian church, in honour of his Son, who purchaſed it with his blood. *Learn* hence, That when and where God will gather to himſelf a church, no oppoſition, either of men or devils, ſhall be ſufficient to hinder it; as Rome itſelf, nay, in the court of Nero, under the very noſe of that bloody tyrant, was a church collected, Phil. iv. 22. No wonder the devil ſtruggles, when his kingdom totters; it follows, *which* (church) *is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, eſtabliſhed in the knowledge, faith, worſhip, and obedience of God the Father; they were Gentiles, called off from their dumb idols, to ſerve the living and true God, and were diſtinguiſhed from all other ſocieties and communions whatſoever; they were in *God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, they enjoyed a bleſſed union with Jeſus Chriſt by faith, and a ſweet communion and fellowſhip both with Father and Son, by the bond of the Spirit. Behold the high dignity and glorious privilege of the Chriſtian church, to be thus knit and united, both to the Father and the Son, by the agency of the Holy Spirit! *To the church of the Theſſalonians, which is in God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* *Note*, 3. The ſalutation itſelf, *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *obſerve*, 1. The option of bleſſings wiſhed, *grace and peace*; *grace*, in ſcripture, ſignifies, firſt, the gracious favour of God towards us; and, next, all the gifts of grace, all benefits and bleſſings iſſuing forth and flowing from thence; *peace*, uſually ſignifies in ſcripture-language, all manner of outward proſperity and happineſs. 2. The author and fountain from whence theſe bleſſings flow: (1.) From *God the Father:* (2.) From the Mediator, *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; intimating, That whatever ſpiritual grace or temporal bleſſing we now receive from God, is from him, not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, a gracious Father in Chriſt, in whom he pours out the immenſity of his love upon us, and through whom he conveys all kinds of bleſſings unto us.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers. 3 Remembering without ceaſing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſight of God and our Father;

Note here, 1. The holy wiſdom of our apoſtle, who being about to magnify and extol the graces of the Spirit wrought in the Theſſalonians, particularly their faith, their love, their patience and hope, inſtead of commending *them* for theſe graces, he breaks forth into thankſgivings unto God for them; *We give thanks to God always for your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope:* His buſineſs was not to celebrate and commend them, but to admire the ſpecial grace of God conferred upon them, and conſpicuous in them. *Learn* hence, That it is our duty, and will be our great wiſdom, ſo to ſpeak of the grace of God, which we ſee and obſerve in others, as that they may not be puffed up with any conceit of their own excellencies, but ſee matter of praiſe and thankſgiving due unto God only, and nothing to themſelves. *Note*, 2. The ſpecial and particular graces which St. Paul obſerved in the Theſſalonians, their *faith*, their *love*, their *hope*, together with the evidence of the ſincerity of thoſe graces; their faith was a working faith, that is, fruitful in good works; their love was a laborious love, promoting the good of all the ſaints; and their hope in the Lord Jeſus, rendered them patient in and under all tribulations for his ſake. There is no ſuch way to judge of the truth of the inward habits of grace in the heart, as by obſerving the effects and fruits of that grace in the life: The apoſtle concluded they had true faith, becauſe a fruitful faith; true love, becauſe a laborious love; a good hope in Chriſt, becauſe accompanied with patience under the croſs of Chriſt. 3. St. Paul's offices and acts of love performed on the Theſſalonians behalf, namely, thankſgiving and prayer. (1.) Thankſgiving, *We give thanks unto God always for you all.* But why, O bleſſed apoſtle, art thou ſo thankful for the graces of God's holy Spirit wrought in theſe Theſſalonians? For thy own ſake, no doubt, as well as theirs; he ſaw in them an eminent ſeal of his apoſtleſhip, the happy fruit and bleſſed effect of his miniſtry among them. This, O! This it was, that drew forth his very ſoul in thankſgivings to God. *Learn*, That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt rejoice greatly at the ſight and appearance of the grace of God in any perſon; but when they ſee it in their own people, as the ſeal of their miniſtry, and the bleſſed fruit of their own painful endeavours amongſt them, this carries them out into tranſports of thankfulneſs; verily, the joy of their hearts is too big to come out at their mouths, they give thanks for ſuch a mercy without ceaſing. Yet, (2.) He ſubjoins *prayers* with his praiſes, adds ſupplications to his thankſgivings, *making mention of you always in my prayers*; to let them know that there was ſtill much grace wanting in *them* to keep them humble, as well as great grace in them to make *him* thankful: Our prayers for grace, muſt be thankful prayers, or accompanied with thankſgiving; when we pray to God for more grace, we muſt ever be thankful for what we have received; and when we return thanks for grace received, we muſt be earneſt and inſtant with God for further and freſh ſupplies of grace wanted. *Note*, 4. The frequency, yea, conſtancy of our apoſtle, in performing theſe duties of prayer and thankſgiving on the behalf of theſe Theſſalonians, *We give thanks to God always for you, remembering you without ceaſing, in the ſight of God, and our Father*; that is, as often as we appear before God our Father, we inceſſantly pray for you, and conſtantly praiſe God on your behalf. Where *obſerve*, The comfortable relation in which the ſaints of God do approach and draw near unto God in prayer, they come to him as a *Father*, yea, *as their Father*; *in the ſight of God our Father*. The holy Spirit of God vouchſafed to believers under the goſpel, enables them to come before him in prayer, with a full aſſurance of his fatherly affection towards them, as being the ſons of God, through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and it enables them to cry, *Abba, Father*; and they are very careful to improve this their relation to God, and intereſt in him, as a father, in prayer, on behalf of themſelves, and all their fellow-brethren and members in Chriſt. Thus St. Paul here, *We give thanks for you, and remember you*, &c.

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake.

Obſerve here, 1. One ſpecial ground and reaſon aſſigned, why the apoſtle's heart was thus extraordinarily carried out in praiſe and thankſgivings unto God, on the Theſſalonians behalf, and that was the knowledge of their election, *knowing your election of God*; that is, knowing certainly and infallibly, by your proficiency in the forementioned Chriſtian graces of faith, love and hope, that God had certainly choſen you out of the Gentile world, to be a church and people to himſelf, and that it was the good pleaſure of God to gather a Chriſtian church at Theſſalonica; and alſo he did know and believe, with a judgment of charity, that Almighty God had choſen them to eternal life alſo, to be a part of his church triumphant in heaven, as well as of his church militant upon earth; the preaching of the goſpel having met with ſuch viſible ſucceſs amongſt them. It is our unqueſtionable duty, and we learn it from St. Paul's example, in charity to number amongſt God's choſen, in whom we ſee, as much as man may ſee, the fruits and ſigns of God's election. 2. The ground which St. Paul had to build his confidence upon, that the Theſſalonians were a people choſen of God, and that was rational evidence, *knowing your election of God*; *for our goſpel came to you not in word only, but in power*. Where *note*, The piety and prudence of St. Paul's charity, it was not weakly grounded and credulous, but guided by reaſonable evidence; *Charity hopeth all things*, that is, all things which it hath good ground to hope, but nothing more than what probable evidence may induce it to hope.

St. Paul when he ſaw the apoſtaſy of Hymenæ
Alexander into error and vice, without cenſoriouſn
uncharitableneſs, pronounces, that they had *made ſh*
of the faith, 1 Tim. i. 20. For he had ſufficient
to believe, there could be no faith where there
holineſs. There are a generation of men amon
who brand the miniſters of God with cenſoriouſne
raſh judging the preſent ſtate of men, though the
by their lives and actions; they would have us ho
concerning them, againſt hope, and judge quite cont
rational evidence; we muſt believe them to hav
when they have no knowledge; that they are righ
tents, and ſorrowful for their ſins, when they make
of ſin; that their hearts are chaſte, when their
foam out nothing but filthineſs; but let them kn
dare not bring a curſe upon ourſelves, by calling go
and evil good; our charity, though not cauſele
picious, yet neither is it fooliſhly blind. *Obſerve*,
particular and ſpecial evidence which the apoſtle ha
Theſſalonians election, and that was the great and g
ſucceſs of his miniſtry amongſt them. *Our goſpel*
But how *our* goſpel? Not as if he were the autho
but the diſpenſer only; not our goſpel by origina
lation, but by miniſterial diſpenſation only. But h
the goſpel come amongſt the Theſſalonians? *Not*
only, ſounding in the ear, or reaching and reſting
underſtandihg only, as a light to gaze upon; but in
that is, accompanied *then* with the power of miracl
with a convincing, terrifying, humbling, renewi
reforming power. It follows, *and in the Holy Gho*
is, the preaching of the word was at that time atten
with a mighty power of miracles, ſo with an extrao
effuſion and pouring out the Holy Ghoſt upon the
heard it, prevailing upon them to embrace it, and
mit themſelves unto it. With this miraculous p
the Holy Ghoſt was the preaching of the word accon
then, with an enlightened, quickening, regenerati
ſanctifying power *now*; the miniſtry of the word
great inſtrument in the hand of the Spirit, for t
verſion of ſinners, for the edification of ſaints, and
ſalvation of both. Again, the apoſtle's miniſtratio
unto them *in much aſſurance*, that is, with a full co
both to *them* and *him*; to them, with an evident co
of the truth of his doctrine; and to *him*, it was a f
ſuaſion, yea, a firm aſſurance, that God had choſe
to be a church and ſpecial people to himſelf. An
As to his own conduct and converſation amongſt t
appeals to them, and to their own knowledge, wh
was not anſwerable to the doctrine delivered by h
know what manner of men we were among you for yo
Happy is it when the pious and prudent converſati
miniſter amongſt his people, is, and has been ſuc
upon a fit occaſion, he can and dare appeal to G
them as witneſſes and obſervers of it; *Ye know w*
were among you: ye are witneſſes, and God alſo, ho
and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves am
chap. ii. 10. An heterodox converſation will c
orthodox preacher to hell; there is a preaching life,
as a preaching doctrine; if religion be taught by t
and irreligion by the latter, we ſadly diſappoint the

what is ſpoken; though, like a cracked bell, we may be inſtrumental to ring others to heaven, yet for ourſelves there is no remedy, but to the fire we muſt go, either for our refining, or for our condemnation. The throne and the pulpit, above all places, call for holineſs; the prince and the preacher, above all perſons, are moſt accountable to God for their example: *Ye know what manner of men we were among you.*

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghoſt: 7 So that ye were enſamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

In theſe words, our apoſtle gives us another profitable evidence, that the Theſſalonians were undoubtedly choſen of God, namely, becauſe they were active and operative Chriſtians; they did in their life and practice conform themſelves to that excellent pattern and example held forth unto them by their preachers, *Ye became followers of us.* Where *note*, That there ought to be ſomething worthy of imitation in the lives of miniſters, ſomething which their people may ſafely follow; and it is the people's duty, not only to lend an ear to their doctrine, but an eye to their pious converſation. It is added, *Followers of us, and of the Lord:* Followers of Chriſt, abſolutely, as an unerring pattern; of his miniſters, conditionally, ſo far as they followed Chriſt: But *followers of the Lord* here, ſeems to import their following of him in his ſufferings and afflictions, as appears by the next words, *Having received the word with much affliction.* Such as are ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians, are followers of Chriſt in his ſufferings, as well as in his example; they follow him in the ſharp and thorny path of affliction, in which he went before them, they are willing to bear his croſs, as well as to wear his crown, to ſuffer for him, as well as to be glorified with him. *Obſerve* next, The particular inſtance wherein the Theſſalonians became followers of the apoſtles; it was this, That they preached the word to them with great deſire, delight and joy, though at the ſame time they endured a great *fight of afflictions*, contending with the oppoſition both of men and devils, in preaching the word unto them: In like manner did they *receive the word with much affliction*, and adhere to it in the midſt of perſecution; and all this accompanied with ſuch inward joy, as none but the Holy Ghoſt could be the author of in them: *Ye received the word with much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghoſt.* *Learn* hence, That upon preaching of the word, to have an heart open to *receive it, to receive it with affliction, with much affliction*, and yet with joy and rejoicing, with a cheerful ſpirit, and ſuch a joy as the holy Spirit of God is the author and producer of, is a good evidence, that a perſon is choſen of God, and has a title to the everlaſting inheritance. Farther, Our apoſtle, in a juſt and deſerved commendation of theſe Theſſalonians, tells them, to their great and ſingular honour, that as they were followers of them (the apoſtles) in ſufferings, in patience, and cheerfulneſs; ſo they were themſelves living patterns, and lively enſamples of courage and conſtancy under their ſufferings, to all the neighbouring churches in Macedonia and Achaia. Then is the grace of God received by us, a mark and evidence of our election of God, whom we have advanced to ſuch a conſiderable proficiency and growth in it, as to become patterns and examples of piety to all that are round about us. Thus the Theſſalonians here, *Ye are become enſamples*, &c.

8 For from you ſounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but alſo in every place your faith to Godward is ſpread abroad, ſo that we need not ſpeak any thing. 9 For they themſelves ſhew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to ſerve the living and true God.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in a copious commendation of theſe Theſſalonians, or rather in a thankful admiration of the grace of God ſhining in them; he tells them, and that without flattery, that the fame and report of their graces was ſpread abroad far and near, inſomuch that the foreign churches, amongſt whom he converſed, were able to give him a perfect account how the apoſtle's entrance amongſt them at Theſſalonica was; though not pompous, yet very proſperous, ſtrangely ſucceeded, and ſingularly bleſſed, to the turning of them from dead idols, to ſerve the living and true God. *Learn*, That were true grace is rooted in the heart, though it be not immediately ſeen, yet it cannot long be hid, but it will diſcover itſelf in the genuine fruits and vital effects of it, to the deſerved admiration, and wiſhed for imitation of all beholders whatſoever: *From you ſounded forth the word of the Lord*, &c.—And *how* you turned from idols, that is, how readily and ſpeedily, how ſincerely and heartily you turned from idolatry, your former idolatry, in which you had been educated and brought up; yet upon the preaching of our goſpel, ye left it, and turned with indignation from it, to ſerve God, *the living God*, ſo called in oppoſition to their dead and dumb idols; and the *true God*, in oppoſition to their falſe gods. Theſe words of the apoſtle teach us how to expound thoſe words of our Saviour, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God:* Teaching us, that the Father is called *the only true God*, not in oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt, as the Socinians would inſinuate, but in oppoſition to idols and falſe gods only. Now from this effect, which the goſpel had upon the Theſſalonians, to turn them from idols to ſerve the living God, we *learn*, That as every man naturally bears an idol in his heart, that is, ſets up ſomething there in God's ſtead, which attracts and draws off the chief of his affections from God, ſo wherever the goſpel is heartily received and entertained, there will be an abandoning of, and returning from, whatſoever did uſurp God's throne in the ſoul, and the perſon hereafter, will only love and ſerve the living and true God. *You turned from idols, to ſerve the living and true God.*

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, *even* Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Here the apoſtle produces a further evidence of theſe Theſſalonians converſion, namely, that they did not only turn from idols to ſerve God the Father, but did alſo believe in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son: This act of faith is expreſſed by *waiting*, they *waited for his Son from heaven*, that is, by faith they expected that Chriſt, whom the apoſtle had preached to them, and was gone to heaven, would certainly come again from thence, to deliver his redeemed ones *from the wrath to come*, that is, from the puniſhment and vengeance eternally due unto them for ſin. And the ground of this their expectation was, Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead: *To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead.* *Note* here, 1. A deſcription, an heart-affecting, yea, a ſoul-affecting deſcription of that wrath which doth await every wicked and impenitent ſinner; it is a wrath to come; after thouſands, yea, millions of years, that ſinners have lain under it, ſtill it is wrath to come; and they are as far from being delivered from it, as the firſt hour they fell under it. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt delivered up himſelf to death, that he might be a Saviour and deliverer to his people from this wrath; let it break forth when it will, not a drop of it ſhall ever fall upon any of them. 3. That believers may warrantably expect deliverance by Chriſt from this wrath, ſeeing God has *raiſed him from the dead*. 4. Therefore, may and ought they to wait and wiſh, to look and long for his coming from heaven, when deliverance from wrath will be perfected and completed.

CHAP. II.

The deſign of the apoſtle in this and the next chapter, is to acquaint the Theſſalonians *with the ſincerity and ſucceſs of his miniſtry amongſt them; and put them in remembrance of his meek deportment towards them.*

FOR yourſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

Obſerve here, How our apoſtle did and durſt appeal to the Theſſalonians themſelves, as touching the ſincerity and ſucceſs of his public miniſtry among them: *Ye yourſelves know.* It is not ſufficient to a miniſter's comfort, that he be well reported of amongſt ſtrangers, for his zeal and diligence, for his ſincerity and faithfulneſs, unleſs he can and dare appeal to the conſciences of his own people, and call them to vouch and bear witneſs to his integrity: *Ye yourſelves know that our entrance in unto you, was not in vain. Our entrance in unto you*; that is, our firſt preaching amongſt you, *was not in vain*; that is, ſay ſome, it was not in vain in the matter, we did not preach about vain, uſeleſs and unprofitable niceties and ſpeculations; but our preaching was ſubſtantial, ſound and ſolid: It was not vain in the manner, ſay others; it was not undertaken raſhly, and without a call, nor managed in a ſlight and vain manner: But the word *in vain* here, ſeems to point at theſe two things: (1.) That it did not want power and energy, but had the demonſtration of divine aſſiſtance to confirm them in the faith that *heard* it, and alſo thoſe that *preached* it, in expectation of ſucceſs. (2.) *It was not in vain*, that is, it did not want fruit, it was not without a great and gracious ſucceſs: For the word *vain*, when it is applied to the meſſage which the miniſters of God bring, ſignifies the not accompliſhing the great ends for which it was deſigned. Iſa. lv. 11. *The word that goeth out of my mouth, ſhall not return unto me in vain*, but proſper, &c. Hence *learn*, That where a miniſter is regularly called to, and faithfully diſcharges his duty amongſt a people, both by public preaching and private inſtruction, his labours ſeldom, if ever, want fruit, in ſome degree or meaſure, either ſooner or later, either manifeſt or ſecret, either for converſation or edification. We have the promiſe of Chriſt's preſence with us, Matt. xxviii. 20. And if the fault be not ours, we ſhall certainly experience it; both the preſence of his power to ſtrengthen us, and the preſence of his gracious Spirit to ſucceed us. Poſſibly we do not ſee any viſible ſucceſs at preſent; but this may comfort us, there is more good done by the miniſtry of the word, than we are aware of; and if we reap not the fruit of the ſeed we ſow, they who come after us may; but if neither they nor we reap fruit, our miniſtry ſhall not be in vain, with reference to ourſelves; yet ſhall we be glorious, though Iſrael be not gathered. But, oh! that our people might ſhare in that glory with us, and alſo ſhine as the ſtars, for ever and ever! God grant we may never be called forth by Chriſt to give a judicial teſtimony againſt any of them at the bar of God, for not *believing our report*.

2 But even after that we had ſuffered before, and were ſhamefully intreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God with much contention.

Here St. Paul diſcovers to the Theſſalonians the great difficulties and dangers which he broke through at his firſt entrance amongſt them to preach the goſpel; he acquaints them with the reproach and diſgrace he underwent at their neighbouring city, Philippi, and the ſufferings there endured for the goſpel, which are recorded, Acts xvi. 23. But nothing of that nature could diſcourage him, but that he rather waxed more bold in ſpirit, reſolving to preach *the goſpel of God*, though *with much contention* and oppoſition from the unbelieving Jews. Where *mark*, That the apoſtle calls his boldneſs, a boldneſs *in God*, becauſe a boldneſs for God, and from God: It was not barely the fruit of a natural courage, but it was a zealous boldneſs in the cauſe of God, and proved a convincing, as well as a courageous boldneſs; it is one neceſſary requiſite and qualification in the miniſters of God, in order to the rendering their miniſtry fruitful and ſucceſsful, that a wiſe, humble, zealous and convincing boldneſs be found with them in their delivering the truths of God unto their people: *We were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God.*

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Here our apoſtle aſſigns a ſubordinate reaſon why his preaching was ſo ſucceſsful amongſt the Theſſalonians, namely, becauſe it was very ſincere: There was both ſincerity in the doctrine preached, and alſo in the preacher of that doctrine. Where *note*, 1. St. Paul calls his preaching an *exhortation*; doubtleſs becauſe a great part of his preaching was, as ours ought to be, applicatory and exhortatory, earneſtly and affectionately exciting the hearers to cleave unto the truths, whether doctrinal or practical, delivered to them. 2. How St. Paul removes from himſelf the oppoſites of ſincerity, ſome of which point at the ſincerity of the doctrine preached by him; *it was not of deceit*, or of enſnaring and ſeducing error, not ſuited to the corrupt opinions and wicked inclinations of men; *nor of uncleanneſs*, nothing that he either preached or practiſed did countenance and encourage men in their filthy luſts, as did the falſe preaching of the falſe apoſtles, and the Gnoſtics; *Nor in guile*; this points at the ſincerity of his own heart in preaching, his exhortation was not in *guile*, that is, he did not ſeek himſelf, under a pretence of acting for God and his glory, nor propound his own worldly advantage as his ultimate end. *Learn* hence, It is the duty of Chriſt's miniſters, not only to preach the pure word of God, but to preach it purely, in ſimplicity of heart, and with a ſingle eye at God's glory, without looking at, or having any regard unto baſe, ſiniſter ends, or bye reſpects. *Note*, 3. That St. Paul having vindicated his miniſtry from all ſuſpicion of inſincerity, next aſſures them of his great uprightneſs in all his miniſterial performances, making it his chief deſign to approve himſelf unto God, and to be approved of him, not in the leaſt regarding to *pleaſe men*, but only in ſubordination to God. 4. The arguments or motives inclining him thus, in much ſincerity, to approve himſelf to God in all his miniſterial ſervices; namely, (1.) The conſideration of that high favour and honourable truſt which he had received from God: *We were allowed of God, to be put in truſt with the goſpel:* God did fit him for this truſt, and then entruſted him with it, and he looked upon both as a favour and honour from God. 2. The conſideration of God's omniſciency and all-ſeeing eye, *who trieth our hearts*. The apoſtle well knew, that Almighty God was both a witneſs of his doctrine and converſation, and alſo privy to his intentions and purpoſes, his aim and end, as being a God that ſearcheth the heart; therefore he ſo preached, *not as pleaſing men, but God*. *Learn* from both, That nothing doth more effectually conſtrain the miniſters of Chriſt to the faithful diſcharge of their whole duty, than the conſideration of the honour and weight of that truſt which God hath conferred on them, and the remembrance that the eye of an all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God is both upon and within them alſo: *We ſo ſpeak*, being put in *truſt* with the goſpel by *God*, *who trieth our hearts*.

5 For neither at any time uſed we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetouſneſs; God *is* witneſs. 6 Nor of men ſought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdenſome, as the apoſtles of Chriſt.

Still our apoſtle ſees fit to proceed in avouching his own ſincerity in preaching the goſpel, and diſowning all flattery, covetouſneſs, and vainglory, to have any influence upon him in the diſcharge of his miniſterial truſt. Firſt, He *uſed not flattering words*, that is, ſpeeches fitted to gratify the luſts and humours of men, or for gaining their favour, or courting their good opinion. Flattery in any is odious, in a miniſter it is monſtrous; both becauſe ſpiritual men ought to be moſt plain-hearted, and alſo becauſe flattery about ſpiritual things is moſt fatal and pernicious, both to the giver and receiver. Secondly, He uſed not a *cloke of covetouſneſs*, that is, he had no covetous deſign in his miniſtry; his great end, in that adminiſtration, was not worldly, or outward advantage to himſelf; and becauſe a covetous deſign is ſecret, and man cannot judge of it, he appeals ſolemnly to God, that ſearcheth the heart, as a witneſs of his freedom from that deſign: *I uſed no flattering words as ye know, nor a cloke of covetouſneſs; God is witneſs:* As if he had ſaid, "Had I uſed flattering words, you might witneſs it; but I could have worn a cloke of covetouſneſs ſo cloſely, that you could not have ſeen it, but God could; he can judge through the darkeſt cloud, and ſee through the thickeſt cloke and covering; but I appeal to him, whether I have put on ſuch a cloke or no." An oath then is lawful to a Chriſtian; he may ſolemnly appeal to God, and call him to witneſs the truth of what he ſpeaks, in and upon a juſt and great occaſion; thus St. Paul here, by oath, purges himſelf from covetouſneſs of ſpirit. Thirdly, He purges himſelf from all oſtentation and vainglory; he tells them plainly, he did not hunt after applauſe from others, nor ſought ſo much as due reſpect in a fitting maintenance from themſelves, though herein he aſſures them he did remit of his right; ſeeing, as an apoſtle of Chriſt, he might have been *burdenſome*, that is, chargeable to them, by exacting maintenance from them. *Learn*, 1. Though every man may (much more a miniſter) have a due reſpect to his own honour and juſt reputation, yet to hunt after reſpect and eſteem, and to ſeek it with the full bent of our deſires, doth ſavour of vanity and vainglory. 2. Though the miniſters of the goſpel have an undoubted right to an honourable maintenance, yet it may be a pious prudence in them, at a particular time, to remit their right; and when they do ſo, with an eye at the glory of God, and the advantage of the goſpel, God will recompenſe it to them.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children: 8 So, being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.

St. Paul having cleared himſelf and his miniſtry, in the foregoing verſes, from the charge and imputation of thoſe foul vices of flattery, fraud, and covetouſneſs, which the falſe teachers were guilty of; he next gives an account of his holy and humble, meek and gentle, courteous and affable behaviour amongſt them, performing all duties towards them from a principle of tender love, even ſuch as is found in a nurſe to her babe, which makes her ſtoop to the meaneſt offices for it: *We are gentle among you as a nurſe*, not an hired nurſe, but a mother-nurſe, who takes nothing for nurſing, who beſtows all her time and pains in nurſing, who draws forth her breaſts, and gives down her milk with pleaſure to her nurſery, lodging it in her boſom, carrying it in her arms, with all poſſible demonſtrations of a tender affection towards it, eſpecially bearing with it in its frowardneſs and manifold infirmities; intimating to us, with what tenderneſs of affection a miniſter ſhould be devoted to his people, bearing with them, and forbearing of them, and exerciſing all that indulgence towards them, which may mutually endear them to each other. *Obſerve* farther, Our apoſtle having reſembled himſelf in general, to a nurſe cheriſhing her children, next inſtances, in particular, wherein he ſtood ready to expreſs, like a nurſe, his indulgent care over them. Thus, 1. As the nurſing-mother, if ſhe be but a ſhort time abſent from her children, doth moſt vehemently long to ſee them, and draws forth her breaſt towards them with the utmoſt deſire and delight; in like manner, was our now abſent apoſtle moſt affectionately deſirous of ſeeing and enjoying his beloved Theſſalonians. 2. As the nurſing-mother, when ſhe gets to the child, with unſpeakable delight, feeds it with her own blood, concocted and turned into milk; ſo was the apoſtle deſirous to impart, not the goſpel only, but *his own ſoul*, that is, his life; implying, how ready he was to ſeal the goſpel with his blood, and to confirm the Theſſalonians in the faith of Chriſt. 3. As the moving, impelling, and impulſive cauſe of the nurſe's indulgent care and indefatigable pains, is pure love, motherly affection, and no hope of gain; ſo was likewiſe the caſe of St. Paul here towards theſe Theſſalonians: *We were willing to impart unto you our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.* *Learn* hence, That there is no ſtronger love, nor more endeared affection between any relations upon earth, than between thoſe miniſters of Chriſt, and their beloved people, whom they have been inſtrumental to convert to God.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel. For labouring night and day, becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God. 10 Ye *are* witneſſes, and God *alſo*, how holily and juſtly and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you that believe:

Notwithſtanding our apoſtle was free, wholly free, from all ſhadow and appearance of covetouſneſs in the whole courſe of his miniſtry, yet it may ſeem as if ſome perſons (probably the falſe apoſtles) did, though with the higheſt injuſtice, charge him with it; accordingly, to clear himſelf from that imputation, here he tells the Theſſalonians, he laboured night and day in the buſineſs of his calling; making tents to maintain himſelf, that ſo he might not be chargeable or burdenſome to any of them; or any ways retard or hinder the ſucceſs of the goſpel amongſt them: *labouring night and day, that we might not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God* freely. Yet *obſerve*, This was only a caſe of neceſſity; for at other times, and in other places, we find our apoſtle aſſerting his own right, and God's appointment, that every one that preacheth the goſpel, ſhould *live of the goſpel*, 1 Cor. ix. 14. Next our apoſtle calls upon them to *remember* his *labour and travel*, that is, his pains and diligence in preaching the goſpel; the words ſignify labour unto wearineſs, and labour after wearineſs, his painfulneſs, both in his preaching, and in his ſecular calling; and from his calling upon the Theſſalonians to remember this, he learns us this leſſon of inſtruction, namely, that it is the ſtanding duty of a people to keep in their conſtant remembrance the great labour and pains which the faithful miniſters of Chriſt do take amongſt them, that ſo they may be duly thankful, both to God and them, and put a juſt value upon that ſpiritual good, which at any time, they have experienced and received from them; *Remember, brethren, our labour and travel.* *Obſerve* again, Having aſſerted his laboriouſneſs in preaching to them, he next puts them in remembrance of his exemplarineſs in converſation amongſt them, how *holily, juſtly* and *unblameably we behaved ourſelves amongſt you*; that is, performing his duty with great integrity and uprightneſs towards God and man, ſo that none juſtly could blame him for neglect amongſt them; and for the truth of this, he appeals to God as a judge, and to themſelves as witneſs, *ye are witneſſes, and God alſo.* *Learn* hence, That it is a great happineſs, and unſpeakable conſolation, both to miniſters and people, when the duties of religion, relating to both tables, are performed with ſuch exactneſs, that they can and dare appeal to one another, as to their holy and unblameable converſation, and to God himſelf, as to the purity of their aim, and ſincerity of intention.

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Obſerve, That ſtill our apoſtle appeals to their own conſciences for his good behaviour amongſt them: *Ye know:* Happy miniſter, that has a throne in the conſciences of his people, unto which he can and dare, at all times, appeal, for the clearing of his innocency and integrity, in and before the face of the whole world! *Obſerve* next, That having compared himſelf to a nurſe before, he reſembles himſelf to a father now, *we exhorted you as a father doth his children*; as it is the office of a father to direct and inſtruct, to counſel and exhort his children; ſo the apoſtle did exhort, comfort, and charge the Theſſalonians, that they may be ſtrictly conſcientious in the faithful diſcharge of their whole duty, both to God and man, and patient under all, and all manner of trials and afflictions whatſoever, which they did, or might meet with, in the way of well-doing. *Note*, That a mixture of meekneſs and gentleneſs, accompanied with authority and gravity, is an excellent compoſition in the miniſters of the goſpel: St. Paul having ſhewn, that, for gentleneſs, he was a nurſing mother, declareth here, that for authority and gravity, he was an inſtructing father. Laſtly, The great duty which he did direct them in, and exhort them to, namely, to *walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his kingdom and glory.* *Note* here, 1. The duty exhorted to, namely, to *walk worthy of God:* How ſo? Not with a worthineſs of merit, but with a worthineſs of meetneſs, to walk as becomes them who profeſs the name of God, who bear the image of God, anſwerable to the high and holy privileges received from God. 2. The reaſon or argument enforcing the duty, *he hath called you to his kingdom and glory*, that is, to grace; and by grace here, to glory hereafter; ſuch as are called to the one, are called to both: Grace is a certain pledge and earneſt of glory, a low degree of glory, and glory the higheſt degree of grace; ſuch as walk worthy of God now, ſhall live with him, ere long, to eternal ages.

13 For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe. 14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus: For ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

Our apoſtle's great deſign, in this chapter, being to ſet forth the wonderful ſucceſs which the preaching of the goſpel had among the Theſſalonians, and alſo to aſſign the cauſes of that ſucceſs, he having, in the former verſes, given the reaſon of this ſucceſs on his own part, namely, his ſincerity in preaching it, and his pious converſation in all things ſuitable to it; now he comes to ſhew the reaſon on their part, with all thankfulneſs to Almighty God for the ſame: Firſt, they heard it; ſecondly, they received it; thirdly, they examined it, and found it no fable, but the word of God, and, as ſuch, entertained it with a divine faith; fourthly, the word thus received did work with a mighty power and efficacy in them that believed, that is, was accompanied with miracles, and miraculous operations of the holy Spirit, *then* to confirm them in the faith of what they did believe; and the word has alſo *now* an efficacious energy and divine efficacy accompanying it in the hearts of believers, working upon the will, not in a way of compulſion, but in a way of congruous to the nature and liberty of the will, by a divine influx, *Tollendo reſiſtentiam, non voluntatis libertatem* (as the great St. Auſtin ſpeaks). *Obſerve* next, St. Paul farther proves the efficacious ſucceſs which the word had amongſt the Theſſalonians, from their conſtancy and patience under the ſharpeſt ſufferings for the word's ſake; *ye have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen:* As if he had ſaid, "You of the Chriſtian church in Theſſalonica, have ſhewn yourſelves like to the Chriſtian churches in Judea, in patient ſuffering perſecution from your friends and kinsfolks, from your countrymen and fellow-citizens, as they did from the unbelieving Jews." *Note* thence, That where the word is efficaciouſly received, it makes the embracer of it endure the hardeſt trials and ſufferings rather than renounce it. 2. That there neither is, nor can be, any better evidence that the word of God is effectually received, than when it enables Chriſtians to bear afflictions, and undergo perſecutions with Chriſtian courage and holy reſolution; *Ye have ſuffered like things:* But of whom? *Of your own countrymen* at Theſſalonica, as the churches in Judea did of the Jews. *Learn* thence, That ſuch is the fury of a perſecuting ſpirit, that when men are judicially given up of God unto it, they will break all bonds, both natural, civil, and religious, and turn barbarous and ſavage, like wolves and tigers, towards thoſe of their own fleſh, who dare not deny the truth, which they perſecute and oppoſe. Here the churches in Judea and Theſſalonica were perſecuted alike by their own countrymen.

15 Who both killed the Lord Jeſus and their own prophets, and have perſecuted us; and they pleaſe not God, and are contrary to all men; 16 Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles that they might be ſaved, to fill up their ſins alway. For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt.

Our apoſtle's deſign being to encourage the Theſſalonians to patience and conſtancy under their perſecutions for Chriſtianity, he acquaints them, that they did not walk alone in this thorny path, but that Jeſus Chriſt, the prophets and apoſtles, went before them, and every ſtep they took in it, was up to the knees in blood; *they killed the Lord Jeſus,* &c. Where *obſerve,* The bitter and bloody perſecution which the Jews were guilty of, *they killed the Lord Jeſus,* and before him their own prophets, called *their own,* becauſe of their own nation, and ſent with a peculiar meſſage to them; and now they perſecuted, baniſhed, and drove away St. Paul, and the reſt of the apoſtles; *they pleaſed not God,* that is, they highly diſpleaſed him, dreadfully provoked him, they were haters of God, hateful to him, now hated of him, and, laſtly, rejected by him; *contrary to all men,* that is, to the common intereſt of all men, by endeavouring to obſtruct the preaching of the goſpel, which bringeth ſalvation to all men; *forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles,* that is, to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, and conſequently obſtructing, what in them lay, the ſalvation almoſt of all the world; *filling up the meaſure of their ſins,* till at laſt the wrath of God came upon them to the utmoſt, in their judicial obduration, and the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans; after which the Jews have been no more a people, but ſcattered abroad through the face of the earth. From the whole, *learn,* 1. That it is a ſingular ſupport to ſuffering ſaints, to conſider, that Chriſt and his apoſtles ſuffered before them; and by his ſufferings, has ſanctified a ſtate of affliction and perſecution to them. 2. That a ſpirit of perſecution ſeems oft-times to run in a blood, and paſſes from parent to child, through many generations. Perſecution became, as it were, hereditary, and, in a ſort, tranſient from one generation to another among the Jews; they *killed* Chriſt, *ſtoned* the prophets, and *perſecuted* the apoſtles. 3. How St. Paul ranks and reckons them that are enemies to the preaching of the goſpel, with the obſtinate ſhedders of Chriſt's blood; they are enrolled amongſt the capital enemies of mankind; *they killed the Lord of life, forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles;* ſuch as are enemies to preaching, are enemies to the ſouls of men. *Object.* But what need ſo much preaching amongſt us, who are converted from heatheniſm to Chriſtianity? *Anſ.* It is one thing to be converted from heatheniſm to Chriſtianity, and another thing to be converted from ſin to God. *Object.* But we have the Bible for that end, and can make uſe of that. *Anſ.* Obſerve it, and you will find, that ſuch as are no friends to the pulpit, are uſually none of the beſt friends to the Bible; follow them to their families, how doth the Bible lie by as a neglected book amongſt them; and it muſt be a large charity, that can judge it is conſcientiouſly uſed in the cloſet, when it is careleſly neglected in the family.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a ſhort time, in preſence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to ſee your face with great deſire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us.

Obſerve here, That St. Paul having all along, in the chapter before us, compared himſelf to a tender father, and a nurſing mother, for his affectionate love unto, and his ſolicitous concern for, theſe Chriſtian converts; he doth in the words before us, declare, that this conſtrained abſence from them, occaſioned him no leſs grief than that of a tender father, when bereft of his beloved children; or that of an indulgent mother, when the child ſhe loves as her own ſoul, is taken violently from her. *We, brethren, being taken from you*; the words intimate ſuch a ſeparation as death makes between a father and a child, which rends the parent's heart in ſunder, and is like cutting off a limb or member from his body, exquiſitely painful; intimating, that the enforced abſence of a paſtor from his beloved people, though but for a ſhort ſeaſon, is very afflictive. Ah! how heart rending then is a total and final ſeparation from each other, occaſioned either by natural or civil death! 2. St. Paul tells them, that though perſecutors had deprived them of his bodily preſence, yet not of his heart, for though not in body, yet in mind he was preſent with them; miniſter and people, like true lovers, are preſent with each other in ſoul, when ſeparated in body. It is a ſingular comfort to Chriſtians under perſecution, that their enemies can neither deprive them of the preſence of God, nor the prayers of their faithful miniſters; their prayers may meet, when their perſons are diſtant, and they may be preſent in ſpirit, in heart and affection, when at the ends of the earth. 3. How he expreſſes his deſire and endeavour, his fervent purpoſe, and fixed reſolution to come unto them, to ſee their face, to refreſh them, and be refreſhed by them; *I endeavoured abundantly to ſee your face, but Satan hindered*; that is, his inſtruments, perſecutors, lay in wait for him, on the one hand, and cauſed ſome diſſentions in other churches, which detained him from coming to them; on the other hand, *Satan hindered*. *Learn* thence, That ſuch as obſtruct the preaching and propagating of the goſpel, and perſecute the promoters of it, are Satan's inſtruments and miniſters. 2. That ſuch as do Satan's work, it is fit they ſhould bear his name. Thus, Rev. ii. 13. *The devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon*, that is, his ſervants: It is fit that maſter and ſervant ſhould have both one name.

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are* not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Here, in the cloſe of the chapter, St. Paul acquaints the Theſſalonians with the true reaſon why he had ſuch an endearing affection for them, and ſuch a fervent deſire to be preſent with them, they were his *hope*, his *joy*, his *crown of rejoicing*; that is, they were then the cauſe of his hope, not the ground and foundation of his hope: that Chriſt alone was; but their converſion by his miniſtry was, in concurrence with other things, a good ground of hope concerning his own ſalvation; ye are now my *hope*, my *joy*, and *crown of rejoicing*. Where *note*, A very remarkable gradation in the words; he calls them his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*. His hope, that is, the matter of his hope, that they ſhall be ſaved; his joy, that is the occaſion of his joy, in their converſion by his miniſtry; and his crown of rejoicing in Chriſt's preſence at his coming, that is, the fruit and ſucceſs of his miniſtry amongſt them, would add to his crown, and redound to his glory in the day of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, 1. That there are degrees of glory in heaven, probably according to the meaſures and degrees of ſervice we have done for God on earth; there is, no doubt, an equality of glory there, as to the eſſentials, but not with reſpect to the accidentals; beſides the joy and ſatisfaction which the miniſters of Chriſt are partakers of, in heaven, in common with other glorified ſaints, they have an additional joy and glory from the ſucceſs of their pious and painful labours, which God has crowned with the converſion and edification of many ſouls. Lord! Who would not ſtudy, ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of ſuch a maſter? Is it not worth all our labour and ſufferings, to appear in the preſence of Chriſt, accompanied with all thoſe ſouls whom we have inſtrumentally either brought home, or built up in the moſt holy faith, either converted, comforted, or confirmed in the way to heaven? To hear one ſpiritual child ſay, "Lord, this is the inſtrument by whom I believed;" another, "This is the miniſter by whom I was eſtabliſhed;" a third, "This is he that quickened me by his example, and provoked me to love, and to good works: O bleſſed be God, that I ever ſaw his face, and heard his voice!" But, Lord, what will it be to hear thy bleſſed voice ſaying to us, "*Well done, good and faithful ſervants, enter into the joy of* me *your Lord*; I have kept an exact account of all your fervent prayers for your people, of all your inſtructive and perſuaſive ſermons, of all your ſighs and groans poured forth before me, on behalf of thoſe whom ye would have perſuaded to be happy, but could not! Every tear from your eye, and drop of ſweat from your face, ſhall now meet with an eternal recompence; you ſhall now find me, according to my promiſe, not *unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*." O what a maſter do the miniſters of Chriſt ſerve! Who would not ſacrifice all that is dear for him, who has the aſſurance of ſuch *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory* from him? 2. That the ſaints of God in heaven will know one another there: Why elſe doth St. Paul here comfort himſelf, that theſe Theſſalonians, whom he converted to Chriſt, would be his crown of rejoicing in the day of Chriſt? Surely, this muſt needs ſuppoſe and imply his diſtinct knowledge of them in that day; if he did not know them, how could he rejoice in them? Doubtleſs we may allow, in that ſtate, all that knowledge which is accumulative and perfective, whatever may heighten our felicity, and increaſe our ſatisfaction, as this muſt needs be allowed to do. Lord, make us faithful to the death, faithful to thee, faithful to our own ſouls, faithful to our people; and then, as they are now our hope and joy, ſo will they be our *crown of rejoicing in the preſence of the Lord Jeſus at his coming.* Amen.

CHAP. III.

WHEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone, 2 And ſent Timotheus our brother and miniſter of God, and our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt, to eſtabliſh you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

At the latter end of the foregoing chapter, St. Paul acquainted the Theſſalonians with his deſires and intentions, to come once and again unto them, but was always providentially hindered. Now here he gives them to underſtand, that ſuch was the fervour of his affection towards them, that although he could not come, yet he could not forbear to ſend to them, though he left himſelf alone, preferred their neceſſity before his own conveniency: *When we could no longer forbear*; that is, " When I could no longer ſatisfy myſelf without knowing your ſtate and condition, I choſe, though with much inconveniency to myſelf, rather to be left at Athens alone, in the midſt of my afflictions and tribulations, than that you ſhould be longer deſtitute of one to ſupply my abſence, in order to your confirmation and comfort." See here a ſpecial inſtance of miniſterial love and affection in St. Paul, preferring the church's good before his own comfort, and poſtponing his own conveniency to their neceſſity; though Timothy's company was very deſirable, very neceſſary and uſeful for him, yet he denies himſelf to ſerve them; *We thought it good to be left at Athens alone. Obſerve*, 2. The perſon ſent by him, Timothy, with his deſerved character and commendation, *a brother*, that is, a Chriſtian, a believer, a brother in Chriſt; *a miniſter of God*, that is, a preacher of the goſpel; his *fellow-labourer*, or one that joined heart and hand with him in the preaching of the goſpel from place to place. See here, a ſpecial inſtance of St. Paul's apoſtolical care for the churches of Chriſt, when he could not viſit them in perſon, he ſends to them, not any one he could come at, but the fitteſt he could get, one who was moſt likely, through God's aſſiſtance and bleſſing, to carry on the work he was ſent about: *I ſent you Timotheus my brother.* 3. The great end for which he was ſent unto them; it was to confirm them, and to comfort them; to confirm them in the faith of Chriſt, and to comfort them under all their ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt. The ſtrongeſt faith needs confirmation and eſtabliſhment; and it is the miniſter's duty, in trying times eſpecially, to guard his people's faith upon the ſtability whereof their ſtrength and ſafety doth depend.

3 That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions. For yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, " One great end why I have ſent Timothy among you, is this, leſt either upon the account of your own afflictions, or my ſufferings, you ſhould be moved from your ſtedfaſtneſs, either drawn away by fraud and flattery, or driven away by force and terror;" *that no man be moved by theſe afflictions. Obſerve* alſo, The argument to confirm them in the faith, amidſt all their ſufferings and afflictions, and that is drawn from the pleaſure and purpoſe, the ordination and appointment of God, concerning their afflictions; *Ye yourſelves know, that we are thereunto appointed. Learn* hence, 1. That the beſt of ſaints are ſubject to be moved by their afflictions. 2. That it is the high commendation of a Chriſtian, not to ſtir or be moved from his ſtedfaſtneſs by the heavieſt ſhock of affliction that may fall upon him; *That no man may be moved by theſe afflictions.* Some render the word *appointed*, ſet as a mark to be ſhot at; ſome ſaints, with holy Job, are ſet on purpoſe as a mark for the arrow of affliction to be levelled at, yet then are they to keep their ground, and ſtand immoveable; we honour God abundantly, when we are immoveable in our active obedience; and we glorify him eminently, when we are immoveable in our paſſive obedience; when we ſtand to it in the midſt of ſufferings, and are no more moved either by cowardice or impatience, than a poſt that is ſhot at. This is the glory of a Chriſtian, and his great duty, and it is the glory of God, and his certain due. 3. That believers are under a divine appointment from God himſelf, to undergo trouble and affliction. The ultimate deſtination of believers, is to reſt (God hath not appointed them unto wrath, but to obtain *ſalvation)*: But the intermediate deſtination of them is to trouble and affliction, in order unto reſt, and to prepare them for that reſt. Seeing then that afflictions are appointed to us, and we appointed to them, ſeeing there is a decree of God concerning them, a decree as to the matter of them, as to the manner of them, as to the meaſure of them, as to the time of them, when they ſhall commence, how far they ſhall advance, how long they ſhall continue, ſeeing every thing in affliction is under an appointment; how meek and humble, how patient and ſubmiſſive ought the Chriſtian's ſpirit to be under them? And with what ſteadineſs of expectation may and ought he to look up to heaven for a ſanctified uſe and improvement of them? Let no *man be moved by afflictions*, &c.

4 For verily when we were with you, we told you before that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation; even as it came to paſs, and ye know.

Our apoſtle informed the Theſſalonians in the foregoing verſe, with the purpoſe and decree of God concerning the afflictions which were before them; in this verſe he appeals to themſelves, as to his own ſincerity, in acquainting them, at their firſt converſion, that they muſt, through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of God, and it came to paſs accordingly; *when we were with you*, ſays the apoſtle, *we told you, before it came to paſs, that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation*, and it ſhortly after *came to paſs* as we told you. *Learn* hence, That it is the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt to give timely warning of, and to acquaint young converts early with, the pleaſure of God, to exerciſe all that belong to him with the croſs, with variety of afflictions, trials, and ſufferings, before they come, that ſo they may not ſtumble, nor be offended at them when they come. The ſincerity of our apoſtle is here very remarkable; when he came firſt to preach the goſpel at Theſſalonica, he did not flatter them with the expectation of an earthly paradiſe of pleaſure, but told them plainly that Chriſtianity had a croſs attending it, that a ſuffering hour would come, and they muſt expect it; *when we were with you, we told you that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation. Learn*, 2. That when Chriſtians have had timely notice from the miniſters of God, and from the word of God, of approaching trial and troubles, before they come, they ought to fore-arm themſelves, and not to faint or ſink under them when they come, much leſs to forſake religion becauſe of them, but to continue ſtedfaſt, knowing that the heavier the croſs is, the weightier will their crown be; for affliction, there is glory; for light affliction, a weight of glory, and for *light affliction, which is but for a moment, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

5 For this cauſe, when I could no longer forbear, I ſent to know your faith, leſt by ſome means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. 6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, deſiring greatly to ſee us, as we alſo *to ſee* you:

Obſerve here, 1. One ſpecial end why St. Paul ſent Timothy to Theſſalonica, it was to know their faith, that is, their conſtancy in the faith; for he had a fear upon him, leſt Satan the tempter had taken occaſion, from the preſent perſecution they were under, to turn them from Chriſtianity; and that by their yielding to his temptation, and apoſtatizing from the faith, his labour in the goſpel had been in vain amongſt them. Here *note*, That the ſaints perſecutions are called temptations, and aſcribed to Satan the tempter, who, by his miniſters and inſtruments, endeavours to hinder the progreſs of the goſpel, and by perſecutions, to terrify and turn men from the profeſſion of it. *Note* farther, that there is an holy jealouſy in the minds of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, who, though they hope the beſt, yet are apt to fear the worſt, with reference to the poor people, leſt they ſhould run in vain, and labour in vain amongſt them; for though their labour ſhall not be in vain, with reſpect to themſelves, their reward is with the Lord (the careful nurſe ſhall be paid, though the child dies at the breaſt) yet with reſpect to their people, they may be in vain, yea worſe, for a teſtimony againſt them, St. Mark, vi. 11. *Obſerve*, 2. How happily the apoſtle's fear was prevented, touching theſe Theſſalonians, by the return of Timothy, and the good tidings which he carried along with him, of the ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith, of the fervency of their charity, of their particular reſpect to himſelf, having always *remembrance* of him in their prayers, and making a reſpective mention of his miniſterial labours and diligence, and this always when they had occaſion to ſpeak of him. And laſtly, By their paſſionate and impatient deſire to ſee him (ſo much the original word ſignifies) to which he adds, that his deſire was no leſs ardent to ſee them, though the providence of God had hitherto hindered him. *Learn* hence, That the beſt tidings which can be brought to the ear of a faithful miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, is this, That his people are ſound and ſtedfaſt in the faith, maintainers of charity, and promoters of good works, and do account highly of, and honourably eſteem the miniſters and ambaſſadors of Jeſus Chriſt: *Timothy brought us good tidings of your faith, charity, and kind remembrance of us. Learn* farther, From the Theſſalonians fervent deſire to ſee St. Paul, and he to ſee them, that Chriſtian love doth earneſtly long to evidence itſelf in Chriſtian fellowſhip, and paſſionately deſires the communion of ſaints, for the mutual comfort and ſpiritual advantage of each other; the ſweeteſt privilege, next to communion with God, is communion with his ſaints. O! What a pleaſure is it, to behold the beautiful and bleſſed graces of the holy Spirit of God, ſparkling and ſhining in each other, exciting and quickening one another, acquainting each other with their experiences, and making known to each other their griefs, their doubts and fears! No wonder then that the Theſſalonians deſired ſo paſſionately to ſee St. Paul, and he as earneſtly to ſee them.

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and diſtreſs by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God?

In theſe words, our apoſtle declares the tranſcendent joy and overflowing comfort, which was found in his ſoul, upon the knowledge he had received of the conſtancy and ſtedfaſtneſs of the faith of theſe Theſſalonians; *we were comforted in our affliction by your faith:* Of all comforts which the people of God can afford to the miniſters of the goſpel, there is none comparable with that which reſults from the unfainting perſeverance in the faith, and the unblameable holineſs of their life. No comfort can be greater than our people's gracious demeanour; this put a kind of new life into St. Paul, in the midſt of all the ſorrows and ſufferings, the afflictions and perſecutions he underwent. *Now we live*, ſays he, *if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*, that is, a life of joy and comfort; or, *we live*, that is, it will be a mean to prolong our life, as well as add to the comfort of it; and the contrary tends to the ſhortening of our days. Thoſe that do impair the cheerfulneſs of their miniſters lives, ſuch as deaden their ſpirits, and break their hearts, by their obſtinate non-compliance with the rules of the goſpel, are no better than murderers in the account of God. If miniſters may, as all other perſons do, value their lives by the joy and comfort of them, then may they ſay, with the great apoſtle, "*We live*, as we ſee any of our people *ſtand faſt in the Lord*; and we die, as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their ſins." *Obſerve* farther, How highly thankful the apoſtle was to God, and what unſpeakable praiſe he renders to him, for adminiſtering to him this occaſion of joy, by the conſtancy and perſeverance of the Chriſtians faith at Theſſalonica; *What thanks can we render to God for you, and for all the joy wherewith we joy for* *your ſakes?* The faithful miniſters of Chriſt think that their hearts can never ſufficiently be carried forth in thankfulneſs to God, for the ſucceſs of their labours in the lives of their people: *What thanks can we render?* As if he had ſaid, “I can never be ſufficiently thankful, nor I can never fully expreſs my thankfulneſs to God for this honour, this favour, this benefit, that any one ſoul ſhould be brought home to God by my miniſtry, much more that a Chriſtian church ſhould be planted by my endeavours at Theſſalonica; and that God ſhould keep them ſteady and ſtedfaſt in ſhaking times, and ſupport them under ſuch perſecutions and trials as would ſhock an ordinary patience and conſtancy of mind: O! *What thanks can I render to God for this joy?*”

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might ſee your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

Obſerve here, How abounding St. Paul was in the duty of prayer for the Theſſalonians; his prayer was aſſiduous and conſtant, *night and day*; it imports frequency and conſtancy in performance of the duty. Luke iii. 37. His prayer alſo was very fervent and affectionate, *praying exceedingly*, exceſſively, as the word will bear: Spiritual affections are ſtrong and vehement. *Note* here, The admirable pattern which St. Paul ſets before all the biſhops and paſtors of the church to the end of the world, namely, to be much, very much in prayer, to abound in this duty. *Obſerve* farther, The ſubject matter of St. Paul's prayer, *That he might ſee their face, and perfect what was yet lacking in their faith.* Here *note*, That St. Paul's ſhort ſtay among the Theſſalonians, when he firſt planted the goſpel, did not permit ſo full and complete an explication of the matters and myſteries of Chriſtianity, as the apoſtle did deſire; he therefore prays that God would bring him again amongſt them, that he might ſupply what was wanting in their faith, that he might increaſe their knowledge, confirm their faith, inflame their love, excite their deſires, quicken their endeavours, and carry on that good work to perfection in them, of which God had laid the foundation by him. *Learn* hence, 1. That even in the faith of the moſt renowned, as well as of the new converted Chriſtians, there is ſome deficiency and defect. 2. That one great end of the miniſtry of the word is, to help faith forward towards perfection; that which was the inſtrument to beget faith, is alſo the mean of increaſing and confirming it, namely, the ordinances of God in general, and the miniſtry of the word in particular. As faith cometh by hearing, ſo is it confirmed by hearing alſo: *Longing to ſee your face, that we might perfect what is lacking in your faith.*

11 Now God himſelf and our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, direct our way unto you;

Note here, 1. An implicit acknowledgement that our journies intended, and viſits deſigned to be given to our friends, are not in our power, but under the direction of God; we cannot viſit a friend when we pleaſe, but when God will give us leave: We are not in our own diſpoſe, but God's. Accordingly here, St. Paul begs of God to direct his way unto *them*, that all obſtacles and impediments being removed, the providence of God might direct him, as in a right line, unto them, as the original word imports. 2. The perſons whom he directs his prayers to, for this mercy, to God and Chriſt. Where *note*, That Chriſt is invocated as well as the Father, he is therefore God as well as the Father; becauſe this invocation of him by all perſons, proves him omniſcient, ſearching the hearts of men, and all omnipreſent, being with his people in all places; and conſequently proves our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be truly and undeniably God.

12 And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all *men*, even as we *do* towards you:

Still our apoſtle perſeveres in prayer, on the behalf of his beloved Theſſalonians; and the particular mercy he prays for, is, their abundant increaſe in the grace and duty of love, firſt amongſt themſelves and their fellow-brethren in Chriſt, all Chriſtians far and near; next towards all men, heathens and infidels, their bitter and bloody perſecutors not excepted. Where *note*, The true property of Chriſtian love; it is, (1.) A brotherly affection, which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt, for grace ſake; and (2.) A gracious propenſity of heart, which a Chriſtian bears for God's ſake to all mankind, whereby he wills, and to his power procures all good for them. *And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love*, &c.

13 To the end he may ſtabliſh your hearts unblameable in holineſs before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all his ſaints.

Here a particular and ſpecial reaſon is aſſigned, why he prayed ſo fervently for their *abounding in love*, namely, in order to their eſtabliſhment *in faith and holineſs*; teaching us, that as true love evidences the co-exiſtence of all graces, ſo it gives ſtability and eſtabliſhment to all graces. *Learn* hence, 1. That growth in grace is accompanied with ſtability *both in faith and holineſs*. 2. That a general and abounding charity, being that by which we become moſt like unto God, tends exceedingly to our eſtabliſhment in all grace, and renders us *unblameable before God*, at the appearance of Chriſt. 3. That there will be no poſſibility of appearing *unblameable before* Chriſt at his *coming*, without the love and practice of univerſal holineſs in our Chriſtian courſe. 4. That the perfecting of a ſaint's graces, and rendering him altogether *unblameable*, without ſpot or imperfection in grace and holineſs, is reſerved till Chriſt's coming: Then, and not till then, ſhall our holineſs be perfected, our love improved to a ſeraphim's likeneſs, all burning; then ſhall we obey with vigour, praiſe with cheerfulneſs, delight in God above meaſure, fear him without torment, truſt him without deſpondency, ſerve him without laſſitude and wearineſs, without interruption or diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him, as well in holineſs as in happineſs, as well in purity as in immortality.

Come then, Lord, down to me,
Or take me up to thee.

CHAP. IV.

Our apoſtle comes now in the remaining part of this epiſtle, to recommend to the Theſſalonians *ſeveral duties and graces, with which, as with ſo many jewels of invaluable price, they were to adorn their Chriſtian converſation.*

FURTHERMORE then we beſeech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jeſus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more.

In theſe words, we have a general exhortation given to the Theſſalonians, That according to the doctrine and injunctions formerly given them for an holy converſation ſuitable to the goſpel, they would make it their care and endeavour to abound more and more in the exerciſe of piety, and outſtrip themſelves in doing their duty towards God and one another: *We beſeech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus*, &c. Where *note*, 1. With what great condeſcenſion and earneſtneſs St. Paul applies himſelf to them; he ſtyles them his brethren, and exhorts and beſeeches them. The miniſters of Chriſt muſt not only be teachers, but beſeechers alſo, meekly and affectionately intreating perſons to be kind to themſelves, and comply with their preſent duty. Yet, *note*, 2. With what authority he backs his intreaty, he beſeeches and exhorts *by the Lord Jeſus*, that is, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by his authority, and for his ſake; ſo that he that deſpiſeth the gentle exhortations of Chriſt's miniſters, deſpiſeth not men, but God; as the authority of a prince is deſpiſed, when his meſſages by his ambaſſadors are rejected. 3. The general and comprehenſive duty which they are exhorted to, namely, to walk ſo as to pleaſe God in their daily converſation, to be found in the practice of all the duties and virtues of a good life. Where *obſerve*, That St. Paul in the courſe of his miniſtry, did not only explain and unfold goſpel myſteries, but urge and enforce moral duties: *Ye have received of us how ye ought to walk.* This muſt be a miniſter's care, to acquaint his people, that as the privileges of Chriſtianity are very great, ſo the duties it requires are ſtrict and exact; and thoſe which we call moral duties, are an integral part of our religion; he that is not a moral man, is no Chriſtian; let us preach and preſs ſecond-table duties, with arguments drawn from the firſt, namely, that they be performed in humble obedience to the command of God, and with a ſingle eye at the glory of God, and from an inward principle of love to God, and then we can never preach up morality too much, nor our people practiſe it too much. Laſtly, The apoſtle exhorts them to abound more and more, that is, in grace and holineſs; Chriſtians are to be thankful for, but not ſatisfied with, their preſent meaſures of grace received; God allows us liberty to enlarge our deſires after an abundance of his grace; and happy is it where there is found an holy covetouſneſs going along with the grace of God, as there is an inſatiable covetouſneſs going along with the gold and treaſure of this world: This, ſays the apoſtle here, will pleaſe God, when *ye abound more and more.*

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus.

Here our apoſtle ſubjoins a reaſon, to enforce his foregoing exhortation; what he now required of them, was nothing but what at their firſt converſion to Chriſtianity he had commanded them, and that in the name, and by the authority of Jeſus Chriſt, to be performed by them; ſo that they were not his commands, but Chriſt's by him, and, as ſuch, to be eſteemed of them. *Learn* hence, That the inſtructions and rules for an holy life, laid down by the apoſtles before the churches, are to be looked upon as the commandments of Chriſt, as being dictated by his Spirit, and delivered by his authority, and as ſuch to be received of them, and obeyed by them.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication: 4 That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour: 5 Not in the luſt of concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.

This is the will of God, even your ſanctification; that is, this is the will of God, eminently and emphatically revealed in his word, that Chriſtians ſhould be holy and pure, chaſte and clean; not indulging themſelves in thoſe impure and filthy luſts of the fleſh, fornication, and all manner of uncleanneſs, which the Gentiles, who knew not the true God ſavingly, were addicted to, and, in a moſt beaſtly manner, guilty of; but that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs and make uſe of his body, and all its members, as the veſſel and inſtrument of the ſoul, in holineſs and honour. *Note* here, 1. How the apoſtle deſcends from general to particular duties: He exhorted the Theſſalonians, ver. 1. in the general, to walk ſo as to pleaſe God; here he exhorteth them in particular, to purity and chaſtity, both of heart and life, and to watch againſt all the violent eruptions of concupiſcence in their earthly members; teaching us, that the miniſters of God muſt not ſatisfy themſelves with giving general exhortations to a good life, but muſt treat of particular ſins and duties, and endeavour to put men upon the practice of the one, and to reclaim them from the other; thus doth our apoſtle here. 2. The particular duty exhorted to, ſanctification; a comprehenſive word, and of large extent; in the general, it conſiſts in a conformity of our natures to the nature of God, and of a conformity of our lives to the will of God. In particular, ſanctification here ſtands in oppoſition to all bodily uncleanneſs, as the next words do plainly ſhew, *that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication*, that is, all filthineſs and uncleanneſs contrary to chaſtity; intimating to us, that as there are no ſins that human nature is more inclined to, than the luſts of the fleſh; ſo there are no ſins that a Chriſtian ſhould more guard againſt, and ſtrive to mortify and ſubdue, as being contrary to that purity of nature and life which the goſpel directs, and the holy Spirit aſſiſts, unto. 3. The argument which our apoſtle here uſes to enforce his exhortation to purity and holineſs, *This is the will of God:* it is both the command of God that we ſhould be holy, and the will of God to make us holy; now the ſignification of God's will ought to be a ſufficient inducement to us to deſire it, and endeavour after it. *This is the will of God, even your ſanctification,* &c. 4. The remedy preſcribed againſt all bodily uncleanneſs, and that is, a careful preſerving the veſſel of the body free from all fleſhly pollution, and in that meaſure of purity and chaſtity which is ſuitable to the honour put upon it by God, in being made a temple for the Holy Ghoſt, *That every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour.* Where *obſerve,* The title given to our body, it is called a *veſſel;* it is, firſt, the Spirit's veſſel, he reſides in it as in his temple; and accordingly, it ſeems to be an alluſion to the conſecrated veſſels of the temple, in which a more than ordinary cleanneſs, and purity was found: Secondly, It is the ſoul's veſſel, it is its veſſel or receptacle, in which for a time, it is preſerved; and it is the inſtrument of the ſoul, by which it acts and performs its office and function. Now, it is every perſon's, every man and woman's duty, to poſſeſs their body, and to be maſters of it, not to be poſſeſſed by it, or enſlaved to it, but to keep it in ſubjection to, and as the inſtrument of the ſoul; the body is God's curious workmanſhip, it is Chriſt's precious purchaſe, it is the ſoul's receptacle, it is the Holy Ghoſt's temple; therefore, to be kept holy, pure and clean, like the conſecrated veſſels of the temple. 5. Our apoſtle exhorts the Theſſalonians, not only to abſtain from the outward act of uncleanneſs, but to mortify and ſubdue the inward *luſt of concupiſcence,* ver. 5. or, as the word ſignifies, the feveriſh fit, or violent paſſion of burning deſire, which boileth within, through all the members of the body without. There is a divine art in the exerciſe of chaſtity, and no ſmall ſkill required to keep a man's ſoul and body free from fleſhly uncleanneſs; in order to which, inordinate deſires muſt be reſiſted, the outward ſenſes guarded, enticing and enſnaring objects avoided, wanton company declined, meat, drink, and ſleep, ſoberly uſed, our lawful callings diligently followed, the firſt motions to uncleanneſs ſuppreſſed, prayer to God renewed; and, if theſe prevail not, marriage, God's ſpecial remedy, holily made uſe of. Thus may Chriſtians *poſſeſs their veſſels in ſanctification and honour, not in the luſts of concupiſcence.*

6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: Becauſe that the Lord *is* the avenger of all ſuch, as we alſo have forewarned you and teſtified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs. 8 He therefore that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God, who hath alſo given unto us his holy Spirit.

Here we have another poſitive duty preſſed upon the Theſſalonians, in which a great part of their ſanctification or holineſs would diſcover itſelf, namely, juſtice and equity in all their dealings, man with man. Theſſalonica was a city of great trade and merchandiſe; therefore, the apoſtle directs them, in their traffic and commerce, neither by fraud nor force, to over-reach and go beyond one another: And the apoſtle ſaying, Let none *go beyond or defraud his brother,* that is, his fellow Chriſtian, doth not ſuppoſe it lawful to defraud ſuch as were not their brethren, but only lets them ſee, that for Chriſtians to defraud and cheat, to over-reach and go beyond one another, would be a very great aggravation of their crime, ſeeing the laws of their religion, as well as the light of nature, condemns all ſuch injuſtice and diſhoneſty: And accordingly, the apoſtle adds a reaſon to enforce his exhortation, drawn from the dreadful effect of all ſuch ſins; namely, that it expoſes and lays open the guilty perſon to the direful vengeance of God: *The Lord is the avenger of all ſuch.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the wiſdom of God has variouſly diſpenſed the gifts of providence to mankind; to ſome more, to others leſs; to ſome in one kind, to others in another; ſo that men cannot live without mutual commerce one with another. 2. That there is ſuch a covetous and inſatiable deſire of wealth in the heart of man, that little regarding the meaſure of worldly things, which God has diſpenſed unto him, he lies at catch to take all advantages of his neighbour in matters of commerce, and, by defrauding and over-reaching him, ſeeks to increaſe his own worldly eſtate with impairing of others: *Let no man go beyond his brother:* The apoſtle by forbidding this evil, plainly ſuppoſes man to be very prone and ready to fall into it. 3. That the ſin of injuſtice in traffic and commerce, is ſo very heinous in the ſight of God, that ſuch men as are guilty of it, without repentance, muſt never expect to eſcape the vengeance of God, either here or hereafter; God is the avenger of all ſuch. *Obſerve* next, The reaſon urged by St. Paul to enforce his foregoing exhortations to purity and juſtice. The firſt is taken from the deſign of God in their vocation; when called out of their heatheniſh ſtate to Chriſtianity, they were called not to uncleanneſs, but out of uncleanneſs to holineſs. The ſecond is taken from the heinouſneſs of their ſin who ſhall deſpiſe or reject the commands here given for holineſs and ſanctification: *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God:* to deſpiſe the miniſter of God in a command which he delivers from God, is to deſpiſe God himſelf; the apoſtle gave theſe commands by the direction of the holy Spirit, which was given him for that end: *Who hath alſo given unto his holy Spirit: Therefore,* ſays he, *he that deſpiſeth,* &c. Where *note,* That although the reaſon here given, why ſuch as deſpiſed the apoſtle, deſpiſed God himſelf, be peculiar to St. Paul, who had the holy Spirit to guide him infallibly; yet ſo far as the ordinary miniſters of Chriſt do follow the apoſtle's ſteps, and deliver nothing but what is agreeable to the word of God, the contempt of their meſſage is a deſpiſing of God himſelf.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: For ye yourſelves are taught of God to love one another. 10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia. But we beſeech you, brethren, that ye increaſe more and more;

Our apoſtle proceeds from an exhortation to chaſtity and juſtice, to preſs that of love, called here *brotherly love,* becauſe it has all Chriſtians, all our fellow-members in Chriſt for its object; and he perſuades to the practice of it by a winning inſinuation, that he need not ſay much upon this argument, becauſe they were taught of God, that is, by the goſpel of God, and influenced by the Spirit of God, to love one another. And *obſerve* we farther, The extenſiveneſs of their love, it was not confined to a party, only to them in Theſſalonica, but throughout all Macedonia; however, he deſires them to extend it ſtill farther, *to abound more and more*; that is, firſt, in the extent of it, Let it reach not only the ſaints throughout all Macedonia, but even to them at the ends of the earth: Secondly, In the meaſure of it, to excel even themſelves in the degrees of their love. *Learn* hence, That neither brotherly *love*, nor any other Chriſtian grace, doth advance to ſuch an height in any ſaint here, but it is ſtill capable of farther augmentation and increaſe, both intenſively, by advancing to farther meaſures, and higher degrees of perfection, and extenſively, reaching to more objects, who ought to be ſharers in our love.

11 And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

It is ſuppoſed by ſome, that the charity and bounty of theſe Theſſalonians, mentioned in the foregoing verſes, occaſioned ſome perſons to be idle and carry tales from houſe to houſe, ſeeking by ſuch flatteries and inſinuations to maintain themſelves without working; the apoſtle therefore commands every man to work at ſome calling, that they neither be a burden to the church, nor give a ſcandal to the heathen. *Study to be quiet*, that is, to be of a peaceable ſpirit and temper; and the original word imports an ambitious ſtudy; it ought to be our ambitious deſire to live quietly and peaceably with all men; and to live ſo with ſome men will require ſtudy, and earneſt endeavour: *If it be poſſible, live peaceably with all men*, ſays St. Paul, Rom. xii. 18. Implying, that there are ſome men that it is impoſſible to live peaceably with; and whereas he adds, *doing our own buſineſs, and working with our own hands*; that apoſtolical injunction requires, that every perſon be well employed, and found in the way of an honeſt and induſtrious diligence, for no man is ſent into the world to be idle; and as it is every man's duty, ſo it is alſo his privilege, to have a calling; the want of which expoſes to innumerable temptations, for the devil finds an idle perſon always ready to run of his errand.

12 That ye may walk honeſtly towards them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

Our apoſtle having exhorted the Theſſalonians to induſtry and diligence in the foregoing verſe, he preſſes it with a double argument in this verſe. 1. Hereby they ſhould walk honeſtly towards them that are without, that is, in a decent and ſeemly manner in the eyes of unconverted Pagans, who are ſaid to be without, becauſe without the pale of the viſible church; and, 2. Becauſe, by God's bleſſing upon their induſtry, they would attain to ſuch a competency of the things of this life, as to lack nothing which the wiſdom of God ſaw fit and convenient for them; ſo that by induſtrious diligence we pleaſe God, we profit ourſelves, are ſerviceable to the public, we ſilence and ſtop the mouths of the enemies of religion, and beautify our profeſſion with a becoming converſation.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others which have no hope.

Our apoſtle, from this verſe to the end of the chapter, exhorts the Theſſalonians to moderate their grief and ſorrow for their friends who died in Chriſt, many of which, no doubt, were martyrs for the truth in thoſe days of perſecution: He lays down many conſolatory arguments, as ſo many ſovereign antidotes againſt immoderate ſorrow for the death of pious relations; and, firſt, he acquaints them, that ſuch ſorrow as is exceſſive, would be more like Pagans than Chriſtians, who mourn without hope of any life after this, that is, of a reſurrection from the grave, and a ſtate of future immortality. Our apoſtle doth not forbid ſorrow for the dead abſolutely, which Chriſt ſhewed for Lazarus, and the church for Stephen, but it is exceſſive ſorrow only that is here condemned. *Learn* hence, 1. That all ſorrow for the death of friends is not unlawful, or forbidden to Chriſtians; the Chriſtian religion doth not deſtroy natural affections, but teaches us to moderate them. 2. That there is a mighty difference between the Chriſtian's ſorrow for the dead, and theirs who are ſtrangers to Chriſtianity: The ſorrow of the heathen was extravagant and exceſſive in the meaſure, fooliſh, cruel, and impious in the manner; they tore their hair, beat their breaſts, cut their fleſh, and ran howling up and down in the moſt deſperate manner: But the Chriſtian ſorrow is ſober, moderate, ſilent, free from oſtentation, under the government of reaſon and religion. 3. That the believe of a future ſtate, and the hope of a joyful reſurrection, is the cauſe of this great difference; it is ignorance of the happineſs of glorified ſaints in heaven, which is the cauſe of our immoderate ſorrow for their death, here on earth.

14 For if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.

St. Paul having, in the foregoing verſe, diſſuaded from immoderate grief and ſorrow for the death of relations, comes now to lay down ſeveral conſiderations or conſolatory arguments in order to it. The firſt word of comfort is this, That our relations over whom we mourn, are but fallen aſleep; the grave is a bed, in which the ſaint is laid to reſt, his body reſts in a bed of duſt, as in a ſafe and conſecrated dormitory, till the morning of the reſurrection: And, if the night be long, the morning will be the more joyous. The ſecond comfort is, they ſleep in Jeſus, that is, in union with Jeſus, as members of his body; in the faith of Jeſus, that is, in ſuch a belief of the doctrine of Chriſt, as is accompanied with an holy obedience to the commands of Chriſt. The third conſolatory word is this, God will come, that is, to judgment, and when he cometh, will bring his ſleeping ſaints with him, that is, he will bring their ſouls from heaven, their bodies from the grave. Body and ſoul united he ſhall take up to himſelf into the clouds, and then carry all his ſaints back with him into heaven. A fourth, is this, our relations are not alone in death; *Jeſus died*; the Captain of our ſalvation marched before us through the black regions of death and the grave, and has perfumed the bed of the grave, by his own lying in it. *Note* here, The apoſtle ſays Jeſus died, the ſaints ſleep; a believer's death is called a ſleep; I do not find that Chriſt's death is called a ſleep, no, his death was death indeed, death with a curſe in it: But the believer's death is turned by Chriſt into a ſweet and ſilent ſleep. Again, Jeſus died and *roſe again*, that is a comforting conſideration, he was laid, but not loſt in the grave; he roſe by his own power, he roſe as our Head and Repreſentative, and accordingly, all his ſaints are riſen in him, and ſhall riſe after him; *becauſe I live*, ſays Chriſt, *you ſhall live alſo*.

15 For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep.

In this verſe St. Paul obviates an objection: Some might ſay, that the ſaints found alive at the laſt day might be ſooner happy than the dead ſaints; no, ſays the apoſtle, they that are alive ſhall not prevent them that ſleep, they ſhall not prevent their riſing, nor ſhall they get the ſtart of them, or get to heaven before them, or have any advantage above them; the living ſaints ſhall not be made happy without them, nor one moment before them. *Learn* hence, That the reſurrection which the ſaints that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall be made partakers of, ſhall put them into as full a capacity of the glory of Chriſt's coming, as if they had remained alive in the body, till that bleſſed hour: Nay, the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, that is, the ſaints who ſleep in the grave at Chriſt's coming, ſhall be ſo far from being made leſs happy, or later happy, than the ſaints who ſhall be found alive, that they ſhall be firſt remembered; Chriſt's firſt care will be about his dead ſaints; they that have ſlept ſo long in their bed of duſt ſhall be firſt awakened, before any thing be done about them that never ſlept; if there be any privilege, any joy, any triumph, greater than others, ſuch as ſleep in Jeſus, and eſpecially ſuch as have ſuffered for Jeſus, ſhall be partakers of it at that great day.

16 For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt:

Theſe words gives us the aſſurance of the certainty of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and of the ſolemn manner of it, and of the conſequence of it. *Obſerve*, 1. The certainty of our Lord's coming; *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven*; that is, the Lord Jeſus, the Mediator; he will not depute an angel, but deſcend himſelf, to finiſh that laſt part of his mediatorial office. Chriſt will come perſonally, for the judgment will be managed viſibly; and for the recompence of his abaſement, it is requiſite that he that was judged by the world, ſhould come and judge the world. Reaſon ſays, he may come and judge the world, for he made it; faith ſays, he muſt and ſhall come to judge the world, for he has promiſed it, John xiv. 2. Let us then keep up our faith, and our faith will keep up our hearts. 2. The awful and ſolemn manner of our Lord's coming, and that is threefold: (1.) He ſhall deſcend with a ſhout; the original word ſignifies ſuch a ſhout as is heard among ſeamen when they deſcry the haven, and with united voices cry out, "A ſhore, a ſhore." (2.) With the voice of an archangel; probable it is, that Chriſt himſelf ſhall give the word of command, both to the quick and dead, to appear before him, and that his command ſhall be proclaimed by an archangel. (3.) With the trump of God; the angel's proclamation ſhall be confirmed by ſound of a trumpet, which will be heard far and near, even by thoſe who are in the graves, and in the depth of the ſea. *Learn* hence, That our Lord's ſecond coming at the great day, to judge the quick and the dead, ſhall be attended with ſuch ſolemnity, that all the terror, majeſty, and dreadful reverence, which has been ever ſeen upon the earth, ſhall fall infinitely ſhort of it. Great was the terror on mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, but far greater will the terror be at the day of judgment, when Chriſt comes to puniſh the tranſgreſſors of that law, and the diſobeyers of his goſpel. *Obſerve*, 3. The bleſſed conſequence of his coming, namely, the reſurrection of his ſaints: *The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*; the ſaints ſhall riſe with the very ſame bodies which they laid down in the grave; and they ſhall riſe firſt, that is, before thoſe who are alive ſhall be changed: Though it is very probable that there will be no conſiderable difference of time between the glorification of the raiſed ſaints, and thoſe that are alive at Chriſt's coming, yet it ſeems evident, that the dead ſaints ſhall be raiſed, and in their bodies be glorified, before them that are alive ſhall be changed.

17 Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. The triumphant aſcenſion both of the living and ſleeping ſaints, together into the clouds; *We which are alive ſhall be caught up together with them into the clouds*. This aſcenſion ſhall be effected by the power of Chriſt, by the miniſtry of angels, and by the ſpirituality of the ſaints own bodies. *Learn* hence, That the deſcent of the ſaints of God into the grave, is not with ſo much weakneſs, ignominy and abaſement, as their aſcent after the reſurrection, to meet their Lord in the air, ſhall be with power, triumph, and glory; Chriſt ſhall draw them, clouds ſhall carry them, angels ſhall conduct them. *Obſerve*, 2. The bleſſed meeting of all the ſaints together in one body, to take their flight together to meet the Lord Jeſus, who comes from the third heaven to meet them in the lower region of the air, when Chriſt will own them in their perſons, own them in their ſervices, own them in their ſufferings, and they ſhall receive their full and final benediction from the mouth of Chriſt, and take an everlaſting poſſeſſion of the heavenly kingdom, together with Chriſt. 3. The ſaints cohabitation and fellowſhip with Chriſt, together with its extent and duration, they ſhall ever be with the Lord; this implies the ſaints preſence with Chriſt, their viſion and ſight of him, their fruition and enjoyment of him, their delectation in him, their conformity to him. *Learn* hence, That the top and height of the ſaints bleſſedneſs in heaven conſiſts in this, that they ſhall for ever be there with Chriſt.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.

That is, draw matter of conſolation to yourſelves from the foregoing conſiderations, againſt the loſs of your deceaſed friends; intimating, that the beſt and choiceſt of comforts, for ſupporting the ſpirits of men under afflictions in general, and the loſs of dear relations in particular, are drawn from the holy ſcriptures; *comfort one another with theſe words*, that is, with ſuch ſcriptual words as he had now written.

CHAP. V.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing chapter, treated of Chriſt's ſecond coming to judgment, in this he makes it his buſineſs to put all perſons upon the practice and performance of ſuch duties as would prepare and fit them for that ſolemn time.

BUT of the times and the ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourſelves know perfectly that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they ſhall not eſcape.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Although I have told you that there will be a general reſurrection and future judgment, when Chriſt will certainly come in the clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, yet I ſuppoſe you do not expect that I ſhould write to you of the particular time of his coming; for you have been told, that his coming will be like the coming of a thief, without warning, and without noiſe, when perſons are moſt ſecure, leaſt ſuſpecting, and wholly unprovided for it; yea, as the pains of a woman in travail, which are unavoidable; the thief may perhaps not come, but the pains of child-birth muſt come, and alſo be painful when they come." *Learn* hence, 1. That the wiſdom of God has thought fit to conceal and keep ſecret the determinate time of Chriſt's coming to judgment, and yet there is an itching curioſity in man's nature to ſearch and pry into that profound ſecret, though the knowledge of it is not only impoſſible, but would prove unprofitable and hurtful to mankind, making the world ſecure and careleſs; whereas, not knowing the hour when our Lord cometh, it ſhould oblige us to be upon our watch every hour. *Note* then, That our Lord will certainly come at one hour or other, but at what hour he will come cannot certainly be known, yet there is no hour when we can promiſe ourſelves that he will not come. *Note*, laſtly, That the pain and ſorrow, the trouble and horror which the day of the Lord will bring upon ſuch as are unready and unprepared for it, no tongue can utter, no heart can conceive; the greateſt of earthly and bodily torments and ſorrows, ſuch as the pangs of a woman in travail, being but weak ſhadows and ſlender repreſentations of it, the day of the Lord cometh *as travail upon a woman with child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs, that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs.

Note here, The wiſdom and holy caution of our apoſtle in his application to the Theſſalonians; he had in the foregoing verſes aſſerted the certainty and ſuddenneſs of Chriſt's coming, namely, to deſtroy Jeruſalem, and to judge the world. Now, leſt theſe Chriſtians ſhould be terrified in their minds, and ſhaken with apprehenſions of fear from that ſudden deſtruction he had mentioned, he caſts in a ſeaſonable word of comfort here in the words before us, aſſuring them that were ſincere Chriſtians amongſt them, that how ſudden ſoever the coming and appearance of Chriſt might be, yet it ſhould not find them unready and unprepared for it, becauſe they were not in darkneſs, but in the light, and were not children of the night, but of the day; that is, they were not now in a ſtate of heatheniſm, but Chriſtianity; they were not any longer in their groſs and natural ignorance of God, as they were before converſion, but they were the children of the light and of the day; living and walking in the light of the goſpel, and in all holineſs of converſation. *Learn* hence, that as ſincere Chriſtians are freed from the groſs darkneſs of their natural ſtate, from the darkneſs and ignorance of ſin, and do walk in the light of an holy converſation, ſo their knowledge and practical holineſs will be a good ſecurity againſt the terror of ſurpriſing afflictions, and particularly againſt the dread and terror of the day of judgment.

6 Therefore let us not ſleep as *do* others; but let us watch and be ſober. 7 For they that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. 8 But let us who are of the day be ſober, putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of ſalvation:

The apoſtle having acquainted the Theſſalonians with the privilege of their converted ſtate, that they were the children of the light, having received a light of knowledge, a light of grace and holineſs, and a light of joy and comfort from the goſpel, he comes next to infer the duties proper and ſuitable to perſons in ſuch a ſtate; Firſt, Negative, *Let us not ſleep as do others*; ſleep is not proper for the day, but the night; the ſleep here intended, is the ſleep of ſin, and of ſinful ſecurity, whereby all the ſpiritual ſenſes of a man are bound up, ſo that he is both unapprehenſive of his duty, and regardleſs of his danger. Secondly, Poſitive, *Let us watch and be ſober*; that is, let us be always ready and prepared for Chriſt's coming; and that we may be ſo, let us be found in the daily exerciſe of ſobriety, at no time overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and that day overtake us unawares; the exerciſe of theſe two graces, watchfulneſs and ſobriety, do beſt together, and can hardly be ſeparated one from another; he that is not ſober, cannot be watchful; and he that is not watchful, can never be ready for Chriſt's coming: Let us therefore (ſays the apoſtle) *watch and be ſober.* *Obſerve* next, Our apoſtle ſubjoins a reaſon to enforce his exhortation to watchfulneſs and ſobriety, becauſe ſleep and drunkenneſs are works of darkneſs, performed in the night, and not ſuitable for the children of the day: *They that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that are drunk, are drunken in the night.* The old heathens had their *Bacchanalia,* their drunken feaſts in the night; and in the apoſtles' times, drunkenneſs was ſo ſhameful a vice, that men were aſhamed to be ſeen drunken in the day-time: But, Lord, to what an height of impudence is the intemperance of our age arrived, when Chriſtians bluſh not to do that at midday, which heathens were aſhamed of at midnight! *Obſerve* farther, Another reaſon ſuggeſted why we ſhould be thus ſober and watchful, namely, becauſe our life is a ſpiritual warfare: It is now a time of fighting, therefore not of ſleeping, and intemperate eating and drinking; ſoldiers muſt be upon their guard and well-armed; accordingly St. Paul directs to the two principal pieces of ſpiritual armour, to guard the moſt noble and vital parts, namely, the head and the heart; the helmet for the head, the breaſt-plate for the heart; for theſe two being the chief fountains of life and ſenſation, the preſerving of them ſafe, is, in effect, the preſerving of the whole man; and accordingly, the ſoldiers that were upon their watch, and kept centinel, never ſtood without their helmet and breaſt-plate. In alluſion to which, our apoſtle here directs us, as Chriſtian ſoldiers, to put on the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation, without which we can never be rightly and duly prepared for our ſpiritual warfare. *Note* here, Of what admirable uſe, faith, love, and hope, are to a Chriſtian; faith fortifies againſt deſtructive temptations, love will preſerve from apoſtaſy and revolting, and hope will be of univerſal uſe unto us in the exerciſes of our Chriſtian courſe; it will be a cordial to comfort us, a ſpur to quicken us, a ſtaff to ſupport us, a bridle to reſtrain us, an helmet to defend us: *Therefore let us who are of the day be ſober,* &c.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 10 Who died for us; that whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another, even as alſo ye do.

Obſerve here, 1. A reaſon enforcing the apoſtle's exhortation to holineſs of life, *For,* or becauſe, *God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt.* *Note* here, 1. What a Chriſtian is not appointed to; he is not appointed to wrath. 2. What he is appointed to, namely, to obtain ſalvation. 3. The means by whom a Chriſtian doth obtain ſalvation, and that is by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That God's ordination and appointment of us to happineſs and ſalvation, doth not diſcharge us from care and endeavour after the practice of univerſal holineſs; it is the greateſt piece of folly imaginable, from the appointment of the end, to infer the refuſal or neglect of the means. *Learn,* 2. That our Lord Jeſus is the perſon appointed by God the Father, by whom alone all believers ſhall obtain ſalvation. 3. That nothing ſhort of the death of Chriſt was ſufficient to purchaſe ſalvation for us, *we obtain ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us.* 4. That the great end deſigned by Chriſt in dying for us, was our living to him, in order to our living with him; a life of grace on earth, is our evidence for a life of glory in heaven; *whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him.* *Obſerve* laſtly, The great and important duty which he exhorts the Theſſalonians to perform mutually to each other, and that is, to comfort themſelves together with this hope, and to edify and build up one another in faith and holineſs; *wherefore comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another, as alſo ye do;* implying that as it is the duty, ſo it ought to be the endeavour of Chriſtians to edify one another, both in their graces, and in their comforts.

12 And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you; 13 And eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake. *And* be at peace among yourſelves.

In theſe words have we declared both the miniſter's office, and the people's duty; the miniſter's office, with reſpect unto his people, and the people's duty both towards their miniſters, and one towards another. The miniſterial office and function is here deſcribed, and conſiſts of three parts, publicly to *labour,* privately to *admoniſh,* miniſterially to *rule.* To labour in the word and doctrine, the word ſignifies a labour unto wearineſs. Our work is the moſt weighty work, and, bleſſed be God, the moſt worthy work too. Admonition conſiſts of two parts, reproving of ſins committed, and exhorting to duties neglected; rightly to do both, requires that the miniſter be a perſon of knowledge and underſtanding, of prudence and diſcretion, of courage and reſolution, of integrity and unblameableneſs of converſation; to rule not magiſterially, much leſs tyrannically, but in love, and with a ſpirit of meekneſs, executing that power which Chriſt has given for edification, and not for deſtruction: Such a power as the ſhepherd has over the flock, to guide and conduct it; as the head has over the members, to influence and quicken them; as the father of the family has over the houſhold, to take care of it, and provide for it. *Obſerve* next, The people's duty to their paſtors, or ſpiritual guides declared; and this is twofold: (1.) They are to know them, and this with a knowledge of obſervation, and with a knowledge of approbation, and with a knowledge of imitation. (2.) They are highly to eſteem them, paying honour to the function, reverence to their perſons, and all this in love, and for their work's ſake. *Obſerve* laſtly, the people's duty one towards another, *and be at peace among yourſelves;* ſuch a people can never join hearts in duty that cannot join hands in love; Chriſtian love is a nurſing mother to all graces, and tends exceedingly to make the work of the miniſtry ſucceſsful; but when ſtrife and diſſention, when diſcord and diviſion prevails either amongſt the people themſelves, or betwixt miniſter and people, farewel all expectation of ſucceſs from the ableſt miniſtry upon earth.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

Here our apoſtle directs the miniſters of Chriſt how to carry themſelves towards their people, namely, that they ſhould *admoniſh* thoſe that are unruly, and walk diſorderly, that they would *comfort the feeble-minded*, ſuch as are diſpirited by, and dejected under their afflictions, that they ſhould bear with the weak in faith, and be patient towards all mankind. *Note* hence, That the church of Chriſt here on earth, is like an hoſpital of ſickly and infirm perſons, labouring under great variety of ſpiritual diſeaſes, and conſequently fit objects of Chriſt's miniſters, to exerciſe their patience and pains upon; ſome unruly, ſome weak, ſome feeble-minded; every perſon, every member of the church is a patient, and every patient has his particular diſtemper, which calls for indefatigable diligence, and invincible patience, from ſuch as are ſpiritual phyſicians.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*: but ever follow that which is good, both among yourſelves and to all *men*.

Our apoſtle from this verſe cloſes his epiſtle with a general exhortation to all Chriſtians to be found in the practice of ſeveral neceſſary and important duties; the firſt of which is to abſtain from all revenge, *render to no man evil for evil*; a malicious deſire of revenge is ſo far beneath a Chriſtian, that it is the baſeneſs of a man. Let him that does the wrong look to it, could an heathen ſay; not only revenge in the action, but in the affection, is greatly ſinful before God, and deeply penal alſo; as jealouſy is the rage of a man, ſo malice and revenge is the rage of the devil, it is the very ſoul and ſpirit of the apoſtate nature. *But ever follow that which is good*, &c. By *good* here, as it ſtands in oppoſition to rendering evil, muſt be underſtood good will and beneficence, or doing good to enemies, and this the apoſtle would have us follow, or, as the word ſignifies, purſue with eagerneſs, as the hunter doth his game, and this continually. *Ever follow that which is good* without interruption, notwithſtanding a multiplicity of injuries; and this not only among themſelves, who were Chriſtian profeſſors, but even amongſt heathens (with whom they lived) though bitter enemies to Chriſtianity. *Learn* hence, That a Chriſtian muſt not turn vindictive and impatient, or incline to any deſires or motions towards private revenge, notwithſtanding the malicious temper of his adverſary continues; but inſtead of being overcome of evil, muſt labour *to overcome evil with good*; *render to no man evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourſelves and to all men*.

16 Rejoice evermore.

Obſerve here, 1. Three very extenſive and comprehenſive duties, which our apoſtle exhorts unto, all which have a kind of univerſality annexed unto them: Now the more comprehenſive any duty is, the greater its obligation is; the firſt duty is to *rejoice evermore*, that is, to carry ourſelves ſo holily towards God, and ſo circumſpectly and unblameably before men, that we may always have cauſe for rejoicing, and in the midſt of temptations, and in the midſt of poverty and affliction, may actually rejoice in the expectation of preſent advantage by them, and in the hope of the glory of God, as the reward of them. *Learn* hence, That the children of God ought to make conſcience of rejoicing in God at all times, and in all conditions: But is not there a time to mourn, as well as to rejoice? Yes, but it is no where ſaid, mourn evermore; nay, holy mourning has the ſeed of ſpiritual joy in it, directly tends to it, and will certainly end in it; mourning is but a temporary, rejoicing is an eternal duty.

17 Pray without ceaſing.

Note from the connection, That he that would rejoice evermore, muſt pray evermore: ſeldom praying and conſtant rejoicing will never ſtand together; according to our conſtancy in prayer, ſuch will be the conſtancy of our joy. *Note*, 2. That frequent and conſtant prayer to God, is a duty required of all Chriſtians; we are then ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably, when we pray at ſtated times, morning and evening every day, when upon extraordinary occaſions we perform the duty in an extraordinary manner, and when we perform it with unfainting perſeverance, both frequently and fervently, though we receive no preſent anſwer to our prayers; and, in a word, when the heart is always kept in a praying frame, this is to pray continually; and the reaſon for it is, becauſe we ſtand in continual need of God, we want him continually, we ſin againſt him continually, we are ſurrounded with temptations continually, we are expoſed to troubles and afflictions continually, and we ought to glorify God continually; and if ſo, we muſt pray continually; not that a man ſhould do nothing elſe but pray; for though we may do nothing without prayer, yet we muſt do many things beſides praying.

18 In every thing give thanks: For this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty required, and that is, Thankſgiving. 2. The extent of the duty, *In every thing give thanks*, that is, be thankful in every condition, and for every providential diſpenſation, both proſperous and adverſe. *Queſt.* “Should Chriſtians be thankful for afflictions?” *Anſ.* Yes, Becauſe they are fruits of fatherly love, becauſe they conform us unto Chriſt, becauſe they prevent ſin, and purge out ſin, becauſe they fit us for glory, and will add to our crown of glory at the great day. *Queſt.* “But ſhould Chriſtians be thankful for ſin, or when they fall into ſin?” *Anſ.* By no means. *Rule*, What we muſt not pray for, we may not give thanks for; we muſt pray to be kept from ſin, therefore may not give thanks when we fall into ſin; ſin diſhonours God, diſrobes ourſelves, expoſes to God's wrath and curſe, is the ground of our juſt deteſtation, therefore cannot be the ground of thankſgiving; yet when we obtain pardon of ſin, or get any good by ſin, we may and ought to rejoice at it. *Obſerve*, 3. The grounds and reaſons of the duty. (1.) It is the *will of God*, his revealed will; this the law of nature directs to and the light of Scripture calls for; and he that performs it ſpiritually, glorifies God abundantly. 2. It is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, this part of God's will is eſpecially revealed to you by the doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, and by the example of Chriſt Jeſus: Chriſt was both a great pattern and precedent of thankfulneſs all his life long: He thanked God frequently and fervently, and has made thankfulneſs a conſiderable part of our goſpel ſervice, Heb. xiii. 15.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

Still *obſerve*, 1. The coherence and connexion, he that would *rejoice evermore*, muſt *pray without ceaſing*; and he that would rejoice in every thing, muſt be thankful in every thing; and he that would rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually, muſt evermore keep the Spirit unquenched; the way to keep one's ſelf warm, is to keep the fire burning: *Quench not the Spirit*; that is, neither the graces of the Spirit, nor the motions of the Spirit. *Note* here, 1. That the holy Spirit of God in man is of the nature of fire, as fire it enlighteneth, it enliveneth, it warmeth, it conſumeth, it purifieth and refineth, it aſcendeth upward. 2. That this holy fire of the Spirit may be quenched; the gifts, graces, motions, and comforts of the holy Spirit are of ſuch a nature, that if they be not cheriſhed, they are quenched: Fire will go out as well by neglecting it, as by caſting water upon it. 3. That it muſt be a Chriſtian's ſpecial care, that the graces of God's holy Spirit be not quenched in him, nor any of its motions reſiſted by him. Sin in general quenches the Spirit, as water quenches fire; particularly, ſins committed againſt knowledge and conſcience; inordinate love of the world quenches the Spirit, as earth will extinguiſh fire as well as water. A cold, cuſtomary, formal appearance of holy duties, without the exerciſe of lively faith and holy love in the performance of them, will grieve and quench the Spirit, eſpecially ſenſual luſts indulged, and anger, malice, and revenge harboured in the heart; the holy Dove will not reſt upon that man, that has the heart of a vulture in his breaſt and boſom; and let us always remember, if we quench the Spirit in his motions, he is alſo quenched by us in his offices; he doth us many good offices, in prayer, he is our helper, our aſſiſtant, he quickens to the duty, and in the duty, and helps our infirmities, and makes interceſſion for us in our Chriſtian courſe; he guides us, comforts us, and bears witneſs to our integrity in us: All theſe good offices will he ceaſe to do for us, if he be quenched in us. *Quench not the Spirit.*

20 Deſpiſe not propheſyings.

Note here, 1. How cloſe this duty is coupled with the former, *Quench not the Spirit*; *deſpiſe not propheſyings*; plainly intimating to us, that the Spirit is then dangerouſly quenched, when propheſying, or the preaching of the word, is ſinfully neglected. 2. That by propheſying here, is not meant foretelling things to come, but the interpretation and application of the holy ſcriptures, which we call preaching. 3. That by not deſpiſing it, we are to underſtand, that it is our obliged duty to put an high value and eſteem upon it, to attend to it, and have a great regard for it, to honour the public miniſtry as an ordinance of God for inſtruction, converſion, and edification. *Learn*, That it is not ſufficient that we do not ſlight the ordinance of preaching, nor declaim againſt it as vain and uſeleſs, (as the manner of ſome is) but we are to have an honourable eſteem of it, and evidence that eſteem by a due attendance upon it: More is intended by the Holy Ghoſt than is here expreſſed; for though he only forbids the ſin, he intends the duty or grace in ſtrict oppoſition to the ſin, namely, That Chriſtians ought to be ſo far from deſpiſing, that they ought to be very forward in embracing of the miniſtry and preaching of the word.

21 Prove all things; hold faſt that which is good.

Note here, 1. The perſons to whom this advice is given, to the church of the Theſſalonians, not to the miniſters, but to the people, ver. 12. *Know them that labour among you*, &c. 2. The advice itſelf, *Prove all things*; examine, try, and approve them, with a judgment of private diſcretion, not of public deciſion. *Learn*, 1. That it is the duty of all Chriſtians to examine the grounds of their faith and religion, and not to take them upon truſt; otherwiſe their embracing the beſt religion in the world, is rather the reſult of chance than of judgment and choice. 2. That although all doctrines and opinions muſt be tried, yet only that which is good muſt be retained. 3. That nothing is to be held faſt but what is firſt tried: Suppoſe we hold that which is good, yet if we have not tried and proved it to be good, it is no better to us than that which is evil; to approve before trial is not good, though the thing approved be never ſo good. *Inference*, That this is a ſtrong argument for the perſpicuity and ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures, and againſt the neceſſity of a living Judge, for he that muſt try all things muſt alſo try the doctrine of this living Judge, and therefore, till he has made this trial, muſt not admit his doctrine as an article of Chriſtian faith, for theſe words plainly teach, that what we hold faſt, muſt be firſt tried: *Try all things, and hold faſt that which is good.*

22 Abſtain from all appearance of evil.

This advice genuinely follows upon the former; after we have tried all things, we muſt *hold faſt that which is good*, and *abſtain from evil*. Where *note*, The gradation uſed by our apoſtle, we muſt *abſtain from evil*, *from all manner of evil*, *from all appearance of evil*. Yet *obſerve*, It is not the apoſtle's meaning that we abſtain from all that which appears evil to others, for that would be to deſtroy our Chriſtian liberty in things indifferent, and create in our minds continual perplexities, there is nothing almoſt we can do, but may appear evil to ſome. But St. Paul here enjoins us to abſtain from every thing which, after trial, ſeems evil to ourſelves, and is judged by us ſo to be; yet it is our duty not to give any juſt occaſion of ſcandal to any, but to live not only *ſine crimine*, but *ſine labe*, not only without fault, but, if poſſible, without flaw, that the world may have nothing to ſpot us withal.

23 And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly: and I *pray God* your whole ſpirit and ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Note here, 1. That our apoſtle having exhorted the Theſſalonians to labour after the higheſt meaſures of ſanctification, breathes out his ſoul here in a moſt affectionate prayer to God, to ſanctify them thoroughly and throughout; teaching us, that inſtruction and ſupplication ſhould go together; after we have been inſtant with our people, we muſt be earneſt and inſtant with God for them. 2. The perſon whom the apoſtle directs his prayer for ſanctification to, *The God of peace:* But why doth he not ſtyle him the God of grace? Becauſe peace and unity is one very eminent part of that ſanctification the apoſtle had prayed for, and had exhorted them before unto, ver. 13. *Be at peace among yourſelves.* Now this grace being once well rooted, all the other parts of ſanctification thrive the better. 3. How thorough and prevailing a work of ſanctification the apoſtle prays for; namely, that God would ſanctify them wholly in ſpirit, ſoul, and body. By ſpirit, underſtand the ſuperior faculties, the underſtanding, the will and conſcience; by ſoul, the inferior faculties, the paſſions, affections, and ſenſitive appetite; and by body, the outward man, the tabernacle of the ſoul. Now the apoſtle prays, that all theſe may be ſanctified, becauſe they are all defiled. Bleſſed be God, regenerating grace is as univerſal a principle as original ſin was; it is in the underſtanding by illumination, in the will by renovation, in all the affections by ſanctification, reducing thoſe rebellious powers under the government and dominion of reaſon and religion. 4. Our apoſtle doth not only pray for their ſanctification, but for their preſervation alſo, that they may be *preſerved blameleſs to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is preſerved in a ſtate of grace and holineſs unto the end; all the ſanctified are preſerved, inſtability is an argument of inſincerity, within a while, all poſſibilities of falling will be removed, in the mean while, take heed of falling, by thinking it is impoſſible to fall; for none are ſo near falling, as thoſe who are moſt confident of their own ſtrength and ſtanding.

24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who alſo will do *it*.

Here our apoſtle comforts the Theſſalonians with the aſſurance that God, who had called them to the knowledge of Chriſtianity, would do what he had prayed for, namely, ſanctify them wholly, and preſerve them blameleſs, and this becauſe *God is faithful*, that is, always the ſame, true to his word. God will certainly do his part in and towards the work of ſanctification and preſervation; but in a way of concurrence with our care and induſtry; he will do nothing without us, as we can do nothing without him; God's faithfulneſs is a pledge to us of the performance of all his promiſes, and will moſt certainly put him upon the performance of them; but his promiſe to us always ſuppoſes, yea, exacts from us, the uſe of all means, and particularly the exerting of our own endeavours, in order to our preſervation in grace, and perſeverance in holineſs.

25 Brethren, Pray for us.

Obſerve, Who it is that begs a prayer, a great apoſtle, St. Paul himſelf; and who it is he begs prayer from, the brethren, Chriſtians, and fellow-members of the church at Theſſalonica. Thoſe tha tare moſt eminent for gifts and graces, are greatly deſirous of the ſaints prayers; particularly the miniſters of the goſpel, as they ſtand moſt in need of, ſo are they moſt importunate for this ſpiritual alms, which they crave as earneſtly as ever beggar did bread at a rich man's gate. See on 2 Theſſ. iii. 1.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs.

Our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle with ſalutations to all the brethren and members of the church, without exception, poor and rich, adviſing them to manifeſt and teſtify their affection one to another, by a kiſs given to each other, a ceremony of civility much in uſe in thoſe eaſtern countries; yet requires, that it ſhould not be a wanton, but an holy kiſs; intimating to us, that our civil actions ſhould have a reliſh and ſavour of holineſs. Hence it is that St. Paul is ſo careful to give particular directions for the right ordering of our ſpeech and diſcourſe in common converſation, that it be grave and ſavoury, Col. iv. 6. Of our apparel, that it be ſuch as becomes thoſe that profeſs the goſpel; and here, that our courteous ſalutations of each other ſhould be chaſte and holy, *Greet one another with an holy kiſs*; their kiſs of love and peace muſt truly ſignify what it makes ſhew of, that neither treachery, nor cruelty, nor hypocriſy, nor luſt, may inſinuate itſelf into ſuch a ſymbol of holy love.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Our apoſtle having now finiſhed his epiſtle, gives a ſtrict charge for the peruſal of it. In which, *note*, 1. The duty enjoined, with the matter of it, namely, the reading of this epiſtle, and, for the ſame reaſon, all the reſt, which had the like ſtamp of divine authority upon them. 2. The object or parties to whom this epiſtle is to be read; to the brethren, *To all the brethren.* 3. The ſolemnity of the injunction, *I charge you*, not, I exhort, beſeech, or intreat, but charge and enjoin you; nay, the word ſignifies, I adjure you; it has the force of an oath, and that under a curſe: As if he had ſaid, "I oblige you, under the penalty of God's curſe, that this epiſtle be read." *Learn* hence, 1. That the ſcriptures ought to be in a known tongue, that they may be read unto, and read by the common people. 2. That to confine the reading of the ſcriptures to the clergy, and exclude the laity or common people from reading of them, is a very grievous ſin, contrary to the intent and deſign of God in the firſt penning and compoſing of them. 3. That it doth in a ſpecial manner concern the miniſters and ſpiritual guides, to take particular care that the holy ſcriptures be publicly read to, and privately read by, all their people; and in order thereunto, to excite parents to read them daily in their families, Deut. vi. 9. and in their cloſets, Col. iii. 16. And alſo, it is a great part of the miniſter's duty, to look after the putting forth the children of poor parents to ſchool, that they may learn to read the ſcriptures for their inſtruction and comfort. Lord, what a reproach is it to this Chriſtian nation, that in thouſands of families the *Bible* ſignifies no more than a chip! not a ſoul amongſt them able to read a letter in it! This is a lamentation, the Lord put it into the hearts both of miniſters and people, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to roll away this reproach from us!

28 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen.

Thus concludes our apoſtle his excellent epiſtle, with his uſual valediction or farewel wiſh, deſiring, that though the Theſſalonians had been large partakers of the grace and Spirit of Chriſt, that yet they might receive freſh, farther, and fuller ſupplies from himſelf, the fountain of all grace and goodneſs. From whence *note*, That ſo inexhauſtible is the fountain of divine grace, and ſo copious the ſtreams of ſpiritual bleſſings flowing from it, that no ſuch meaſures can be attained, but as more is wanting, more is had, more is provided, more is allowed, more is to be thirſted after, and laboured for. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt, that over-flowing, that never-failing fountain of grace and comfort, in whom all fullneſs dwells, that of his fulneſs all his members may receive, further receive, grace for grace. *Amen.*

THE
SECOND EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

The ſecond epiſtle to the Theſſalonians *is believed, very probably, to have been written by St.* Paul, *ſoon after the firſt, becauſe the ſame perſons,* Silvanus *and* Timotheus, *were ſtill with him when he writ it, as they were at the writing of the firſt epiſtle.*

Having, in his former epiſtle, expreſſed his longing deſire to viſit them, and finding by the intervention of other affairs, that he was from time to time providentially hindered from coming to them, he ſends this ſecond epiſtle to them, to ſupply the want of his preſence among them. In which, he firſt congratulates their conſtancy in the profeſſion of the goſpel exhorting them to growth in grace, and perſeverance in religion. Next, he rectifies a miſtake which they lay under, concerning the coming of Chriſt to judgment, as if that day were then at hand, when it was very far off, there being a general and grand apoſtaſy to precede it, comforting the Theſſalonians *againſt the dread and terror of it. Laſtly, He commends divers Chriſtian duties to them, requiring them to admoniſh and cenſure ſuch idle perſons among them who did not work, but lived upon other men's labours; and ſo concludes his epiſtle with particular recommendations of them to the ſpecial favour and grace of God.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL and Silvanus and Timotheus unto the church of the Theſſalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 2 Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe two verſes contain the inſcription of this epiſtle in the very ſame words with the former, in the foregoing epiſtle. In which *obſerve*, 1. The writer of the epiſtle, St. Paul, joining himſelf with his two aſſociates, Silvanus or Silas, and Timotheus or Timothy. 2. To whom it was written, *To the church of the Theſſalonians, in God the Father*, that is, eſtabliſhed in the knowledge of God the Father, and in the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 3. The uſual ſalutation, *Grace and peace*, under which are comprehended all ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings: And theſe are ſet forth as flowing to us, firſt, from their fountain, *God the Father:* Secondly, From their means of conveyance, *Jeſus Chriſt*, as Mediator; intimating, that whatever ſpiritual grace, or temporal bleſſing we now receive from God, we have it from him, not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, as a gracious Father in Chriſt, in and through whom all kinds of bleſſings are conveyed to us. Now, 1. From St. Paul's uſing the very ſame form of words in this epiſtle, which he had made uſe of in the former, we may *obſerve*, That the holy Spirit of God, in inditing of the ſcriptures, did not ſo much regard variety of words and ſtyle, as the purpoſe intended by thoſe words; and accordingly the miniſters of Chriſt, in the expounding and explaining of the ſcriptures, ſhould rather ſtudy ſolidity of matter, than variety of expreſſion, or elegance of ſtyle. It was none of the apoſtle's buſineſs, (God grant it may be none of ours) to pleaſe the wanton wits, and gratify the luxuriant fancies of men, with a pompous ſound of words, but ſolidly to inſtruct them in the great and neceſſary duties of the goſpel, and to furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt arguments and motives to a good life. Plain truths, without any art or varniſh may be conveyed with more warmth and vigour to the conſcience, than all the charms of human eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular tongue. But though we muſt come in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of ſpeech. *Note*, 2. From St. Paul's writing this epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, when he was providentially hindered in his purpoſe of coming to them, and preaching amongſt them, we may *learn*, That as the wiſdom of God has appointed ſeveral means for the edification of his church, ſometimes preaching, at other times writing, ſo the miniſters of Chriſt are obliged and bound to endeavour the church's edification by all means; when they cannot do it by public preaching, to endeavour it by writing; and when they can by both, their labours from the preſs and from the pulpit ſhould be jointly employed in the church's ſervice.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth: 4 So that we ourſelves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Obſerve here, 1. The holy wiſdom and pious prudence of our apoſtle, who being about to magnify and extol the graces of the Spirit wrought in the Theſſalonians, particularly their faith and charity, inſtead of commending them for theſe graces, he breaks forth into praiſes and thankſgivings unto God for them; we thank God that your faith groweth exceedingly, *and that the charity of every one of you aboundeth.* His buſineſs was not to celebrate the praiſes and commendations of them, but to admire the ſpecial grace of God conferred upon them, and conſpicuous in them. *Learn* hence, That as it is our duty, it will be our great wiſdom and prudence, ſo to ſpeak of the graces of God, which we ſee and obſerve in others, as that they may not be puffed up with any conceit of their own excellencies, but ſee matter of praiſe and thankſgiving due unto God only; and nothing to themſelves. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſpecial and particular graces which St. Paul obſerved in the Theſſalonians, their faith, and their charity, together with the evidence of the ſincerity of theſe graces, namely, that their faith was a growing faith,, their love an abounding and over-flowing love: *Your faith groweth exceedingly, and your love aboundeth.* *Learn* hence, That as the ſaving graces of faith and love do admit of degrees, and do not come to their height and perfection all at once; ſo all other graces do either increaſe or decreaſe, grow or fade together with theſe; the vigour or decay of theſe cardinal graces have an anſwerable influence upon all our other graces. But how did St. Paul know that their faith did thus grow? *Anſ.* He knew the increaſe of their faith by their conſtancy in ſufferings. *Obſerve*, 3. Our apoſtle doth not barely commend theſe graces of faith and love, which were found in the Theſſalonians, but he makes an holy boaſt of them, he glories in them, and excites other churches to a praiſeworthy imitation of them: *We glory in you in the churches of God.* But for what? Even for your courage and patience under ſufferings, perſecutions, and tribulations for the ſake of Chriſtianity, and for your conſtancy in the faith of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, 1. That perſecutions, afflictions, and tribulations, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, (when maintained, eſpecially in the power of it) are the common lot of God's faithful children and ſervants. 2. That it is the higheſt glory of a Chriſtian to bear afflictions, and undergo perſecutions for the ſake of the goſpel, with an undaunted courage, and an invincible patience. 3. That it is not unlawful, but ſometimes neceſſary and expedient, for a miniſter to glory in his people; not in their multitude, not in their riches, not in their greatneſs, not in their high eſtimation of his perſon and abilities, but in the eminent graces of God's holy Spirit in them, and in the great ſervices and ſufferings undergone by them.

5 *Which is* a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer:

As if he had ſaid, "Which tribulations and perſecutions, or, which patience under your preſent perſecutions, is a ſign and token, yea, an evidence and manifeſtation, that God, the righteous Judge, will reward you with a part and ſhare in that kingdom for which you ſuffer, being in his account, worthy of it; not with a worthineſs of merit, but with a worthineſs of meetneſs, they being made meet and fit for heaven hereafter by their patience and conſtancy under ſufferings and perſecutions here." *Learn* hence, That as none can enjoy the kingdom of heaven, by meriting heaven, but by being made meet for heaven; ſo patience under ſufferings and reproaches, under perſecutions and ſharp trials, is a ſpecial qualification to make us meet for the enjoyment of that glorious kingdom.

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you:

Our apoſtle had ſhewn in the foregoing verſe, that their patience under perſecution was a manifeſt evidence of God's intending them a portion in that kingdom, for which they ſuffered perſecution: Now, in this verſe he denounces the perſecutors doom upon them, namely, That the righteous nature of God did oblige him to recompenſe tribulation, and to repay trouble to all ſuch as did trouble them, and unkindly perſecute them for righteouſneſs ſake. *Learn* thence, That as perſecutors generally do continue finally impenitent, ſo the heavieſt ſtroke of divine vengeance ſhall fall on ſuch, in the day of God's moſt righteous judgment: *It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble you.*

7 And to you who are troubled, reſt with us —

That is, "As God will certainly puniſh your perſecutors, ſo he will, ere long, give reſt to you his ſufferers, together with us who are companions with you in the ſame ſufferings; you that are troubled ſhall have reſt with us, his perſecuted apoſtles, you ſhall have reſt as well as we, and you ſhall have reſt together with us." Bleſſed be God, that there is a day undoubtedly coming, when all the troubles of his people ſhall be ended indeed, and all his ſuffering ſaints ſhall be fully and finally rewarded for all their ſervices and ſufferings; and this diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, ſhall be in the preſence of the whole world, at the great day, for the glory of Divine Juſtice. Then all thoſe, who doubt or complain of God's juſtice, ſhall awfully admire and adore it: *To you that are troubled, reſt with us.* Where *note*, 1. That the preſent time is a time of trouble to the people of God; their time of reſt is hereafter. 2. That Almighty God alloweth his troubled ſaints a liberty to comfort themſelves with the expectation and hope, that their troubles ſhall ſhortly end, and their everlaſting reſt begin. 3. That it addeth much to the excellency of that reſt which the troubled ſaints expect, that it ſhall be enjoyed, not by a few of the moſt eminent ſufferers, but by all of them; *All* you *that are troubled ſhall reſt with us*; with us apoſtles, with all the prophets, and faithful ſervants of God. Hail, happy day! when all the ſaints ſhall ſing and rejoice together; when there ſhall not be one wicked perſon among them to damp their mirth, or to diminiſh their joy. How deſirable is the communion of ſaints here! How happy do they eſteem themſelves when they can get together by themſelves! But how joyful will the time and place be, when they get to heaven, where none ſhall interrupt their quiet, nothing ſhall diſturb their reſt! *God will recompenſe tribulation*, &c.

— When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

In theſe words we have an awful deſcription of the day of judgment, and of the proceſs of that ſolemn day. Where *note*, 1. The Judge deſcribed, *The Lord Jeſus*, he ſhall be *revealed from heaven*; ſince his aſcenſion, the heavens have contained him, and concealed him from our ſight and ſenſes; but he ſhall then viſibly appear, and locally deſcend from the higheſt heavens, into the region of the air, *He ſhall come in the clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him. Note*, 2. His noble attendants, the *mighty angels*, every one ſtronger than an hoſt of armed men. As the work Chriſt comes about, is a great and mighty work, ſo he will have inſtruments ſtrong and mighty, ſufficient for that work; yet doth Chriſt make uſe of the angels, not for neceſſity, but for majeſty; he can do his work without them. 3. The manner of his coming, *In flaming fire*, by which the heavens and the earth ſhall be burnt up, and in which the damned ſhall be eternally tormented. 4. The end of his coming, To take vengeance on the ignorant, and on the diſobedient, on ſuch as *know not God*, and on them that do know, but *obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus. Learn* hence, 1. That it greatly tends to the comfort and ſupport of perſecuted Chriſtians, that Chriſt their righteous Judge will come: *He ſhall be revealed*, and nobly attended; he ſhall come as an exalted King, accompanied with a glorious train of mighty angels. 2. That the dread and terror of the day of judgment, will be matter of comfort to the godly, no ways terrifying. Thoſe very flames, which ſhall ſet the heavens and earth in a blaze, and occaſion dreadful conſternation and fear to the wicked and impenitent world, ſhall be a comfortable ſight to the godly, and the forethoughts of them may, and ſhould yield comfort to them under their preſent troubles. 3. That ignorance, whether in Pagans or in Chriſtians, doth very much, but diſobedience to the goſpel, doth very much more, expoſe perſons, and lay them open to the vengeance of the great day; if Chriſt will render vengeance to them that know him not, much more to them that do know, but *obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus*.

9 Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Note here, The tremendous dreadfulneſs of that wrath and vengeance which at the great day will be inflicted on the ignorant and diſobedient part of mankind; to denote the greatneſs of it, it is called *deſtruction*, not as if it were an aboliſhing of their nature, and utter extinction of their being, as the deſtruction of beaſts is; but a loſs of their happineſs and well-being, as the deſtruction of the fallen angels was; and to ſet forth the duration of it, it is called *everlaſting deſtruction*, a dying life, and a living death; their debt will never be paid, they ſhall never come out of priſon; they will be always ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice. And *note* farther, As their puniſhment of ſenſe is here deſcribed, ſo we have their puniſhment of loſs declared: They ſhall be baniſhed from the preſence of the Lord, that is, for ever excluded from the ſight of his bleſſed face, and the enjoyment of his gracious preſence; the preſence of his favour they ſhall never find, the preſence of his fury they ſhall ever feel. Lord! how is thy preſence here on earth, life, light, and joy to thine own people! How much more will it be ſo in heaven! But how terrible and dreadful will thy preſence be to the wicked at the great day, even everlaſting deſtruction! Lord, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear, when thou appeareſt! Thy very preſence ſhall puniſh and torment them, and thy glorious power drive them away to the place of torment prepared for them: *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction*, &c. that is deſtruction ſhall come forth immediately from the preſence and glorious power of Chriſt upon them, and that without any meaſure of mitigation; the ſentence denounced will be inſtantly executed, and the ſinner that is baniſhed from Chriſt's preſence ſhall be everlaſtingly tormented by his power.

10 When he ſhall come to be glorified in his

ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe (becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed) in that day.

The former verſes repreſented to us the great end of Chriſt's appearance to judgment, with reſpect to the wicked, it was for puniſhment, they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, &c. Now here we have aſſigned the gracious deſign of Chriſt's coming with relation to the godly; he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints. Where *note*, 1. The character of Chriſt's ſaved ones, they are ſaints, all ſuch, and only ſuch; not by viſible profeſſion barely, but by inward ſanctification, and holineſs of converſation alſo: And called alſo *believers*, who are endued with the grace of ſaving faith. 2. The end of Chriſt's coming, with reference to his own children. (1.) To be *glorified in his ſaints*; mark, not to be glorified by them, but to be glorified in them; the Head will not only be glorious in himſelf, but glorified in his members: The glory God gave the Son, he hath given the ſaints, and will put ſuch a glory upon them in ſoul and body, as he himſelf ſhall be thereby glorified. (2.) *Admired in all them that believe*, that is, he will do ſuch things for believers, as will be to their own and others admiration; things that will not only exceed their unbelief, but their faith too. Plainly thus, the Lord Jeſus, at the great day, will put ſuch glory upon believers, as never was expected, either by themſelves or others, and conſequently ſhall be admired, greatly admired, eternally admired by all beholders. But, Lord, if the glory put upon thy ſaints ſhall be thus admired, how much more ſhall thyſelf be admired, the beſtower of that rich and tranſcendent glory? The glory of thy juſtice in the damnation of the wicked will be admired, but not comparably with the glory of thy mercy in the ſalvation of believers. Oh! how will this ſtrike the adoring angels into an ecſtaſy of holy admiration, and tranſport thy admiring ſaints into an eternal rapture, when thou ſhalt come to *be glorified in thy ſaints*, &c.

11 Wherefore alſo we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleaſure of *his* goodneſs, and the work of faith with power:

In theſe words, St. Paul aſſures the Theſſalonians, that although he could not come to them, that yet he prayed fervently for them; *we pray always for you*; the faithful miniſters of Chriſt can as ſoon forget themſelves as their people in their prayers to God. *Note* next, What he prayed for, on their behalf. 1. That God would count them worthy, that is, fit and meet for this calling; that is, for the fore-mentioned glory which they were called to the expectation of, for they were already called; and therefore calling, here, muſt denote that unto which they were called, even the kingdom of glory. 2. That in order to this, God would fulfil, fully perform and accompliſh his whole purpoſe, here called his pleaſure, and the pleaſure of his goodneſs, to ſhew that nothing but his own goodneſs was the cauſe of his own purpoſe. 3. He prays that God, by his own power, would ſtrengthen the work of faith in them; *and the work of faith with power.* Where *note*, 1. That we are not only ſaved by God's good pleaſure, but by faith. 2. That there is no ſaving faith, but is a working faith. 3. That faith is wrought by a wonderful power, which doth produce wonderful effects.

12 That the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Our apoſtle declared, at ver. 10, how Chriſt ſhould be glorified in his ſaints hereafter; now he prays that the name of Chriſt may be glorified in them here. Where *note*, That ſanctifying grace maketh Chriſtians a glory to the name of Chriſt, not by adding any glory to him, which before he had not, but by ſetting forth that glory which he already hath. *Note* alſo, That as the name of Chriſt is glorified in the ſaints now, ſo they ſhall be glorified in him then, and glorified with him and by him. The ſame glory, for kind, ſhall be put upon the head and members: Grace is the only way to glory, and glory will be the certain reward of grace.

CHAP. II.

The former chapter was ſpent in a kind of conſolation againſt trouble, this in a caution againſt errors, or to rectify their judgments concerning the time of Chriſt's ſecond coming.

NOW we beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Brethren, we beſeech you, as you aſſuredly expect the coming of Chriſt, and do love, look, and long for that day when it ſhall go well with you, and Chriſt will appear to your glory, that you be not troubled, *&c.*" *Learn* hence, That the coming of Chriſt to judgment is a truth well known, firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired by all true Chriſtians; well known, becauſe the apoſtles, when they went abroad to proſelyte the world, uſually began with this point; firmly believed, for a day of judgment was never denied by any, but thoſe whoſe intereſt it was that there ſhould be none; and earneſtly deſired, in reſpect of Chriſt our Judge and Saviour, and in reſpect of ourſelves, who ſhall be ſharers in the happineſs of that day. *Obſerve*, 1. The apoſtle calls the coming of Chriſt *a gathering together unto him*; intimating, that when Chriſt ſhall come all the ſaints ſhall be gathered together unto him; at the day of judgment there ſhall be both a congregation and a ſegregation; a congregation of all believers, to make up the number of Chriſt's train and attendants, and that in one troop they may be brought into his heavenly kingdom; and a ſegregation, he ſhall ſeparate the ſheep from among the goats, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt. Matt. xiii. 44.

2 That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand.

Note here, 1. The error which the apoſtle diſproves, namely, that the day of Chriſt, that is, the day of judgment,

ment, was then at hand, to come in a few years, which was very true with reſpect to his coming to deſtroy Jeruſalem, but not as to the final judgment. *Learn* hence, That the time of Chriſt's coming to judgment muſt be patiently expected, but not poſitively determined. *Note*, 2. The effect which this error might produce, namely, trouble and unſettledneſs of mind; *That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or troubled*; implying, 1. That errors breed trouble and diſquietude of mind. 2. That Chriſtains ſhould be ſo eſtabliſhed, and have ſuch a conſtancy of mind, that they ſhould not be eaſily ſhaken and moved from the faith. *Note*, 3. A removal of all the ſuppoſed foundations of this error, or the means which theſe impoſters uſed to entice the Theſſalonians to embrace it; and they are three; namely, ſpirit, word, and letter; *not by ſpirit*, that is, be not ſhaken in mind by any pretence of ſpiritual or divine revelation; *nor by word*, by any pretended meſſage or word from us; *nor by letter*, that is, not by any thing contained in our former epiſtle, or in any ſpurious or counterfeit writings, paſſing under the apoſtle's name, mentioning as if Chriſt ſhould come in that age wherein they lived. We need not wonder that St. Paul is ſo careful to obviate this error of the preſent coming and appearance of Chriſt, becauſe, ſhould the Theſſalonians have depended upon it, and found themſelves deceived in their expectation of it, it might have cauſed great trouble to them, and even ſhaken their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means. For *that day ſhall not come* except there come a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition:

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Let no man deceive you in this article of your faith, by any pretence whatſoever; for before Chriſt's coming, there ſhall come a great falling away from the catholic faith, and by that means the man of ſin will be revealed, who is the ſon of perdition." *Note* here, 1. Such a proneneſs there is in the nature and mind of man to embrace and entertain error, when once vented, that there is need of repeated diſſauſives from it, and to guard perſons againſt the poiſon and infatuation of it; *Let no man deceive you by any means*. 2. A general apoſtaſy or defection of the viſible church from the faith of Chriſtianity, muſt be before Chriſt's coming to judgment; *Except there come a falling away firſt*; it is foretold as a thing that would certainly come to paſs. 3. The revelation of antichriſt declared, *That man of ſin ſhall be revealed the ſon of perdition*; where, by the man of ſin underſtand not a particular or individual perſon, but a ſociety and ſucceſſion of men, ſuch as is found in and amongſt the Papacy, where the ſodomy, blaſphemy, inceſt, adultries, ſorceries, murders, treaſons, which are not only committed, but countenanced, not acted, but authoriſed, do moſt evidently declare that there never was ſuch an apoſtaſy from Chriſtianity ſince it had a being in the world, as is found amongſt them. 4. This man of ſin is alſo ſtiled *the ſon of perdition*. 1. Actively, a deſtroying ſon, one that brings others to deſtruction. 2. Paſſively, a ſon that ſhall be deſtroyed; antichriſt and all his adherents ſhall be deſtroyed, utterly deſtroyed by Jeſus Chriſt, and his kingdom ſhall periſh without any hope of recovery; firſt deſtroying, and at laſt deſtroyed. Where *note*, That our apoſtle, at the firſt, the very firſt mentioning antichriſt, doth declare his deſtiny; at his firſt riſing he declares his fall and ruin.

4 Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.

Our apoſtle proceeds in the farther deſcription of this man of ſin, by a twofold note of diſtinction, namely, by his enmity and oppoſition, and by his dignity and exaltation. *Obſerve*, 1. His enmity and oppoſition; *He oppoſeth himſelf*, that is, againſt Chriſt, as his name, Antichriſt, ſignifies; opppoſing him in his doctrine, in his offices, in his members, corrupting his doctrine, debaſing his offices, perſecuting his members. 2. His dignity and exaltation, which conſiſts of two parts, 1. *He exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or is worſhipped*: that is, he exalteth himſelf above all magiſtrates, emperors, kings and princes, who are called *gods*, becauſe repreſenting his perſon, as his vicegerents, uſurping a power over all civil authority, inthroning and dethroning princes at his pleaſure. 2. His arrogance is ſet forth in relation to God himſelf, that *as God, he ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God*. By the temple of God, underſtand the church of God, the external viſible church, which profeſſeth the faith of Chriſt, and bears his name; in this temple of God he *ſitteth* as an officer or biſhop; and ſits as *God*, that is, as a god upon earth; whom all muſt adore; kings kiſſing his feet, emperors holding his ſtirrup, and claiming the ſame power that Chriſt hath in and over the church, namely, an univerſal ſupremacy, an abſolute authority, and an unerring infallibility. And the uſurped titles given to him, declare, that he *ſheweth himſelf that he is a God*, he is called, *ſupremum numen in terris*; "The chief god upon earth;" and that from him it is affirmed, that no appeals are to be made; no, not to God himſelf; that he can change the ſacraments delivered by Chriſt, and decree contrary to ſcripture. Now to accept of theſe flattering titles, and to pretend to ſuch an unlimited power, is to *ſhew himſelf that he is God*.

5 Remember ye not, that when I was with you, I told you theſe things?

Obſerve here, That the doctrine of the riſe and ruin of antichriſt is neceſſary to be made known; for though theſe things were not to come to paſs in their days, yet St. Paul taught them before when preſent, and now repeateth it again when abſent, to faſten it upon their mind and memories; it is neceſſary to deliver this doctrine, both to warn the faithful againſt deluſion, and fortify the faithful againſt perſecution, to keep them patient under it; for when antichriſt is diſcovered. Chriſtians under his tyranny ſubmit to ſufferings more chearfully; ſuffering under antichriſtian perſecutors is martyrdom, and ſuffering for Chriſt, as well as under Pagan perſecutors.

6 And now ye know what with-holdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

Obſerve here 1. How our apoſtle intimated to the Theſſalonians, that antichriſt was not then revealed, and conſequently that they were not then to expect the coming of Chriſt to judgment. 2. The impediment that then hindered his *revelation*; *Now ye know what with-holdeth*; by which the Roman empire is generally underſtood; the man of ſin could not riſe to his greatneſs, ſo long as the Roman empire ſtood in its grandeur; for this ſeat could not be filled with two imperial powers at once: Whilſt the Roman emperor poſſeſſed Rome, the ſeat was full, and till it was void it could not be the ſeat of antichriſt. But why did not the apoſtle name it then? *Anſ.* That he might not incenſe the Roman emperors againſt the Chriſtians, as he muſt have done had he openly ſaid, "Antichriſt ſhall not come till the Roman empire is deſtroyed;" he therefore covertly ſays, *Ye know what with-holdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.*

7 For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let* until he be taken out of the way.

That is, The beginnings of antichriſtianity are ſecretly and myſteriouſly already working, which will bring antichriſt himſelf forth in time, even antichriſtian doctrines, and the affecting of antichriſtian dominion; only the empire that now hindereth muſt be removed and taken out of the way. *Note* here, So great an enemy is Satan to the ſalvation of mankind, that no ſooner did Chriſt erect a kingdom in the world for ſaving ſinners, but the devil ſet up his enſign in oppoſition thereunto. Antichriſtianiſm is almoſt as old as Chriſtianity; the myſtery of iniquity ſoon appeared after the revelation of the myſtery of godlineſs; though truth be error's elder, yet error is not much truth's younger; *The myſtery of iniquity doth already work.* And from theſe words, *He that letteth will let till taken out of the way. Learn*, That the greateſt empire and monarchies upon earth have their final and fatal periods determined by God, beyond which they ſhall not ſtand; the Roman empire that letteth, ſhall be taken out of the way.

8 And then ſhall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the Spirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming.

Theſe words contain both the riſe and ruin of antichriſt, his revelation and deſtruction. *Obſ.* 1. The title given to him, in the Greek, *The lawleſs one*, he that boaſts himſelf to be above all law, and aſſumes to himſelf a power to diſpenſe with all the laws of God, as we well know who does. *Ob.* 2. His revelation, *Then ſhall that wicked be revealed.* God has revealed antichriſt to the world, let none wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt him, but let him be ſhunned and abhorred; if his adherents will not fall off from him, but be partakers with him in his ſins, let them expect to be partakers alſo with him in his plagues; to continue his adherents is dangerous, but to turn his diſciples is more dangerous; for that is a downright apoſtaſy, and flat revolt from Chriſt to antichriſt. How almighty God may diſpenſe mercifully with errors imbibed in our education, we know not, but to turn our back on the truth wherein we have been educated, and inſtructed, makes it more dangerous to our ſalvation. *Ob.* 3. Antichriſt's ruin, *whom the Lord ſhall conſume and deſtroy.* Here *Note*, That the apoſtle had no ſooner diſcovered antichriſt's riſe, but he preſently declares his ruin; the Lord ſhall deſtroy him; that is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall deſtroy him gradually, he ſhall waſte away by little and little; as his riſe was, ſuch ſhall his ruin be; deſtroyed and conſumed he ſhall be, but not preſently, becauſe God has an uſe for him, work to do for him, to ſcourge his people, to try his people, to unite his people. *Ob.* 4. How antichriſt's ruin is accompliſhed; 1. *With the ſpirit of his mouth*, or the breath of his mouth: The expreſſion denotes, 1. the facility and eaſineſs of his deſtruction; it is done with a breath, the breath of God will leave him breathleſs; as he hath ſtood by the flattering breath of men, ſo he ſhall fall by the conſuming breath of God. The breath of God here denotes the preaching of the goſpel, and intimates, that antichriſt's deſtruction ſhall be by the miniſtry of the word, and the victorious evidence of truth; but beſides this miniſterial word, there will be a providential word, which God will make uſe of for antichriſt's deſtruction: The former means we are to uſe, the latter God is to make uſe of. Again, 2. The deſtruction of antichriſt ſhall be by the *brightneſs of Chriſt's coming*; at Chriſt's coming to judgment the final ruin and utter deſtruction of antichriſt ſhall be accompliſhed; let not the church then be diſcouraged, though antichriſt remains, after all endeavours uſed for his ruin, it is ſufficient we are aſſured that antichriſtianiſm ſhall be finally deſtroyed: for the time, leave we that to God; if it be not till the day of judgment, or Chriſt's final conqueſt over all his adverſaries, why ſhould not we be contented to tarry for it, ſeeing infinite wiſdom determines the time, as well as the thing itſelf? *Then ſhall that Wicked be revealed*, &c.

9 *Even him* whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders.

An account is here given how antichriſt doth acquire and keep up his power in the world: The firſt and great inſtrument is Satan; after the working of Satan, is as much as by the working of Satan, denoting not only his pattern, but his influence. The devil has a great hand over wicked men in the world, his way of dealing with them is moſt efficacious and powerful, he is certainly the firſt founder and main ſupporter of the antichriſtain ſtate. *Ob.* 2. The ſubordinate inſtrumental means, by which antichriſt gained his power in the world; namely, by pretended miracles; *with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders*; miracles are called powers, becauſe the effects of extraordinary powers; ſigns, from their uſe, becauſe they ſealed the doctrine to which they are applied; wonders, becauſe they breed aſtoniſhment in the minds of beholders: Now antichriſt pretends to all theſe, but his are lying powers, lying ſigns, and lying wonders; becauſe the greateſt of his pretended miracles are fables, forgeries, impoſtures, diabolical deluſions. *Learn* hence, That antichriſt doth uphold and ſupport his kingdom by a falſe ſhew of ſigns, wonders, and mighty deeds; they are *mira*, but not *miracula*; what he cannot prove by the oracles of God, he endeavours to prove by the miracles of Satan.

10 And with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.

Here we have a threefold deſcription given of the ſubjects of antichriſt's kingdom; they are deſcribed, 1. By the ways and means how they are drawn into this apoſtaſy and defection, and that is, *with all deceiveableneſs and unrighteouſneſs*; where, by unrighteouſneſs, underſtand his falſe doctrine and wicked laws, which tend to the making of his diſciples and followers injurious to God, unjuſt to men, and cruel to themſelves; and by deceiveableneſs is meant all manner of deceits and wiles, tricks and cunning perſuaſions, to make the world believe his unrighteous errors to be pure and innocent truths. *Learn*, That ſuch as are ring-leaders to error, are men of no conſcience, but find out all unrighteous ways and means to make their tenets plauſible, and paſs for truth; they come *with all deceiveableneſs and unrighteouſneſs* Again, 2. They are deſcribed by their doom and miſery which doth wait them, they are ſuch as periſh; that is, ſuch as are in an actual ſtate of perdition, and without haſtening out of it, are undone for ever. *Learn* hence, That the ſubjects of antichriſt's power and ſeduction are thoſe that periſh. And, 3. They are deſcribed by their ſin, which is the cauſe and reaſon of this doom; *becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.* Where *mark*, It is not enough to receive the truth in the light of it, but we muſt alſo receive it in the love of it, or it will do us no good; to make truth operative, there is required, beſides knowledge, faith and love; there may be knowledge, without faith, and there may be faith without love, that is, without any affection to the truth believed; it was therefore a pious prayer of St. Auſtin, *Fac me, domine*, &c. "Lord make me taſte that by love, which I taſte by knowledge." As the certainty of truth calls for faith, ſo the amiableneſs of truth calls for love; If truth be not received into the heart as well as the head, it will not ſecure againſt apoſtaſy, nor prevent periſhing.

11 And for this cauſe, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

The ſin of thoſe who are ſeduced by antichriſt was mentioned in the foregoing verſe; the judgment of ſuch is here declared, in theſe verſes, which is twofold, deluſion in this world, and damnation in the next. (1.) Deluſion in this world. Here *note*, 1. The author of this judgment, God *ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions*; as it is a ſin, God has no hand in it, but as it is a puniſhment, God has to do in it; there is a judicial tradition or delivering them up to a ſpirit of error, who do not receive the truth in the love of it, and this without the leaſt ſhadow of unrighteouſneſs, puniſhing ſin with ſin. 2. The degree or nature of the puniſhment, deluſions, *ſtrong deluſions*; given up to the efficacy of error, which is diſcovered by the abſurdity of thoſe errors which they cleave unto, and by the obſtinacy wherewith they cleave unto them. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſtrong deluſions may be, and ſometimes are, of God's own ſending. 2. That by God's juſt judgment there is an infatuation upon the followers and abettors of antichriſt, that they ſwallow the groſſeſt errors, and believe the ſtrongeſt deluſions to their own deſtruction. *Note* 3. The iſſue and reſult of this puniſhment, *that they ſhould believe a lie*: Falſe doctrines are often called a lie in ſcripture: All the doctrine of the man of ſin, with which he hath deceived the world, under the notion of truth, is one great lie; but beſides this he approves and applauds the doctrine of equivocation, and teaches that in many caſes it is neceſſary, and in ſome very lawful to lie: Theſe they call pious frauds, but they are indeed diabolical forgeries. 4. Their dreadful puniſhment in the other world, *That they might be damned*, &c. Where *mark*, The puniſhment itſelf, damnation, for filling up the meaſure of their obduration, together with the juſtice and equity of it; expreſſed negatively, *they believed not the truth*, received it not with ſimplicity of mind, to be inſtructed and directed by it; poſitively, they *had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, in unrighteous doctrines and practices. *Learn* hence, 1. That errors in judgment, as well as ſins in practice, may bring damnation upon the ſouls of men. Error is as damnable as vice, for it is as contrary to the law of God as vice is. 2. That though all errors may bring damnation upon men's ſouls, yet ſome may be ſaid more eſpecially than others to be damning errors, ſuch are the errors of antichriſt, the man of ſin. O! How dangerous then is it to be found amongſt his followers? To be ſharers with them in their ſins, will render us partakers of their plagues.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation through ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, ſet forth a fatal apoſtaſy from the ſincerity of the Chriſtain faith and worſhip, here in this verſe exempts the Theſſalonians from the number of thoſe that were endangered by it; and this he makes mention of to their great comfort, and with thankſgivings to God; *We are bound to give thanks*, &c. *Obſerve* here, 1. The titles given to the Theſſalonians by our apoſtle, *brethren*, and *beloved of the Lord*; not beloved of the apoſtle only but of the Lord alſo, both with an antecedent love, beſtowing grace upon them, and with a conſequent love, believing in his name, and ſuffering for his ſake. 2. His obligation to bleſs God on their behalf, he gave *thanks*; this ſhewed his eſteem of the bleſſing, he gave thanks *always*, which ſhewed how deeply he was affected with the bleſſing, and he owns it is a debt which was due unto them; we are *bound to give thanks*, &c. 3. The matter of his thankſgiving, or the mercy which he was thankful for, and that was their election to ſalvation; *We are bound to give thanks, becauſe God hath choſen you.* Whence *learn*, That God's election,

election either of ourſelves or others to ſalvation, is, and ought to be great matter of thanſgiving unto God. 4. Their election is amplified, 1. By the antiquity of it, from the beginning, that is, from all eternity, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the word*, that is, before the beginning, before God began to create any thing the word was. 2. From the means of its accompliſhment; and they are two, one on God's part, the ſanctification of the Spirit; the other on their part, the belief of the truth. Where *note*, That election is to the means as well as to the end; and without the means, can the end never be attained: He that hath choſen us to ſalvation, hath choſen us to be holy, and to believe the truth, in order to ſalvation. 2. That ſanctification and holineſs is not the cauſe of our election, but the effect and fruit of it. 3. That ſanctification being the fruit, it is alſo the evidence of our election: *Sic ſe aperit decretum*, thus the decree of God is made evident to us, the election of God is a ſecret in the boſom of God, it is only manifeſted to us by the effects, which are a ſanctification by the Spirit, and a ſound belief of the doctrine of the goſpel: Where *mark*, a bare belief of the doctrine of the goſpel ſaves none, unleſs accompanied with the ſanctification of the Spirit. *Note*, 4. The neceſſary connexion between the ſanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, even as between the cauſe and the effect, and they do alſo accompany one another; the goſpel was a ſupernatural doctrine, and it was fit that it ſhould be accompanied with a ſupernatural operation, how elſe ſhould it be known to be of God? The goſpel and the Spirit are inſeparable companions; where the goſpel is little known, there is little of the Spirit found.

14 Whereunto he called you by our goſpel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The apoſtle comforted the Theſſalonians in the former verſe from their election, in this from their vocation; *whereunto*, that is, to which ſalvation, ſanctification, and belief of the goſpel, *God hath called you*, by our preaching of the word, to the obtaining of the glory purchaſed, and conferred by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Note* here, 1. The author of the Theſſalonians vocation, God the Father, he calleth you, that is, God, who from the beginning choſe you for ſalvation, None but God, (1.) Hath authority to call; he only is our proper Lord, and rightful Sovereign, our Creator, and our Owner; therefore he has a right to call us to duty, and to require duty from us, Jam. iv. 12. *There is one lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*. None but God, (2.) Hath power to call; for to effectual calling there is required not only the invitation of the word, but alſo the effectual operation of the Spirit; it is a work of divine power to give grace to graceleſs ſouls. *Note*, 2. The means, that is, the eternal and outward means, by which they were called; *by our goſpel*, that is, by our preaching of the goſpel to you. The miniſtry of the word is the great inſtrument in the hand of the Spirit for a ſinner's effectual vocation, and bringing home to God. But why doth our apoſtle call it *our* goſpel? Doth not that derogate from the authority of it, to appropriate it to any man? No: He calls it not his goſpel by way of revelation, but in regard of diſpenſation only; and his goſpel imported the great pains which he took in preaching of the goſpel, and the hazard he ran in diſpenſing of the goſpel to them. It is alſo a word of eſteem, love and affection, what we love we call *ours*. *Note*, 3. The end of this calling, which is twofold, 1. Ultimate, to obtain the *glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, the glory of heaven, and of the whole man, whole ſoul and body in heaven, called the glory of Chriſt, becauſe purchaſed by him, promiſed by him, prayed for by him, conferred by him, and enjoyed eternally with him. 2. Subordinate, they are called to faith and holineſs, in order to ſalvation; for there muſt be a likeneſs between the perſon calling, and the perſons called; without likeneſs to him, we can never love him; and without loving of him, muſt never expect to live with him. From the whole, *learn*, That ſuch as are elected and choſen of God, are in time effectually called by faith and holineſs to obtain eternal glory and happineſs.

15 Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epiſtle.

Our apoſtle having abundantly comforted the Theſſalonians in the former verſes from their election and vocation, he cloſes the chapter with an exhortation to them to perſeverance and conſtancy in the truth; *Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt*. *Obſer*. 1. The illative particle, *therefore*, that is, becauſe God hath choſen and called you, and given you ſuch aſſurance of his favour, and ſuch advantages againſt error and ſeduction, therefore, let it be your care to perſevere; aſſurance of ſalvation doth not encourage negligence, but engage to greater diligence. *Obſerve*, 2. The duty inferred, *Stand faſt*: it is a military word, uſed by captains to their ſoldiers, to prevent a cowardly and treacherous revolt; he had been deſcribing a great apoſtaſy that would come, now bids them to be upon their guard and ſtand faſt. *Obſerve*, 3. The means directed to, in order to their ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance, namely, to hold the traditions which they had been taught, either by word or by epiſtle. Here *Note*, 1. The act, *Hold* with a ſtrong hand, hold againſt all aſſaults, whether of error or perſecution. 2. The object. The *traditions taught*, either by *word*, or by *epiſtle*. Where *mark*, That all the apoſtle's doctrine, whether preached when amongſt them, or written to them in his abſence from them, he calls *traditions*; ſo that holding the traditions here, is nothing elſe but perſeverance in apoſtolical doctrine. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That what aſſurance ſoever we have of God's preſerving us in the truth, yet are we bound to uſe all poſſible care and caution, in order to our own preſervation. *Note*, 2. That it is our duty to ſtand faſt in the faith of Chriſt, and profeſſion of godlineſs, whatſover dangers or temptations we may be expoſed to. *Note*, 3. That the doctrine of Chriſtanity, taught by the apoſtles, is a tradition, and that holding this tradition, is the beſt means for ſtanding faſt in the faith of Chriſt. *Note*, 4. That whilſt the apoſtles were in being, there were two ways of delivering the truth, namely, by word of mouth and writing, *Whether* *by word or our epiſtle. Note*, 5. That now, when they are long ſince dead, and we cannot receive the doctrine of life from them by word of mouth, we muſt ſtick to the ſcriptures and written word, againſt all pretences to unwritten traditions, or pretended revelations, becauſe the ſcriptures are a perfect rule both for our faith and practice.

16 Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlaſting conſolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work.

Our Apoſtle having abundantly comforted, and affectionately exhorted the Theſſalonians in the former verſes, now concludes with fervent prayer for them. Where, *obſerve*, 1. The perſons prayed to, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and God our Father. Where *Note*, 1. That prayer muſt be made to God alone, he only knows all our wants, and he alone is capable of hearing and helping us. *Note*, 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is here invocated together with God the Father: ſurely his Godhead is hereby proved, for he is the object both of internal and external worſhip, is God, *our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, &c. *Obſerve*, 2. The ground of audience and ſucceſs in prayer, *which hath loved us, and given us everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace.* Where *Note*, 1. That God's love to ſinners, manifeſted in their redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, giveth great boldneſs and encouragement in the duty of prayer. *Note*, 2. That God hath given all believers ſolid ground of ſubſtantial and perpetual conſolation, he hath given us *everlaſting conſolation*. *Note*, 3. That God has given all believers hope, a good or well grounded hope of eternal life, and this hope is a great encouragement to the duty of prayer. *Obſer.* 3. The bleſſings prayed for; Increaſe of comfort, and perſeverance or eſtabliſhment. 1. The apoſtle prays for increaſe of comfort: *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and God our Father comfort your hearts.* Where *Note*, That all true comfort flows from God, and that the heart is the proper ſeat of ſpiritual comfort: Pſalm, iv. 7. *Thou haſt put gladneſs into my heart.* 2. For eſtabliſhment and perſeverance;—*and eſtabliſh you in every good word and work:* By *every good word*, is meant ſound doctrine; by *every good work*, holineſs of life. *Learn* hence, That eſtabliſhment in faith and holineſs is a great and neceſſary bleſſing, earneſtly to be ſought of God in prayer; as at all times this bleſſing is to be ſought, ſo eſpecially in unſettled times, that when we are moſt in danger of falling by temptation, we may be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

C H A P. III.

Our apoſtle cloſed the foregoing chapter with a fervent prayer for the Theſſalonians; *he begins this chapter with requeſting their prayers for him.*

FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* courſe, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you;

Obſerve here, 1. A courteous and loving compellation, *brethren.* There is a threefold brotherhood, which the ſcripture takes notice of betwixt Chriſt and believers, betwixt believers themſelves, and betwixt the miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved people. *Obſerve*, 2. St. Paul's paſſionate requeſt and ſupplication, *Brethren pray for us. Learn* hence, That an intereſt in the prayers of all thoſe that have an intereſt in God, is the paſſionate deſire and earneſt requeſt of all the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; there is nothing that the miniſters of Chriſt do more want or need, nothing that they ſo much deſire and crave, as the ſpiritual alms of their people's prayers; their work is a work of the greateſt weight, of the greateſt labour, of the greateſt difficulty and oppoſition; and, alas, their ſhoulders are no ſtronger than other mens, to ſtand under the weight of this burden; wonder not then they cry out ſo importunately for the help and benefit of their people's prayers. *Obſerve*, 3. The ſubject matter which he deſires them to pray for, *that the word of the Lord may have a free courſe, and be glorified*; in the original, that the word may run and be glorified; a metaphor taken from a water courſe, where the current flows freely, without interruption or obſtruction.—*Queſt.* When may the word be ſaid to have free courſe? *Anſ.* When it is freely preached, and ſucceſsfully preached; when it is preached, without eternal oppoſition, and accompanied with the Spirit's internal operation. *Learn* hence, That it is the ſtanding duty of the people of God to wreſtle with God at the throne of grace, for the free courſe of the word in the labours of his miniſters; *pray that the word of the Lord may have free courſe and be glorified.* But when may the word be ſaid to be glorified? When God is glorified in and by the word, by the converſion of ſinners, by the exemplary converſation of believers; then is God glorified when his word is entertained. *Obſer.* 4. The argument to excite the Theſſalonians to pray for the ſucceſs of the word amongſt others, namely, the great and good ſucceſs which God had given it amongſt them———that it may be glorified, *as it is with you.* Thence *learn*, That ſuch as have felt the power of the goſpel themſelves, to their converſion and ſalvation, ſhould pray, that others may partake of the ſame benefits by it and from it, together with themſelves; herein they ſhew their love to God and charity to the ſouls of men.

2 And that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men; for all *men* have not faith.

In the former verſe, St. Paul deſired the Theſſalonians prayers with referrence to the *word*; here he requeſts it with relation to *himſelf*, that his perſon might be preſerved, as well as his preaching proſper; that ſo long as God had any work for him to do, he might be preſerved from the rage and fury of the unbelieving Jews and perſecuting Gentiles, who followed him from place to place to give him trouble; *that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men.* Where *Note*, The odius character with which the apoſtle brands the enemies of his miniſtry, he calls them unreaſonable men, whom no reaſon nor argument could convince or ſatisfy; and wicked men, of vicious lives and debauched practices. They are uſually the vileſt and worſt of men, the very dregs of mankind, who ſet themſelves to perſecute the preachers, and oppoſe the preaching of the goſpel. Next, he ſubjoins a reaſon, why he did ſo earneſtly deſire their prayers for deliverance from dangers, *becauſe all men have not faith*, neither fidelity nor faithfulneſs, much leſs ſincere faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for then they would not oppoſe his goſpel, nor perſecute us from place to place, for the plain and perſuaſive preaching of it. Where *Note*, That what profeſſion ſoever a perſon makes of godlineſs and religion, and how high ſoever his pretences are for external devotion, yet if he oppoſes the goſpel, in the power, purity, and progreſs of it, he is, and may be deſervedly ſtiled, *an unreaſonable and wicked man*, who wants fidelity, moral honeſty, and real virtue, and acts only for his own intereſt, and to pleaſe a party.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil.

Our apoſtle had prayed for the Theſſalonians eſtabliſhment before, chap. ii. 17. he aſſures them of it now; *God will ſtabliſh you and keep you from evil*; from all evil and particularly from the evil of apoſtaſy; and the argument for aſſurance is drawn from the fidelity of God, and his faithfulneſs in all his promiſes: *The Lord is faithful who ſhall ſtabliſh you.* *Learn* hence, That the Chriſtian's eſtabliſhment in grace, his preſeverance in holineſs, and preſervation from ſin, depends upon the power and faithfulneſs of God, in concurrence with their own united endeavours to eſtabliſh and preſerve themſelves from falling; *The Lord is faithful, &c.*

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “Although I gave you the aſſurance of God's faithful readineſs, according to his promiſe, to do every thing that is requiſite on his part in order to your eſtabliſhment in holineſs and preſervation from ſin, yet you muſt not, you cannot, expect the aſſiſtance of God, except you alſo add your own endeavours, as I have commanded; and accordingly I have good confidence, that what I command you in the Lord, or by the authority of the Lord, both now and hereafter, at all times, ſhall be performed by you. Where *Note*, The character of that obedience which the goſpel directs; It muſt be univerſal and perpetual; ye do all things that I command you, and I have confidence that ye will do.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Chriſt.

As if he had ſaid, “That we may not be miſtaken in this our confidence, we pray, that the *Lord will direct your hearts into the love of God*, which will conſtrain you to this obedience.” Where *note*, That to direct man's heart right into the love of God, is the work of God; *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.* *Note* farther, that theſe Theſſalonians did love God already; for the apoſtle had before commended their work of faith, their labour of love, and yet here he prays, that their hearts may be directed in the love of God, *&c.* *Learn* thence, That the hearts of the holieſt and beſt of ſaints do ſtand in need of a more perfect and conſtant direction into the love of God; as ſhips that are beſt rigged need a pilot, ſo they that love God moſt, need to have their love ordered and directed to the beſt advantage of his glory. *Obſerve* farther, From the phraſe here uſed (*direct*) that God works upon man as a rational creature; he changeth the heart indeed, but he doth it by direction, not by violence and compulſion. The Spirit's conduct is ſweet, yet powerful; it changes the will but without offering violence to the freedom and liberty of the will; we are not *forced* but *directed*; *the Lord direct your hearts.*—Again, *the Lord direct your hearts*; it implies, there are many things that would wreath and bend our hearts another way, and divert our love to a contrary object, to the word and the fleſh; therefore we had need pray with earneſtneſs, *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*; it follows,—*and into the patient waiting for Chriſt.* *Note* here, 1. The true character of a ſincere Chriſtain; he waits for the coming of Chriſt: Such as love Chriſt fervently, long for his coming greatly. 2. How patience qualifies thoſe holy ardours, and longing deſires, which the ſaints have to be with Chriſt; though love ſets us upon the wing to be gone, yet patience commands to wait for Chriſt's own time of going; vehement love needs the allay of patience; moſt need much patience to die, but ſome need as much patience to live: Therefore, ſays the apoſtle, *The Lord direct your hearts into a patient waiting for Chriſt*; intimating, that the ſaints of God have great need of patience to enable them to endure that ſtate of diſtance and ſeparation from Chriſt ſo long as they muſt endure it in this world: Well then might the apoſtle pray on behalf of the Theſſalonians, *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for Chriſt.*

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Our apoſtle here enters upon a new ſubject, namely, that of church diſcipline; not only exhorting, but commanding and requiring them to excommunicate from their ſociety every brother or Chriſtian profeſſor walking diſorderly, and not after the tradition or doctrine delivered by him, againſt ſuch perſons. *Note here*, 1. That though the apoſtle did oftentimes intreat and beſeech, yet he had authority to enjoin and command; *We command you, brethren.* 2. That this authority to command he had not of himſelf, but from Chriſt: *We command you in the name of the Lord Jeſus:* A miniſter muſt look that his commands be grounded on the authority of Chriſt, or elſe they will lie with ſmall weight upon the conſciences of his people. 3. The ſpecial duty he commanded them to the practice and performance of, namely, to excommunicate ſcandalous and diſorderly perſons from their communion and familiar ſociety; *that ye withdraw yourſelves.* A man that is guilty of a notorious ſcandalous ſin, ought to be ſuſpended from familiar converſe and ſociety with the ſaints, to ſhame him into repentance, before a public declarative excommunication caſts him out of the church; *We command you to withdraw* *yourſelves from every brother.* 4. The offender deſcribed, *a brother*; that is a profeſſor of Chriſtianity, be he who he will, and let his rank and ſtation be what it will, if he walks diſorderly, like a ſoldier that keeps not rank and file, as the word ſignifies, if he walks not after the tradition which he received of us, that is plainly, according to the rule and direction of the goſpel, let him be avoided. Hence *learn*, That there is no church-member, whoſe rank and ſtation, whoſe quality and condition doth exempt his diſorderly ſcandalous walking from eccleſiaſtical cenſure: *Withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly.*

7 For yourſelves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you. 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought: but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not becauſe we have not power, but to make ourſelves an enſample unto you, to follow us.

In theſe verſes, the apoſtle plainly intimates, whom he meant by the *diſorderly brother* mentioned in the foregoing verſe: It is the idle perſon, called diſorderly, for this reaſon, becauſe Almighty God, having fitted man for, and ordained him to labour, he that will not do ſo, deſerts the order in which God has placed him, and thus renders himſelf diſorderly. To condemn which practice, St. Paul propounds his own example to their conſideration and imitation; declaring, that he did not eat any man's bread before he earned it, but wrought with his own hands in the day time, and ſometimes part of the night, at his trade of tent-making, that he might not be chargeable to any of them; not but that he had power to demand maintenance for his miniſtry, but he choſe rather to depart from his right, and to labour in his calling, to excite others to do the like. *Note* here, 1. That had not St. Paul laboured in his calling of tent-making, he had not been a diſorderly perſon; but, leſt any ſhould think ſo, he takes away, and cuts off, all occaſion of ſuſpicion, by working with his hands; his miniſterial office would have freed him from the charge and imputation of idleneſs, and made maintenance from the church his due; but idleneſs the apoſtle obſerved, was a growing ſin, which needed an example as well as doctrine to ſubdue it; and accordingly the apoſtle ſets one: *I behaved myſelf not diſorderly* or idle *among you, but wrought with labour and travail night and day.* *Note*, 2. It is commendable to follow good examples, but much more to ſet a good example: As miniſters ought to be patterns, ſo people ought to be followers; and their ſin will be much the greater, and their puniſhment much the ſorer, who do not follow their miniſters' doctrine, when they have ſeen it exemplified in their converſation. 3. There have all along been ſome perſons in the world, who have looked upon the work of the miniſtry as a very eaſy calling, yea, as an idle calling, that a little time, a little pains and labour is enough for it; whereas the labour of the miniſtry, in the exerciſe of the mind, may juſtly be eſteemed the greateſt of labours; yet we ſee people all along have not judged it ſo, but the miniſters of Chriſt find it ſo. 4. From the poverty of St. Paul's condition, that he had nothing beforehand, but was forced to earn his bread before he ate it. *Learn*, That it pleaſes God ſometimes to meaſure out a very hard lot to his own children, and to give but little of earth to thoſe who glorify him moſt upon earth; and thoſe upon whom he intends to beſtow extraordinary meaſures of glory in heaven, are cut very ſhort of theſe outward comforts. Here behold St. Paul, a choſen veſſel, one of the holieſt men, and the moſt ſerviceable man that lived in the world in his time, yet without a penny in his purſe, but what he wrought for with his hands, nay, working night and day for bread! Lord! how endearing are thy children's obligations to thy goodneſs, for their eaſy and plentiful circumſtances in the world! What a favour it is to have fulneſs upon earth whilſt we live, and the aſſurance of thy everlaſting fruition when we die!

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any ſhould not work, neither ſhould he eat. 11 For we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſy-bodies. 12 Now them that are ſuch we command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread.

Note here, 1. The ſolemn charge given by the apoſtle, for every man to follow ſome lawful calling, and to be found in the way of an induſtrious diligence; if any (being able) will not work, let him not eat (any part of the church's charity). So that the ſin of idleneſs was directly contrary to the apoſtle's command, and to the apoſtle's example. *Mark*, It is not thoſe that cannot work, but thoſe that will not, whom the apoſtle excludes from the church's charity; poor men that will not work when they can, do forfeit the bread of charity from men; the rich men that live idly, do by that ſin forfeit their food to God, yea even their lives and their ſouls too: *If any man would not work, neither ſhould he eat.* *Note*, 2. The apoſtle exhorts every man to eat his own bread; implying, that the bread of idleneſs is ſtolen bread; idle perſons ſhall be judged as thieves, though they eat that which was freely given them: Drones deſerve no honey, what they eat is ſtolen from the induſtrious bee; that is truly our bread which we labour for ourſelves, or recompenſe thoſe who get it for us by their labour: God has ſent no man into the world to be idle; but as the providence of God diſpoſes of every man, though he has never ſo much worldly wealth, yet he muſt be ſome way uſeful and ſerviceable in his generation. 3. One of the bad effects of idleneſs pointed at by our apoſtle; namely, an intermeddling (as buſy-bodies) in other men's matters; an idle perſon that doth nothing to any good purpoſe, yet has a deal of buſineſs to anſwer for, done to very bad purpoſe; not for labouring, but buſy trifling; the buſy body's buſineſs is very unprofitable buſineſs; the mind of man cannot be wholly idle, but muſt be employed in ſomething, if not in doing good, of neceſſity in contriving evil; uſually none are ſo buſy in other men's matters, as they that neglect their own; thoſe diſorderly perſons, who did not work at all, yet were buſy-bodies, and, as ſuch, cenſured by our apoſtle: *I hear there are*, &c.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epiſtle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed. 15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admoniſh *him* as a brother.

Note here, 1. How far St. Paul was from the cenſoriouſneſs and uncharitableneſs of thoſe men, who condemn a whole ſociety, a communion, a church in general, for the miſcarriages of ſome particular perſons in it. *I hear*, ſays he, *there are ſome that walk diſorderly*; *but ye, brethren*, are free from theſe miſdemeanors; you are painful in your employments, diligent in your callings, charitable in your diſtributions, be not weary in theſe inſtances of your duty, but perſevere in well-doing; when the miniſters of Chriſt reprove the ſtubborn and diſobedient for the neglect of their duty, they forget not to encourage and exhort the faithful and obedient to a perſevering diligence in their known duty. 2. He directs them how to manage refractory perſons, ſuch as remained contumacious and diſobedient to the admonitions given by this epiſtle; continuing diſorderly, and refuſing to labour: His advice is two-fold; he tells them what he would have them not do, and what he would have them do, to ſuch. (1.) Negatively, What they ſhould not do; namely, not to cut them off from the church by excommunication, deſpairing of their repentance and reformation; extreme rigour is offenſive to God, and injurious to the church, as well as too much lenity and forbearance. (2.) Poſitively, He exhorts that they conſider them as lapſed brethren, and treat them accordingly, as thoſe that deſire and endeavour to reduce and reform them; in order to which he directs, firſt, To note or mark the diſorderly perſons; that is, ſet a note of ſhame upon them. Next, To avoid all intimacy and familiarity with them. Laſtly, To admoniſh them of their duty, that they may be brought, if poſſible to repentance.

16 Now the Lord of peace himſelf give you peace always, by all means.

Our apoſtle being now to take his leave of the Theſſalonians, cloſes his epiſtle with prayer. Where *note*, 1. The mercy prayed for, *Peace*, peace with God, peace with conſcience, peace and unity among themſelves as Chriſtians, peace with the men of the world, ſtrangers, yea, enemies to Chriſtianity. 2. The perſon prayed to, *the Lord of peace*, underſtand Jeſus Chriſt, the prince of peace, the purchaſer of peace, the procurer of peace, the preſerver of peace. 3. The perpetuity of the mercy prayed for, *The Lord give you peace*, not for a ſhort time, but for continuance, *always*, that is, at all times, and in all places, and with all perſons. 4. The way and manner of obtaining this and all other bleſſings, it muſt be in the uſe of means; *the Lord give you peace by all means*, that is, in the uſe of all lawful and laudable means. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord himſelf is the author, procurer, and preſerver of all that peace which his people enjoy; and therefore his people may boldly truſt him for peace and ſafety, who is, and will be ſtyled, *The Lord of peace*. 2. That ſuch as will obtain this bleſſing of peace, muſt pray for it, and endeavour after it in a diligent uſe of all lawful means, which is the uſual way and method in which God diſpenſes it. 3. That it is a laſting peace, in peace *always*, amongſt all perſons, and at all times, that a Chriſtian ſhould pray for and endeavour after, that it may be enjoyed without ceſſation, and without interruption: *The Lord of peace*, &c.

— The Lord *be* with you all. 17 The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epiſtle; ſo I write: 18 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. *Amen.*

Note here, 1. That in the former part of the verſe he had prayed for peace on behalf of theſe Theſſalonians, and this prayer was put up to Jeſus Chriſt; *The Lord of peace give you peace*, which, by the way, is a ſtrong argument for the divinity of Chriſt; for none but God is to be prayed to, none but God can give peace, Iſa. lvii. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace.* Our apoſtle now having prayed for peace, next prays for the preſence of God: *The Lord give you peace, the Lord be with you all. Learn* thence, That God's gracious preſence with his people in any plentiful meaſure, is annexed to their peaceable frame of ſpirit, and to their ſerious endeavours after peace and love, after unity and concord amongſt themſelves; and the contrary ſpirit and temper grieves the good ſpirit of God, and provokes him to withdraw his quickening and comforting preſence from his people; for theſe two petitions ſeem to have mutual dependency upon each other, *The Lord give you peace*, and *the Lord be with you all. Note*, 2. That the ſalutation written with his own hand reſpects his own writing, which did ſerve as a token or certain mark whereby his own epiſtles were diſtinguiſhed from all counterfeits. The ſending of ſalutations, either by word or writing, that we may thereby teſtify our ſincere affection to abſent friends, is not a matter of decency only but of duty; not of compliment barely, but of conſcience, *The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand.* 3. His uſual valediction and farewel wiſh, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.* Amen. As if he had ſaid, "May the gracious and undeſerved favour of God in Chriſt, with all the fruits and effects, the benefits and advantages of it be conveyed to you all, without exception, and be the portion and privilege of every ſoul of you; and in teſtimony both of my affectionate deſire and aſſured confidence, I ſay *Amen*, ſo be it, ſo let it be." *Learn* hence, That there is an inexhauſtible fountain of rich grace in Chriſt, and ſo copious are the ſtreams of ſpiritual bleſſings which flow from it, that wiſh we never ſo much to others, yet there ſtill remaineth enough for ourſelves. St. Paul, who wiſheth all grace to the Theſſalonians, knew very well there was enough both for himſelf and them; and that how large a meaſure ſoever was beſtowed upon them, there would not be the leſs remaining for himſelf; therefore doth he thus cloſe and conclude his epiſtle, ſaying, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.* Amen.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO
TIMOTHY.

Timotheus *or* Timothy *is the name of the perſon to whom St.* Paul *directs this and the following epiſtle; a name given him by his parents, to teſtify their pious deſire that this their ſon ſhould fear and honour God, according to the ſignification of his name.*

His grandmother Lois, *and his mother* Eunice, *bred him up in the knowledge of the ſcriptures from a child; he became firſt the diſciple, and then the companion of St.* Paul; *was ordained by him, was very aſſiſting to him, and inexpreſſibly dear to this great apoſtle, who knew how to value true worth in what age ſoever he found it; inſomuch, that St.* Paul *ſeldom mentions his name but with a mark of honour and eſteem, calling him his* ſon, *his* dearly beloved ſon, *his* faithful fellow-labourer, *&c. He was a perſon of eminent gifts, and of a gracious diſpoſition, but of a ſick and weakly conſtitution; and being entered very young into the work of the miniſtry, St.* Paul *thought fit in his abſence from him, to write two epiſtles to him, and to all ſucceeding miniſters of the goſpel after him, directing how to demean and behave themſelves in their miniſterial functions.*

In theſe two epiſtles, and that to Titus, *we have a collection of canons truly apoſtolical directing all biſhops and paſtors of the church how to govern themſelves, and how to guide their people.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *which is* our hope;

Note here, 1. St. Paul aſſerts his apoſtolical authority, calling himſelf *an apoſtle*, not that Timothy queſtioned it, but he writes it for their ſakes, over whom he was now preſiding at Epheſus, that neither miniſters or people might deſpiſe what Timothy did, it being enjoined both him and them by ſo great an authority as was that of an apoſtle, *Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*. 2. What authority St. Paul had for executing this office of an apoſtle, it was *by the commandment of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, by the appointment, injunction, ordination, and immediate commiſſion of the Father and Chriſt, by his voice from heaven, as the reſt of the apoſtles were called by a voice from Chriſt on earth: In 1 Cor. i. 1. he is ſaid to be called by the will of God; not by his permiſſive will barely, but by his preceptive will particularly. 3. The title given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is ſtyled our *hope*, that is, the author of our hope, the object of our hope, the purchaſer of what we hope for, the declarer to us of the hopes of glory expected by us. Where *note*, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is undoubtedly and undeniably God, becauſe he is our hope and truſt; Now, if he were no more than a man, though never ſo excelling, to make him our hope, would be to make ourſelves miſerable: For *curſed is the man that truſteth in man, and maketh man his hope*, Jer. xvii. 5.

2 Unto Timothy, *my* own ſon in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Note here, 1. The endearing title which our apoſtle gives to Timothy, he calls him his *ſon*, his *own ſon*, his own ſon *in the faith*; becauſe as ſome think, converted by him to the Chriſtian faith; others, that he was more thoroughly inſtructed, edified, and encouraged by St. Paul, but converted before; poſſibly alſo, he may call him his ſon, becauſe he was as aſſiſting to him, as obſequious and obſerving of him, as a ſon is to a father, he being a young man, and the apoſtle now aged; or it may be he calls him his ſon, becauſe he reſembled him in faith and doctrine, preaching and converſation, as a ſon reſembles his father in face and manners. Conſider Timothy as a ſpiritual ſon to St. Paul, begotten to the faith by him, and then the *note* is this, That the miniſters of Chriſt cannot but bear a fervent and affectionate love to thoſe that are their ſpiritual children, their ſons in the faith, and converted to Chriſt by their miniſtry; conſider him as an aſſiſtant to St. Paul, a co-worker and fellow-labourer with him in the work of the goſpel, and thus affectionately beloved by him; and we may learn for our inſtruction, how fervently the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould love one another, ſpeak reſpectfully of each other, ſecure the reputation one of another, ſtrengthen each other's hands, encourage each other's hearts in the work of God: We have little, God knows, very little love from the world: Lord! how ſad is it that we ſhould yet have leſs one for another? See how the heart of St. Paul and his aſſiſtant Timothy were knit together in love, like father and ſon, to the great reputation, as well as the ſucceſsful furtherance of the goſpel!

3 As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endleſs genealogies, which miniſter queſtions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; *ſo do.*

Note here, 1. The tender care which St. Paul took of the new planted church at Epheſus; when his office called him into Macedonia, he leaves Timothy behind him at Epheſus, to water what he had planted, and to build upon that foundation which he had laid: *when I went into Macedonia, I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus. Note*, 2. The charge and command which St. Paul left with Timothy at his departure from him, to take care that no new or ſtrange doctrine be taught, or any other doctrine received by the church, than what was delivered by him: *charge ſome that they teach us other doctrine.* But who were theſe? Very probably they were the Judaizing teachers, who ſtrenuouſly endeavoured to corrupt the purity, and deprave the ſimplicity of the goſpel. Thence *learn*, 1. That though the doctrine of Chriſt and his apoſtles was abundantly ſufficient to ſalvation, yet the church of Chriſt, even in the earlieſt days of Chriſtianity, were in very great danger of being corrupted early by other doctrines, than thoſe delivered by them. 2. That it is the great duty, and ought to be the ſpecial care of the miniſters of God, that no new or ſtrange doctrine be broached in the church of Chriſt: *I beſought thee—that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine.* But a farther and more particular charge is given, ver. 4. That the church at Epheſus give no heed to *fables* or *endleſs genealogies*, which rather occaſion wrangling diſputes, than tend to edification in faith and holineſs: By fables, we may underſtand vain and idle ſpeculations, Jewiſh ſcruples, frivolous obſervances; whatſoever in preaching is delivered by us, which doth not anſwer the great end of preaching, namely, to build up men in faith and holineſs, is trifling, and not preaching; what we deliver ſignifies no more than a fable or imaginary tale that is told. But what were theſe endleſs genealogies here ſpoken of? *Anſ.* Not ſcripture genealogies, for thoſe are not vain but uſeful; not endleſs, but determinate; but theſe were endeavours of ſome particular perſons, who, that they might have a pretence to claim kindred with Chriſt, did make their genealogies endleſs, drawing down their line of deſcent from David, &c. or elſe endeavours to prove themſelves ſons of Abraham and Iſaac, privileges which they highly valued themſelves upon, and reſted in, ſaying, *We have Abraham to our father.* Whatever they were, our apoſtle charges Timothy, that the church at Epheſus give no heed to them, nor to the preachers of them, and the reaſon is given, becauſe they only occaſion diſputes, and tend not to edification.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conſcience, and *of* faith unfeigned: 6 From which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide unto vain jangling; 7 Deſiring to be teachers of the law, underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

In theſe words our apoſtle ſmartly reflects upon the Judaizing teachers, who were ſo zealous for their ceremonial law, that they mingled works with faith in the point of juſtification; the apoſtle tells them, that the end of the law, ay, and of the goſpel too, is love; the end, that is, the aim, the ſcope, the deſign, the perfection and conſummation, the perfecting end; the ſenſe is, that all the duties which the law of God and the goſpel of Chriſt doth enjoin, are deſigned only as means to advance and perfect our love both to God and man; the end of all Chriſt's doctrine is charity, or the bringing of men to love God and their neighbour. *Obſerve* next, The apoſtle deſcribes the nature and quality of that love, which is the end and deſign, the intention and perfection of the law, and the fountain from whence this love muſt ſpring and flow, namely, from a pure heart, or a heart purified by the Spirit of Chriſt, from a *good conſcience*, or a conſcience purified by the blood of Chriſt, and from a faith unfeigned: Implying, That love either to God or men, is not ſincere, unleſs it proceed from a clean heart, and is accompanied with an holy and innocent life, and has faith for the root and principle from which it flows. *Obſerve* laſtly, How he taxes theſe Judaizing and falſe teachers, with ſwerving from charity, purity, and faith, and turning aſide to vain janglings; and that whilſt they affect to be thought learned teachers, and expounders of the law, they betray their own ignorance, not underſtanding either what they ſay, or whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man uſe it lawfully.

Leſt any ſhould have apprehended, from the reflection he made upon the teachers of the law in the foregoing verſe, that he did diſparage and undervalue the law itſelf, our apoſtle in this verſe declares, that the law rightly underſtood and preached was very good, given for, and ſerves unto excellent purpoſes, if we uſe it lawfully; that is, as we ought to uſe it, as God intended it, namely, as a perfect rule of life, to direct us in our obedience to God; but not ſo good as to expect juſtification by it; not good in oppoſition to the goſpel, but in ſubſerviency to the goſpel: *the law is good if uſed lawfully. Obſerve* here, 1. Something implied, namely, that the law of God may be uſed unlawfully: But how and when may it be ſaid ſo to be?

Anſwer, When it is converted to unprofitable diſputes, as was the caſe here, when men oppoſe it to Chriſt, when they ſeek juſtification by it, and the like. *Obſerve*, 2. Something expreſſed, namely, That the law of God, conſidered in itſelf, is good and excellent, it is good in regard of its author, it hath the authority of God inſtamped upon it; good in regard of the matter contained in it; good in regard of the end of it, to lead us unto Chriſt, Rom. x. 4. *Chriſt is the end of the law*; good in regard of the uſe of it, and that, (1.) To the ungodly, to reſtrain them from ſin, to convince them of ſin, to condemn them for ſin. (2.) To the godly, to diſcover ſin more clearly and more fully, to drive them out of themſelves, and from all expectation of righteouſneſs and juſtification by any thing in themſelves, or done by themſelves; to cauſe them to put the higher value, eſteem, and price upon Jeſus Chriſt, and the benefits received by him. Thus the law is good; and if ſo, wo to the Antinomians, who deny the uſe and excellency of the holy law of God, who vilify it, trample upon it, and becauſe it is not good for juſtification, affirm it is not good at all: What! is not gold good, becauſe you cannot eat it for food? It was never intended for that purpoſe: Is not obedience to the law as an eternal rule of holy living, and good works, agreeable to the demands of the law, neceſſary and good, though they never had the impreſs of God's ordination for our juſtification in his ſight, he having provided a perfect and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs for that purpoſe, which is highly pleaſing to him? Lord! in the day when thou ſhalt come to plead with the world for tranſgreſſing thy law, how ſhall theſe men, who with tongue and pen have cried down the uſe and excellencies of thy law, ſhew their heads before thee?

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, for unholy and profane, for murtherers of fathers and murtherers of mothers, for manſlayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for liars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to ſound doctrine.

Our apoſtle here declares the perſons, 1. Whom the law was not made for, and them for whom it was made: It was not made for a righteous man; that is, ſay ſome, it was not made for him as a burden, to be an uneaſineſs to him, becauſe he has a love to it, a delight in it, and does voluntarily conform himſelf to the obſervation of it: Others ſay thus, The law was not made for a righteous man, that is, the righteous man is not under the coercive or vindictive, but directive power of the law only; he is not under the curſe of the law actually, though all are under it meritoriouſly; and accordingly the law was never made to terrify, and affrighten, and condemn them. Next, the apoſtle declares for whom, for what perſons, and for what purpoſes the law was made, intended, and deſigned; namely, for reſtraining and condemning, firſt, in general, all lawleſs perſons, ſons of Belial, as the ſcripture calls them, that is, men without yoke; the moral law in general is a rule of holy living, and the goſpel in particular is Chriſt's yoke; now ſuch as will not wear the yoke of Chriſt, muſt expect no benefit by the croſs of Chriſt: Then he inſtances in particular, what and whom the law was made for, namely, to deter and reſtrain perſons from all impiety and profaneneſs, from all diſobedience and ſtubbornneſs, from murder and manſlaughter, from ſodomy, from whoredom, and all manner of uncleanneſs, either natural or unnatural, from theft, from perjury, from lying and falſhood, and ſummarily, to curb and reſtrain wicked men from the practice of every thing which is contrary to the pure and holy nature of God. *Learn* hence, That there is ſuch a propenſity and inclination in the corrupt and depraved nature of man to the practice of all ſin, even the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt of ſins, that the law of God, with all its threatened puniſhments, is not ſufficient to deter, to terrify, or reſtrain ſinners from the commiſſion of them; but ſuch as will not be under the reſtraining, muſt lie under the condemning power of the law.

11 According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt. 12 And I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry;

Note here, 1. The title given to the goſpel, it is called, *the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God*; partly, becauſe the glorious attribute and excellencies of God are more reſplendent in the goſpel, than in the law of God; as alſo, becauſe the goſpel brings more honour and glory to God than all the works of creation put together. 2. He ſtyles God, the giver of this goſpel, *The bleſſed God*, to ſignify thereby unto us his tranſcendent mercy and excelling goodneſs, in that being infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himſelf and his divine perfections, and incapable of any profit from, or advantage by, his creatures, he was yet pleaſed to give us his Son, his goſpel, his Holy Spirit, to qualify us for, and bring us to the enjoyment of himſelf; *According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God*. 3. What humble and thankful returns St. Paul makes to Chriſt, for the high honour, the rich and ſpecial favour conferred upon him, in calling him to diſpenſe this glorious goſpel, in calling him to it, in enabling him for it, and rendering him faithful and ſucceſsful in it? *I thank Chriſt Jeſus, who enabled me, and counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry*. Where *note*, That all the fidelity, ability, zeal, and courage, which the apoſtle had exerciſed in the whole courſe of his miniſtry, is attributed and aſcribed unto Chriſt, and not to himſelf; his faithfulneſs was not the cauſe or motive, but the effect and fruit of the grace of God in calling him to the miniſtry, 1 Cor. vii. 25. having obtained mercy to be faithful: Had our Saviour only diſcovered this faithfulneſs in him, and not conferred it upon him, there had not been ſuch reaſon for this affectionate thankſgiving which here we find from our apoſtle, *I thank Chriſt, who hath enabled me, counting me faithful*.

13 Who was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, becauſe I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

Note here, 1. What a prodigious ſinner St. Paul repreſents himſelf before converſion. *I was a blaſphemer, perſecutor, and injurious:* A blaſphemer, the higheſt ſin he could commit againſt God; a perſecutor, the higheſt ſin he could commit againſt the ſaints; injurious, the higheſt wickedneſs towards mankind; ſins of ſuch an aggravated and accumulated guilt, that they wanted but one ingredient, namely, ſufficient knowledge, to render them the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at the great and infinite mercy of God towards great ſinners! Even perſecutors and blaſphemers may be, and ſometimes are, converted, and brought home to God. 2. The reaſon aſſigned by him, why ſuch diſtinguiſhing mercy was diſpenſed to him: He obtained mercy becauſe he did it ignorantly in unbelief. The word *becauſe*, doth not import or imply, that ignorance in the apoſtle was the proper cauſe of mercy in God, but that it made St. Paul a more capable ſubject for receiving mercy, than he ſhould have been, if he had maliciouſly ſinned againſt knowledge; not that St. Paul by leſs ſinning did merit the mercy of God, but his ignorance and unbelief being in a ſort invincible, through the prejudices of education, they did much abate the malignity of his ſin; for he was bred a Phariſee, which was a ſect that had an implacable enmity againſt Chriſt and his holy religion. *Note*, laſtly, The end and deſign of St. Paul in relating that his bitter perſecution of Chriſtianity was in the time of his ignorance, and not done deliberately, knowingly, and maliciouſly; partly to juſtify the divine mercy and free grace of God, which pardoned his fury, his rage, and madneſs againſt Chriſt and his ſaints; for, had he done thus deliberately and maliciouſly, for ſecular ends and worldly advantages, it had been the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which was unpardonable: And partly, he mentions his ignorance, to prevent the abuſe of the divine mercy in men, and to let the world know that none might, or ought to take encouragement from his example, to be of a perſecuting ſpirit, and yet hope for mercy, when at the ſame time, they ſin againſt light and knowledge. I would to God the perſecuting Spirit amongſt us would conſider this, which is as bitter as ever in the breaſts of ſome againſt their proteſtant brethren; but, bleſſed be God, legally reſtrained: They cannot now afflict thoſe whom they do not affect; yet it is evident, they do not rejoice, and are not ſo thankful for their own liberty as they ſhould, becauſe thoſe whom they hate enjoy their's: Their caſe is vaſtly different from our apoſtle's; they cannot pretend to do it ignorantly, though through infidelity in ſome ſort they may.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Still our apoſtle goes on magnifying the tranſcendent mercy and abundant grace of God, that called him firſt to be a Chriſtian, and then an apoſtle; and he ſhews, that this great mercy of God had great effects in him of faith and love, both towards God and his ſaints. Where *note*, How St. Paul, after his converſion, abounded and excelled in thoſe graces which were oppoſite and contrary to the ſins committed in his carnal and unregenerate ſtate: He abounds in *faith*, in oppoſition to his former *unbelief*; and in *love*, in oppoſition to his former rage and cruelty. A Chriſtian's fruitfulneſs in grace and holineſs after his converſion, ought to bear ſome proportion to his unfruitfulneſs in a ſinful ſtate before converſion; the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love; he now glorifies God by excelling in thoſe graces which were oppoſite to his former ſins.

15 This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief.

Obſerve here, 1. What an humble apprehenſion this great apoſtle had of himſelf; though then the greateſt of ſaints in the eſteem of others, yet the chiefeſt of ſinners in his own account: For he doth not ſay, I was the chief of ſinners, but, *I am ſo*; notwithſtanding his repentance and remiſſion, ſtill he reflects upon his former unregenerate ſtate and ſinful condition. *Learn* hence, That when ſin is mercifully pardoned, and caſt behind God's back, the penitent ſinner will and ought to ſet it continually before his own face, to keep him humble, ſenſible of, and thankful for the rich grace of God diſpenſed to him, and received by him; *Sinners, of whom I am chief. Obſerve*, 2. A moſt comfortable revelation made by the goſpel concerning the redemption and ſalvation of a loſt world, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *He came into the world to ſave ſinners.* Where *note*, That the promiſed Meſſiah is come into the world; that Jeſus Chriſt is that promiſed Meſſiah: Therefore he was before he came, his divine nature pre-exiſting from all eternity; and in the fulneſs of time he aſſumed the human nature into an union with his God-head. *Note* farther, That the deſign of his coming was to ſave ſinners; therefore, if man had not ſinned, Chriſt had not come into the world: What need of a Mediator, had there been no breach? No need of a phyſician, had there been no diſeaſe. Farther, it was not abſolutely neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould come into the world to ſave ſinners; but ſuppoſing God's purpoſe of ſaving ſinners by way of a price and ſatisfaction, Chriſt's coming into the world was indiſpenſibly neceſſary; for no mere creature could lay down a price ſatisfactory for the ſalvation of loſt man. *Obſerve*, 3. The truth and certainty, together with the worth and excellency of the goſpel revelation; *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation:* For, what is the goſpel but a revelation of pardon to condemned malefactors, a declaration of peace to proclaimed enemies, a proclamation of liberty to enſlaved captives, an offer of cure to diſeaſed perſons? Oh! With what fervent zeal ſhould this acceptable doctrine be preached by us, and embraced by our people, *That Jeſus Chriſt is come into the world to ſave ſinners.*

16 Howbeit for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.

Note here, That God is pleaſed ſometimes to magnify his mercy in the converſion and ſalvation of the moſt notorious ſinners, that ſo the greateſt of ſinners may take encouragement from thence to hope and truſt in our Lord

Jeſus Chriſt for pardoning mercy: Thus here, this great blaſphemer and perſecutor was received to mercy, for a pattern and example to all ſuch ſinners as ſhould hereafter forſake their evil and wicked ways, and give up themſelves ſincerely to the obedience of the goſpel; *For this cauſe I obtained mercy.* Such a conſpicuous example of Chriſt's clemency and grace towards ſo great a ſinner, whom he not only pardoned, but preferred to the dignity of an apoſtle, and ſent forth to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, would be a ſtrong motive to the Gentiles to receive the goſpel with faith and obedience; there could be no reaſon for any of them to deſpair of mercy, when they ſaw ſuch a pattern, ſuch an illuſtrious inſtance of pardoning mercy before their eyes.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle being raviſhed with a ſweet ſenſe of the greatneſs of God's pardoning mercy towards himſelf, concludes this whole matter with a pathetical doxology, and an affectionate thankſgiving unto God. As if he had thus ſaid, "The ſenſe of the aforenamed unſpeakable mercy calleth up my ſoul to ſpeak with joy the praiſes of our God, who is eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only God, abſolutely wiſe, over angels and all creatures, to him be honour and glory for ever and ever."

18 This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy,—

What charge? To ſtay at Epheſus, ſay ſome, for the benefit of the church there; to charge the falſe teachers not to give heed to fables, ſay others; to keep the doctrine committed to him by St. Paul as a faithful miniſter and ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, againſt all oppoſition: Theſe were the charges given.

—According to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mighteſt war a good warfare,

Here St. Paul encourages Timothy to go on in the courſe of his miniſtry with courage and faithfulneſs, according as it had been foretold or propheſied he ſhould do. Here *note*, That amongſt the gifts of prophecy, which were found in the apoſtle's time, and the diſcerning of ſpirits, this was one; to foretel and chuſe out perſons meet and fit to do God ſervice in the miniſtry. Timothy was thus choſen by prophecy, that is, by the direction of the Spirit of God; he was deſigned and notified by the ſpirit of prophecy, and therefore the apoſtle bids him, as it had been foretold he ſhould be a faithful miniſter, to approve himſelf to be ſuch; *According to the prophecies which went before on thee, war a good warfare.* *Learn* hence, That young miniſters ought to take heed, that what hopes, expectations, and good opinions others have had of them, and what prayers, promiſes, and engagements have been made for them, may not be made void, but made good by them, in the future courſe of their miniſtry.

19 Holding faith, and a good conſcience, which ſome having put away, concerning faith have made ſhipwreck:

St. Paul had exhorted Timothy in the foregoing verſe *to war a good warfare*; here he directs him to two weapons which he would have him uſe in that warfare, namely, *faith and a good conſcience*; neither will do alone: Not faith without a good conſcience, nor a good conſcience without faith; hold both, faith in thy teaching, and a good conſcience in thy practice: Hold them faſt; for faith ſtands with a good conſcience, and falls with a bad one. *Learn* hence, That in the moſt perilous times, when ſome loſe their graces and comforts, their preſent peace and future hopes, that we may not loſe what we have in earth, and what we look for in heaven, our continual care muſt be, to get and keep, to have and hold, faith and a good conſcience. And *mark* the encouragement given to exerciſe this care; ſome through the neglect of it, *concerning faith have made ſhipwreck.* Our life is a ſea-faring condition; a good conſcience is the ark in which we are ſecure, made by God's own direction (as was that of Noah) and pitched within and without, as was his: A window it has in the top, to let in the light of heaven, but not the leaſt crack or crevice below, to let in a drop of guilt, or endanger its own ſafety; it ſhoots off all the ſhowers that fall downwards, and all the floods that rage upwards. Such a ſecurity is an innocent mind and a clear conſcience; but if we do not hold faſt a good conſcience, but let it go, we have ſeen the laſt of faith, it ſinks, it ſhipwrecks preſently.

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander;—

That is, of the number of thoſe who have made ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience, are theſe two men. They made ſhipwreck of faith; but how? By renouncing Chriſtianity expreſsly? No: But implicitly, by denying the reſurrection, and maintaining ſuch doctrines as utterly ſubverted and totally overthrew the faith.

—Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.

That is, whom I have inflicted the church's cenſure of excommunication upon, caſt them out of the church, and delivered to Satan as God's executioner, who oft-times tormented the perſon with grievous diſeaſes and bodily pains, called elſewhere, *The deſtruction of the fleſh*, 1 Cor. v. 5. *Learn* thence, That excommunication rightly adminiſtered, is a very ſolemn ordinance; a ſhutting out of heaven him who is juſtly caſt out of the church's communion here on earth. But *obſerve*, The charitable intention of the apoſtle in denouncing this ſentence of excommunication; it was, *That they might learn not to blaſpheme.* Mark, It was none of Satan's deſire, but the apoſtle's, that they might learn *not* to blaſpheme: Satan was then God's executioner, when the church wanted the countenance of the Chriſtian magiſtrate, and his deſign was deſtruction, but the apoſtle's was reformation; not to ruin, but reclaim. *Learn*, That the end of the church's cenſure, in particular of excommunication, is not to ſerve to the deſtruction of the cenſured, much leſs to the private revenge of the cenſurer, but to reform and reclaim the offender, that others may be warned, and the infection ſtayed.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter directs Timothy *to the management of his duty; and exhorts him to take ſpecial care that prayers and ſupplications be publicly made, and, ſo far as it was in his power, privately for all men.*

I EXHORT therefore, that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men: 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty which Timothy is exhorted to take care of, and that is, of the duty of public prayer; I exhort thee, that ſupplications, prayers and interceſſions, with thankſgivings, be publicly made: Prayer being a ſpecial and principal part of public worſhip, the miniſter of God muſt be aſſiduous and conſtant in it; deprecating evils threatened, ſupplicating for mercies wanted, interceding on the behalf of others, and giving thanks for bleſſings received. 2. For whom we are to pray in general, *for all men*; becauſe we cannot pray acceptably for ourſelves, if we pray only for ourſelves: This is the nobleſt exerciſe of charity, and which God has put in the power of the pooreſt man upon earth to exerciſe; *Let ſupplications and prayers be made for all men.* 3. For whom we are more eſpecially, and in the firſt place to pray; for *kings*, and all in authority, who then were Pagans and perſecutors. *Mark*, He ſays not for lawful and rightful kings, but for ſuch as have the pre-eminence and power in their hands, for all power is of God: *And the powers that be, are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 2. But why *firſt for kings?* Becauſe they are ſuch great inſtruments of good to mankind, becauſe they moſt want our prayers, as they encounter with more difficulties, are expoſed to more dangers, and are liable to greater temptations than other men. 4. The arguments which the apoſtle offers, to engage us to this duty, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty*; that is, that we may be ſecured in the quiet and peaceable poſſeſſion of our civil rights and intereſts, and that we may be protected in the free exerciſe of our religion, and in the practice of godlineſs; for though no prince can take our religion from us, if we reſolve to keep it, yet they may diſturb us in the quiet and peaceable enjoyment of it; and therefore it is our intereſt, as well as our duty, to pray *for kings, and all that are in authority.*

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Our apoſtle ſubjoins his reaſons for our praying *for all men*, becauſe Chriſt came into the world to ſave all men, chap. i. 15. Becauſe it is the deſire of God, as well as the deſign of Chriſt, that all men ſhould be ſaved, and becauſe ſuch prayers are good and acceptable in the ſight of God. *Learn* hence, 1. That to pray for all men, as well enemies as friends, eſpecially and particularly for rulers and magiſtrates, is good, acceptable, and agreeable to Almighty God, as all acts of obedience to his commanding will are: *This is good and acceptable in the ſight of God.* 2. That it is not only all ſorts of men that God and Chriſt deſire ſhould be ſaved, but our Lord willed, together with his Father, the ſalvation of all men in general, ſo far as to make a ſacrifice ſufficient for all, if they repent and believe, and to offer a general pardon to all on condition of acceptance, and to ſend his miniſters amongſt all with the word of reconciliation, accompanying it with an hearty deſire that all would accept of it; in ſhort, what Chriſt offereth to all, he undoubtedly purchaſed for all; but he offers to all pardon and life upon condition of acceptance; therefore, he is ſo far willing that all men ſhould be ſaved. 3. The means and method by which, and in which, God would have all men to be ſaved, namely, by coming to the knowledge of the truth. It is evidently falſe then, which ſome confidently affirm, That a man may be ſaved in any religion: No, he cannot come to ſalvation but by the knowledge of the truth; without the knowledge of God, without faith in Chriſt, where he has been revealed, and without obedience to the goſpel, where it has been made known, there is no poſſibility of ſalvation; God would have all men to be ſaved, by coming to the *knowledge of the truth.*

5 For *there is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus; 6 Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time.

The apoſtle's argument runs thus: "We ought to pray for all, becauſe there is one God, who is good to all, and one Mediator between God and mankind, who took upon him the common nature of all men, and gave himſelf a ſatisfactory and ſufficient ranſom for all, which was in due time teſtified and born witneſs to us by his apoſtles." *Learn* hence, 1. That the only way or friendly intercourſe between God and fallen men, is by and through a Mediator: God cannot look upon fallen men out of a Mediator, but as rebels, traitors, and objects of his vindictive wrath; nor can fallen man, without a Mediator, look up to God, but as a provoked majeſty, an angry judge, and a conſuming fire. 2. That there is no other Mediator between God and man but Jeſus Chriſt, who was both God and man; for though the apoſtle calls him the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus, this is not added to exclude the divine nature from the Mediatorſhip, but emphatically to declare *that* nature, in which he gave himſelf a ranſom for us; the human nature is the matter of our ranſom; the divine nature gave worth and value to it; Chriſt ſuffered being man, and ſatisfied being God. 3. That this one Mediator, Jeſus Chriſt, gave himſelf a ranſom for all: Whoever periſhes under the goſpel, it is not becauſe no ranſom was paid for him, nor becauſe it was not ſufficient for him, for it is moſt notorious, that God has iſſued forth an univerſal act of grace, offering pardon of ſin, and eternal ſalvation to all men without exception, living under the goſpel, upon condition of their believing acceptance; if they reject and refuſe it, it is to their unutterable and inevitable condemnation. 4. That

Chriſt's mediation and interceſſion is founded upon redemption; becauſe he gave himſelf a ranſom for all, therefore is he, and he only, qualified to intercede for all, in virtue of that ſacrifice which he offered for the ſalvation of mankind: Therefore, the diſtinction of the church of Rome, between a Mediator of redemption, and a Mediator of interceſſion, is groundleſs; for who dares plead with an offended God, as an interceſſor on the behalf of ſinners, that has not firſt, as a redeemer, ſatisfied the juſtice of God for ſin? As there was no redemption wrought by any, but by Chriſt; as there is but *one God*, ſo but *one Mediator* between God and man, the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apoſtle, (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, *and* lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8 I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle declares his authority to publiſh the goſpel to the Gentiles, and his integrity in the publication of it; I was ordained an apoſtle, a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity. 2. That according to St. Paul's commiſſion, he gave directions to all ſorts of perſons for the regular performance of their duty. And, firſt, concerning the duty of prayer: *I will*; that is, God by me declares his will, that all *men pray*, that they pray *every where*, in the public aſſemblies, in their private families and apartments; *lifting up the hands*, in token of expecting to receive an anſwer from heaven: *Lifting up holy hands*; let their prayers be holy, accompanied with faith and charity: *Without wrath and doubting*; a peaceable heart is as neceſſary in prayer, as a pure hand: It is in vain to aſk in prayer the favour of God, with anger and revenge in our hearts againſt man; to pray with doubting, is oppoſed to faith; to pray in wrath, is oppoſed to charity. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Pray both in actual faith and love." There muſt be faith in prayer, otherwiſe we cannot lift up holy hands without doubting, there muſt be love otherwiſe we cannot lift up holy hands without wrath: *Therefore*, ſays the apoſtle, *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands*, &c. He and his ſervice muſt be holy, that will ſerve God acceptably.

9 In like manner alſo, that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array; 10 But (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works.

The next apoſtolical precept here given, is to women, concerning their apparel and attire, that at all times, but eſpecially in public worſhip, they uſe ſuch apparel as becometh modeſt and chaſte women, expreſſing by their outward garb the inward gravity and modeſty of their minds; not like proud and alluring perſons, with embroidered hair, gold and peals, to attract the eyes and hearts of the ſimple. *Note*, 1. That the attire, which all perſons wear, ought to be ſuch as may anſwer the end for which apparel was appointed; which was to hide and ſhroud our nakedneſs; for differencing and diſtinguiſhing of ſexes; as alſo for diſtinguiſhing between the qualities and ranks of perſons: Garments alſo are for defence and protection, and for decency, and ornament. 2. That though perſons of quality are not prohibited to wear ſuch garments, though coſtly, as becometh their degree, yet none are to ſtudy the external adorning of the body, ſo much, as to neglect the inner man by good works. 3. That all attire (1.) is forbidden which ſuſpected women uſe, either to provoke luſt in others or to ſhew inclinations to it themſelves. (2.) All ſuch attire as, by the richneſs and coſtlineſs of it, ſhews pride and vanity of ſpirit, and an ambition to excel others; not but that there may be pride under mean apparel, and ofttimes is. (3.) All ſuch attire as is unſuitable either to the time or place of worſhip. *Note*, 4. That this precept ought not to be ſlighted, by women, as of ſmall moment; becauſe the two great apoſtles, St. Peter and St. Paul, do both give it in charge unto them. Laſtly, That the men are by no means to look upon themſelves as unconcerned in this apoſtolical precept given to women: It is much more inexcuſable in them to affect gaiety and guady dreſs; for it is vain and fooliſh, troubleſome and uneaſy, the nurſe of idleneſs, attended with luxury and wantonneſs, and very often with immodeſty and lewdneſs, and is the great bane very often of juſtice and charity. How many are fine and gay, but at the expence, and ſometimes at the ruin, of the poor tradeſman! And how oft is that ſpent in vain decking, which ought to be laid out in the poor's clothing!

11 Let the women learn in ſilence with all ſubjection. 12 But I ſuffer not a woman to teach, nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence.

Still our apoſtle is directing Timothy how perſons ſhould and ought to behave themſelves at the time, and in the place of worſhip: *Let*, ſays he, *the women*, in your aſſemblies, *learn in ſilence with all ſubjection* to the better ſex; for *I ſuffer not a woman to teach* publicly, and to *uſurp authority over the man*, to whom God has given authority over her; but rather, according to her duty, let her learn *in ſilence*. Here *note*, 1. That it is only women's public teaching that is here forbidden: not their private teaching their children, or ſervants, or the younger women, or even their huſbands themſelves upon a fit occaſion. Acts xviii. 26. we find Priſcilla privately inſtructing Apollos. 2. That none ought to teach but who have authority; and teaching is exerciſing that authority: A woman therefore teaching publicly, doth uſurp an authority not due unto her. 3. There were ſome women in the Jewiſh church endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and particularly with the gift of propheſying, who did teach publicly; as Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Anna: And it is probable, that the ſpeaking of theſe extraordinary women encouraged others to do the like, whom the apoſtle here directs his ſpeech againſt: *I ſuffer not a woman to teach*, &c.

13 For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion.

Here St. Paul offers a double argument to enforce the duty of ſubjection upon the woman, and to prevent her uſurping of authority over the man; namely, becauſe the man was firſt in the creation: *Adam was firſt formed, then Eve*; and the woman was firſt in the tranſgreſſion: *Adam was not deceived*, that is, firſt and immediately deceived, *but the woman being deceived was* firſt *in the tranſgreſſion*; ſhe was therefore guilty of her own and her huſband's tranſgreſſion; and accordingly, not only by the law of her creation, but as a puniſhment for her tranſgreſſion, God has placed her in a ſtate of ſubjection, and given the man authority over her; which authority ſhe uſurps over him, whenever ſhe undertakes to be a public teacher of him. Theſe two conſiderations doth the apoſtle make uſe of, to humble the woman, and to keep her within the ſphere of her proper duty.

15 Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety.

Our apoſtle having in the preceding verſe, acquainted us with the woman's ſin, that ſhe *was in the tranſgreſſion*, and firſt in the tranſgreſſion; in this verſe he informs the woman of a part of her puniſhment for that her tranſgreſſion; and that is, the ſevere pain and extreme peril of child-bearing. He acquaints her, 2. With her comfort and ſupport under that puniſhment; and that is, an hope of ſalvation: *She ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing*. 3. With the condition, upon which the hope of that ſalvation is grounded and bottomed; *if ſhe continue in faith and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety*. *Learn*, 1. That pain in child-bearing is a part of that puniſhment which was inflicted by God upon the woman for her firſt ſin; and accordingly the woman's ſorrow and ſenſible feeling of the pains of child-birth ought to bring to her remembrance her original and firſt tranſgreſſion. Surely when the woman feels the original puniſhment, it ought to remind her of her original ſin, as a child ought to remember his fault at that very inſtant when he is under his father's rod. 2. That the infliction of this puniſhment (the pains of child-bearing) even unto death, is and ſhall be no hindrance of the woman's eternal ſalvation, if there be found with her thoſe holy qualifications and gracious conditions which the goſpel requires; partly in regard of the relation which God ſtands in to her, partly in regard of the covenant which God has made with her. A child is as much a child under the rod, as in the boſom; neither the father's ſtroke, nor the child's grief can diſſolve that relation. 3. That faith and charity, holineſs and ſobriety, with perſeverance therein, are the great conditions of the goſpel upon which the woman's eternal ſalvation in that hazardous condition doth depend. *She ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing*, &c. The words may alſo refer to the woman's temporal deliverance in the time of travail; and the ſenſe runs thus: "She ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing, that is, ſhe ſhall go through the pains of child-birth with ſafety, if ſhe continue in faith, putting her truſt in God for deliverance, in charity, exerciſing compaſſion to thoſe in like condition; and in the exerciſe of temperance, ſobriety, and chaſtity, according to her matrimonial vow." *She ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing, if ſhe continue in faith*, &c.

CHAP. III.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this chapter is to inſtruct Timothy *in one of the moſt important parts and duties of his office, namely, to take great care whom he did admit into the ſacred function.*

THIS *is* a true ſaying, if a man deſire the office of a biſhop, he deſireth a good work.

Note here, 1. Our apoſtle acquaints Timothy with the dignity, honour, and excellency of the ſacred function: *He that deſireth the office of a biſhop*, that is, to rule and teach in the church of God, *he deſireth a good work*, that is, an honourable employment. As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Know, O Timothy, that as to the office of a biſhop, whoever deſireth it, doth deſire a very great and excellent work: It is not a bare name, title, dignity, a place of honour and command; but a *work*, a work of vaſt importance, labour and difficulty: Take heed therefore whom thou doſt admit, and of thoſe that are alſo admitted into the ſacred function, to conſider the great weight of that important ſervice, to enterprize it with extraordinary dread and caution, looking upon their office, not with aſpiring but tremendous thoughts: For *who is ſufficient to theſe things?*"

2 A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, apt to teach.

Here we have St. Paul's poſitive character of a biſhop, and what he ought to be, who is admitted into that high and honourable office in the church of God; he ought to be *blameleſs*, a perſon free from ſcandal, without any juſt ground of blame: The life of a biſhop ſhould ſhine ſo bright, that others may not only behold it, but admire it, and guide their lives by the example of it: *The huſband of one wife*; that is, one at a time; not guilty of the ſin of having many wives, or of putting away the wife by divorce, as the Jews frequently did for frivolous cauſes. Here *note*, 1. The apoſtle's command (that the biſhop be the huſband of one wife) doth not oblige him to marry, but it eſtabliſhes the lawfulneſs of his marriage, if he ſees ſufficient reaſon for it. Nor, 2. Does the apoſtle here forbid ſucceſſive marriages, as if when a biſhop has buried one wife, or more, he might not lawfully marry again; for this he elſewhere allows, 1 Cor. vii. 8. from this it may not be in a man's power to abſtain; many loſe their firſt, and ſometimes their ſecond wives ſo ſoon, that were not after-marriages lawful, all the ends of marriage muſt be fruſtrate as to them; yet may we ſuppoſe by theſe words, and many others, that St. Paul propoſes a greater degree of chaſtity to church governors than to other perſons. *Vigilant*, very diligent and watchful in the performance of his whole duty, not long abſent from his flock, nor negligent when he is among them; *ſober*, governing his paſſions and appetites, reducing thoſe rebellious powers under the dominion of reaſon and religion; *of good behaviour*, in his words, in habit and garb, in his deeds and actions, neither proud and ſupercilious, nor moroſe and ſour, but affable and eaſy, kind and courteous, of a compoſed temper and grave behaviour; *given to hoſpitality*,

pitality, not to ſenſuality; it is not the keeping of a free table, and open houſe for all comers, which St. Paul points at; but charity in entertaining ſtrangers, poor Chriſtians that left their country by perſecution, or ſuch as travelled upon their lawful affairs from place to place, the free relieving of ſuch as are neceſſitous, and expoſed to want and hardſhip, is the hoſpitality pointed at by our apoſtle; *apt to teach*, that is, both knowing and willing, able to teach, and forward to it, having both ſkill and will, ability and dexterity for that part of his duty, one that is neither ignorant of his duty, nor negligent in the performance of it.

3 Not given to wine, no ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

The negative character of a biſhop now follows, ſhewing what he muſt not be: *Not given to wine*; that is, to much wine, no inordinate lover either of wine or ſtrong drink, no wine-bibber, nor ſitter at wine in his own houſe, much leſs at taverns and public houſes: *No ſtriker*, either with hands or togue, no quarreller, that cannot keep his hand from hurting, no word-ſtriker, no ſtriker with his tongue in paſſion and anger; a word, we ſay, wounds deeper than a ſword; the miniſters of God may wound the conſciences of men with the ſword of the Spirit, but they muſt not wound the reputations of men with their own wrathful ſpirits: We muſt uſe our tongues rather to heal than wound; or if at any time to wound, it muſt be in order to healing. *Not greedy of filthy lucre*; no inordinate lover of money, which makes a man baſe and ſordid, both in getting, keeping, and ſpending; *but patient*, meek and forbearing, not rigidly exacting his due, not acting *ſummo jure*, but rather parting with ſomewhat which in ſtrictneſs may be his right, for peace ſake: *Not a brawler*, or contentious perſon, often engaged in law-ſuits, but of a mild and peaceable diſpoſition: *Not covetous*, or enſlaved to the love of wealth; poſſeſs he may the good things of this life, but not be poſſeſſed by them.

4 One that ruleth well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?)

A biſhop being a ruler in the church of God, Timothy is adviſed to chuſe ſuch a one to rule in the church that well and wiſely governs his own family, having his children in due ſubjection, and both he and they behaving themſelves with becoming gravity; and St. Paul ſubjoins a reaſon for this apoſtolical injunction, arguing from the leſs to the greater, thus: "The church is a large family, the biſhop's houſe a leſs; the former requires a greater ſkill in governing of it than the latter: If then a man cannot rule a leſs province, how ſhall he manage a greater? If he cannot keep up his authority with decency and becoming gravity in his own family, how ſhall ſuch a one be thought fit to be entruſted with the care of the church of God?" Great are the obligations which lie upon the miniſters of God above all other men, to guide and govern their own families, to keep their children in due ſubjection, and their ſervants in great order; becauſe their family miſcarriages reflect greatly upon their authority and prudence, and the world will pronounce them unfit for rule in the church of God, who cannot govern their own houſe: *If a man knows not how to rule his own houſe*, &c. *Learn* hence, That he who knows how to rule his own houſe well, is in a good poſture of ſpirit for public rule; the ſame wiſdom, juſtice, and holineſs, for kind, but more extenſive, acts in either ſphere, and will regularly move in both.

6 Not a novice, leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

A *novice*, ſignifies, *a young plant*: here, *a young, raw, unexperienced perſon*: Yet not ſo much young in years as in knowledge; for Timothy himſelf was very young: Not a novice in religion then, not one that is unexperienced in the myſteries of the goſpel, undertaking to teach others before he has learnt himſelf. And the reaſon for this injunction is weighty; *Leſt being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil*: Implying, that young, raw, and unexperienced perſons, when put into public office, are in very great danger of falling into the ſin of pride, the devil's ſin, and of expoſing themſelves to condemnation, the devil's puniſhment, becauſe their knowledge is weaker, and their paſſions ſtronger, and their graces feebler, and they want that experience which ſhould conſolidate their judgments, are therefore in great danger of ſelf-exalting; for none ſo proud and confident as the ignorant and injudicious. *Note* here, That when St. Paul ſays, *Leſt he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, it is as if he had ſaid, "Leſt he be condemned for the ſin that the devil was condemned for, which was pride;" not that the devil will condemn him for his pride, for the more proud a man is, the more the devil approves him: Nor is it the devil's office to condemn, but to execute: he is the executioner, not the judge; he will not condemn for ſin, but he will eternally torment them whom God condemns.

7 Moreover, he muſt have a good report of them which are without; leſt he fall into reproach and the ſnare of the devil.

Note here, How needful it is for a miniſter to be of an untainted reputation; a biſhop muſt be of good report, ſaith St. Paul; it is neceſſary for his own ſalvation that he be good, and for the ſalvation of others, that he be accounted ſo: Great is their ſin, then, who go about to blaſt a miniſter's reputation, becauſe ſomething of reputation is abſolutely neceſſary to render his miniſtry ſucceſsful. *Note* farther, *He muſt have a good report* of them that are *without*, that is, without the church, unbelieving Jews or Gentiles, with whom he formerly converſed; leſt becoming contemptible, and ſo not able to perform his duty as he ſhould, he give occaſion to the heathen to blaſpheme Chriſtianity, and to reproach him for his former courſe of life.

8 Likewiſe *muſt* the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

Note here, 1. That there are but two ſorts of fixed church-offices mentioned by St. Paul, biſhops and deacons;

as the church had its own biſhop, ſo likewiſe their own deacons; Theſe were at firſt inſtituted for the ſervice of the poor; the alms of the church were brought to the altar, the deacons received them, and diſtributed them among the aged and impotent from houſe to houſe: Now becauſe they were thus employed, the apoſtle adviſeth them to beware of thoſe faults that are frequently committed in common converſation, as light and vain diſcourſe, ſaying one thing to one perſon, and the contrary to another. *Let the deacons be grave*, not guilty of levity, but ſerious and compoſed, men of a modeſt and becoming carriage; *not double-tongued*, nor over talkative perſons, nor ſaying one thing to one perſon, and the contrary to another, according to the place or company they fell into: *not given to much wine*; not the thing, but the exceſs, is forbidden; *not greedy of filthy lucre*, ſeeking to get wealth by ſordid ways and means.

9 Holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.

That is, they muſt be ſound believers, and of an upright life, maintaining truth of doctrine, and ſoundneſs of faith, by ſincerity of heart and integrity of life.

10 And let theſe alſo firſt be proved; then let them uſe the office of a deacon, being *found* blameleſs.

Here Timothy is directed not to put any perſons ſuddenly into the office of a deacon, but firſt to prove them for ſome conſiderable time; and their ſufficiency being approved, let them be ordained, and uſe the office of a deacon.

11 Even ſo *muſt their* wives *be* grave, not ſlanderers, ſober, faithful in all things.

In the original it runs, *Let the women*; by which is meant, either the deacons' wives, or the deaconneſſes, who were appointed to take care of the poor women, as the deacons were of the men: Underſtand it of both; theſe qualifications are very excellent and well-becoming of both; they ought to be grave and ſober, not light and airy, no ſlanderers, not devils, ſays the original; the ſenſe is, not railers, nor falſe accuſers, but diligent and faithful in all buſineſs, and truſty in all affairs. It is not enough and ſufficient that the miniſters of the goſpel themſelves be of a grave and ſober converſation, but their wives alſo muſt and ought to take eſpecial care that they demean themſelves anſwerable to their place and ſtation, and ſuitably to the character which their huſbands bear; *ſo muſt their wives be grave*.

12 Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houſes well.

That is, "Let not any ſuch be admitted deacon who has more wives than one, or that hath injuriouſly put away one, and married to another; and let them ſhew by the good government of their own children and houſhold, that they are fit to govern the church of God." *Note* here, That the higher offices of the church were uſually choſen out of the inferior; and accordingly, the qualifications for both offices, namely, that of biſhops and deacons, are for the greateſt part the ſame, both in this epiſtle, and in that to Titus.

13 For they that have uſed the office of a deacon well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and great boldneſs in the faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

That is, "Although the deacons be as ſervants to the biſhops, yet ſuch as uſe that office well, according to the foregoing rules, by ſo doing do purchaſe to themſelves a good degree above the vulgar, and alſo have farther hopes of being advanced in the church to higher offices; and when they preach the word (as did Philip and Stephen) they might do it with great boldneſs, and with expectation of ſucceſs, living ſuitably to the qualification of their function, and walking according to the rule of the goſpel, which they profeſſed and taught."

14 Theſe things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee ſhortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thyſelf in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "I do hope to come to thee very ſhortly; but if I tarry long, or be prevented at laſt, as I am uncertain, I write theſe things to thee, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to converſe in the houſe of God, the church of the living God in which thou art a pillar and firm buttreſs of the truth." Some, by the *pillar* here, will underſtand the church, as being the foundation on which truth is built, and giving it authority; but ſhe is therefore the church of Chriſt, becauſe ſhe holds the truth, and it is eſſential to her being to maintain and teach all neceſſary truths; ſhe holds it forth, and publiſhes it to the world, ſuſtaining it, and ſupporting it as a pillar doth the king's proclamation: The truth receives not its authority from the church, but the church receives authority by adhering to the truth. Others, by the *pillar*, underſtand Timothy, and that St. Paul is here exhorting, that according to his office, Timothy ſhould be a pillar and buttreſs of truth in the church. Hence Gal. ii. 9. James, Cephas, and John, are ſaid to be pillars there, as is Timothy here; a pillar in the church ſignifies a man that is well rooted and grounded, and ſtrong in the faith; this he exhorts Timothy to be. *Note* here, 1. The church's ſurpaſſing dignity: She is called the houſe of God, in which he dwells: God is preſent in all places, even in hell itſelf, by the immenſity of his being; but the church is his palace, the place of his peculiar reſidence. 2. The miniſters of the church's important duty, namely, as pillars to ſupport, maintain, and uphold the divine truth againſt all thoſe that ſeek to corrupt and ſuppreſs the ſame. Be thou, O Timothy, in the church of God as *the pillar and ground of truth.*

16 And without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Our apoſtle having exhorted Timothy, in the preceding verſes, to behave himſelf worthily in the church of God, and as a pillar ſupporting, maintaining, and upholding the truths of God, in this verſe he reckons up ſix principal heads of evangelical truths, which are to be aſſerted and defended by him; uſhering them in with this preface, *Without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs*. *Learn*, That our holy faith, our Chriſtian religion is a myſtery, a great myſtery, an unqueſtionable myſtery, a myſtery of godlineſs, a myſtery hidden in God, Eph. iii. 9. hidden in Chriſt, Col. iii. 3. hidden in the Scriptures, Rev. iii. 18. hidden in and under the types and ſhadows of the ceremonial law; nay, hidden even in the goſpel itſelf, for we know but in part: And if Chriſtianity be a myſtery, then the knowledge of it is the effect of divine revelation and ſupernatural diſcovery, not to be known by the light or benefit of nature, but God reveals it to us by his Spirit: Farther, if it be a myſtery, then the diſpenſation of it is a ſpecial favour, an arbitrary and voluntary diſcovery of it, to whom, when, and how far God himſelf pleaſes: Finally, if it be a myſtery, then it is to be apprehended by faith, and not to be fathomed by reaſon; faith looks at *revelation*, reaſon calls for a demonſtration; faith embraces like Abraham, what reaſon laughs at, like Sarah; *Without controverſy*, *great is the myſtery of Godlineſs*. This is St. Paul's magnificent preface, which requires not only the aſſent, but challenges the obedience and adoration of our faith. *Obſerve* next, The ſix principal heads of evangelical truth here reckoned up for Timothy to ſtudy, to preach, and to defend. 1. *God was manifeſted in the fleſh*; that is, the ſecond Godhead appeared in our human fleſh and nature. Aſtoniſhing myſtery! That the Creator of the world ſhould become a creature, lodged in a ſtable, and cradled in a manger! The infinite Deity and finite fleſh met in one perſon, and yet the Godhead not humanized, nor the humanity deified, but both inviſibly conjoined: the human nature was united to the Godhead miraculouſly, aſſumed integrally, united inſeparably. 2. Juſtified in or by the Spirit; that is, the Spirit was Chriſt's witneſs, that he was no impoſtor or deceiver, but the promiſed and expected Meſſias, working all his miracles by the power of the Spirit, raiſing himſelf from the dead, and thereby declaring himſelf to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holineſs; and by ſending the Spirit after his aſcenſion into heaven, down upon his diſciples here on earth: Thus the Spirit juſtified Chriſt really and truly to be what he profeſſed himſelf to be, and ſealed his doctrine to the world. 3. *Seen of angels*; they celebrated his birth, and gave notice of it to the world, miniſtered to him in the wilderneſs, ſuccoured him in the garden, were preſent at his reſurrection, accompanied him in his aſcenſion: *Seen of angels*. Lord, what a ſtupendous ſight was this! For man to ſee an angel is wonderful, but for an angel to ſee God become man was ſoul-amazing; they ſang their *gloria patri* at his birth, they beheld and and applauded his happy victory over Satan in the deſart. Oh! with what eyes did they look upon his bloody ſweat in the garden! With what officiouſneſs did they roll away the ſtone in the morning of the reſurrection! And with what univerſal triumphs and acclamations did they accompany him to his celeſtial throne! 4. *Preached to the Gentiles*: the wall of ſeparation between Jew and Gentile being broken down, Chriſt was, by his commiſſioned apoſtles, preached to the Gentile world; the Jews were once children, and we dogs; theirs was the bread ours were the crumbs; but now are we made fellow-commoners with them, heirs of the ſame, partakers of the ſame glory. 5. *Believed on in the world*: Chriſt came into the world in ſo deſpicable a manner, that he was diſregarded by the world, who are allured and taken with pomp and outward magnificence: Therefore, that any ſhould believe on him in the world, is a juſt wonder, and a myſtery of godlineſs; though Chriſt be liberally preached, yet he is ſparingly received. Iſa. liii. 1. *Who hath believed our report?* Chriſt is believed on in the world: but, alas! comparatively but by few. Lord, enlarge the number of thy believers, and confirm that number in believing. 6. *Received up into glory*, where he ſits in his glorified humanity, united to his glorious Deity, with all that blood and gore wiped off with which he was beſmeared in the day of his paſſion, and his body ſhining brighter than ten thouſand ſuns. This body the heavens muſt contain till the reſtitution of all things, when he ſhall come from heaven as he went into heaven attended with glorious angels, ſummon the whole hoſt of ſaints to meet him in the air, that ſo they may ever be with their Lord. Oh! ſtrengthen our faith in this deſirable happineſs, and ſet our ſouls a-longing for the full fruition and final enjoyment of it. *Amen*.

CHAP. IV.

Our apoſtle in this chapter acquaints Timothy *with (that he may forewarn the church of) an apoſtaſy and revolt from the Chriſtian faith, though not in all parts of it, yet from ſeveral main and fundamental parts of it; withal aſſuring them, it was no more than what had been long foretold; for the Spirit ſpake expreſsly that in the latter times ſome ſhould depart.*

NOW the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that in the
latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith,
giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of
devils: 2 Speaking lies in hypocriſy, having their
conſcience ſeared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to
marry, *and commanding* to abſtain from meats, which
God hath created to be received with thankſgiving of
them which believe and know the truth.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, "Although the myſtery of godlineſs, the doctrine of Chriſtianity, be ſo clearly revealed, and fully confirmed, yet the ſpirit of prophecy has very plainly foretold us, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith once embraced by them, either in whole or in part; turning apoſtates by giving heed to impoſtures and doctrines of men, teaching errors ſuggeſted by devils, who cover their lies with hypocritical pretences, and are men of hardened hearts, ſeared conſciences, profligate lives; forbidding ſome, whom they have ſeduced to marry, and commanding them to abſtain from meats, which God hath ecrated to be received with thankſgiving by them which do believe and know the truth." *Obſerve* here, 1. That the apoſtaſy and defection of a conſiderable part of the Chriſtian church in the latter times was foreſeen and foretold very long before it came to paſs; by Daniel, ſay ſome, chap. ix. 37, 38, &c. by St. Paul, ſay others, in his ſecond epiſtle to the Theſſalonians; and in his firſt epiſtle to Timothy, the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly, that ſome ſhall depart from the faith, that is, from the doctrine of the faith received, which we know the church of Rome has moſt notoriouſly done. 2. The cauſe of this apoſtaſy and defection from Chriſtianity, *Giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils. Queſt.* But what is here meant by the doctrines of devils? *Anſ.* Theſe (ſays our reverend Archbiſhop Tillotſon) can be no other doctrines than thoſe tending to idolatry, which the ſcripture every where doth, in a particular manner aſcribe to the devil, as the inventor and promoter of; therefore he tells us, that, in ſome ancient copies, the words run thus: *In the latter times ſome ſhall apoſtatize from the faith*; *for they ſhall worſhip the dead having regard to doctrines of devils*; ſo that the particular kind of idolatry into which ſome part of the Chriſtian church ſhould apoſtatize, is here pointed at, namely, That they ſhould worſhip ſouls departed, or the ſpirits of dead men, which was part of the heathen idolatry, into which the children of Iſrael did frequently relapſe: Theſe departed ſouls were called *demons*, and were eſteemed a middle ſort of divine powers, between the ſupreme gods and mortal men, whoſe office it was to be agents and mediators between the gods above, and men below; thus is the holy city trodden down by the Gentiles, that is, overwhelmed with the Gentiles' idolatry. 3. The perſons revolting, who they are foretold to be; not all, but ſome only: *In the latter days ſome ſhall depart from the faith*; not the whole viſible church, but a very great and conſiderable part of it. *Learn*, thence, that the true church of Chriſt was never wholly extinguiſhed, nor the light of the goſpel ever quite put out, no, not in the greateſt darkneſs that ever was, to overwhelm it; ſome (only) and not all, ſhall depart from the faith. *Obſerve*, 4. The perſons deſcribed who ſhould be the occaſion of this apoſtaſy and revolt, namely, ſuch as *ſpeak lies in hypocriſy*, and have *ſeared conſciences*, that is, ſuch ſtupid conſciences as have loſt the ſenſe of good and evil, and do no longer do their office. Theſe lies, which the apoſtate church of Rome is guilty of, the profound Mr. Mede ſtyles, "Lying miracles, fabulous legends of the acts of ſaints and ſufferings of martyrs, counterfeit writings under the name of the firſt and beſt antiquity." Lord! who could have coined or believed ſuch monſtrous ſtuff as the popiſh legends are fraught with, but ſuch as are cauterized paſt all feelings and tenderneſs both of conſcience and ſenſe itſelf. 5. The doctrines diſcovered which theſe apoſtates would teach, namely, the forbidding of marriage to ſome, and enjoining abſtinence from ſome meats as unlawful and unclean to others, both which are called doctrines of devils, that is, wicked and deviliſh doctrines. *Learn* thence, That the popiſh doctrine forbidding marriage, not abſolutely to all, but with reſtriction and limitation to ſome, to wit, their clergy, and all ſuch as ſhall enter into holy orders, is a deviliſh and wicked doctrine; for it forbids that which the word alloweth, nay, in ſome caſes commandeth, Heb. xiii. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled*; if honourable in all, then ſurely lawful for all; under the Old Teſtament, the prophets, prieſts, and Levites did marry; under the New Teſtament the miniſters of God have a power to marry; 1 Cor. ix. 5. *Have not we power to lead about a ſiſter, a wife?* And that they made uſe of their power, is evident from the following words, *as well as other Apoſtles and Cephas.* The other wicked doctrine concerning meats is alſo found in the church of Rome, who by a law do oblige ſome orders of men, as monks, to abſtain from certain meats, reducing them thereby from their Chriſtian liberty to a conformity to the legal rites, which may well be reckoned as an apoſtaſy from the Chriſtian faith; for although St. Paul, Rom. xiv. doth allow the forbearance of ſome ſorts of meats to avoid ſcandal, yet he doth no where condemn the eating of them as unclean: The doctrine therefore of the church of Rome, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats, is wicked and deviliſh.

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving: 5 For it is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Here our apoſtle aſſigns a reaſon why Chriſtians are not forbidden, under the goſpel, to abſtain from particular meats, namely, becauſe the diſtinction of meats (clean and unclean) is taken away, and every creature of God is good in itſelf, and clean to us, and nothing to be refuſed, as unlawful or unclean, if it be received thankfully from God's hand; *for it is ſanctified by the word*, that is, by the goſpel; it is made clean to us, and lawful for us, *that* having taken off the difference of meats, and *to the pure made all things pure. Note* here, 1. The quality of all God's creatures as they come from him, and are given to us, *every creature of God is good.* 2. The uſe of God's creatures conſiſting in their lawfulneſs unto us, and our liberty unto them, *nothing is to be refuſed*; ſo that there is no ſin in the uſe of them, nor no religion in the forbearing of them, or abſtaining from them; this liberty was given us by God, and reſtored by Chriſt, therefore we muſt not ſuffer our Chriſtian liberty to be impeached by Judaiſm. 3. A condition neceſſary on our part, leſt the creatures otherwiſe good and lawful, ſhould become unto us evil and hurtful, and that is thankfulneſs; *If it be received with thankſgiving*, with the thankfulneſs of the heart, expreſſed by the language of the lips. 4. The way and means by which the creatures become clean and ſanctified to us; namely, by the word of God and prayer. 1. By the word of God, here *obſerve*, A threefold word of God, by which the creature is ſanctified, namely, the word of donation, the word of benediction, and the word of promiſe. By the firſt he beſtows his creatures upon us, by the ſecond he bleſſes the creatures to us, and by the third he confirms his bleſſing in Chriſt; in whom, and by whom we have a covenant right unto, and a ſanctified uſe of all the mercies which we do enjoy. 2. By prayer, namely, as it obtains from God, firſt, A right improvement; and ſecondly, A comfortable enjoyment of all that we do receive; or thus, the creature is ſanctified to us by prayer in the procurement of it, in the fruition of it, in the review and recognition of it, and God's mercy in it, with thankſgiving and praiſe, loving it after God, and for God, and in ſubordination to God. Thus then *is every creature of God good*; *and nothing to be refuſed, being ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou haſt attained. 7 But refuſe profane and old wives' fables, and exerciſe thyſelf *rather* unto godlineſs.

Our apoſtle proceeds, from this verſe to the end of the chapter, to lay ſeveral directions before Timothy with reference to his miniſterial office. The firſt of which is, that he ſuggeſt unto, or *put the brethren in remembrance of thoſe things* which the apoſtle had taught him, in order to their preſervation from the peril and poiſon of theſe impoſtors; thus doing, he would approve himſelf a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, and one nouriſhed up with the ſincere doctrine of the goſpel. Here *note*, That the miniſters of the goſpel are, in the firſt place miniſters or ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt; ſecondarily, and in ſubſerviency, they are miniſters of the church; as a nobleman's ſervant employed by him to diſtribute wages, or appoint work to the inferior ſervants, is ſecondarily a miniſter to the ſervants, but primarily a ſervant to his Lord. The ſecond duty that Timothy is exhorted to, is the avoiding and rejecting the doctrines of abſtinence from meats and marriage, and to regard them no more than an old woman's tale, and to exerciſe himſelf unto real godlineſs. *Note* here, Something that Timomothy muſt forbear, and ſomething that he muſt follow after: He muſt forbear and refuſe profane old wives fables; if thou wilt not ſwim down the tide of theſe apoſtatizing times, take heed of ſteering thy courſe by profane, though ancient cuſtoms; refuſe them with ſcorn, and reject them with anger: One way to prevent apoſtaſy is to refuſe ungrounded antiquity. That which Timothy is exhorted to follow after, is real godlineſs; this is his duty, both as a miniſter, and as a member of Jeſus Chriſt; real godlineſs ought to be minded as every man's, eſpecially every miniſter's chief and principal buſineſs; religion muſt be our chief occupation.

8 For bodily exerciſe profiteth little: But godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

By *bodily exerciſe* he meaneth corporal auſterities, abſtinence from meats and marriage; all the external exerciſes of religion: Theſe do profit a little, though but a little, in compariſon of the profit of godlineſs. Where *note*, That faſtings, humiliations and watchings, with other bodily exerciſes, which ſerve to bring down the pride and wantonneſs of the body, have their proper and neceſſary uſe, and are expreſſive of a juſt revenge which a ſinner takes upon himſelf for former exceſſes; they are, when wiſely managed, what God accepts, but the leaſt that God expects from us: *Bodily exerciſe profiteth little.* But *obſerve*, The univerſal uſefulneſs of godlineſs to all the purpoſes of life; *Godlineſs is profitable in all things.* 1. It is profitable to make a man rich, to help him to get and increaſe an eſtate; becauſe it makes a man wiſe and prudent, diligent and and induſtrious, thrifty and frugal. 2. It is profitable to make a man renowned as well as rich; it is the only way to attain a good name and reputation; the godly man is a worthy and excellent man, and he is an uſeful and ſerviceable man, and ſuch do ſeldom miſs of a good reputation in the world; thoſe that want goodneſs themſelves will yet commend it in others. 3. It is profitable for pleaſure, as well as for riches and honour: for a life of religion doth increaſe the reliſh and ſweetneſs of all our ſenſible enjoyments, ſo far is it from abridging us of any earthly delights: And beſides, it adds to us a world of pleaſures of its own; thus *godlineſs is profitable unto* men in *all things*, having the promiſes of happineſs both in this life, and that which is to come, annexed to it.

9 This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation. 10 For therefore we both labour and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe.

Note, That this phraſe of *a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation*, uſed here, was uſed before, chap. i. 15. That Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners. *Learn* thence, That this propoſition that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, and this, that ſuch ſinners as of ungodly will become godly, and perſevere in the practice of godlineſs, ſhall be happy in the life that now is, and that which is to come; theſe two propoſitions are faithful and remarkable ſayings, worthy of the acceptation of all reaſonable creatures. *Note* farther, that the belief of this propoſition, That godlineſs has the promiſe of this and the next life, will cauſe all Chriſtians, as it did St. Paul, to labour and ſuffer reproach in the cauſe of God, and this without wearineſs and fainting. *Note*, laſtly, the title given to Almighty God, *the Saviour of all men*, that is, the Preſerver of all men; but eſpecially of all good men, when their temporal preſervation conduces moſt to the advantages of his glory and their good: or if it be underſtood of eternal ſalvation, we muſt take it thus, That he publiſhes and proclaims, offers and tenders ſalvation to all men, although believers only are actually ſaved, becauſe they only accept the offers and conditions of ſalvation.

11 Theſe things command and teach. 12 Let no man deſpiſe thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.

Still our apoſtle proceeds farther in direction and advice to Timothy, both as to his preaching and his practice, both as to his doctrine and converſation. 1. As to his preaching, he requires it to be done with due authority: *Theſe things command and teach*, that is, theſe things teach commandingly, and with a neceſſary authority; the miniſters of God ſpeak from God, therefore may command for God. 2. As to his converſation, he exhorts him to exerciſe ſuch becoming gravity in his deportment, that though he was very young, none might deſpiſe him or his function, becauſe of his youth; where piety and modeſty meet in young miniſters, it will preſerve their youth from contempt; and where levity and vanity are found, it will expoſe not only youth but grey hairs to contempt and ſcorn. 3. He directs him to be not only a precedent to all miniſters, but a pattern to all believers; *be thou an example of the believers*, and that, 1. *In word*, or ſpeech; look that thy diſcourſe be wiſe and inſtructive, not idle nor impertinent, much leſs frothy and profane, but let ſomething for edification always drop from thy lips. 2. *In converſation*, look that thy gravity be beyond thy years, make up in thy deportment what is wanting in thy age; obſerve a juſt equality, neither be too aſſuming nor too proſtrate, behave not thyſelf either above or below thyſelf. 3. *In charity*, ſhew benevolence, and exerciſe beneficence towards all mankind, according to thy ability and opportunity; nothing gives a miniſter a greater advantage for the ſucceſs of his labours than charitable diſtributions; this gives us a throne in the hearts of our people, when wiſely managed. 4. *In ſpirit*, that is, in zeal and warmth of ſpirit, in fervency of affection, in an active and ſprightly zeal for the glory of God and the good of ſouls, ſuch a zeal as may render thee induſtrious in feeding, governing, and inſtructing thy flock. 5. *In faith*, that is, in fidelity too, and conſtancy in the true religion, not enduring either to be huffed or wheedled out of the truth; for it is a ſacred *depoſitum*, an holy treaſure, which we muſt tranſmit to our poſterity as our forefathers did to us, with their precious blood. 6. *In purity*, in chaſtity and cleanneſs, abſtaining from ſenſual luſts, from wantonneſs and worldly mindedneſs; chuſe ſpiritual delights now, for they are the entertainment which we muſt live upon to eternal ages. By all this we ſee how much it is in a miniſter's own power to procure a due eſteem to himſelf, at leaſt to prevent his own contempt, ſince an holy and exemplary deportment, faithful and conſtant labours, never fail to do that in ſome meaſure: But if we fail here, what other methods ſoever we uſe, we ſhall find God making good his threatening, Sam. ii. 30. that they which deſpiſe him, *ſhall be lightly eſteemed*: nor will any titles, dignities, or pre-eminencies above others, ſecure the guilty from the efficacy of this curſe, which will cleave to their perſons, yea, to their memories, like a girdle to their loins.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery.

St. Paul being uncertain when he ſhould ſee this young labourer again, adds farther inſtructions to thoſe already given him. And here, 1. He requires him *to give attendance to reading*, that is, be diligent in private reading the holy ſcriptures, to enable him to teach, inſtruct, and exhort others, what they ought to believe and know, and what they ought to practiſe and do. Where *note*, That the illuminations and teachings of the holy Spirit muſt not take off any miniſters from reading and ſtudying the holy ſcriptures, but we muſt fit ourſelves the better thereby, to exhort, direct and inſtruct others. 2. He ſtirs up and exhorts Timothy, not to neglect, but to excite, to uſe, and diligently improve thoſe eminent gifts which were given him by prophecy, that is, according to the foregoing prophecies concerning him, and by laying on of the hands of the preſbytery, when he was ordained. Where *note*, That the ceremony of laying on of hands in ordination, is very ancient and apoſtolical: not accidental or indifferent, but a very neceſſary rite in the performance of that ſervice; neglect not the gift which was given thee, with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery. *Note*, 2. That perſons ordained, ought with great care and diligence, to ſtir up the gifts God's holy Spirit conferred upon them; for negligence quenches the Spirit of God in them.

15 Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

He exhorted him to read the ſcriptures before, now to meditate upon what he read. Where *note*, That if thoſe who were inſpired, and divinely qualified, muſt yet read, meditate, ſtudy hard, and employ their whole time to fit themſelves for the miniſterial work, what ſhall we think of the ignorance and impudence of our lay-preachers, who without any divine qualification, and without any call or commiſſion, without giving themſelves wholly to theſe things, dare preſume to teach the ſcriptures, when they never underſtood them; nay, can hardly read them! Meditate on theſe things, and *give thyſelf wholly to them*; *be in them*, ſays the original, lay out thy whole ſtrength and time in ſtudying God's will, and making known thy people's duty. Three things are here implicitly condemned in perſons ſet apart for the holy function; 1. Sloth and negligence: It is a painful ſervice we are engaged in, and wo unto us if we be ſlothful in buſineſs, if we be ſparing of our pains for fear of ſhortening our days, and haſtening our end; verily the lamp of our lives can never burn out better than in lighting others to heaven. 2. Worldly mindedneſs, 1 Pet. v. 2. feed the flock but not for filthy lucre: The ſpiritual man muſt not ſo mind earthly things as to make them his principal aim and ſcope; for if ſo, he will act accordingly and defeat all the ends of his miniſtry. The apoſtles had no ſettled maintenance, but their ſubſiſtence to ſeek; yet were wholly in theſe things. How much more ſhould we be ſo now, who have our maintenance legally ſecured? How ſhould we ſeek the kingdom of God and the welfare of our people's ſouls, ſeeing all other things are added to us, in meaſure, though not in exceſs? 3. Incumbrance by worldly buſineſs: He that muſt give himſelf wholly to theſe things, what leiſure can he find for magiſtracy, for managing law ſuits, for farming of lands, and for ſecular concerns: We cannot make a buſineſs of two things ſo widely different from each other. Can we be ſpiritual perſons and yet mere ſeculars in our thoughts and cares? Well therefore might St. Paul ſay to Timothy, *But thou O man of God flee theſe things*, 1 Timothy, vi. 11. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The reaſon which the Apoſtle ſubjoins why he would have Timothy do all this; *That his profiting may appear to all men*: He muſt read, meditate, pray, and ſtudy, that he may improve and profit himſelf; though he was inſpired, yet he muſt not rely on the Spirit's aſſiſtance without his own endeavours; and his improvement by ſtudy muſt appear not barely to himſelf, but to others, to his people as well as himſelf, yea, to all perſons: His growth and improvement by ſtudy and exerciſe muſt be ſo conſpicuous, that all his flock may bear witneſs to it, and bleſs God for it. *Meditate on theſe things and give thyſelf wholly to them*, &c.

16 Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Have a ſpecial regard to the piety of thy liſe, and to the purity of thy doctrine, and this continually; ſo ſhalt thou do what lieth in thee, to ſave both thine own ſoul and the ſouls of all thy people." 1. *Take heed unto thyſelf.* Our lives muſt be ſuch as become miniſters of God and preachers of righteouſneſs: For the eyes of God and the whole world are upon us; the obſerving eye of God, the cenſorious and inſidious eye of the world, who will charge the miſcarriages of a ſingle perſon upon the whole order, and condemn all for the faults of one: Therefore let every one take heed unto himſelf; the honour of our profeſſion requires it, the conſcience of our duty challenges it, a due regard to the glory of God, and our own reputation commands it. 2. *Take heed unto thy doctrine*, that it be the pure and uncorrupted word of God, expounded agreeably to the ſenſe of the ancient church, and of our own church in particular, which has with the greateſt care followed the ancient pattern: Many errors are abroad in the world, which have adulterated the truths of the goſpel; it is therefore prudential and neceſſary, that the miniſters of God keep at a great diſtance from every opinion which looks like heretical, and not to come within reach of ſuſpicion: It is not enough for us to be innocent, unleſs we appear ſo. *Note* farther, The order of the words: St. Paul bids Timothy firſt to take heed to his life, and next to his doctrine; not firſt to his doctrine and then to his life; *Take heed unto thyſelf and to thy doctrine:* Becauſe the ſucceſs of our doctrine depends upon the goodneſs of our lives; it is this muſt render our doctrine operative and effectual: This is the principal thing; we muſt do as well as teach: For who will believe him in the pulpit, who contradicts himſelf in his converſation? Therefore *take heed to thyſelf and to thy doctrine*. *Note*, laſtly, The great benefit of this courſe, and the bleſſed advantage of it: We ſhall *ſave ourſelves*, deliver our own ſouls by our diligence and care; for the faithful nurſe ſhall be paid, though the child dies at the breaſt; and not only ourſelves, but our people alſo; *them that hear us*; that is, We ſhall do our utmoſt, and all that lieth in us, to ſave the ſouls committed to us, that they may be our crown of rejoicing, in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming." God will pronounce us pure and innocent from the blood of all men; and if our people periſh, their blood will be upon their own heads; which God avert for his mercy's ſake. *Amen*.

CHAP. V.

REBUKE not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men, as brethren; 2 The elder women, as mothers; the younger, as ſiſters, with all purity.

Our apoſtle here directs Timothy how to manage rightly that great and important duty of miniſterial reproof: If aged perſons, elders in office, or elders in age, do tranſgreſs, they muſt be rebuked, not magiſterially, but fraternally, with humility and gentleneſs, according to their years; not with auſterity and roughneſs: *The elder men as Fathers*, *the elder women as mothers*, both with juſt deference and due reſpect: The younger alſo muſt not be treated with contempt, but with gentleneſs; *the younger men as brethren*, *the younger women as ſiſters*, both without pride and fierceneſs, and *with all purity*; ſhunning all levity and wantonneſs, and eſchewing all that favoureth of immodeſty or unchaſtity in thought, ſpeech, look, or behaviour. *Learn* hence, That although the miniſters of God muſt not flatter or favour any perſon, to the prejudice either of truth or holineſs, yet muſt they put a difference between perſons in their reproof; they muſt not deal with the aged as they deal with the younger, (when we ſpeak reproof, we muſt alſo ſpeak reſpect to the ancient ſpiritual fathers) no more than natural children muſt behave themſelves proudly againſt the ancient, and baſely againſt the honourable.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God. 5 Now ſhe that is a widow indeed, and deſolate, truſteth in God, and continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day. 6 But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure is dead while ſhe liveth. 7 And theſe things give in charge, that they may be blameleſs.

Our apoſtle proceeds to give Timothy directions concerning widows, particularly thoſe who were to be maintained by the church's charity, and to live upon it. *Note*, 1. The perſons to be relieved and ſupported by the church's charity, *Widows indeed*; that is, ſuch widows as were *deſolate*, being deprived both of huſband and maintenance at once; and having neither children, nor grand-children, nor near relations, in a capacity to relieve them; and they were alſo ſuch as were reſolved to continue in widowhood: Theſe he required ſhould be *honoured*, that is, have reſpect ſhewn them, maintenance allowed them, employment provided for them, to viſit the ſick and poor, and give notice of their wants to the church, and to ſpend their time in the exerciſe of devotion, truſting in God: *Continue in ſupplication and prayer night and day*. 2. That ſuch widows as had children and near relations, were to be taken care for, by them, and not by the church: *Let them learn to ſhew piety at home*, that is, relieve their own relations before they ſhew kindneſs to ſtrangers, or before the church be burdened with them; where the original word is very emphatical and ſignative: Let them exerciſe religion and godlineſs towards their own houſe; implying, that to extend our charity to our neareſt relations is a duty in the firſt place, and to perform it with cheerfulneſs, is an act of religion and godlineſs, and that it is in vain to pretend to religion, if we ſee a relation in want, and are able, but unwilling to relieve them. 3. The character which St. Paul gave of ſome widows in his time; they *lived in pleaſure*; with the cenſure which he paſſed upon them, namely, that they were *dead*, whilſt they *lived*: She that liveth in pleaſure, that is, licentiouſly, ſportingly, wantonly, profuſely, to the diſhonour of her huſband's memory, and her own perſonal diſgrace, ſhe is *dead* in ſin, *dead* to Chriſt, and his holy religion, whilſt ſhe lives in the world; and ſo is not to be looked upon by the church as a vital member of it, much leſs to be maintained by the church's charity. This is what St. Paul thought needful to give Timothy in charge concerning widows, that ſo they might be found *blameleſs*, and without ſcandal to religion.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel.

That is, "If any profeſſing Chriſtianity, and having ability, provides not for his own kindred, but eſpecially *for thoſe of his own houſe*, as parents or children, he liveth ſo contrary to the Chriſtian faith, that in effect he denies it, *and is worſe than an infidel*, who ordinarily take care of their parents, and make proviſion for their poor relations." The old Heathens had this among them as an univerſal principle of nature, To honour the gods, and provide for their parents; affirming, That no man can do any thing more acceptable to the gods, than by heaping favours upon their parents; and that nothing can be a greater evidence of atheiſm and impiety, than to neglect and deſpiſe them. *Learn* hence, That it is, moſt unnatural to be hardened againſt thoſe to whom we ſtand engaged by near relation or natural bonds; the light of nature teaches infidels much better.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threeſcore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if ſhe have brought up children, if ſhe have lodged ſtrangers, if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet, if ſhe have relieved the afflicted, if ſhe have diligently followed every good work.

Our apoſtle had given directions concerning ſuch widows as were to be maintained by the church's charity in the preceding verſes; he ſpeaks now of ſuch widows as were to be admitted into the church's ſervice under the name of *deaconeſſes*, whoſe office it was to take care of the aged and impotent, to be ſtayed monitors to the younger women, to attend poor women in labour, and to aſſiſt at the baptiſm of the female ſex. St. Paul adviſes, that none be admitted under threeſcore years of age, and none that was divorced from one huſband, and married to another; *Let not a widow be taken into the number*, that is, of church widows or deaconeſſes, *under threeſcore years old, having been the wife of one man* only. Next St. Paul lays down the general and particular qualifications of ſuch widows as ſhould be elected into the churchs' ſervice: The general qualification is fruitfulneſs in good works; *If ſhe has diligently followed every good work*. Where *note*, It is not her age alone, not her poverty alone, but her Chriſtian behaviour before all, that give her a right to the churchs' ſervice and maintenance. The particular qualifications follow: If ſhe has *brought up children* religiouſly, *if ſhe hath lodged ſtrangers* or Chriſtian travellers hoſpitably, if ſhe has condeſcended to the meaneſt offices, not diſdaining to waſh the very feet of poor Chriſtians in their journeyings; if according to her ability ſhe has done all the good ſhe poſſibly could, though much ſhort of what ſhe deſired. *Note* here, That in thoſe hot countries perſons travelled on foot, and without ſhoes, wearing only ſandals; and having few or no inns for entertainment, or but little money to defray travelling-charges, it was a very great work of pious charity to entertain Chriſtian ſtrangers, to receive and lodge them in their houſes, to waſh and cool, refreſh and cleanſe, their feet, and to adminiſter to their neceſſities; ſuch widows as are thus qualified, he directs may be taken into the churchs' ſervice, and partake of her maintenance.

11 But the younger widows refuſe. For when they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt, they will marry; 12 Having damnation, becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith. 13 And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, but tatlers alſo and buſybodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not. 14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the houſe, give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully. 15 For ſome are already turned aſide after Satan. 16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

Next, he tells him what ſort of widows he would have him refuſe and reject, and by no means admit into the number of deaconeſſes or the church's ſervants; namely, *the younger widows*, who were not paſt child-bearing; and there fore *waxing wanton againſt Chriſt, would marry*; that is, growing weary of the churchs' ſervice, and deſpairing of marriage in the church, would revolt from the faith, and marry ſome infidel out of the church: *Having damnation*; that is, committing ſin worthy of damnation, and bringing themſelves into a damnable condition. *Becauſe they renounce their firſt faith*, which they made profeſſion of when they were baptized, turning apoſtates to pleaſe their infidel huſbands, which the apoſtle calls, a *turning after Satan*, ver. 15. to the great ſcandal of Chriſtianity. *Obſerve*, next, Our apoſtle ſhews, that ſuch young widows are uſually idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe, prying into, and tatling about other folks' matters; to avoid all which, he adviſes the young women, and particularly the younger widows, to marry, and ſerve God in a conjugal relation, bearing and bringing up their children, guiding their families, and giving no occaſion to the enemies of religion to reproach either it or themſelves. From all which we may *note*, That celibacy, or ſingle life, is no ſuch ſtate of holineſs

neſs and perfection as the church of Rome would perſuade us: We ſee here it has its temptations and ſnares and thoſe not a few nor ſmall; and that our apoſtle, in ſome caſes, and to ſome perſons, recommends a married life before it. *Obſerve*, laſtly, For a cloſe of his diſcourſe concerning widows, he adviſes, That if any Chriſtian has any helpleſs widow of his own family, or amongſt his relations, that he relieve and maintain her, if he be able, and not caſt her upon the charity of the church, leſt there be not a ſufficiency to ſupply the wants of ſuch as are *widows indeed*, aged and helpleſs; for any to eat the poor's bread, who are not poor, and to whom it does not belong, is robbery.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Our apoſtle proceeds next to give Timothy directions concerning *elders*; not old men in years, but elders in office, ſuch as were employed in the governing of the church, and over and above that ſervice, laboured even unto wearineſs in preaching of the word, and expounding the Chriſtian doctrine, requiring that *double honour* be given unto ſuch. *Note* here, 1. The elders' work and duty declared: *To rule well*; wiſely to preſide over, and diſcreetly to govern, the church of Chriſt; alſo to *labour in the word and doctrine:* to take pains in preaching the goſpel upon all occaſions: Thoſe that are advanced to the higheſt eminency in the church, will not think themſelves above this part of their duty. *Note*, 2. The honour and reſpect challenged on their behalf: *Double honour* is their due; namely, an honour of reverence, and an honour of maintenance, and a double meaſure of either: Some think it an alluſion to the firſt-born, who was the prieſt of the family, and had a double portion amongſt his brethren; the Levites ſucceeded them, and the miniſters of the goſpel theſe; who, when laborious in governing and teaching the church of Chriſt, deſerve more honour and better maintenance than the unkind world is willing to confer upon them; who, inſtead of double honour, ſometimes deny them civil reſpect. *Note*, 3. In that the apoſtle ſtyles the miniſters' maintenance, *honour*, it follows, that their maintenance is not to be eſteemed in the nature of alms, but of a tribute paid by an inferior to a ſuperior; neither is our maintenance mercenary wages, but ſuch as ought to be given as a teſtimony of honour, as well as in the nature of a reward. As then they are worthy of, let them never fail to receive *double honour*, who *rule well*, and alſo *labour in the word and doctrine*.

18 For the ſcripture ſaith, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

Theſe words evidently ſhew, that by *honour*, in the former verſe, is to be underſtood *maintenance*: A place is here out of Deut. xxv. where the law of Moſes forbade the *muzzling of the ox that treadeth out the corn*, but allowed him feeding all the time of working: In like manner, the labour of the church's guides gives them a right to the church's maintenance and honour; but ſuch as do not labour, have a right to neither.

19 Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation but before two or three witneſſes. 20 Them that ſin rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear. 21 I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Here our apoſtle directs Timothy how to proceed in church-cenſures againſt open offenders: Which plainly ſhews, that there was a right of judging and cenſuring offenders in Timothy, by virtue of his office. Firſt, then, he begins to acquaint him with his duty in cenſuring an elder, and adviſes him never to admit *an accuſation* againſt ſuch, without the atteſtation of *two or three witneſſes:* Becauſe, (1.) It is the intereſt of the church of Chriſt, that the reputation of its miniſters be ſupported. (2.) Becauſe prejudiced perſons will be ready to accuſe without reaſon. Conſcientious miniſters ſhall never want accuſers, if falſe accuſers can but find judges that are willing to believe them: Therefore, *againſt an elder, receive not an accuſation, but before two or three witneſſes*. Next he adviſes him, when there is a juſt and ſufficient cauſe for cenſuring an elder, to do it publicly. *Them that ſin*, that is, ſuch elders as ſin, and are convicted of it, and ſo are become ſcandalous by it, *rebuke* before all the church, before all the clergy, as in a ſynod, putting them to public ſhame, that others may fear to ſin, ſeeing thee to puniſh ſo publicly and impartially. Laſtly, He concludes his advice with a very ſolemn charge to Timothy, before God and Chriſt, and the glorious angels, to obſerve theſe rules of juſtice in eccleſiaſtical judicature, without preferring one man before another, doing nothing by a partial reſpect of perſons. *Learn* hence, That ſo heinous is the ſin of unjuſt and unrighteous judging, eſpecially in eccleſiaſtical perſons, and of ſuch fatal miſchief to the church, that all imaginable care and caution ought to be taken to prevent both the ſin and the danger of it. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that thou obſerve theſe things.

22 Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens ſins: Keep thyſelf pure.

A twofold ſenſe and interpretation is given of theſe words. 1. With reference to ordination, and ſo they are a caution to the governors of the church, to admit, none into the ſacred function haſtily, raſhly, without due examination, and ſufficient trial; to which are added words of great terror, *neither be partaker of other mens ſins*; which ought to make a mighty impreſſion on the minds of thoſe in whom the power of ordination is lodged, ſince the words do plainly import, that ſuch as do ordain any raſhly, intitle themſelves to all the ſcandal they give, and are partakers of their guilt. *Note* here, 1. The nature of the office the miniſters of Chriſt are ordained to; to rule and labour in the word and doctrine. 2. An authority to Timothy to admit perſons into this office, by laying on of hands. 3. The great care and caution, the heedfulneſs and circumſpection, neceſſary in admitting perſons to this holy function; *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man:* The welfare of the church, the honour of religion, the ſalvation of men's ſouls, depend much, very much, upon thoſe who are admitted into holy orders. The ſecond interpretation given of theſe words is, that Timothy is here directed how to carry himſelf in cenſuring and abſolving of penitents: 2. As if St. Paul had ſaid, "When thou haſt juſtly cenſured an offender, be not too haſty in abſolving of him, (for this alſo was done by impoſition of hands) till ſome trial be made of his reformation, leſt by ſo doing thou becomeſt guilty of his future faults: But keep thyſelf pure from all ſin, whoſe office it is to cenſure and reprove ſin in others." In both theſe ſenſes have theſe words been underſtood, *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man*; *keep thyſelf pure*.

23 Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine' for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities.

Note here, 1. There is a lawful uſe of wine to ſupport nature, not to clog it; to cure infirmities, not to cauſe them: Drink it Timothy might, medicinally, and no doubt for cheerfulneſs and alacrity, that the body might be more fit and expediate for duty; *uſe a little wine for thy ſtomach's ſake*. 2. That our meat and drink ſhould be fitted for the preſervation of health, rather than for the gratification of our appetite; the former is Chriſtian duty, the latter is brutiſh ſenſuality. 3. That the apoſtles who had the gift of healing, could not make uſe of it when and upon whom they pleaſed; no, not upon themſelves, but muſt help their own infirmities in and by the uſe of ordinary means. Thus Timothy here, drink no longer water *alone*, but uſe a little wine *with it* for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities thence proceeding.

24 Some men's ſins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and ſome *men* they follow after. 25 Likewiſe alſo the good works *of ſome* are manifeſt beforehand; and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.

St. Paul had juſt before exhorted Timothy to keep himſelf pure from other men's ſins, whether canditates or penitents, here comes in ſubſequent advice, in order thereunto. As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Timothy, if thou be diligent to obſerve, and not over haſty either in ordaining candidates, or abſolving penitents, thou mayeſt in ſome meaſure perceive who are worthy, and who are unworthy. If thou layeſt thine hands upon thoſe that are actually faulty, thou partakeſt with them, by being an occaſion of their ſinning; but if thou canſt not diſcover their faultineſs beforehand, though they afterwards prove wicked it is not thy fault; God will at length detect them, yea, they will diſcover themſelves, and when their faults are manifeſt, deal with them according to the diſcipline of the church." *Learn* hence, 1. That how much ſoever ſinners attempt the hiding, yet cannot they actually hide themſelves, or their ſinnings, from God's ſight and knowledge. *They cannot be hid*, ſays St. Paul, though men labour much to hide them: Oh, ſinner! there is no way to hide thyſelf from God: Thou mayeſt by repentance hide thyſelf in God, in the love, in the favour, in the mercy of God, but from God thou canſt not be hid. As the ſaints good works are open and manifeſt in the ſight and to the view of God, ſo they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid: When can a ſinner be hid from him who is every where? or what thing can be our covering from him, in whoſe ſight all things are open? Lord! what will it avail to hide ourſelves from men, when we lie open and manifeſt to the eye of God? *They that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.*

CHAP. VI.

LET as many ſervants as are under the yoke count their own maſters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blaſphemed. 2 And they that have believing maſters, let them not deſpiſe *them*, becauſe they are brethren; but rather do *them* ſervice, becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.—

Our apoſtle having, in the preceding chapters, inſtructed Timothy to give the neceſſary directions for the performance of ſeveral relative duties, in this chapter he particularly directs him to inſtruct Chriſtian ſervants, to the acceptable performance of that great duty of obedience, which they owe to their reſpective maſters, whether infidels or Chriſtians. Chriſtianity frees perſons from ſinful ſlavery and bondage, but not from civil ſervitude and ſubjection. Religion does not level perſons, but allows of an inequality amongſt men, ſuperiors and inferiors; and as it gives the former a power to command, ſo it lays the latter under an obligation to obey. *Obſerve*, 2. The general duty required of all ſervants towards their maſters, and that is to give them all the honour and obedience which is due in that relation; let them account their maſters worthy of all honour. What maſters? 1. Their infidel and unbelieving maſters; they are required to carry it dutifully and reſpectfully towards them. 2. Their *believing* or Chriſtian maſters; they ſhould not deſpiſe them becauſe they are brethren; for Chriſtian brotherhood conſiſts with inequality of place and relation, and with ſubjection of one perſon to another: But they ought to ſerve ſuch maſters the more readily and cheerfully, becauſe brethren, beloved of God, and partakers of the *benefit*, namely, of redemption by Chriſt, and of the ſanctifying grace of God. *Obſerve*, laſtly, the grand argument which St. Paul uſes to enforce the duty of obedience upon all ſervants, *that the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed*; that is, the men of the world will reproach religion, revile Chriſtianity, and ſay that it teaches, or allows at leaſt, that men be ſtubborn and diſobedient: Where, *note*, That the pooreſt and meaneſt profeſſor of Chriſtianity may do much good or much hurt to religion. Some might be ready to ſay, "Alas! What credit or diſcredit can a poor ſervant do to religion?" Much every way: He may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, Tit. ii. 9. by his Chriſtian behaviour; and the name of God, and his doctrine, may be blaſphemed by him, if he be negligent in his duty: None are ſo inconſiderable, but they are capable of ſerving the great ends of religion, and may honour God in ſome meaſure; and are capable of being honoured by him upon earth, and with him in the higheſt heavens.

—Theſe things teach and exhort: 3 If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, 5 Perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs. From ſuch withdraw thyſelf.

Note here, 1. The ſolemn charge which the Holy Ghoſt by St. Paul gives to Timothy, to teach and preſs theſe relative duties of ſervants toward their maſters, with great zeal and affectionate earneſtneſs, *Theſe things teach and exhort*; as if our apoſtle had ſaid, "They are duties of great moment, therefore, teach and preſs them earneſtly."—Doubtleſs there is much of the pleaſure and will of God in theſe commands, and the honour and glory of God is much concerned in them, otherwiſe the Spirit of God had never been ſo earneſt in the preſſing of them: the power of holineſs, in nothing diſcovers itſelf more conſpicuouſly, than in the performance of relative duties; we are no more really, than what we are relatively; rational holineſs is the brighteſt ornament of religion. 2. The high character which St. Paul gives of this doctrine, which urges the practice of theſe relative duties; he calls what he ſays and writes about it, *wholeſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. *Learn* thence, that the words written by St. Paul, in this and his other epiſtles, are the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that is, words agreeable to his mind and will, written with an eye to his glory, promoting his honour, correſpondent with, and ſuitable to his practice when here on earth. 3. The odious character wherewith he brands thoſe falſe flattering teachers, which preached contrary doctrine to what Jeſus Chriſt by his apoſtles had delivered; he charges them with pride, ignorance, envy, ſtrife, railing, evil ſurmiſing, and with ſuppoſing that gain was godlineſs; that is, their end in profeſſing godlineſs was this, that they might make gain of it, and get preferment by it, making uſe of religion only as a block to take horſe at: But to make uſe of religion in policy, for worldly advantage ſake, is the way to be damned with a vengeance for religion ſake. Laſtly, St. Paul's advice to Timothy to withdraw from theſe men, *from ſuch withdraw thyſelf*; hold no communion with them, maintain no diſputes with them, for they dote about queſtions, and ſtrive about words. *Note* here, from St. Paul's bidding Timothy withdraw himſelf from them, that it is very evident that he ſpeaks of perſons who were then in being; the Gnoſtic heretics, according to ſome, the Judaizing teachers, in the opinion of others; that is, they of the circumciſion, who taught things which they ought not, for filthy lucre ſake. Whoever they were, St. Paul's admonition to Timothy, to withdraw himſelf from ſuch, teaches us, that heretical ſeducers are to be ſhunned and avoided, rather than diſputed with, as unfit for our Chriſtian communion, and common converſation. *Theſe things teach and exhort. If any teach otherwiſe*, &c.

6 But godlineſs with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although theſe ſeducers are for making a gain of godlineſs, yet *we* know that godlineſs is great gain, eſpecially godlineſs with contentment; with contentment, I ſay, which it becomes us to have, *for we brought nothing into this world* with us, and ſhall carry nothing away with us; having therefore *food and raiment, let us be therewith content* and ſatisfied." *Learn* hence, 1. That godlineſs is the ſincere practice of the Chriſtian religion, ſo called, becauſe it directeth and preſcribeth to us the true and only way of worſhipping and ſerving God. 2. That ſome men ſuit their godlineſs with their worldly ends, they make a trade and ſaving bargain of it. 3. That godlineſs, or the ſincere practice of the Chriſtian religion, is true gain, great gain, yea, the beſt gain, both for this world, and that which is to come. 4. That one great point of godlineſs, is to be content with what we have, yea, though it be only food and raiment. Contentment is a ſedate and quiet temper of mind about outward things: It is the wiſdom and will of God not to give all alike, but to ſome more, to others leſs, of theſe outward comforts; but nothing beſides food and raiment is abſolutely neceſſary, a little will ſuffice a contented mind; he is not rich that has much, but he that has enough: That man is poor who covets more, having food and raiment, &c. Laſtly, The apoſtle's argument to excite and move the Chriſtian to this duty of contentment, without enlarging his deſires inordinately after the world, and the periſhing ſatisfaction of it: *For we brought nothing into the world*, &c. Where *remark*, That the note of aſſurance is fixed rather to our carrying out than to our bringing in; the apoſtle doth not ſay, It is certain that we brought nothing into the world, and we ſhall carry nothing out: But he ſays, We brought nothing in, and *it is certain* we can carry nothing out. The note of aſſurance is applied to the latter; for this reaſon, I conceive, becauſe though all perſons come naked, and bring nothing with them into the world, yet abundance is put upon them, and they are born heirs to vaſt poſſeſſions: But it is obvious to every eye, and moſt indubitably certain, that they carry nothing away with them. Death is called an unclothing; it unclothes the body, diſrobing it of all its gaudy and glorious attire; yea, it unclothes the bones, our fleſh wears off quickly in the grave: we proverbially ſay of a rich man, he has left a vaſt eſtate, left it behind him, carrying neither a foot of land, nor a farthing of money, with him; therefore doth St. Paul add, *it is certain we can carry nothing out*.

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a ſnare, and *into* many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.

Note here, 1. The parties deſcribed, they that will be rich; that is, whether God will or no; their hearts are ſet upon the world, they feel it coming, and have it they will, if by any means right or wrong, they can come at it, aſk nobody's leave, no not God Almighty's leave, but rich they are reſolved to be. 2. Their danger repreſented, they fall into temptation and a ſnare, and many fooliſh luſts, &c. *Learn* hence, That a will and reſolution to be rich, is the occaſion of much miſchief to thoſe that cheriſh and allow it in themſelves; a will to be rich, is to make riches our principal buſineſs, our main ſcope, our great work, to purſue the world with the full bent of our wills: Now the bent of our wills is diſcovered, firſt, by intention, ſecondly, by induſtrious proſecution; when the mind is wholly intent upon getting wealth, and unwearied induſtry and endeavour is found in the purſuit of it. Now this is to make a god of the world; for that which is a man's aim, deſign, and end, is his chief good, and that which is our chiefeſt good is God. *Learn*, 2. That an hot and over-eager purſuit of the world, lays a man open to endleſs temptations, ſo that it is not only difficult, but impoſſible, to keep his innocency; and that being irrecoverably loſt, drowns a man in perdition and deſtruction.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: Which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.

Here we have the nature of covetouſneſs, the evil and ſin of covetouſneſs, and the miſchief and hurt of it declared. *Note*, 1. The nature of it: It is an inordinate love of money, an inſatiable deſire after wealth. 2. The evil and ſinfulneſs of it: It is a root of ſin, *The root of all evil*; the fruit of all ſin grows from this root, diſtruſtful care, tormenting fear, anger, malice, envy, deceit, oppreſſion, bribery, perjury, vexatious law-ſuits, and the like; nay, farther, covetouſneſs is the root of hereſy in judgment, as well as of iniquity in practice: *They have erred from the faith*; that is, in point of doctrine, as well as in practice: It makes a man believe, as well as act, againſt the rule of faith, for filthy lucre. 3. The miſchief and hurt of covetouſneſs declared; it pierces, *it pierces through with ſorrows*, yea, *with many ſorrows.* But whom doth it pierce? Firſt, Others: it pierces the poor, the needy, the widow, the fatherleſs, all that fall within the reach of its griping hand: Nay, it doth not ſpare its own maſter, or ſlave rather, but pierces him: *They pierce themſelves through*, ſays the apoſtle, *with many ſorrows*, with many more, and much worſe ſorrows, than they pierce others with. Riches ill-gotten, by covetouſneſs or oppreſſion, inſtead of making their owners heartily merry, make their conſciences ake, and give them many a ſtitch in their ſide. None can tell what gall and wormwood ſprings from this bitter root both to themſelves and others: *The love of money is the root of all evil*, &c. It is the root of all evil, of ſin, and alſo of trouble and diſquiet.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things; and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs.

Obſerve here, 1. The apoſtle's compellation, or the title given to Timothy: *Thou, O man of God:* It is a title borrowed from the Old Teſtament, where it is frequently given to the prophets, who revealed the mind and will of God to the people. Now by giving it to Timothy, the apoſtle intimates his duty to him, to contemn the world, and flee the eager purſuit of riches. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "O Timothy! Thou art a miniſter, and man of God, ſolemnly dedicated to his ſervice, and devoted entirely to his glory; ſee then that thou abhor and avoid that deteſtable ſin of covetouſneſs. Heavenly truths are the ſubjects of thy daily ſtudy: Oh! let not earthly things be the object of thy chiefeſt delight and love: But follow after ſpiritual riches, namely, *righteouſneſs and godlineſs*, *faith and love*, *patience and meekneſs*; that godlineſs which gives contentment with food and raiment, that faith which aſſures us of a better and more enduring ſubſtance, that righteouſneſs or juſtice which requires us to let every man enjoy his own, that love which makes us willing to diſtribute, that patience which makes us willing to ſubmit to a low condition, that meekneſs which ſuppreſſes wrath againſt thoſe that are injurious to us. All theſe virtues and graces are neceſſary to *thee* as a miniſter of God, they are certainly indications of a mind free from covetouſneſs, and infallible preſervations from it."

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called, and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes.

This whole verſe is an alluſion to the Olympic games, particularly to that of racing, where the garland or crown being hung up at the end of the goal, he that came firſt did lay hold of it, and take it to himſelf; and becauſe theſe games were performed in the ſight of many ſpectators, the apoſtle continues the alluſion, and ſays, Timothy had before many witneſſes profeſſed his readineſs to ſuffer for the faith. The ſenſe of the apoſtle in this advice ſeems to be this: "*Fight the good fight of faith:* Go on by faith to overcome all temptations and difficulties; preſs toward the mark, till thou lay hold on the prize, which is eternal life: To which ſpiritual warfare and Chriſtian race thou gaveſt in thy name, when, being baptized and ordained, thou madeſt a public profeſſion of thy faith before many witneſſes."

13 I give thee charge in the ſight of God who quickeneth all things, and *before* Chriſt Jeſus, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion; 14 That thou keep *this* commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 15 Which in his time he ſhall ſhew, *who is* the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: To whom *be* honour and power everlaſting. Amen.

Obſerve here, What a ſolemn adjuration and vehement charge is given to Timothy, by our apoſtle, to watch and guard againſt the ſin of covetouſneſs, and to avoid the eager purſuit of worldly wealth: I *charge thee before God and Chriſt, that thou keep this commandment ſpotleſs and unrebukeable*, until the coming of Chriſt, and mayeſt be found ſuch at his appearing. 2. What a glorious diſplay our apoſtle here makes of the adorable attributes of God: He ſtyles him the God that *quickeneth* all things; that is all things that have or ſhall have life; *the bleſſed and only Potentate*, becauſe all power is eſſential in him, and derived from him; who *only hath immortality*, that is, an original, primitive, ſimple independent, eſſential, immortality, that is only proper and peculiar to God; he only is eſſentially and neceſſarily of himſelf immortal; *dwelling in that light* which is inacceſſible, and none can approach unto, and *whom no man hath ſeen, or can ſee*: God is inviſible in his eſſence; he is not to be ſeen by any mortal eye on earth, the eye of faith ſees him only here; nay, he is not to be ſeen by any glorified eye in heaven, in his divine eſſence; the nature and eſſence of God never was ſeen, nor ſhall be ſeen. But we are by the ſight of God in heaven, to underſtand a more clear and full manifeſtation of God unto us, even ſo far as our glorified natures can bear it; it will be abundantly beyond expreſſion, yea, beyond our comprehenſion. 3. The teſtimony which our apoſtle bears to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt when here on earth; that *before Pontius Pilate he witneſſed a good confeſſion*; that is, he did not deny the truth to ſave his life, but gave all his miniſters and people an example of courage and conſtancy in owning the truth, and ſealing it with his blood. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God*, &c.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Our apoſtle having, in a very ſolemn manner, exhorted Timothy to avoid that dangerous ſin of covetouſneſs himſelf, in the foregoing verſes, he doth in theſe verſes require him to lay the ſame charge upon others, particularly upon worldly rich men: *Charge them that are rich. Note* here, 1. Timothy's duty, not barely to exhort and teach, but to charge and command. True, the miniſters of Chriſt are ſervants to their people; but ſervants to their ſouls, not to their wills, much leſs to their luſts: There is an authority in our office, which impowers us to command for God, as well as to intreat. 2. The ſubject of this charge: *them that are rich in this world: Mark*, No man is forbidden to be rich, nor yet to uſe ſuch lawful means, by which, through God's bleſſing thereupon, men may be rich: But rich men need a charge; they want plain dealing from miniſters, becauſe they meet with ſo little of it from other men; for ſome flatter them, others fear them: God's miniſters ought ſurely to deal faithfully with them. 3. The charge itſelf, and this is ſet down negatively and affirmatively; both, twofold. (1.) The negative matter of the charge, *That they be not high-minded:* Pride of heart, and haughtineſs of mind and ſpirit, is one ſpecial ſin which great men are ſubject to. When God lifts them up by his providence, they lift up themſelves by pride: There is a ſecret malignity in riches, when they meet with men's corruptions, to lift them up above their due region; though neither the wiſer, the holier, the nearer heaven, for all their wealth, nay, perhaps, a great deal nearer hell for the abuſe of it; yet ſtill the rich think high, look big, breathe ſcorn, talk with diſdain, forgetting that God gives them riches to exalt him, and not themſelves. Next part of the negative charge is, That *they truſt not in uncertain riches*; intimating, That the creature-confidence, or making an idol of wealth, is the dreadful bane and ruin of ſome rich men: Their actions ſay to the gold, *Thou art my hope*; *and to the fine gold*, *Thou art my confidence:* But the vanity and ſinfulneſs of this appears, by the apoſtle's calling them *uncertain riches:* uncertain in their abode and continuance with us, uncertain in their promiſes and pretences to us; we expect more from them than ever we find in them. *Note*, 4. The poſitive part of the charge: (1.) To truſt in God, the living God, a bountiful God: He giveth riches; they buy, they do not give; he giveth *all things:* All the wealth in the world cannot buy a mouthful of air, or ray of light, if God withholds it. God is the giver of all, he giveth richly all things; the moſt miſerable man cannot number the rich mercies which he doth receive; and he giveth *all things richly to enjoy*; that is, he gives an heart to take and taſte the comfort of what he gives; he gives not only poſſeſſion, but fruition. Riches can do none of theſe things; why then ſhould we truſt in *uncertain riches*, and not in the *living God?* 5. Another duty exhorted to, and that is, to imitate God in the works of bounty: *To do good.* Rich men are to make their wealth the materials of good works; nay, they muſt not only do good works, but *be rich in good works*; as their eſtate is plentiful, ſo muſt their charity be proportionable; they muſt do it copiouſly; *be rich in good works:* They muſt do it cheerfully, *ready to diſtribute*, without grudging, and without delay: They muſt do it diffuſively; *willing to communicate*, that is, to do as much good to the community as poſſibly they can, upon principles of humanity, and upon principles of Chriſtianity alſo. 6. The encouragements given to this duty. (1.) Thus to lay out, is *to lay up*, and that as in a treaſury; it is like ſcattering of ſeed, in order to an increaſe and harveſt. (2.) Thus to lay out upon others, is to lay up for themſelves, they have the comfort here, and the reward hereafter. (3.) It is to lay up for themſelves *a foundation*; not by way of merit towards God, but by way of evidence in regard of ourſelves; a teſtimony of our reconciliation to, and acceptance with, God. (4.) It is a good foundation *for the time to come:* All our glory, wealth, and ſubſtance, is no durable foundation, here to-day, and gone to-morrow, but good works are a bank in heaven: All is depoſited in a ſafe hand, that we lay out for God. (5.) It ſhall be rewarded with eternal life: *Laying up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come*, &c. Now from the whole, *learn*, 1. That the wiſdom of God has ſeen fit to make a great diſtinction between men in this world; ſome are poor, others rich, as God ſees beſt for both. 2. That ſome are rich, who are not rich in this world; rich in faith, heirs of a kingdom, yet wandering in deſerts, dens, and caves. 3. That there are many who are only *rich in this world:* Look beyond the grave, and they are poor men, miſerable men, having great poſſeſſions in this world, but no proviſions for the next. 4. That the great deſign which all men, eſpecially rich men, ſhould purſue and proſecute in this life, is, how they may in this life ſecure and lay hold of eternal life: Bleſſed be God, it may be laid hold upon; it is worth laying hold upon; it is life; it is eternal life. *Queſt.* But how ſhould we lay hold upon eternal life? *Anſ.* 1. In our judgments: By having them convinced of the tranſcendent excellency of it, and by having them approve of the ſtricteſt conditions upon which it is tendered. 2. In our affections: by ſtrong and vehement deſires after eternal life. 3. In our endeavours: by a diligent uſe of all means in order to the obtaining of it, and particularly by doing good, by being rich in good works, by being ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate; for hereby ſhall we lay up for ourſelves *a good foundation againſt the time to come*, and at length, *lay hold of eternal life*.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy truſt, avoiding profane *and* vain bablings, and oppoſitions of ſcience falſely ſo called: 21 Which ſome profeſſing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

Our apoſtle concludes this his epiſtle to Timothy with a very paſſionate and pathetic exhortation to him: That he would maintain the purity of the doctrine of the goſpel, and preach that to his hearers, avoiding all idle ſpeculations and philoſophical niceties, which the heathen philoſophers admired, deſpiſing in the mean time, the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the goſpel: And he tells him farther, that ſome Chriſtians, being taken with this ſort of learning, have corrupted Chriſtianity, turned heretics, erring concerning the faith; to prevent which, he begs for Timothy the grace of God, to preſerve, ſanctify, and ſave him. *Learn* hence, That in the firſt beginnings of Chriſtianity, the philoſophers, by pretences of great learning, were the greateſt deſpiſers, and the bittereſt enemies of Chriſtianity. Secondly, That the generality of them were taken up with mere uſeleſs quibbling, ſtriving about words and barren notions, inſtead of neceſſary and uſeful knowledge. Thirdly, That Timothy, and every miniſter of Chriſt with him, ought to preach the goſpel, without any ſuch human mixtures in the purity and plainneſs of it; and the people receive it, with a ſimplicity of mind, to be guided and directed by it. Laſtly, That the ſanctifying and eſtabliſhing grace of God is neceſſary, and indiſpenſibly needful, to preſerve both miniſters and people ſtedfaſt in the faith of the goſpel, and to perſevere in their obedience to it.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO
TIMOTHY.

It is generally concluded, That it was not long before St. Paul'*s death that he wrote this epiſtle to* Timothy; *and ſome think it was the laſt epiſtle that ever he wrote, in which he foretels the near approach of his own death and martyrdom,* chap. iv. 6. *ſaying,* I am ready to be offered *up*, and the time of my departure is at hand.

The deſign of our apoſtle in this epiſtle is twofold: Firſt, to forewarn, and thereby fore-arm, his dear ſon Timothy *againſt thoſe heretics, and falſe teachers, which were then ariſing and creeping into the church;* and *next to excite him to the utmoſt care and diligence in the faithful diſcharge of his office; exhorting him to prepare for ſufferings and perſecutions, from his own example ſet before him.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God according to the promiſe of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus; 2 To Timothy *my* dearly beloved ſon: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

In theſe verſes, the penman of this epiſtle is deſcribed, by his name, *Paul*, by his office, *an apoſtle*, by the perſon that ſent him, *Jeſus Chriſt*, by the end of his miſſion to preach, *the promiſe of life*; that is, the goſpel in which the promiſe of life eternal is contained. *Note* here, 1. That it is God's call, and not barely God's permiſſion; his commanding will, and not barely his permitting will, which muſt warrant a perſon's undertaking the ſacred office, and prove him a true miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt: *Paul an apoſtle by the will of God.* 2. That as Adam brought the ſentence of death upon all, the promiſe of life is made to us in and through Jeſus Chriſt; ſo that promiſe of life muſt have miniſters to proclaim it, and to preach this promiſe is their proper work. *Obſerve*, 2. The perſon deſcribed, to whom this epiſtle is directed, and that by his name, *Timothy*, by his relation, *a ſon*, by his affection, *a beloved ſon*, a *dearly* beloved ſon. Some think St. Paul calls him his ſon, becauſe converted by him to Chriſtianity; others, becauſe more thoroughly inſtructed, edified, and encouraged by our apoſtle; poſſibly becauſe he was aſſiſtant to him, a co-worker and fellow-labourer with him in the work of the goſpel, and for that reaſon moſt affectionately beloved by him. From whence *learn*, With what fervour of ſincere affection the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould love one another, ſpeak reſpectfully of each other, ſecure the reputation one of another, ſtrengthen each other's hands, and encourage one another's hearts in the work of God. We have little love from the world: Lord, how ſad is it that we ſhould have leſs one for another? Behold here how St. Paul's and his aſſiſtant Timothy's hearts were knit one to another; like father and ſon, to the great reputation, as well as ſucceſsful furtherance of the goſpel. 3. The apoſtle's ſalutation, in form of a prayer: *Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* *Learn* hence, That all ſpiritual bleſſings flow from God as the Father in Chriſt unto us; and that no grace, mercy, or peace can be had from God the Father, but in, by, and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 I thank God, whom I ſerve from *my* forefathers with pure conſcience,—

But how could St. Paul, before converſion, be ſaid to ſerve the God of his forefathers with a pure conſcience, when he was a perſecutor, and the chief of ſinners? *Anſ.* The meaning is, That he worſhipped the ſame God, and the only true God, which his forefathers worſhipped, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and that he worſhipped him in ſincerity, according to his conſcience, and the meaſures of light then received. *Learn* hence, That the church before Chriſt had the ſame faith, the ſame object of faith, and worſhipped God, the ſame God, under the law, with us under the goſpel: *I thank God, whom I ſerve from my forefathers.*

—That without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day:

Behold here the miniſters duty in a more eſpecial manner, to be much in prayer one for another; they ſtand greatly in need of this mutual help to ſtrengthen each other's hands, and encourage one another's hearts in the ways of God: They ſhould therefore without ceaſing, remember one another at the throne of grace.

4 Greatly deſiring to ſee thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy:

Obſerve here, The vehemency of affection which our apoſtle expreſſes towards Timothy; he deſired, greatly deſired, to ſee him, and with the ſight of him to be filled with joy. *Note*, That though we muſt love all Chriſtians with a ſincere love, yet may we love ſome Chriſtians with a more fervent love than others; choice and uſeful Chriſtians, endearing and endeared friends, may and muſt be loved above others: *I deſire greatly to ſee thee*, &c. *Obſerve* farther, St. Paul declares how mindful he was of Timothy's tears; perhaps a flood of tears were ſhed at their laſt parting one from another. The beſt of men have a propenſion to weeping, and, upon occaſion, have ſhed tears; ſo had Jacob, Joſeph, David, and Chriſt himſelf. True goodneſs promotes compaſſion; good men ever have been, and are men of tender and compaſſionate diſpoſitions.

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: And I am perſuaded that in thee alſo.

This is another reaſon why St. Paul ſo earneſtly deſired a ſight of his dear ſon Timothy, namely, a remembrance of his faith, as well as of his tears; which faith is deſcribed by the quality of it, *unfeigned*; by the effect of it, it *dwelt*; by the ſubjects wherein, in *Lois*, *Eunice*, and *Timothy*; by the order in which, firſt, in the grandmother Lois, then in the mother Eunice, and laſtly, in the child Timothy. *Learn* hence, That it is a moſt deſirable and bleſſed thing when there is a ſucceſſion of believers in a family, and to ſee faith tranſmitted down to poſterity, when grandmother, mother, and grandchild, all walk in the truth. Thus here: And whereas Timothy received the advantage of a religious education from thoſe two holy women, Lois and Eunice, we *learn*, That God often bleſſes the labours and examples of holy women, to raiſe up excellent inſtruments in his church.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou ſtir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Obſerve here, 1. St. Paul's care in putting Timothy in remembrance of his duty, though he very well knew it before: *Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance.* None are ſo well inſtructed in their duty, but they may and ought ſometimes to be put in remembrance of what their duty is. 2. The duty which St. Paul puts him in remembrance of; namely, to *ſtir up the gift of God, which was in him, by putting on of the* apoſtle's *hands*. Where *note*, 1. What the gift was which he adviſes ſhould be ſtirred up; namely, the Holy Ghoſt, in its miniſterial gifts and ſanctifying graces; particularly, a divine power, which diſpoſed and enabled him to teach and live, to act and do, anſwerably to the duties incumbent upon him as a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. What care Timothy muſt take of this gift; namely, to ſtir it up: The word is a metaphor taken from fire, which, if not ſtirred up, grows dead, and gives little heat. They that have received much grace, and many gifts from the holy Spirit, may yet be wanting to themſelves in ſtirring them up. This ſtirring up the gift of God in Timothy, reſpects either the means that are to be uſed in order to the duty, ſuch are, prayer, reading, meditation; or the duty itſelf, which conſiſts in feeding the flock of God, in reforming abuſes in the church of God, and in enduring hardſhip as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. 3. How this gift was beſtowed upon Timothy; namely, by putting on of the apoſtle's hands, together with the hands of the preſbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14. Authority and power was given by the apoſtle, the preſbytery concurring as his aſſiſtants. St. Paul did not lay on hands without the preſbytery, much leſs did the preſbytery lay on hands without the apoſtle, but he and they in conjunction. From the whole, *learn*, That no perſons, eſpecially miniſters ought to ſuffer the gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit to remain in them unexcited and unſtirred up: *Stir up the gift of God that is in thee.*

7 For God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel, according to the power of God.

Here our apoſtle exhorts Timothy to an holy courage and undaunted reſolution in the execution of his office. As if he had ſaid, " Be not diſcouraged by perſecution: for God hath not given us, his meſſengers, the ſpirit of fear, but of courage and fortitude; fearleſs we are of the frowns of men: Alſo *the ſpirit of love*, love to God and the ſouls of men, which will make the miniſters of God indefatigable in their endeavours for the good of ſouls: Likewiſe the ſpirit of a ſound mind, which enables God's miniſters to curb their paſſions, inordinate luſts, deſires, and perturbations of mind; an admirable ſpirit, to know when to be angry and ſevere, and when to be mild and gentle." *Learn* hence, That love is the genuine principle of obedience, and ought to be that frame of ſpirit, that inward affection of mind, from whence all our ſervices to God and our neighbour do proceed. Thus, having fortified Timothy againſt fear, in the ſeventh verſe, he next fortifies him againſt ſhame, in the eighth verſe: " *Be not thou aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord*; that is, of giving teſtimony of the goſpel of our Lord, whether by preaching of it, or ſuffering for it: Not to be aſhamed *of me his priſoner:* for I do not ſuffer as a malefactor; nay, be thou a cheerful partaker of the ſame ſufferings as myſelf, and for the ſame cauſe with myſelf, according to the power of God; that is, being ſtrengthened with the almighty power of God." *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of the goſpel are to take care that they be always ready to ſuffer reproach for the goſpel, but that they never be a reproach unto the goſpel. Suffering for Chriſt will be ſweet, if it be not imbittered by ſinning againſt Chriſt.

9 Who hath ſaved us, and called *us* with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began. 10 But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, " To fortify thee againſt the fear of thoſe perſecutions, and to arm thee againſt the ſhame of thoſe reproaches, which may probably attend thee in the work of the goſpel, conſider, that the God whom thou ſerveſt in this employment is he that hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling: Called us firſt to Chriſtianity, and then to this holy function of the miniſtry; but to neither of them according to the merit of our works; as if we had done any thing to deſerve either of theſe favours at his hands; but *according to his own purpoſe and grace, given us in Chriſt before the world began*; that is, which from all eternity he decreed and determined to accompliſh by Jeſus Chriſt; which gracious purpoſe of his is now clearly diſcovered by our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's coming into the world; *who hath aboliſhed death and brought life and immortality to light*; that is, made a fuller and clearer diſcovery of it by the goſpel; to preach which goſpel I am a commiſſioned apoſtle, and for this I ſuffer; and God help you, when thereunto called, to ſuffer with me." *Learn* hence, 1. That God himſelf is the author of man's ſalvation; He hath ſaved us: That effectual vocation doth accompany ſalvation; That the Chriſtian's calling is an holy calling; that it is alſo an act of free and gracious favor in God to call; *who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling*, &c. *Learn* further, That God's purpoſe or eternal decree to ſave before all time, was manifeſted by Chriſt's appearing in time: *But now is made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve* alſo, The happy effects of Chriſt's appearing: 1. To aboliſh death; not to root it at preſent out of the world, but to take away its dominion, its dread and terror, the whole power and diſpoſal of it, Rev. i. 18. *I am alive and have the keys of life and death.* 2. To bring life and immortality to light; that is, immortal life more clearly manifeſted and diſcovered. *Note* here, 1. That the ſoul of man is immortal, and that there is another ſtate, an immortal ſtate, which remains for men after this life; otherwiſe, the juſtice of God's providence could not be ſufficiently vindicated; but upon the ſuppoſal of a future ſtate of immortality, it may. An account of the unequal providences of God in this world, is eaſy to him that believes the certainty of another; as good and evil are at preſent different in their natures, ſo ſhall they be in their rewards. 2. That the greateſt diſcovery that ever was made of life and immortality to loſt ſinners, is made by Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel. It was diſcovered, though darkly, to the Old Teſtament ſaints; but the diſcovery made of it by the goſpel, as it was an unexpected diſcovery, a free and gracious diſcovery, ſo was it a more clear, more full, and final diſcovery of it: *Chriſt hath aboliſhed death, and brought life*, &c.

12 For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things: nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to

keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.

For which cauſe, that is, "For the ſake of the goſpel, and not as an evil doer, I ſuffer patiently all afflictive evils, without either fear or ſhame, well knowing in whom I repoſe my faith and hope, my truſt and confidence; and firmly believing that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, my temporary life, yea, my eternal life, the life of my ſoul, my reward in heaven; I have committed all unto, and depoſited all in God's hand, and I am ſure he is both able and willing, he both can and will keep in ſafety, that which I have thus committed to him." *Note* here, 1. That the knowledge of God muſt precede, or go before faith in God. *I know in whom I have believed:* Faith ſees not him, in whom it believeth, but it knows him in whom it believeth. 2. There is no ſuch way to ſecure the ſoul, as to commit it into God's hand; the way to make the ſoul ſafe, is to commit it to him to keep, and that in the way of well-doing.

13 Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us.

By *ſound words*, we are to underſtand the doctrine of the goſpel; by *a form of ſound words*, the truths and doctrines of the goſpel methodically diſpoſed and digeſted; to *hold* it *faſt*, is, not to ſwerve from it in the courſe of our miniſtry, but pertinaciouſly to adhere to it, not parting with it ourſelves, nor ſuffering it to be adulterated and corrupted by others. This form of ſound words ſome take to be the articles of our *creed*, in the words wherein we now have them, probably the ſame in ſenſe, if not in words. This is called, *ver.* 14. *That good thing* which was committed to Timothy to keep; meaning, that ſummary of Chriſtian doctrine which was committed to his care and keeping. *Learn* hence, 1. That evangelical words are ſound words: All goſpel-truth is of an healing nature. 2. That a form of ſound words, or a methodical ſyſtem of goſpel-truths, is very profitable both for miniſters and people. 3. That ſuch a form of ſound words is very faithfully to be retained, and very carefully to be kept unto. 4. That faith and love are the hands whereby we are to hold faſt goſpel-truth: *Hold faſt the form of ſound words in faith and love, which is in Jeſus Chriſt.* 5. That as Chriſtians are to hold theſe evangelical truths faſt in their judgments, ſo are they to hold them forth in their lives and practices: *Keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us*; that is, the power and aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt will not be wanting to our endeavours, to help our memory, love, and practice, if we be not wanting to ourſelves.

15 This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

By *all in Aſia*, we are to underſtand very many, almoſt all, not every individual perſon: Some think they were teachers in Aſia, others that they were private Chriſtians; ſome that they were his companions and followers, who, when they ſaw him impriſoned, deſerted and left him; and particularly, Phygellus and Hermogenes. Yet, *note* here, 1. That he doth not tax them of apoſtaſy from Chriſt, when he accuſes them of forſaking him; it is too harſh to ſay, that thoſe that forſake a particular ruler of the church, do forſake Chriſt himſelf. 2. In that he ſays, *All that are in Aſia are turned away from me*, that ſin may, and oft-times has the major vote of its ſide, the generality go one way and uſually the wrong way; ſinners, like ſheep, run after one another; like fiſh ſwim down the ſtream together.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus; for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain, 17 But when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found *me*. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: And in how many things he miniſtered unto me at Epheſus, thou kneweſt very well.

Our apoſtle having complained of many in Aſia forſaking him, in the day of his ſufferings, in the foregoing verſe; in this, he makes a grateful commemoration of the kindneſs of Oneſiphorus towards him, who refreſhed him with his preſence and relief, and was not *aſhamed of his chain*, of his impriſonment, as others were. *Learn*, 1. It is no new thing for the moſt holy and innocent ſervants of Chriſt to ſuffer hardſhip, impriſonment, baniſhment, yea, even death itſelf, for the ſake of Chriſt; and when they do ſo, to have friends forſake, and turn their backs upon them. Proſperity affords many friends, more flatterers; but who regards the priſoner in bonds? who cares for looking upon the dial when the ſun is off? 2. That not to be aſhamed of the ſaints in the day of their ſufferings, but to own them, and adminiſter to them in ſuch a condition, is a certain ſign of a ſound and ſincere Chriſtian. Good Oneſiphorus had this, amongſt other evidences of his gracious ſtate, that he was not aſhamed to own a perſecuted Paul in chains. Nay, he ſearched for the apoſtle very diligently, and found him; ſo far was he from hiding his eyes from him, and forſaking him, as the men of Aſia did. *Obſerve* next, Our apoſtle's fervent and affectionate prayer to God, abundantly to recompence this labour of love in Oneſiphorus towards him: Firſt, He begs mercy for his whole houſhold, *The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus. Note*, 1. How thankful the ſaints of God are for mercies received from God, by the hands of men. 2. That acts of Chriſtian charity to the ſuffering ſervants of Chriſt, do receive a conſiderable part of their reward, even here, in the hearty and affectionate prayers of the people of God on their behalf. How well did it fare with Oneſiphorus and his houſhold upon the ſcore of St. Paul's prayer, *The Lord ſhew mercy*, &c. next he prays for Oneſiphorus himſelf, *The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*; that is, in the great day of judgment. *Learn* hence, 1. That the holieſt of men, and beſt of ſaints, will ſtand in need of mercy, much mercy, when they ſtand before God at the great day. 2. That the merciful Chriſtian, which has here ſhewn mercy to the miniſters and members of Jeſus Chriſt, may expect and ſhall find mercy in that day, when they ſtand in need of mercy. They that ſhew mercy in the evil day, ſhall certainly find mercy in the great day:

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter firſt exhorts Timothy *to the practice of ſeveral duties belonging to his ſacred function; and next he dehorts him from ſeveral ſins which render the office of a biſhop obnoxious to cenſure, and his perſon to contempt.*

THOU therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

St. Paul having acquainted Timothy with the hard things which he had ſuffered for the goſpel of Chriſt, and withal informed him how many had flinched for fear of ſuffering, forſaking him, and the cauſe of God defended by him; in this verſe he exhorts Timothy to courage and holy reſolution for Chriſt: *Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus:* That is, when others ſhew puſilanimity and cowardice, do thou ſhew thyſelf a ſtrong and valiant man, not affrighted at the dangers that threaten in publiſhing and defending the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. Be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt; that is in the goſpel of Chriſt, which contains a diſcovery of the riches of his grace, or be ſtrong through the influences of the grace of Chriſt. *Note,* 1. That as all Chriſtians in general, ſo the miniſters of Chriſt in particular, do need courage, *Thou, my ſon, be ſtrong*; nothing he does, but is an act of valour, all duties are attended with difficulties, which put the Chriſtian upon diſputing every inch of his way; they are only a few gallant ſpirits that dare take heaven by ſtorm: And the miniſters of Chriſt do meet with more difficulties than other men. *Learn,* 2. That our ſtrength, both as Chriſtians and as miniſters, lies in Chriſt, and not in ourſelves: *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus:* The ſtrength of every ſaint, yea, of the whole hoſt of ſaints, lies in the Lord of hoſts.

2 And the things that thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo.

A ſecond charge given to Timothy is, To take ſpecial care that the doctrine of the goſpel, and the precepts of holy living, which he had heard St. Paul deliver, in the preſence of many witneſſes, ſhould be handed down and tranſmitted to men of great fidelity and ability, whom he was to ordain and impower to teach it unto others. Where *note,* 1. A direction given to the guides and governors of the church, how they ought to manage themſelves in the ordination of the miniſterial office: This office is to be committed unto *faithful able men*; many may be uſeful in the church, that cannot be excellent, but he that is unfaithful, is only fit to make atheiſts. 2. That ſuch as have the goſpel depoſited with them, may and ought to depoſite it with others, and they with others, to the end of the world, thereby to prevent all innovations and diverſities of opinions in matters of religion.

3 Thou therefore endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the affairs of *this* life; that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier. 5 And if a man alſo ſtrive for the maſteries, *yet* is he not crowned except he ſtrive lawfully. 6 The huſbandman that laboureth muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits. 7 Conſider what I ſay; and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things.

Still we find our apoſtle proſecuting the great and general deſign of this epiſtle, which is to direct Timothy in the faithful diſcharge of his office, as a miniſter of the goſpel, and particularly to prepare for ſufferings, and to inure himſelf to hardſhip, and to encounter with difficulties and dangers: Hence, he compares him to a ſoldier, to a wreſtler, and an huſbandman: (1.) To a ſoldier: *Endure hardneſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* *Learn* hence, That every faithful miniſter is a ſpiritual ſoldier, warring under Jeſus Chriſt, his Captain and chief Commander: Muſt the ſoldier be called, and do all by commiſſion? ſo muſt the miniſter. Muſt the ſoldier be armed, trained up, and diſciplined, and made fit for ſervice? ſo muſt the miniſter. Muſt the ſoldier ſhun no dangers, ſtick at no difficulties, paſs through thick and thin? Muſt he uſe allowed weapons, approved armour of his general's directing, not of his own inventing? all this muſt the miniſter be and do. In a word muſt the ſoldier pleaſe him that choſe him to be a ſoldier, and in order thereunto, not *entangle himſelf with the affairs of this life?* Such a life of freedom from incumbrance by ſecular affairs, ſhould the miniſter of God deſire and endeavour after. Soldiers muſt be as free as may be from diſtractions; a ſoldier that fights in fetters, fights thereafter; he muſt put off his fetters before he puts on his armour; the miniſter's work lies in the affairs of the other life: Now, he that is entangled in the affairs of this life, will do little about the affairs of the next. He muſt alſo pleaſe his Captain, not pleaſe himſelf, his appetite, his pride, his covetouſneſs, much leſs muſt he pleaſe the enemy he is to fight againſt, the devil, the world, and the fleſh. Again, 2. The miniſter is here compared to a wreſtler: *If a man ſtrive for the maſtery*; that is, for the prize, the garland, the crown, at the end of the race, he ſhall be crowned, if he ſtrives lawfully, if he runs fairly, according to the rules of the game, and perſeveres finally till he comes to the end of the goal. Thus muſt the miniſters of the goſpel ſtrive for the crown of life, by putting forth all their ſtrength, exerting their utmoſt endeavours; ſuch as are now wreſtlers, ſhall ere long be conquerors. Laſtly, Timothy, and all with him in the work of the goſpel, are here compared to huſbandmen: As the huſbandman muſt firſt toil and labour before he can partake of the fruits of the earth, he muſt plough and ſow before he can reap and gather; ſo muſt the miniſter of God, by a laborious diligence, cultivate and improve the people, before he can hope to reap that great fruit and benefit, by gaining and converting of ſouls to Chriſt. God will regard no miniſters but the laborious, he will never dignify drones in the church triumphant. Farther, by comparing Timothy to an huſbandman, he intimates to him his duty, not to be diſcouraged if he doth not reap fruit preſently; the ſeed ſometimes lies under the clods long before it does appear; we muſt not deſpair of men too ſoon. And, laſtly, By comparing Timothy to an huſbandman, he ſeems to intimate, that he was to be ſuſtained and maintained by thoſe for whom he laboured. Thus having laid Timothy's duty before him under the metaphor of a ſoldier, a wreſtler, and an huſbandman; he counſels him to conſider what he had ſaid unto him, and deſires of God to give him a right underſtanding and ſound judgment in all things; intimating, that they that will have God's word and good counſel bleſſed by God to their underſtanding and practice, muſt ponder upon it, conſider of it, and duly apply it to themſelves; *Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things.*

8 Remember that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David was raiſed from the dead, according to my goſpel: 9 Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, exhorted Timothy to patience and conſtancy under ſuffering, comes now to direct him as to the matter and ſubject of his preaching, particularly, that he inſiſt upon the incarnation and reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *Remember that Jeſus Chriſt* was the promiſed Meſſias *of the ſeed of David*, not of Joſeph. Timothy is here called upon to aſſert the incarnation of Chriſt, their being ſome heretics which did very early deny the truth of his human nature, as the Marcionites and Manichees; as there were others that denied the reality of his divine nature, particularly, Ebion and Cerinthus. Secondly, he calls upon Timothy to preach and preſs the doctrine of Chriſt's reſurrection alſo, both becauſe upon that depended the great evidence of his divinity, that he was really God, (his reſurrection by his own power declared him to be God, Rom. i. 4.) and alſo becauſe upon that depends the conſolation and ſalvation of all believers. Remember, and frequently inculcate, that Chriſt was raiſed from the dead, *according to my goſpel*; that is, according to the goſpel of Chriſt preached by me. Chriſt's incarnation and reſurrection, are truths much to be preached and inculcated by miniſters, and frequently remembered and thoroughly conſidered by their people. It follows, *Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds*; *but the word of God is not bound*; that is, for which goſpel, and for preaching which reſurrection, I ſuffer as a criminal and reputed malefactor, yea, I ſuffer to that degree, that I am bound with chains for preaching Jeſus and the reſurrection: *But the word of God is not bound*; though they have reſtrained me, they cannot reſtrain that; that is looſe and at liberty; when the diſpenſers of it are in bonds, that has its free courſe. *Learn*, That the preachers of the goſpel have, from the beginning, met with great perſecutions, they have *ſuffered trouble as evil-doers, even unto bonds.* 2. That the perſecution of preachers doth not hinder the progreſs and liberty of the word; when miniſters are in priſon, the word may have free paſſage, and holy men rejoice at its liberty, under their own confinement: Yea, the providence of God ſo ordered it, (ſee Acts the laſt) that St. Paul, even during his impriſonment, preached the word with all boldneſs; his confinement had cauſed the goſpel to ſpread in Rome. Thus God out ſhoots Satan in his own bow: He thinks when he has the miniſters of God in priſon, he has done his work, but God over-rules and cauſes their impriſonment itſelf to fall out rather to the furtherance of the goſpel; *I ſuffer bonds*, ſays the apoſtle, *but the word of God is not bound.*

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elects' ſakes, that they may alſo obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory. 11 *It is* a faithful ſaying; For if we be dead with *him*, we ſhall alſo live with *him*. 12 If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with *him:* If we deny *him*, he will alſo deny us: 13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: He cannot deny himſelf.

St. Paul having acquainted Timothy in the foregoing verſes with his ſufferings, even unto bonds, here he lets him underſtand and know, why, and for who's ſake, he did ſo cheerfully endure all theſe things, namely, *for the elects' ſake*. Though the reſt of the world rejected the goſpel, yet the elect would be confirmed by his example, and obtain that ſalvation which in and through Jeſus Chriſt was offered and tendered to them. Here *note*, That there is a certain election of God, which hath infallibly choſen to ſalvation all thoſe who make their calling and election ſure, by perſeverance in holineſs and good words. 2. That the faithful miniſters of Chriſt do think no ſufferings too much, or too dear, for the ſake of God's elect, (for the ſake of believing Chriſtians, who are a choſen generation) ſo that their ſufferings may but further their eternal glory, happineſs and ſalvation. To encourage yet again to a patient enduring of all ſorts of afflictions, he aſſures Timothy, that if we be rendered conformable to Chriſt in his ſufferings, we ſhall be alſo in his glory; *If we ſuffer for him, we ſhall reign with him*; *if we be dead with him*, dead to ſin, and dead to the world, *we ſhall alſo live with him*, in conformity to his reſurrection: But if for fear of ſuffering we diſown him, he will alſo deny us; if we believe not, if we be unfaithful and forſake him, yet he will be true to his word, he will not forſake his own cauſe, but make good his threatenings; his own veracity ſtands firm, and is as much engaged to execute the threatening, as to fulfil the promiſe.

14 Of theſe things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, *but* to the ſubverting of the hearers. 15 Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed; rightly dividing the word of truth.

Obſerve here 1. The excellent advice which St. Paul gives to Timothy, to all the miniſters of the church, and to all the Chriſtian churches far and near, that they ſpend not their time in diſputes, that they contend not about words, which have no tendency to make men either wiſer or better, but ſerve only to violate the laws of charity, and cauſe men to wrangle eternally, and perſecute one another with hard names and characters of reproach. Here *note*, 1. What thoſe things are which ought not to be matters of contention among Chriſtians; namely. 1. Such things in which we differ from each other, rather in words, than in ſenſe; oft-times opponents mean the ſame things, but differ only in the way and manner of expreſſion. 2. Such things as tend to little or no profit, either as to edification in faith, in love, or in practical godlineſs. *Obſerve* alſo, the apoſtle's argument, why we ſhould not contend about theſe things; becauſe they tend to beget ſtrife and contention among Chriſtians, by dividing them into factions and parties, and alſo tend to the ſubverſion of the hearers, cauſing them to doubt of the truth of the faith, about which the contending parties cannot agree; *charge them therefore, that they ſtrive not about words of no profit but to the ſubverting of the hearers*. *Obſerve* next, The ſolemn charge given to Timothy, as to the matter, manner, and method of his preaching; that the matter of it be *the word of truth*, the pure word of God, that it be *divided rightly*, to every one his portion, to every hearer his due, methodizing and diſtributing truth, as God would have it; terror to whom terror is due, comfort to whom comfort belongs. The original word rendered *rightly to divide*, ſome think a ſacrifical word, alluding to the right dividing of the ſacrifice, which was laid upon the altar, ſeparating the precious from the vile, and ſevering the parts which were not to be offered from them that were, and cutting out the ſacrifice in ſuch manner as all had their ſhare in them. As if St. Paul had ſaid, "Study not for the applauſe of men, but for the approbation of God, as becometh a good workman, who needeth not to be aſhamed of his work, whoever looks upon it; but let thy preaching and living be ſtraight and conformable to the goſpel, and thus ſtudy to ſhew thyſelf approved of God." Hence *learn*, That although curious and unprofitable trifling with words in a pulpit be vain and ſinful, yet it is the part of a ſkilful teacher, to order, methodize, and diſtribute truth in its proper place, and give every hearer his part and portion.

16 But ſhun profane and vain bablings; for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, ſaying, That the reſurrection is paſt already; and overthrow the faith of ſome.

St. Paul having now finiſhed the exhortatory part of this chapter, and acquainted Timothy what he would have him practiſe and do, now comes to a dehortation, adviſing him what he would have him avoid and ſhun; and here, firſt, he bids him *ſhun profane and vain bablings*; the vain bablings of the Heathen philoſophers, and the profane notions of heretical and ſeducing teachers, particularly, the Gnoſtics, the followers of Simon Magus and Menander, who were guilty of an apoſtaſy from Chriſtianity, by turning the reſurrection into an allegory: affirming, that the reſurrection of the ſoul to piety and virtue, was the only reſurrection to be expected, diſowning the reſurrection of the body, and aſſerting, that the fleſh was unfit to riſe. *Obſerve*, ſecondly, The nature of erroneous doctrine declared; it is of a devouring, ſpreading, and deſtroying nature, *their words will eat as doth a gangrene*. *Queſt.* How doth a gangrene eat? *Anſ.* It eats ſpeedily, it eats incurably, it eats mortally, as it is well known the gangrene doth. *Queſt.* But what is it that hereſies eat? *Anſ.* Faith, peace and godlineſs: ſo here, *they overthrow the faith of ſome, and increaſe unto more ungodlineſs*. *Queſt.* How comes it to paſs that they ſo eat? *Anſ.* The ſpreading and prevailing of hereſies, may be aſcribed partly to the ſubtilty and activity of ſeducers, partly to the curioſity and ſimplicity of the ſeduced, and partly to the juſtice of God, for the manifeſtation of thoſe that are ſincere, and the puniſhment of thoſe that receive not the the truth in the love of it.

19 Nevertheleſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, "Notwithſtanding that Hymeneus and Philetus, with others, are fallen away, nevertheleſs we know that the foundation of God, his holy covenant, ſtandeth firm and ſure, having a ſeal annexed to it, (as uſually contracts have, whereby two parties do oblige themſelves mutually to each other,) which ſeal on God's part has this impreſs or inſcription, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; and on our part is written, *Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity*." *Learn* hence, 1. That the covenant of God made with us in Chriſt Jeſus, is a firm and ſure foundation to build our hopes of perſeverance and eternal life upon; *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*. 2. That the covenant (according to the nature of the covenants) is conditional; on God's part, promiſing aſſiſtance, acceptance, and rewards; on our part, a departing from all iniquity, and an obligation to the love and practice of all holineſs. All that make a profeſſion of Chriſtianity ought to take eſpecial care that their lives may anſwer their light, their practices correſpond with their profeſſion; Chriſtianity being not a ſpeculative ſcience, but a practical art of holy living.

20 But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and ſilver, but alſo of wood, and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, *and* prepared unto every good work.

Our apoſtle had told us at ver. 17, and 18. of certain heretics, ſuch as Hymeneus and Philetus, whoſe doctrines did eat like a canker or gangrene: he tells us here, that it is not to be wondered at, that there ſhould be ſuch perſons in the church, becauſe the viſible church is God's great houſe: Now it is no uncommon thing in great men's houſes, to have veſſels of all ſorts, ſome of wood and earth, others of gold and ſilver, ſome to honourable uſes, and others to diſhonourable. In like manner, it is in the church of Chriſt, there will be a number of orthodox and alſo of heterodox Chriſtians, hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians. He adviſes Timothy therefore, not to be ſcandalized at them, but to purge himſelf from them, to keep himſelf pure from hereſy and impiety: hereby he would manifeſt himſelf to be a veſſel unto honour, *ſanctified and meet for the Maſter's uſe*; that is, for the ſervice and glory of God, and diſpoſed for every good work. *Learn* hence, That all Chriſtians, but eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, ought to be, like conſecrated veſſels of the temple, dedicated and ſet apart for our Lord's eſpecial uſe and ſervice; we are not only with other Chriſtians dedicated by baptiſm, but conſecrated at our ſolemn ordination: ſo that there is a ſacredneſs upon our perſons: And to proſtitute ourſelves to any luſt, is a greater profanation than Belſhazzar was guilty of, when he deſecrated the holy veſſels of the temple.

22 Flee alſo youthful luſts: But follow righteouſneſs, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart. 23 But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in his holy cautionary directions to Timothy, what to avoid, and what to follow. He adviſes him, 1. To avoid and *flee youthful luſts*; by which may be underſtood, not only the luſts of the fleſh, but alſo the luſts and vices of the mind, as ambition and pride, vain-glory and oſtentation. Where *note*, That the fleſh, with its affections and luſts, are ſuch dangerous enemies to our holineſs and ſalvation, that the holieſt of miniſters and beſt of men have need, very great need, to be warned of them, and cautioned againſt them: Flee thou, O Timothy, alſo youthful luſts. 2. He adviſes Timothy alſo to avoid *fooliſh and unlearned queſtions*, that is, controverſies and diſputes, knowing that ſuch contentious wranglings do but engender ſtrife. It is not unworthy our obſervation, that no leſs than four times, in theſe two epiſtles, do we meet with this precept from the apoſtle, to avoid theſe queſtions and diſputes, and to apply to that which is practical, ſhewing of what great importance it is ſo to do; and we ſhall meet with it again in the epiſtle to Titus, chap. iii. 9. From whence *learn*, That diſputes about matters which only ſerve to beget ſtrife and contention, but tend little to edification in faith and holineſs, are vain talking, unprofitable diſputes, and as ſuch to be avoided. *Obſerve* next, He directs Timothy what to follow, having ſhewn him what to avoid: Namely, to follow after righteouſneſs and faith, peace and charity with all perſons, but eſpecially with all our brethren and fellow Chriſtians calling on the ſame Lord, and profeſſing the ſame faith with us. Where *note*, That we ought to have charity for, to maintain peace with, and by no means to ſeparate from our communion, any perſon who ſerves Chriſt with a pure heart: *Follow*, ſays our apoſtle, *charity and peace*, *with* all thoſe *that call on the Lord Jeſus out of a pure heart*.

24 And the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

By the ſervant of the Lord here, we are to underſtand all the biſhops and governors, the paſtors and teachers of the church; by not ſtriving, that they are not to irritate and provoke ſuch as diſſent and differ from them; not to ſtrive indecently with the tongue, but by ſoft and gentle words, by cloſe and hard arguments, endeavour to convince their judgment; for no man that is in an error thinks that he is ſo; therefore if we go about by violence to rend men's opinions from them, they will but hold them ſo much the faſter; but if we have but ſo much patience and charity as to unrip their errors by degrees, they will at laſt fall in pieces of themſelves. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all, and patient*; it follows farther, *in meekneſs inſtructing, if God, peradventure*—Where *note*, 1. The duty directed to: and that is, without bitterneſs and paſſion, but with great lenity and meekneſs, to inſtruct the erroneous, even when they oppoſe the truth; ſuch eſpecially as do it out of ignorance, and for want of better information; are particularly to be pitied, and patiently born with, together with thoſe who labour under the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of a contrary education: *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe*. 2. The benefit hoped for, and the advantage to be expected, by ſuch meek and gentle methods of inſtruction, as are here directed to; (1.) That Almighty God may peradventure give them repentance, bleſſing ſuch prudential and pious means for their converſion from error and ſeduction; and, (2.) That they may be recovered out of Satan's ſnares and temptations, they being at preſent captivated by him according to his will. *Learn*, 1. That if erroneous and miſled perſons will not bear gentle teaching, much leſs will they yield to ſharp invectives, or provoking diſputes. Yet, 2. Diſputations wiſely managed, like defenſive wars, are both uſeful and neceſſary in defence of the truth, though they do not bring over gainſayers. 3. That till erroneous and miſled perſons can be brought by conſideration to be agents in recovering themſelves, no teaching or diſputing will be ſufficient and effectual to recover them; *That they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him.* Laſtly, Error is the devil's ſnare as well as ſin: Error is as dangerous as vice: the one is an open road, the other a by-path, to hell and deſtruction; conſequently, ſuch a Chriſtian as has a due regard to, and value for, his own ſalvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous principles as of debauched practices; *That they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle comes now, by a prophetical inſtinct, to foretel of greater evils and miſchiefs, which ſhould certainly ariſe towards the end of the world, which he calls the laſt days, and perilous times.

THIS know alſo, that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "O my ſon Timothy, be not thou diſcouraged, neither let any of the ſucceſſors be diſmayed, at the ſects and ſchiſms, at the hereſies and blaſphemies,

phemies, at the vice and impiety, which will be found in and amongſt perſons in the laſt days, when certainly known that *perilous times ſhall come.*" Where, by the *laſt days,* underſtand all the times from Chriſt's firſt coming in the fleſh, to his ſecond coming to judgment; in the beginning of which times, ſeveral ſorts of perſons, yea, ſeveral ſects and parties of men aroſe, to whom the following characters did belong; namely, proud, covetous, boaſters and the like. As the Judaizing teachers who urged the neceſſity of circumciſion, and the obſervation of the ceremonial law; alſo the Gnoſtics, and followers of Simon Magus, have theſe characters applied to them in thoſe early days; and it were well if the church of Rome, in theſe latter days, could clear herſelf in theſe characters, which are found upon her, as the marks and badges of an apoſtate church. *Learn* hence, 1. That the days we now live in are the laſt days, and our times the laſt times. 2. That the laſt times are, and will be, the worſt times, *perilous times,* full of ſin, and full of trouble: Old age is the dregs of life, the world draws upon its lees, the dregs are apparent: *in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.*

2 For men ſhall be lovers of their ownſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God.

Here our apoſtle reckons up the ſeveral ſins, which would abound in theſe laſt days, and make the times perilous; perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity ſhall appear inordinate ſelf-lovers, inſatiably covetous, vain-glorious boaſters, proud, deſpiſers of others, blaſphemers of God and Chriſt, and the holy Spirit, by denying the preſcience and foreknowledge of the former, the divinity and Godhead of the latter. *Learn* hence, That ſins, eſpecially great ſins, ſeldom go ſingle and alone, but commonly generate and beget one another. Thus here, ſelf-love begets covetouſneſs, covetouſneſs pride, and pride blaſphemy! Thus men fall from one ſin to another, and proceed from one degree of wickedneſs to another.

5 Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof. From ſuch alſo turn away.

This is the laſt, but not the leaſt ſin of the perilous times: The apoſtle, 1. Tells us what theſe men have, *a form of godlineſs,* that is, a vain empty ſhew of piety and religion, which diſcovers itſelf in external devotion, in a profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith, in an external ſhew of mortification, in a great zeal for ſome particular party, or private opinion. 2. What they want, the power of godlineſs, that is, the truth and ſincerity of it, conſiſting in true love to God and our neighbour. 3. The apoſtle directs us as to our behaviour towards ſuch men, *from theſe turn away.* *Learn* hence, 1. That a perſon may go far, and advance high in an external profeſſion of piety and religion, and yet have no more than a form of godlineſs. 2. That, notwithſtanding this, there is ſuch a thing as the internal and inward power of godlineſs and religion, which few maintain, but moſt deny. 3. That Chriſtians muſt ſhun familiarity with ſuch as have the brand of the foregoing infamous ſins upon them, and not hold correſpondency with ſuch as are the avowed enemies of Chriſt and his kingdom.

6 For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In theſe words, our apoſtle renders a reaſon why we ſhould turn away from the forementioned ſins and ſinners, namely, becauſe theſe heretical and falſe teachers before characterized, are of an inſinuating temper; they vent not their errors openly, but in corners; they creep into houſes, and there ſet upon women with their temptations, who have leſs ability to detect them; and firſt upon women, that they may better win their huſbands over to compliance with them; and upon ſilly women, and ſuch as were laden with ſins and led away with divers luſts; they make a prey of ſuch women as are weak in their intellectuals, and corrupt and wicked in their morals: which women always pretend to be *learned, but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,* and conſequently, are an eaſy prey to ſeducers, and very capable receptive objects for ſuch deceivers to draw away. *Learn* hence, That ſeducers obſerve a method in ſeducing. They begin with women, weak women, and uſually wicked and looſe women. Carefully ought that ſex to reſolve, and ſhun converſing and diſputing with them.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Jannes and Jambres were two famous magicians in Egypt; who withſtood Moſes when he was working miracles before Pharaoh to hinder him from believing; their names are not mentioned in ſcripture, but taken by St. Paul, either from public tradition or ancient Jewiſh records. Now, ſays the apoſtle, as the magicians refuſed Moſes, ſo theſe heretical ſeducers reſiſt the truth, making a violent and rancorous oppoſition againſt it. Thence *learn,* That there have been falſe teachers in all ages, who have with vehemency oppoſed the truth, and the profeſſors of it: Neither the members nor miniſters of Chriſt ſhall ever want enemies to war with, whilſt the ſeed of the ſerpent remains in the world. 2. The character of thoſe men who reſiſt the truth, they are *men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith;* they have loſt all ſound judgment, and made ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience. A corrupt head, a corrupt heart, and a vicious life, uſually attend and accompany one another; looſe principles diſpoſe men to looſe and licentious practices; ſuch as are latitudinarians in opinion, are oftentimes ſo in practice too. An heretical head and an upright heart are incompatible; a good conſcience and a true faith, like Hippocrates's twins, live and die together.

9 But they ſhall proceed no farther: For their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all *men*, as theirs alſo was.

Here our apoſtle encourages Timothy, and in him all the ſucceeding miniſters of the goſpel, to the end of the world, againſt all the diſcouragements which either he or they might meet with from the impoſtors and ſeducers of the times, by aſſuring them of the iſſue and vent of theſe trials; firſt, That God will put a bar in their way, *that they proceed no farther* in their hypocritical and juggling practices. *Learn* thence, That heretics and ſeducers are limited and bounded by God: They cannot do all the miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. Secondly, That God would make their folly and madneſs manifeſt to their own confuſion: Their folly ſhall be diſcovered, and then abhorred, as was the folly and madneſs of Jannes and Jambres. *Learn*, That God will, in his own time, by the preaching of the word, diſcover falſe teachers and their deluſions to the world.

10 But thou haſt fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience, 11 Perſecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra, what perſecutions I endured: But out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution.

A ſpecial mean is here propounded, how Timothy and his ſucceſſors may be preſerved from the ſeduction of falſe teachers, namely, by ſetting before themſelves the example of the great apoſtle St. Paul; we are more eaſily led by precedents than by precepts; therefore the apoſtle propounds his own example as a pattern; *Thou haſt fully known my doctrine*, my *manner of life* and converſation, my purpoſe to adhere to, my faith in Chriſt, my long-ſuffering and patience in undergoing perſecutions for him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra, and how God was graciouſly pleaſed to deliver me out of all. *Learn* hence, 1. That younger miniſters ought eſpecially to obſerve the doctrine and converſation of the elder, the pious way and walking of the graver miniſters, and muſt follow them. Aged Paul propounds his virtues to young Timothy for imitation; *Thou haſt fully known my doctrine and manner of life*; my doctrine to be ſound and ſincere, my life to be holy and unblameable. 2. That it is both lawful and laudable, at ſome times, and upon ſome occaſions, to mention both the graces which God hath wrought in us, and alſo the ſufferings and perſecutions which we endure and undergo for him; *Thou knoweſt what perſecutions I endured at Antioch*, *Iconium*, *and Lyſtra*. 3. That always oppoſition, and often perſecution, attends the preaching of the goſpel wherever it goes. St. Paul went to Antioch, from Antioch to Iconium from Iconium to Lyſtra, preaching the goſpel; but perſecution followed him hard at the heels wherever he went: But obſerve how the goodneſs of God accompanied him too; *Out of them all the Lord delivered me*; not only our dangers but our deliverances alſo, muſt be recorded and obſerved. *Obſerve*, farther, How the apoſtle argues from his own perſecutions in particular, to all the godly's perſecution in general; *Yea, and all that will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*: *Mark*, Not this or that godly man, but *all*, every one without exception; the better the men, the ſooner perſecuted; the devil ſhoots his arrow at the whiteſt and faireſt mark: Again, all that *will*; he doth not ſay, All that wiſh well to godlineſs, but, All that *will*, all that are abſolutely reſolved ſo to do: And farther, if he will *live*, if he can or will keep his godlineſs in his heart, and not diſcover it in his life, he may eſcape hatred and perſecution; but if he will live religiouſly, let him look for perſecution. *Obſerve*, farther, It is ſaid, He that will live godlily, not living civilly, but living godlily, expoſes to the world's ſcorn and hatred: In a word, his godlineſs in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, ſuch godlineſs as is exerted in the virtue, ſtrength and power of Chriſt Jeſus particularly. Godlineſs in Chriſt Jeſus is real and true godlineſs; it is exact godlineſs, it is an active godlineſs, it is a prevailing godlineſs, it is a world-condemning godlineſs: ſuch godlineſs cannot eſcape the world's hatred. *Learn*, That all thoſe that ſhew forth the power of religion in an holy converſation, muſt certainly look for perſecution.

13 But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.

Our apoſtle having acquainted us, in the former verſe, with the condition of the godly, that they muſt expect and prepare for perſecution, he lets us, in this verſe underſtand the miſerable condition of the wicked, that they *wax worſe and worſe*: their proficiency is mere apoſtaſy, they actively deceive others, and are paſſively deceived themſelves, by the devil, that lying ſpirit, that grand impoſtor. *Learn* hence, That the proſperous eſtate of wicked men is much more dangerous and miſerable than the afflicted perſecuted condition of the godly; the good by perſecution grow better, but the wicked by living eaſy, *wax worſe and worſe*.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned and haſt been aſſured of, knowing of whom thou haſt learned them; 15 And that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Several arguments are here made uſe of by St. Paul, to preſs Timothy to the duty of perſeverance in the doctrine of Chriſt, contained in the holy ſcriptures: The firſt is drawn from the authority of the perſon from whom he had received that doctrine, to wit, St. Paul himſelf, an inſpired apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt. Continue in the things which thou haſt learned, that is from me, and by me, as an authorized apoſtle. All the ſervants of God, but eſpecially the miniſters of God, muſt continue conſtant in the faith, and ſtedfaſt in the truth received. The ſecond argument for Timothy's adhering to the doctrine of the ſcriptures, is drawn from his long acquaintance with the ſcriptures, even from his childhood, yea, from his infancy; *From a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures*, &c. And the argument lies thus; “ Thou, O Timothy, haſt learnt the ſcriptures from thy infancy; now what a ſhame would it be for thee, who haſt been taught ſo early the true religion, to turn from it and forſake it; from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, from a ſuckling," as the word ſignifies. From whence *learn*, That it is the duty of parents to inſtruct their children betimes in the holy and good word of God; we read before of the care that Timothy's mother and grandmother took in that matter. *Obſerve*, 2. The title given to the word of God, the holy ſcriptures; they are holy in their author, holy in their matter, holy in their penmen, holy in their end and deſign, which is to make us holy, John xvii. 17. The word of God is not only pure, but purifying, not only clean, but cleanſing. 3. The high commendation given of the word; *It is able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation*; no knowledge can bring us to ſalvation without the knowledge of the holy ſcriptures; the philoſophers will teach you moral wiſdom, but not a word of ſalvation by a Redeemer, without whom our ſalvation is impoſſible; therefore it is here added,—*wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith, which is in Jeſus Chriſt*. *Learn* thence, That the holy ſcriptures, though they inſtruct us in the way of ſalvation, yet cannot ſave us without faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

16 All ſcripture *is* given by inſpiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.

Our apoſtle cloſes this chapter with an exhortation to Timothy to perſevere in his ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, by an argument drawn, 1. From the dignity and authority of the ſcriptures; 2. From their utility; 3. From their perfection. 1. From their dignity and authority, *they are given by inſpiration of God*; that is, they are not the contrivance of any man's wit and fancy, but a revelation of the mind and will of God; and thoſe that wrote them, were excited to it, and aſſiſted in it by the Spirit of God: No part of ſcripture had either angels or men for its author, but every part of ſcripture is divinely inſpired or breathed by God, both for matter and order, ſtyle and words. A ſecond argument is drawn from the utility and ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures; they are *profitable for doctrine and inſtruction*, teaching us what to know and believe in order to ſalvation, concerning God and Chriſt and ourſelves, &c. *for reproof* of error, and confutation of falſe doctrine, *for correction* of ſin and evil manners, *for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, directing us how to lead a righteous and holy life, according to the will of God. A third argument is taken from the perfection of them, they are able to make *the man of God perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works*; that is, to make the miniſters of Chriſt compleat in knowledge, faith, and holineſs, every way fitted for their work and duty as Chriſtians, and as miniſters. *Obſerve* here, 1. That the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, and not of the New, muſt be the ſcriptures here intended, they being the only ſcriptures which Timothy had known from a child; that was before the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament were written. 2. That the apoſtle doth not ſay that theſe ſcriptures were of themſelves ſufficient to make Timothy wiſe unto ſalvation, but only that with faith in Chriſt Jeſus they were ſufficient for that end; much more then muſt the ſcriptures both of Old and New Teſtament together, when accompanied with faith in Jeſus Chriſt, be ſufficient for that end. 3. That the ſcriptures are a perfect, plain, and ſufficient rule in all things neceſſary to ſalvation. 1. They are a perfect rule, becauſe the writers of them were divinely inſpired, and conſequently their writings are infallible. 2. They are a plain rule; otherwiſe they would be no rule at all, of no more uſe to direct our faith and practice than a ſun-dial in a dark room is to tell us the hour of the day: A rule that is not plain, whatever it may be in itſelf, is of no uſe to us till it be made plain. 3. They are a ſufficient rule, they are able to make the man of God *perfect*, and wiſe to ſalvation. Here the church of Rome diſtinguiſhes and ſays, the ſcriptures are ſufficient to ſalvation, but not to inſtruction; to whom one of the martyrs replied, *If ſo, God ſend me the ſalvation, and you the inſtruction*. It is conceived by ſome, that this was the laſt epiſtle that ever St. Paul wrote; if ſo, this is the laſt charge that ever he gave, and concerns us the more to attend the ſolemnity of it. The chapter before us is St. Paul's *cygnea cantio*, his laſt and ſweeteſt ſong; by a ſpiritual ſagacity he ſaw his end approaching, and the time of his martyrdom to be at hand; he therefore, like a dying man, adjures Timothy in a moſt awful and tremendous manner, to preach the word with all diligence and care, which he had ſo highly extolled in the foregoing chapter, as being able to make all perſons wiſe unto ſalvation.

CHAP. IV.

I Charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: 2 Preach the word; be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine.

Obſerve here, 1. A moſt ſolemn adjuration and charge given, *I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the Judge of quick and dead. Lord! what opiate can ſtupify the conſcience of a miniſter, that he ſhall not feel the awful authority of ſuch a charge, or not be awakened by ſuch ardent expreſſions? How can they appear before the moſt high and everlaſting Judge? What will be a ſufficient defence before his enlightened tribunal? If ſuch in the laſt judgment, who neglected to feed the poor with material bread, ſhall be placed at Chriſt's left hand; how can thoſe whoſe office it is to diſpenſe ſpiritual bread, if they neglect to do it, eſcape condemnation? 2. The ſubject-matter of the charge, to preach according to Chriſt's commiſſion, Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go, preach and baptize*; to preach the *word*, not the fancies and inventions of men, but the wholeſome word of God, and the whole word of God, both law and goſpel: The one to keep men from preſumption, the other from deſpair, to be inſtant and active, urgent and zealous in the diſcharge of this duty, in all the parts of it, in inſtruction, reprehenſion, and exhortation; and this *with all long-ſuffering*, patience and lenity, undergoing meekly the contradiction of ſinners and the reproaches of men: And for the time to do it, *in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon*; that is, to take all occaſions and be thankful to God for all opportunities of preaching his word: The lazy may find a thouſand excuſes, but willing minds know no difficulties; they conſider the price paid for ſouls, and the account that muſt be given of them. 3. The perſon to whom this charge is given; to Timothy, an ordained perſon, one ſet apart for the work: This is not a work common to all, but peculiar to ſome: God's Timothies only, who are called and ſet apart by impoſition of hands for the work of the miniſtry, muſt preach the word; and ſuch ought to take all occaſions, and be very inſtant in ſo doing, 1 Cor. ix. 16. *Neceſſity is laid upon us; yea, wo be unto us if we preach not the goſpel.*

3 For the time will come when they will not endure ſound doctrine; but after their own luſts ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they ſhall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and ſhall be turned unto fables.

Here we have the reaſon of our apoſtle's ſolemn adjuration in the forgoing verſes, by which he ſtirs up Timothy to a careful diſcharge of his duty; namely, in regard of the apoſtaſy of the times, in which many would grow weary of ſound doctrine and follow fables. Here *note*, 1. The ground of this apoſtaſy; men's hatred of the truth; *They will not endure ſound doctrine*; that is, they will reject and abhor it; they love their luſts above God's law, and will not endure to hear it. A ſecond ground of their apoſtaſy is, a delight in falſe teachers; *They heap up to themſelves* ſuch as will claw their *itching ears*, and gratify their wanton deſires, and in no wiſe diſturb their luſts. Thirdly, Here is the doleful iſſue and dreadful conſequence of this their malicious contempt of the truth; *They ſhall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables*; that is, ſay ſome, to the fabulous divinity of the Gnoſtics, made up of Gentiliſm and Judaiſm; the fabulous traditions of the Jewiſh doctors, ſay others. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſtian doctrine is ſound doctrine, wholeſome words. 2. Unſound perſons cannot endure ſound doctrine; ſore eyes cannot abide the light. 3. That in the laſt days there will be many falſe teachers to claw and gratify itching ears. 4. That the more falſe teachers do abound, the more careful and induſtrious ſhould the miniſters of Chriſt be to oppoſe them, by preaching ſound doctrine.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangeliſt, make full proof of thy miniſtry.

Behold here a fourfold duty impreſſed upon Timothy; 1. Watchfulneſs: *Watch thou in all things*. As if he had ſaid, "Falſe teachers will beſet you round on every ſide; therefore guard and watch every where." 2. Courage: *Endure afflictions:* He that fears the frowns of men, can never diſcharge his duty faithfully to God. 3. Fidelity: *Do the work of an Evangeliſt*; which was an extraordinary, and therefore but a temporary office, to aſſiſt the apoſtles in preaching and publiſhing the goſpel from place to place; they watered what the apoſtles planted. 4. Sincerity; *Make full proof of thy miniſtry*; ſo fulfil all the parts of it, that none may charge thee with the neglect of any part of thy duty: Let the world ſee that thou makeſt it thine own and only work to win ſouls. *Learn* hence, 1. That the apoſtaſy and looſeneſs of the times we live in, muſt oblige all perſons, but eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, to watch: Who ſhould watch, if not the watchmen? 2. That miniſters, of all men, need courage: They muſt inure themſelves to endure hardſhip, and expect hard words, hard dealings, nick-names, and all kind of reproaches: and theſe muſt be endured with patience, with courage, and with conſtancy. 3. That miniſters muſt make full proof of their miniſtry; that is, muſt fully and faithfully diſcharge all the duties of their calling, not do their duties by halves; but accompliſh all the parts of their miniſtry, ſtrengthening the weak, comforting the afflicted, reducing the wandering, and adorning their doctrine by a pure and unblameable converſation. This is to fulfil our miniſtry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finiſhed *my* courſe, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that day: And not to me only, but to all them alſo that love his appearing.

Our apoſtle having now come almoſt to the end of his Chriſtian and miniſterial race, he firſt looks downward into his grave with comfort, ver. 6. and ſees his death a pleaſing ſacrifice to God, and a ſweet departure to him; *I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.* Next he looks backward, and reflects upon his well-ſpent life with joy: *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe*, ver. 7. Laſt of all he looks upward, and there ſees heaven prepared for him, ver. 8. *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs. Obſerve*, 1. St. Paul's intimation of his death: I am ready to be offered up; a ſacrifical word: "I am ready to be poured out as a drink-offering: my death will be a ſweet ſacrifice to God, my blood being ſhed for Chriſt, as the wine was poured out on the meat offering." *Learn* hence, That the death of God's miniſters, eſpecially of ſuch as die martyrs, is a moſt pleaſing ſacrifice unto God: Precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of all, but eſpecially of ſuch ſaints. *Obſerve*, 2. St. Paul's narration of his life; *I have fought, I have finiſhed*, &c. The words run in figures taken from the Olympic games, where was combating, wreſtling, running, according to the laws of the games, and judges appointed to declare the victories, and give to them the prize, a crown of garlands. The firſt metaphor is taken from a ſoldier, a combatant, a champion; *I have fought a good fight. Learn*, Every ſincere Chriſtian, but eſpecially every faithful miniſter, is a ſpiritual ſoldier; their enemies are ſpiritual, their weapons ſpiritual, their warfare ſpiritual, their victory ſpiritual; they muſt be men of courage, men of conduct, men that can endure hardſhip, men of unity and activity among themſelves. The ſecond metaphor is taken from a ſtrenuous runner; *I have finiſhed my courſe:* "I am come to the period of my days, and to the end of my race;" alluding perhaps to his courſe of life after his converſion, which was wholly ſpent in running from place to place to preach the goſpel: And now he was come to the laſt ſtage or goal at Rome, where he was to receive his garland, his crown of martyrdom. *Learn* hence, A Chriſtian's life is a race, which he muſt not only cheerfully begin, but perſeveringly finiſh: So ſays the apoſtle here, "I, Paul the aged, have fought the good fight, &c. have not only begun, but finiſhed my courſe." O what a comfort is it to be an old ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt! St. Paul is now reckoned to be 61 years of age when he ſuffered martyrdom; he runs his race patiently, cheerfully, reſervedly, and perſeveringly. The third metaphor is taken from depoſitaries, who faithfully keep things committed to their truſt without embezzlement. This *depoſitum*, the Chriſtian faith, St. Paul had kept; *I have kept the faith:* He kept, firſt, the grace of faith; ſecondly, the doctrine of faith inviolable, endeavouring to tranſmit it down to poſterity, in deſpite of the legal Jew, or profane Gentile. *Obſerve*, 3. St. Paul's expectation of his reward: *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, &c. Here *note*, The reward is a crown of righteouſneſs; becauſe given only to righteous men; the perſon rewarding, *Chriſt*, the righteous Judge; the perſon rewarded, *me*, St. Paul himſelf, and all the faithful that love Chriſt's appearing. The certainty of the reward; *It is laid up*, reſerved, and kept ſafe, as an inheritance for a child: The time of the reward; *In that day*, the great day of the Lord, when he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead. *Learn* hence, 1. That the reward, which God has in hand for his faithful ſervants, is no leſs than a crown of glory. 2. That the time when this reward ſhall be fully and finally diſpenſed is the great day. 3. It is the property of the godly to look, love, and long for that day.

9 Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me. 10 For Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world, and is departed unto Theſſalonica: Creſcens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: For he is profitable to me for the miniſtry. 12 And Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus.

Our apoſtle comes now, in this ſecond part of the chapter, to treat of ſome private and perſonal affairs: And firſt, he deſires Timothy to come ſpeedily to him, having a great deſire to ſee him, and be comforted by him before he died: The ſtrongeſt of Chriſtians may ſometimes be helped by the weaker: a Paul may ſtand in need of a Timothy; there is not a member in the body, but is ſome way ſerviceable to the head. Secondly, He aſſigns a reaſon why he did thus deſire Timothy's preſence, becauſe of Demas' and others abſence; Demas had forſaken him, *having loved this preſent world.* The beſt may ſometimes be forſaken by their boſom friends; Demas was ſuch to St. Paul, yet left him: For what cauſe? For the love of the world. This, when it grows inordinate, will cauſe a man firſt to forſake his friend, and then his God. Thirdly, Creſcens was gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, Tychicus to Epheſus; all of them, no doubt, to ſpread the goſpel, to plant or water the churches. Good men will be doing good wherever they are, wherever they come or go. Only Lnke was with him; nothing could ſeparate that good man from him. A faithful friend loveth at all times, yet friendſhip *(olæ amicitia)* will vaniſh in adverſity; but true Chriſtian friendſhip is perpetual; the foundation of it is eternal. Laſtly, He deſires Timothy to bring Mark with him; not for reſt or recreation, becauſe he wanted a companion for his diverſion; no, but to aſſiſt him in his work: *Bring Mark; for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry.* It is happy when the miniſters of God affect the company, and deſire the preſence of each other, for ſpiritual ends and religious purpoſes.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comeſt, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* eſpecially the parchments.

St. Paul having deſired Timothy's company at Rome, requeſts him to bring with him ſuch things as he wanted, and ſtood in preſent need of. 1. His *cloke*; probably a garment which in the winter ſeaſon he might want the warmth and benefit of, eſpecially being in a cold priſon. So long as we are upon earth, a prudential care muſt be taken to preſerve our health; when winter approached, St. Paul ſent for his winter garment to keep him warm: The body is the ſoul's organ or inſtrument by which it acts; therefore, we muſt do what in us lieth to keep it in tune for the ſervice of the ſoul. 2. His *books*; probably the books of the Old Teſtament; certainly no profane books; he had no leiſure for, nor liking to any ſuch. 3. *But eſpecially the parchments:* Theſe are thought to be note-books of his own collecting, in which he had written ſeveral things for the help of his memory, and the benefit of the church. Behold here, 1. An eminent pattern of pious ſtudiouſneſs in St. Paul: Here was an aged man, an aged miniſter, that had already read much; a priſoner, no very proper place for ſtudy, were priſons then filled with ſuch brutes as generally now; nay, a dying priſoner, one that looked for death and beheading every day; yet aged Paul, dying Paul, cannot live without his books; he muſt ſtill be reading, learning, ſtudying the ſcriptures eſpecially, which are ſuch a vaſt deep, as the line of an apoſtle could not fathom: Behold, I ſay, a pattern for ſuch miniſters as think they know enough, they have ſtudied enough, and are too old to learn; ſo was not our apoſtle, when within a few months of his death. 2. Behold here, an eminent pattern of pious humility in Timothy, if biſhop of Epheſus now, as ſome affirm, if only a miniſter of a particular church as others affirm; yet was he undoubtedly a very humble perſon, otherwiſe, St. Paul had not deſired, and Timothy had certainly diſdained to carry this luggage with him to Rome. Pride would have ſtooped to nothing of this, but thrown all to the dunghill; whereas true humility diſpoſes a man, eſpecially a miniſter of Chriſt, to become all things to all men.

14 Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil: The Lord reward him according to his works. 15

Of whom be thou ware alſo; for he hath greatly withſtood our words.

Here our apoſtle, 1. Complains of the injuries and oppoſitions which he had met with from *Alexander the copper-ſmith*, who was before a great profeſſor, but now become a grievous perſecutor: He made ſhipwreck of the faith, 1 Tim. i. 19. which he did before profeſs; nay, it is thought this man, Acts xix. 33. was near martyrdom, yet afterwards an oppoſer of the truth. The beſt things corrupted, become worſt; the ſweeteſt wine makes the ſharpeſt vinegar. Be not offended then, if at any time you ſee profeſſors turn blaſphemers; nay preachers themſelves turn perſecutors. 2. An apoſtolical prediction, rather than a dreadful imprecation, paſſed upon Alexander: *The Lord reward him according to his works.* The Lord will reward him according to his works. The apoſtle by a prophetic ſpirit, ſaw what was a coming upon him, and foretels his doom. Imprecations againſt the enemies of the church, if lawful, yet muſt be cautiouſly and very rarely uſed: What we find in ſcripture looking like ſuch, are rather to be accounted predictions, than imprecations. Laſtly, The caution given to Timothy to ſhun him: *Of whom be thou ware alſo*, for he is an oppoſer of the truth. Wicked men do not ſo much oppoſe the miniſters, as the miniſtry; not ſo much oppoſe preachers, as preaching: It is the light of truth which evil-doers hate; becauſe it has a ſearching, diſcovering, condemning power. St. Paul doth not complain of Alexander's unkindneſs towards him, but of his malicious reſiſting the truth, and hindering the preaching of the goſpel: *He hath greatly withſtood our words.*

16 At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all *men* forſook me; *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

Our apoſtle here complains of the timorouſneſs of weak Chriſtians in their carriage towards him, at his firſt appearing before Nero the emperor of Rome, or ſome of his officers, they deſerted him, they all deſerted him, very few durſt own him: But this was out of weakneſs and timorouſneſs, not out of maliciouſneſs, as Alexander in the former verſe; therefore, St. Paul prays for them, That *God would not lay it to their charge*, but pity and pardon their infirmity. *Learn* hence, How hard it will go with the holieſt of ſaints, if God ſhould lay but one ſin, though a ſin of infirmity, to their charge; it would ſink them to the loweſt hell. Lord! how ſad muſt it then be to have the ſins of a wicked man's whole life charged upon him! 2. That the holieſt ſervants of God, in a ſuffering hour, may and muſt expect to be left alone, forſaken of all their friends, none daring to open their mouth, and ſpeak a word for them: The apoſtle met with it here, and a greater than he before him; when Chriſt was apprehended, all the diſciples forſook him, and fled.

17 Notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood with me and ſtrengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

That is, "Though man forſook me, God ſtood by me; the Lord Jeſus ſtrengthened me, that by me, thus ſtanding up in defence of the goſpel, the preaching of it might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear the defence of it; and thus, for that time, I was delivered out of Nero's hands, that bloody lion's mouth." *Learn*, 1. That whilſt God has any farther work for his ſervants to do, he will aſſiſt and ſuſtain them in deſpite of all oppoſition and diſcouragement whatſoever; though Nero roar, and perſecutors rage, and friends deſert, yet God will ſtand by, God will deliver, till his faithful ſervants have finiſhed their work: *The Lord ſtood by me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*, ſays the holy apoſtle. See here the certain character of the church's enemies: They are lions; lions for power, lions for policy, lions for terror, lions for cruelty; God ſometimes delivers his people, and ſaves them from, ſometimes ſuffers his deareſt children to fall into, the paws, yea, the mouths, of theſe devouring lions.

18 And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work, and will preſerve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Mark, He doth not ſay, The Lord will deliver me from every evil worker, but *from every evil work*; though he doth not ſave me from my temporal enemies, bleſſed be God my ſpiritual enemies ſhall never hurt me, neither ſin nor Satan. Lord! It is a far greater favour to be preſerved from ſin, than from any temporal affliction that can befal us, yea, than from death itſelf: *The Lord will deliver me from every evil work*; yea, farther, *He will preſerve me to his heavenly kingdom.* God has a kingdom, an heavenly kingdom for all his ſaints, his ſuffering ſaints eſpecially; it is prepared for them, they are preparing for it, and they ſhall be put into the poſſeſſion of it in due time.—He cloſes with a doxology here: *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* As God has prepared an eternal kingdom for his ſaints, ſo they deſire that God may have glory from them to eternal ages: Grace enlargeth the heart towards God, in fervent deſires, that his glory may be eternized. *The Lord will deliver me*, &c.

19 Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſhold of Oneſiphorus.

Obſerve here, How mindful the apoſtle is of his abſent friends; though he was now in priſon, and they a great way from him, yet he ſends pious ſalutations to them. This Priſca or Priſcilla, and Aquila, are often remembered by St. Paul, he lodged in their houſe at Corinth: The ſaints and ſervants of God forget not one another, when at the ends of the earth. —He ſalutes alſo Oneſiphorus and his houſhold, wife and children, and ſervants. Thus do pious governors procure a bleſſing upon their families as well as upon their perſons. Oneſiphorus is not only prayed for himſelf and ſaluted ſingly, but likewiſe his houſhold alſo: *Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſhold of Oneſiphorus.*

20 Eraſtus abode at Corinth: But Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick.

Eraſtus is mentioned, Rom. xvi. 23. as chamberlain of the city of Corinth, one that ſhewed kindneſs to Paul: he was a great man, the treaſurer of the city of Corinth; yet neither his riches, nor his great place, could keep him from loving the apoſtle and the afflicted church of God: Rarely are great men good, and as rarely are good men great; yet ſome great men are good, and ſome good men are great. Lot and Abraham, Job and David were full of riches, yet full of piety, under the Old Teſtament: So was Nicodemus, Joſeph of Arimathea, and Zaccheus, under the New. Thus God magnifies the power of converting grace.—*Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick.* This man was a citizen at Epheſus, a diſciple and companion of St. Paul, Acts xx. whom he was forced to leave ſick at Miletum. *Note,* Strength of grace cannot prevail againſt bodily weakneſſes and diſeaſes; ſickneſs may ſeize even the beſt men. 2. That the apoſtles had not the gift of healing, when they pleaſed, but only when God gave it them.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

Our apoſtle being greatly deſirous to ſee Timothy before his death, reneweth his requeſt and ſuit to him to make haſte and come before winter; the perſonal preſence of good men is much very much deſired by them, in order to excite and quicken each other. To encourage Timothy to haſten to him, he names ſeveral perſons of note that were then at Rome, who ſent ſalutations to him and would rejoice to ſee him: But where were all theſe, when our apoſtle was upon his trial? *Anſ.* They all forſook him, and not one of them ſtood with him. Behold what frailty there may be! and what fear will do, in perſons of choice note for eminency and grace in the church of God!

22 The Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with thy ſpirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

The apoſtle concludes this, like his other epiſtles, with an apoſtolical benediction, *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy ſpirit:* as if he had ſaid, "Be not ſad at my departure; for, though I muſt leave thee, yet the Lord will uphold thee by his grace and be preſent with thee by the influence of his holy Spirit." The inward preſence of Chriſt with the ſpirits of his people, directing their ſpirits in thinking, judging, chuſing, and refuſing, is a ſweet privilege, and greatly to be deſired. Happy they who have the ſpirit of Chriſt perpetually preſent with them, who ſo live, that Chriſt may delight to dwell by his Spirit in them —*Grace be with you,* that is, with all of you; he doth not ſay, riches be with you, or honours be with you, or the favour of man be with you, but grace, and the favour of God be with you. God's ſpecial favour and diſtinguiſhing grace is to be ſought by all perſons, above and before all things.—Laſtly, Our apoſtle ratifies and ſeals up all with that concluding particle, *Amen*; teaching us, That whatever we ſhould pray for, ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired, and heartily conſented to: They ſin in prayer, who underſtand not what they pray for, and who do not earneſtly deſire what they pray for: For in teſtimony of our deſires to be heard, we ſay, *Amen.*

THE END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL
TO
TITUS.

St. Paul's *epiſtles to* Timothy *and* Titus, *are the church's canons, which the Holy Ghoſt indited, very ſufficient to their uſe and end. O how happy had the church been in all ages, if ſtrict canonical obedience had been paid, as well as ſworn unto them.* Titus *was a* Gentile, *converted early to Chriſtianity by St.* Paul, *who having great experience of his piety and prudence, left him in* Crete, *to govern the church of God in that iſland. This epiſtle to* Titus *is of the ſame nature, and wrote with the ſame deſign, as thoſe to* Timothy, *only ſhorter; becauſe* Titus *ſeems to have been the more ancient and experienced perſon; St.* Paul *briefly inſtructs him in all the parts of his duty, in electing church governors, in cenſuring falſe teachers, in inſtructing the ancient and younger perſons, in preſſing upon all perſons obedience to magiſtrates, and a care to maintain good works.*

CHAP. I.

Titus *being placed by St.* Paul *in* Crete, *St.* Paul *writes to how he ought to demean himſelf there, by appointing worthy and fit perſons in every city biſhops or elders, to teach and govern thoſe that were converted to the faith of Chriſt.*

PAUL a ſervant of God, and an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godlineſs; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began, 3 But hath in due times manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; 4 To Titus *mine* own ſon after the common faith, grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

Theſe verſes contain the apoſtle's ſalutation, and the firſt part of this chapter; in which, *obſerve*, 1. the perſon ſaluting, deſcribed by his name, *Paul*; by his general office, a *ſervant of God*; by his ſpecial office, *an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; by the end of his office, to *preach the faith*, and thereby to promote the faith of God's elect, and to bring perſons to the acknowledgment of the doctrine of the goſpel, which is the truth according to godlineſs. *Learn* hence, That the great deſign and end of preaching the goſpel, is, to produce faith in the heart, and holineſs or godlineſs in the life, of thoſe that ſit under it; not that common, notional, and intellectual faith, which is oft-times found in unholy perſons; but that lively faith, which is elſewhere called, *The faith of the operation of God*, and here, *The faith of God's elect*; even ſuch a faith as is the parent and principle of obedience. *Obſerve*, 2. The apoſtle declares a farther end of his office, namely, to raiſe Chriſtians up to a lively hope and expectation of that *eternal life, which* that *God, who cannot lie, hath promiſed before the world began.* But how could God then promiſe, when there was none to promiſe to? *Anſ.* The promiſe was made to Chriſt, and in him to all his members: For there was a federal tranſaction betwixt the Father and the Son from all eternity; the Son promiſed to give his ſoul an offering for ſin, and the Father engaged that he ſhould ſee his ſeed, and the travail of his ſoul. 3. How God, who promiſed us in Chriſt eternal life, before all time, did accompliſh and make good that word in the fulneſs of time. Ver. 3. *He hath in due time manifeſted his word through preaching:* that is, what God ſo long ago purpoſed in himſelf, and promiſed to his Son, he hath, in the fitteſt appointed ſeaſon, made manifeſt by the preaching of the goſpel, which is committed to me by the appointment of God and Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That the doctrine of ſalvation is much more clearly revealed to us that live under the goſpel, than it was to the fathers of the Old Teſtament: Life and immortality, that is, the clearer knowledge, and more full aſſurance of eternal life is now brought about, by the preaching of the goſpel. *Obſerve*, 4. The perſon ſaluted, *Titus*, deſcribed by his relation, St. Paul's *ſon in the faith*; he begat him by his miniſtry unto God, was the inſtrument of his converſion

verſion to Chriſtianity; *His ſon after the common faith.* Where *note*, That the church has but one faith common to all Chriſtians, it has one common object of faith, Chriſt crucified; it has one common end of faith, eternal ſalvation. This is the end of every believer's faith and hope. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The ſalutation itſelf: *Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour*; that is, all ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal bleſſings, I moſt heartily wiſh unto you, from God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our worthy Mediator. *Learn* hence, That whatever ſpiritual grace, or temporal bleſſing we now receive from God, is from him not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, a gracious Father in Chriſt, in whom he pours forth the immenſity of his love upon us, and through whom he conveys all kind of bleſſings unto us.

5 For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, has I had appointed thee.

Obſerve here, 1. The erection of a power in the perſon of Titus: *I left thee in Crete to ordain elders*; "I who am an apoſtle of Chriſt, and have received a commiſſion from him thus to do. *I left thee*, thee who wert ſo dear to me, ſo uſeful to me; yet, for the church's ſervice, did I deny myſelf and part with thee." Behold here a bleſſed pattern for our miniſterial imitation. St. Paul did, and could, moſt cheerfully ſacrifice all his private advantages, the tendereſt and inmoſt of his affection to the benefit of the church, and the intereſt of religion; let us go and do likewiſe. 2. The end of this inſtitution, or the uſe and exerciſe of this power, to order and to ordain, to correct and conſtitute; 1. *To ſet in order things that are wanting*; the ſhip of the church is never ſo well rigged, but ſomething is wanting that might be added: Whilſt the tabernacle of God ſojourns here below, ſome pin or other will be lacking in it. 2. *To ordain elders in every city*, ſuch as might govern and teach, and adminiſter to God in holy things: Wherever a church is planted, there is an abſolute neceſſity of a ſettled miniſtry, and a ſucceſſion of miniſters, without which it is impoſſible that religion ſhould either proſper or long continue: And care muſt be taken, that ſuch miniſters be duly qualified, and regularly ordained, *I left thee in Crete to ordain elders.* 3. The limitation of theſe acts, according to the apoſtle's preſcription, *as I had appointed thee.* Titus muſt do nothing but according to commiſſion, and by ſpecial direction. Where *note*, That the ordering and governing of the church was not left arbitrary, no, not to Titus himſelf: But whatever he did was done by apoſtolical direction: *For this cauſe I left thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee.*

6 If any be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly. 7 For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God; not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate; 9 Holding faſt the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainſayers.

Here St. Paul gave Titus, as he had before done Timothy, the character of ſuch perſons as were to be admitted into the ſacred function. The character is twofold, poſitive and negative; he ſhews them both what they ſhould be and what they ſhould not be. The poſitive characters of a biſhop, yea, of every one that adminiſters to God in holy things, are theſe: He muſt be *blameleſs*, free from ſcandal, not blame-worthy; a miniſter's life ſhould be ſo bright and ſhining, that all perſons who behold it, may admire it, and guide their lives by the direction and example of it. *The huſband of one wife*; that is, at once; the apoſtle's command doth not forbid ſucceſſive marriages; for this he elſewhere allows; ſee the note on 1 Tim. iii. 2. Nor does the command oblige him to marry at all, but it eſtabliſhes the lawfulneſs of a biſhop's marriage, if he ſees reaſon for it; yet, no doubt, by theſe words, *the huſband of one wife*, St. Paul propoſes a greater degree of chaſtity to church-governors, than to other perſons. *Having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly.* Titus muſt not only look at the perſon he is to ordain, but the family and houſhold of the perſon ordained, that they be well governed, becauſe the honour of religion, and the reputation of the church ſuffers exceedingly, when any of the biſhop's family, his children eſpecially, are riotous and unruly; beſides, the world will pronounce them unfit to govern the church of God, that cannot command their own families. *As the ſteward of God*; the ſteward is an appointed and deputed officer, he acts by commiſſion, and diſtributes his Lord's allowance, according to his Lord's command, and is accountable for all he does; and as he is over the inferior ſervants, ſo muſt he be a pattern and precedent for them; a ſteward muſt be both wiſe and faithful: *A lover of hoſpitality, ſober, temperate*; *mark*, of hoſpitality, not of luxury and ſenſuality: As he commends hoſpitality ſo he regulates it too, *a lover of hoſpitality*, yet *ſober* and *temperate*; riotous houſekeeping is not hoſpitality in St. Paul's account, but the liberal and free relieving of ſuch as are in neceſſities and ſtraits: *Holding faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught.* He muſt be a perſon well inſtructed, well ſettled and confirmed in the faith, of ability to defend the faith, and to ſtop the mouth of gainſayers:—*Juſt*, *holy*, and *a lover of good men*, a perſon of ſtrict holineſs and piety towards God, of exact righteouſneſs and juſtice towards man, and a ſincere lover of all good men. Theſe are the poſitive characters required in a biſhop. The negatives follow, and they are five; *not ſelf-willed*, not ſo adhering to his own reſolutions, that nothing can divorce him from them; he that is of an inflexible will, had need be of an infallible judgment; *not ſoon angry*, and ſubject to paſſion, for he ſtands in God's place, and ought to reſemble God in long-ſuffering and patience; *not given to wine*, that is, to much wine, no inordinate lover of it, no ſitter at wine, either in his own houſe, or elſewhere; no *ſtriker*, either with the hand, or with the tongue; *not given to filthy lucre*, ſeeking to get wealth by ſordid ways and means: The ſin of covetouſneſs is not ſo baſe in any man, as in a miniſter; many are unjuſtly charged with it, but where it is really found, it is a ſordid ſin. How unfit is he to adminiſter in holy things to God, who prefers the world before God! By making a god of the world, we make an idol of God.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, eſpecially they of the circumciſion: 11 Whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake.

A reaſon is here ſubjoined by our apoſtle, why Titus ſhould take ſuch ſpecial care to fill the church with able guides, namely, becauſe there were a multitude of falſe teachers diſperſed abroad, and ſcattered up and down every where, particularly, the Judaizing doctors, thoſe of the circumciſion, mentioned Acts xv. who would make Chriſtianity nothing more than a ſupplement to the law of Moſes. Theſe, he tells Titus, muſt have their mouths ſtopped, not by force, for Titus had no power of the ſword, but by confutation: he muſt take care to ordain ſuch as might ſilence them, though not ſatisfy them. For, *mark* the efficacy of error, and the power of ſeduction, *they ſubvert whole houſes*, they make proſelytes without number. *Learn* hence, That ſuch is the ſtrength of error, and the weakneſs and unſteadineſs of many Chriſtians, that whole houſholds may be ſubverted by the moſt groſs deceivers. If the apoſtle's converts were thus eaſily and univerſally miſled, no wonder if ours be ſo.

12 One of themſelves, *even* a prophet of their own, ſaid, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies. 13 This witneſs is true: Wherefore rebuke them ſharply. that they may be ſound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewiſh fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth.

The next argument St. Paul makes uſe of to excite Titus to take great care how he behaved himſelf at Crete, and what biſhops he left there, is drawn from the quality and nature of the people in that iſland of Crete, where God's providence and the apoſtle's care had placed him: He tells him, that one of their own prophets or poets, Epimenides, had given this character of them, That the Cretians were a lazy and a lying people, ready enough to be miſled by the falſe teachers, particularly the Judaizing doctors, who impoſed circumciſion and other ceremonial rites upon them, which were now old fables, but tended to pervert men from the truth; therefore he charges Titus to reprove ſharply and cuttingly, *that they may be ſound in faith*. The word is a metaphor taken from ſurgeons, who cut out dead fleſh to the quick, but it is in order to healing; cutting words have done great cures: Many a diſeaſed, feſtered ſoul has been made ſound, both in faith and manners, by ſevere reprehenſion. *Learn* hence, That although generally ſpeaking, we ought to temper our reproofs with much gentleneſs and meekneſs, yet there is a time when we muſt reprove *ſharply*, that men *may be ſound in the faith*. We may, we muſt ſpeak cutting words, when kind words will not do. *Wherefore rebuke them ſharply*, &c.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.

Here our apoſtle intimates what thoſe Jewiſh traditions and fables were, which thoſe Judaizing doctors and falſe teachers would obtrude and impoſe upon perſons at that time, namely, pretences that men were defiled by eating things unclean, by not obſerving their days, and keeping other ceremonial rites: But, ſays the apoſtle, *to the pure all things are pure*; that is, to believers who are ſanctified by the Chriſtian faith, and purified from ſin and guilt, all meats, and days, and things of this nature, are clean and lawful, and may without ſin be uſed, every creature being ſanctified by the word of God and prayer. Here *note*, The honourable title which a gracious and merciful God puts upon good men, notwithſtanding they have much impurity and ſin inhering in them, and many ſinful weakneſſes and infirmities cleaving to them, yet God calls them pure. *Unto the pure*, &c. they are now initially ſo, and ſhall ere long be perfectly ſo. 2. A privilege purchaſed for them by the blood of Chriſt, and that is, the lawful liberty and uſe of all meats, *&c.* under the goſpel, which were prohibited by, and forbidden under the ceremonial law; *unto the pure all things are* now *pure,—But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure*; *Mark*, He doth not ſay, to the defiled all things are unclean, but *nothing is pure:* They pollute all they touch: To an unſanctified man nothing is ſanctified; whatever he does is unclean, either in the matter, in the manner, or in the end of his doing it; and the reaſon follows, becauſe *their mind and conſcience is defiled.* No wonder the ſtreams are polluted, when the fountains are poiſoned. *The mind and conſcience are defiled*, partly by blindneſs, partly by ſtupidity and ſenſeleſſneſs.

16 They profeſs that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Behold here the diſmal character of many hypocritical perſons in the Jewiſh church: They profeſſed the knowledge of God, the true God; but in their works, in their lives and actions they denied him, and ſo became abominable both to God and man, diſobedient to the law, and averſe to every good work. Here *learn*, 1. That hypocrites are generally great profeſſors; they profeſs great knowledge of God, and great zeal for him. 2. That to deny God is a very heinous ſin, and an abominable wickedneſs: There is a twofold denial of God; firſt, in words, expreſly and openly; ſecondly, in practice, cloſely and conſequentially; *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.* There may be at once a profeſſing of God, and a denial of him: Many a man's practice ſpeaks loud, that there is no God, when he makes a fair confeſſion and profeſſion of him with his mouth and tongue. *Learn* 3. That no ſorts of perſons are ſo odious to God, and abominable in his ſight, as thoſe who make a profeſſion of his holy name and truth, but walk contrary in their lives to that profeſſion; *They profeſs that they know God; but in works deny him.*

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter directs Titus *how to diſcharge his duty faithfully, as a miniſter of Chriſt, in preaching the goſpel, adviſing him to inſtruct all, both young and old, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, in the practice of their relative and reſpective duties one towards another, that God might be glorified, and religion adorned.*

BUT ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, Whatever the forementioned Judaizing doctors preach, though they dote upon dreams, and feed their hearers with fables and fancies, to poiſon and corrupt their ſouls, and turn them from the truth; be ſure that thou carrieſt thyſelf as becomes a ſound preacher of the goſpel, and *ſpeak* only *the things which become ſound doctrine:* The body may as ſoon be nouriſhed with carrion, as the ſoul with rotten and unſound doctrine. Chriſtian doctrine is ſound doctrine: And the miniſters of Chriſt, who feed his people, muſt take care that they bring ſuch wholeſome doctrine to their people, as may contribute greatly to their ſpiritual health and ſoundneſs; *Speak thou the things that become ſound doctrine.*

2 That the aged men be ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in faith, in charity, in patience:

By *aged men*, we may underſtand all ancient men in general, and church officers in particular, in whom our apoſtle requires and calls for gravity and ſobriety in behaviour, temperance in all things, that they be *ſound in faith*, ſincere in *charity*, and conſtant in *patience*. Where *note*, That our apoſtle exempteth none from the inſtructions, admonitions, and exhortations of the miniſters of God. God's ſchool is as well for the aged as the young, not only for initiating youth, but alſo for edifying the aged, and building them up in their moſt holy faith: The aged have but a little time to be in the world, their nature declines, their days are almoſt ended, they muſt therefore labour to recompence a decay of nature with increaſe of grace, the weakneſs of body with ſtrength of faith: *Let the aged men be ſound in the faith. Note* farther, That ſobriety, gravity, temperance, ſoundneſs in the faith, eminent charity, and exemplary patience, are the great ornaments of perſons in their old age.

3 The aged women likewiſe, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holineſs, not falſe accuſers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be ſober, to love their huſbands, to love their children; 5 *To be* diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own huſbands, that the word of God be not blaſphemed.

Inſtructions are here given for the aged women, as before for the aged men, that is, for all in general: and ſuch aged women in particular as were deaconeſſes, or ſervants to the church, that they being placed in the rank of church-officers, ſhould act and walk as becometh holy perſons, employed about holy things; particularly, that their deportment and behaviour be ſuch, both in habit and geſture, *as becometh holineſs*, that they be not *falſe accuſers*, devils, the original ſignifies, becauſe falſe accuſing is the devil's work; they that do his work ſhall bear his name: *Not given to much wine*; Exceſs in drinking is bad in men, worſe in women, worſt of all in old women, who ought to be patterns of piety and prudence, of ſobriety and temperance, to the younger women; for St. Paul here directs them to *teach the younger*; that is, by their private admonitions and prudent examples, inſtruct them to be wiſe and ſober, not light and airy; and to love their huſbands and children in a fit and becoming manner, and to ſhew it in their behaviour; diſcreet and chaſte in all their actions, keeping at home, and minding the affairs of the family; to be kind and obedient to their huſbands, leſt the miſcarriages of young women ſhould bring reproach upon religion, and the goſpel be thought by the men of the world to infuſe any thing into them contrary to moral virtue. *Learn* hence, That the wholeſome doctrine of the goſpel muſt be preached and practically applied to women as well as to men, as they cannot without the danger of damnation, deſpiſe or neglect the miniſtry of the word.

6 Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.

Note here, 1. That the miniſters of God muſt apply themſelves and their doctrine to the ſeveral ſexes ages, and conditions of their people; that every perſon, man and woman, young and old, ſuperior and inferior, may know not only what is lawful, but what is expedient, moſt beſeeming their quality, and beſt becoming their age. Here our apoſtle directs Titus to exhort firſt the aged men, next the aged women; now the younger men, that they be *ſober-minded*, ſettled in the truth, guided by ſound judgment, not governed by paſſion, not led by ſenſe and appetite, nor puffed up with proud conceit: Where it is *obſervable*, that St. Paul's warnings here given in this chapter to the aged men, the aged women, and the younger men, do intimate to us what vices they are that all ſorts of perſons are ſubject to, and moſt endangered by; and this is the wiſe improvement that all ſhould make of it, to watch againſt the ſins of their age and condition, their complexion and conſtitution, their calling and vocation, every ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet them, and obſtructs and hinders them in their Chriſtian courſe.

7 In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works: In doctrine *ſhewing* uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity, 8 Sound ſpeech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.

St. Paul having directed Titus what doctrine to preach, comes now to inſtruct him what example to lead, *in all things ſhew thyſelf a pattern of good works*; as if he had ſaid, In all the good which thou exhorteſt thy hearers to, be an eminent pattern of it thyſelf; that they may ſee that viſibly in thy life, which thou preſſeſt upon them by thy preach ing. By piety and good works ſecond thy doctrine; there muſt be a ſweet harmony between a miniſter's doctrine and his converſation; otherwiſe he pulls down faſter than he builds up: An heterodox converſation will carry an orthodox preacher to hell. He cloſes this admonition to Titus concerning preaching, with this ſolemn charge, namely, That his doctrine be ſound and profitable, ſincere without mixture, grave without levity, ſound words, that can never be confuted by gainſayers, which muſt be expected; but happy will you be if they can have nothing juſtly to charge your doctrine or converſation with. *Learn* hence, That the miniſters of God have ever had, and muſt always expect ſome that will withſtand, oppoſe and gainſay them, as long as there is a devil in the world; and ſo long as the miniſters of God endeavour to batter down the walls of his kingdom, he will raiſe ſtorms about their ears. 2. That it is the duty, and muſt be the care and endeavour of all the miniſters of God, to oblige themſelves to ſuch an exemplary piety of converſation, as may ſtop the mouth of ſlander, *that the contrary party may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay againſt them.*

9 *Exhort* ſervants to be obedient unto their own maſters, *and* to pleaſe *them* well in all things; not anſwering again, 10 Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Although Titus, according to ſome, was a biſhop, yea, an archbiſhop, yet St. Paul exhorts him to look upon the inſtruction of ſervants as one part of his charge. *Exhort ſervants*; the ſouls of the pooreſt ſlaves and ſervants, for whom the Son of God died, muſt be of precious account with, and be particularly concerned for, by the higheſt ambaſſador of Chriſt: As all ſouls had an equal price, ſo muſt they have an equal care. 2. The general duty which ſervants are exhorted to, and that is, *obedience to their own maſters*, in all honeſt and lawful things, whether their maſters were Pagans or Chriſtians: If Pagans, not thinking that their Chriſtianity freed them from their juſt commands; if Chriſtian maſters, not thinking that they had therefore a greater liberty to be ſaucy with them, or leſs obedient to them. 3. The particular duties here preſſed upon ſervants, 1. *Not anſwering again*, not croſſing or contradicting what they are commanded, not ſaucily replying when they are reproved. 2. *Not purloining*, that is not ſtealing the leaſt thing, nor taking any thing that is their maſter's, which is not allowed by their conſent, but ſhewing all conſcionable truſtineſs, and that great fidelity and honeſty may be found with them. 4. The argument or motive to ſtir up ſervants to this conſcionable care, and conſcientious diſcharge of their duty, *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*; that is, that they may put honour upon Chriſt and his holy religion, by beautifying their Chriſtian profeſſion by a ſuitable and becoming converſation. *Learn*, That it is in the power of the pooreſt and meaneſt ſervant to do much good or much hurt to the Chriſtian religion: Some might be ready to ſay, Alas! What good or hurt, what credit or diſcredit can a poor ſervant do to religion? Much every way: He *may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*, by his Chriſtian behaviour as a ſervant, and the name of God and his doctrine may be blaſphemed by him, if he be negligent in his duty. None are ſo little and inconſiderable, but they are capable of ſerving the great ends of religion, capable of doing good ſervice for God on earth, and of being eternally rewarded by God in heaven.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world;

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, Let all ſorts of men, ſervants and maſters, children and parents, old and young, diſcharge their duties faithfully to God and one another; for the grace of God, diſcovered in the goſpel, has *appeared to all men*, teaching them to deny all doctrines and practices which are ungodly, and all worldly luſts of ſenſuality, and that we ſhould live ſoberly, with reſpect to ourſelves, righteouſly and charitably towards our neighbour, and holily towards God in this preſent world. *Note* here, 1. A choice and excellent deſcription of the goſpel; it is *the grace of God*, that is, the doctrine of God's free grace and gratuitous favour declared in Chriſt to poor ſinners. 2. The joyful meſſage which the goſpel brings, and that is, ſalvation: The goſpel makes a gracious tender of ſalvation, and that univerſally to loſt and undone ſinners. 3. The clear light and evidence that it does hold forth this meſſage in and by; it *has appeared* or ſhined forth like the day-ſtar, or the riſing-ſun. 4. The extent of its glorious beams, how far they reach, to all indefinitely, *The grace of God bringing ſalvation has appeared unto all men*; that is, it is tendered to all without reſtriction or limitation. (1.) As to nations, Jew or Gentile. (2.) As to perſons, rich or poor, bond or free. (3.) Without reſtriction, as to the number and greatneſs of their ſins. (4.) Without reſtriction, in reference to the degree of their graces. *Note*, 5. The great leſſon which the goſpel teaches, negative and poſitive. 1. Negative, *To deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; where, by *ungodlineſs*, underſtand all ſins committed againſt the firſt table: by *worldly luſts*, all ſins committed againſt the ſecond table; called *worldly luſts*, becauſe the object of them is worldly things, and becauſe they are the luſts of worldly men. 2. Poſitive, to *live*. (1.) *Soberly*; he begins with our duty to ourſelves, then to our neighbour, and laſt of all to God, and ſo proceeds from the eaſier to the harder duties: And obſerve the connection, *ſoberly*, and *righteouſly*, and *godly*, not disjunctively: as if to live ſoberly, righteouſly, or in pretence godlily, were ſufficient. A ſobriety in ſpeech, in behaviour, in apparel, in eating and drinking, in recreations, and in the enjoyment of lawful ſatisfactions. (2.) *Righteouſly*, exerciſing juſtice and charity towards our neighbour: He that is uncharitable, is unjuſt and unrighteous, and the unrighteous ſhall no more enter into the kingdom of God, than the unholy: And all a perſon's pretences to godlineſs are but hypocriſy, without righteouſneſs toward our neighbour. (3.) *Godlily*, Godlineſs has an internal and external part; the internal and inward part of godlineſs conſiſts in a right knowledge of him, in a fervent love unto him, in an entire truſt and confidence in him, in an holy fear to offend him, in ſubjecting our wills entirely to him, in holy longings for the fruition and enjoyment of him. The external and outward part of godlineſs conſiſts in adoration and bodily worſhip; this is due to God from us; he was the Creator of the body as well as of the ſoul, the Redeemer of the body as well as of the ſoul, and will glorify the body as well as the ſoul; therefore we are to *glorify God with our bodies, and with our ſpirits, which are the Lord's. Note*, 6. The time when, and the place where this leſſon is to be learnt, *in this preſent world.* Here is the place, and now is the time when this duty of living *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world*, is to be performed by us. *Learn*, That a ſober, righteous and godly life *in this preſent world.* is abſolutely neceſſary in order to our obtaining the happineſs and glory of the world to come. Inference: If ſo, what a cheat doth that man put upon his ſoul, who truſts to a death-bed repentance? Be it ever ſo ſincere, how can it be ſaid to be a living ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily in this world, when juſt ſtepping into eternity?

13 Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt:

Obſerve here, 1. The character given of that reward which the goſpel promiſes to them that live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world; this is deſcribed, 1. By its futurity, it is *hope*, ſomething expected, and to come; 2. By its tranſcendency, it is a *bleſſed hope. Learn*, That the Chriſtian's hope (or the good things hoped for) is laid up, not in this, but in the other world; becauſe this world, and this preſent ſtate, is not capable of that happineſs which the Chriſtian hopes for. It is too great, it is too good for earth, it is laid up in heaven. *Obſerve*, 2. The time and ſeaſon when this glorious reward and bleſſed hope ſhall be diſpenſed and given forth unto the godly, and that is, at *the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *note*, A threefold deſcription of Chriſt, 1. By the immenſity of his Deity, he is the *great God.* 2. By the graciouſneſs of his office, *our Saviour.* 3. By the glory of his advent, or appearance, *looking for the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve*, 3. The Chriſtian's duty, with reference and relation to this reward, and to the appearance of Chriſt, when it ſhall be diſpenſed and given forth, namely, to look and long for that joyful hour. *Learn*, That the great duty incumbent on all the people of God, is to be continually looking and longing for, hoping and expecting of the coming and appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; *looking for the bleſſed hope*, &c.

14 Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Obſerve here, 1. The way and manner how Chriſt came to be our Saviour, He *gave himſelf for us. Note*, 1. The giver, *Chriſt*, he gave. 2. The gift, *himſelf*. 3. The perſons for whom he gave himſelf, *for us. Learn*, 1. That all that Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered, he did ſuſtain and undergo freely and voluntarily. 2. That that which Chriſt gave for our redemption, was *himſelf*. 3. That it was eſpecially for his church, that he gave himſelf, *who gave himſelf for us. Obſerve*, 2. The great ends for which Chriſt gave himſelf for his church, and they are two, 1. To *redeem* them *from all iniquity.* 2. To *purify* them *a peculiar people to himſelf.* 1. To *redeem them from iniquity*; redemption ſuppoſes a thraldom and bondage; redemption from iniquity ſuppoſes a thraldom and bondage to ſin and iniquity: Our Redeemer therefrom is Jeſus Chriſt, and by dying for us, he did, and only could redeem us: *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.* 2. Another end of Chriſt's redeeming us, is to *purify us to himſelf a peculiar people.* Here *note*, That as redemption did preſuppoſe a bondage, ſo purification ſuppoſes an uncleanneſs, that is, ſin. 2. That Chriſt's redeemed people are a purified people, and a peculiar people, poſſeſſed by the Spirit of Chriſt with a zeal for good works. 3. That it was not only for us that Chriſt redeemed and purified us a peculiar people to himſelf, but ultimately for himſelf, and for his own and his Father's glory and complacency; that he might *purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

15 Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man deſpiſe thee.

As if he had ſaid, Let theſe neceſſary practical truths be the ſubject matter of thy preaching, and according to the authority of thy office rebuke gainſayers, and let thy doctrine and behaviour in wiſdom and gravity be ſuch, as may keep and preſerve thee from all contempt. The miniſters of Chriſt are to take eſpecial care that they neither expoſe their perſons nor their office, by any indecencies, to contempt; *Let no man deſpiſe thee.*

CHAP III.

Our apoſtle in this concluding chapter of his epiſtle, directs Titus *to preach and preſs more general duties which concern all mankind, ſuch as to be ready to every good work, to ſpeak evil of no man; to ſhew meekneſs to all men, and to be careful to maintain good works.*

PUT them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good work.

Obſerve here, That in thoſe early days of Chriſtianity, great ſcandal was brought upon religion by the undutiful carriage of ſervants and ſubjects towards their maſters and magiſtrates; and this upon a falſe notion of Chriſtian liberty, advanced and propagated by the falſe apoſtles, Judaizing teachers, and Gnoſtic libertines; whereupon he requires Titus to put Chriſtians in mind of their duty in that particular, and to inculcate it earneſtly upon them, that the Chriſtian religion might not be ſlandered upon this account. *Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers. Learn* hence, That the duty of ſubjection to governors and government, and of obedience to magiſtrates and rulers, is of very great importance, and ought to be enforced and frequently inculcated upon the people by the miniſters of God? becauſe by nature all men deſire liberty, and to caſt off the yoke of God: Every one would rule and govern, although the duty of ſubjection be much the eaſier duty. 2. From St. Paul's preſſing Titus to preach up the doctrine of obedience and ſubjection to governors and government, *learn*, That there is no ſuch way and method to live regularly under government, like planting the goſpel among them, and making them ſubject to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

2 To ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men.

Calumny and evil-ſpeaking has been a reigning vice in all ages, and a greater guilt is contracted by it than men apprehend; every man ought to be as juſt to his neighbour's reputation as his own? If what we report of another we know to be falſe, it is downright lying; if what we report of others we believe to be falſe, it is ſlander; if what evil we report of others be really true, and we know it to be ſo, yet it is a defamation, and contrary to that charity and goodneſs which Chriſtianity requires; for to divulge the faults of others, though they be really guilty of them, without neceſſity, is certainly a ſin, and included in this apoſtolical prohibition: To think and ſpeak evil of others, is not only a bad thing, but a ſign of a bad man; and in many caſes it is as great charity to conceal an evil we hear of our neighbour, as it is to relieve him in his diſtreſs. The next exhortation is, *to be no brawlers*; in the original, no *fighters*; that is, neither with tongue nor hand, but meek and gentle, putting up a double wrong, rather than revenging a ſingle injury, uſing all meekneſs towards all men. Meekneſs pacifies wrath, and conquers animoſity to a wonder, making him tame and gentle, who by oppoſition is furious and implacable; the hardeſt flint is ſooner broken upon a pillow or cuſhion that gently yieldeth, than upon a bar of iron that furiouſly reſiſteth.

3 For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſt and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

Here we have a very weighty reaſon laid down by our apoſtle, why Chriſtians ſhould be found in the practice of the forementioned virtues of equity and lenity, of patience and charity, of meekneſs and long-ſuffering one towards another; namely, becauſe before their converſion they themſelves lived in the practice of the forementioned vices as well as others, *We ourſelves alſo were fooliſh, diſobedient*, &c. That is, the ſervants of ſin, and ſlaves to our luſts, ſuffering wrath to reſt in our boſoms, till it boiled up to revenge; having formerly, therefore, been ſuch ourſelves, we ought to pity rather than ſpurn at thoſe that are ſo ſtill. No argument will more effectually incline and diſpoſe us to pity the miſcarriages of others, than the conſideration that we ourſelves are prone unto, and have heretofore been guilty of the ſame, or the like provocation ourſelves.

4 But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghoſt; 6 Which he ſhed on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour;

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, Though in our heatheniſh and unconverted ſtate, we were as bad and vile as any, yet no ſooner did the loving kindneſs of God to fallen man appear, by the illumination of the goſpel, and the communication of his grace, not for any good works or deſerts of ours, but of his mere mercy and free goodneſs, he ſaved us from that ſtate of ſin and miſery by regeneration, ſignified and ſealed in baptiſm, and by the renewing of the holy Ghoſt, which holy Spirit was poured forth in an extraordinary meaſure upon us (according to promiſe) after Chriſt's reſurrection. Here *obſerve*, How every perſon in the Trinity acts diſtinctly in the work of our ſalvation: 1. The fontal cauſe, the ſpring and ſource of our happineſs, lies in the kindneſs and love of God the Father. 2. The meritorious and procuring cauſe or the application of this love, is Jeſus Chriſt, in the work of redemption and mediation. 3. The immediate and efficient cauſe of the communication of that love of God the Father, procured through the mediation of Chriſt the Son, is the holy Spirit, in the work of regeneration.

7 Which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour; 8 That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;

That is, which holy Spirit was in its gifts and graces plentifully poured forth upon us, and dwelleth in us, not eſſentially but energetically, illuminating, guiding, ſtrengthening and confirming of us: And the end of God herein, is, *That being juſtified by his grace*, that is, by faith in his Son, *we ſhould be made heirs of eternal life, according to the hope* which the promiſes of God have given us thereof. *Learn* hence, 1. That all the grace which is ſo plentifully poured forth upon believers, is by the means and mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That juſtification being a ſinner's abſolution from guilt and puniſhment by the ſatisfaction of Chriſt the Redeemer, is yet an act of ſpecial grace and free favour in God, *That being juſtified by his grace*. 3. That it is the bleſſed privilege of all juſtified perſons, that they are now heirs to, and ſhall ere long be poſſeſſors of eternal life; they ſhall ere long have in hand, what now they poſſeſs in hope: *Being juſtified by grace, we are heirs according to the hope of eternal life*.

8 *This is* a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly; That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. Theſe things are good and profitable unto men.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, ſpoken of juſtification by grace without works of righteouſneſs, doth here immediately give a ſtrict and ſolemn charge to Titus, to preſs the neceſſity of good works, upon thoſe who did believe and embrace the goſpel, on purpoſe to prevent all miſtake and abuſe of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, and free grace and mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt; intimating, That they who are juſtified by the faith of the goſpel ſhould be ſo far from thinking themſelves hereby excuſed from good works, that they ought, upon that account, to be the more careful to maintain and practiſe them, becauſe by the very profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith and religion, they have ſolemnly engaged themſelves ſo to do. *Obſerve* here, 1. That the great deſign of Chriſtianity, and the end of God in the revelation of the goſpel, was to reform the lives and manners of men, and to oblige all perſons both to be good, and to do good. *Learn*, 2. From the apoſtle's vehement aſſeveration, *This is a faithful ſaying*, and his ſolemn charge, *Theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly*, that there have been perſons in all ages, who have exalted the virtue of faith, if not intentionally, yet indiſcreetly, to the prejudice and neglect of a good life. As if by a mere ſpeculative belief and profeſſion of Chriſtianity, men were diſcharged from the practiſe of moral duties. God grant that the decried morality of ſome perſons may be an integral part of *my* religion. 3. That though good works are not neceſſary before juſtification to bring us into a juſtified ſtate, yet they are neceſſary after juſtification, in order to our continuance in that ſtate; — *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done*, that is, before faith; but he doth not exclude the works of righteouſneſs in the leaſt, that they ſhould hereafter do, by virtue of the new nature given to them, from being conditions of their future happineſs. As morality doth not make faith uſeleſs, ſo neither doth faith bring any excuſe for immorality. 4. That it is not ſufficient that believers do good works, but they muſt *maintain* good works; the words ſignify they muſt be patterns and precedents, they muſt be eminent and excelling in good works: And let their faith be never ſo excellent, if they do not add to their faith, virtue, it is but a fancy, a ſtrong faith built upon a weak foundation.

9 But avoid fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions and ſtrivings about the law: for they are unprofitable and vain.

We have the ſame charge given to Timothy, 1 Epiſt. i. 4. See the note upon it. And *learn* hence, That diſputes about matters, which only ſerve to beget ſtrife and contention, and tend little to our edification in faith and holineſs, are vain talk and unprofitable diſputes, to be declined and avoided by all wiſe and ſerious Chriſtians: *Avoid fooliſh queſtions, for they are unprofitable and vain.*

10 A man that is an heretic, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject: 11 Knowing that he that is ſuch is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, Avoid and ſhun, and refuſe communion with him that doth obſtinately perſiſt in dangerous hereſies, and accordingly let him be excommunicated. *Learn* hence, 1. Who is an *heretic* in the apoſtle's ſenſe, even he who is perverted from the true faith, and holds opinions which ſubvert the foundations of it; and one who is condemned in his own conſcience, and ſins againſt his own convictions: For the apoſtle here bids Titus not inform him of his errors, but admoniſh him of his fault; which ſhews, that the crime lay not in his head, in his underſtanding, but in his will and affections: For, no man, who acts according to his judgment and conſcience, how erroneous ſoever, is ſelf-condemned in that action. 2. That even heretics themſelves ought to be tenderly and lovingly dealt with, ſo long as there is any hope that they may be gained or won. 3. That the charity of the church, in her cenſure of excommunication, aims rather at the cutting off errors than of perſons.

12 When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: For I have determined there to winter.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed all ſuch common precepts as reſpected the whole church in Crete, he now paſſeth to ſuch private affairs as did more particularly reſpect the perſon of Titus and himſelf. Firſt, He deſires Titus to come to him to Nicopolis from Crete, but not before he had ſent thither Artemas or Tychicus to officiate in his place: Wonderful care of the holy apoſtle! And a mighty concern for the welfare of all the churches! St. Paul very well knew how fatal and dangerous it might be to the churches to be left deſtitute of their ſpiritual guides, though for a very ſmall time. St. Paul knew the malice of the devil, the ſubtilty of ſeducers, and the weakneſs of Chriſtians' faith, too well, to give all, or any of them, advantages of doing miſchief in the abſence of Titus from them.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Here we have a ſecond private affair which is given in charge to Titus, namely, that he help forward on their journey Zenas and Apollos, both apoſtolic men; the former an expounder of the law of Moſes, the other an eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures; both theſe cleaved to St. Paul, and therefore were worthily to be reſpected by Titus, whom the apoſtle therefore bids him be kind and courteous to, and help them forward with their journey. *Learn* thence, That Chriſtianity is no enemy to, but a great promoter of all offices of humanity and civil courteſy towards all perſons, towards ſtrangers particularly, towards good men eſpecially. *Obſerve* next, St. Paul deſires Titus to take care that thoſe ſervants of God be ſo ſupplied, that they lack nothing: Such as are engaged in the Lord's work muſt be carefully provided for, and care taken that they lack nothing.

14 And let ours alſo learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful.

Let ours, that is, either, 1. Thoſe of our order, the miniſters of the goſpel, or thoſe that are our converts, ſuch as are Chriſtians, let them ſtudy to excel in good works, be diligent in the labours of their calling, that they may have therewith to ſupply the neceſſities of others, to the intent that they may not appear *unfruitful*. *Learn* hence, That as Chriſtianity is no barren and fruitleſs profeſſion, but all perſons profeſſing religion ought to take care that good works may accompany their faith; ſo the miniſters of Chriſt in ſpecial ought to be careful herein, and by no means to bind their duty upon others, which they do not practiſe themſelves; they muſt by charity and good works, ſecond their doctrine, and ſo win perſons to a love of religion.

15 All that are with me ſalute thee.—

By theſe words, St. Paul gives Titus to underſtand, *that* all the Chriſtians that were then with him, did embrace him with an endearing and loving affection, and would have their mindfulneſs of him witneſſed by a kind and familiar ſalutation. Theſe ſalutations had more in them than humanity, civility, and common courteſy; they were atteſtations of a truly Chriſtian love and brotherly affection, of one member of Chriſt towards another for grace's ſake.

—Greet them that love us in the faith.—

That is, as Chriſtians, as brethren, and fellow-members in Chriſt, *verus amicus qui vere et in Deo diliget*. Grace binds man to man in the ſtrongeſt and moſt indiſſoluble bonds and ties.

—Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

This is the ſalutation of St. Paul, always written with his own hand, in all his epiſtles; although the epiſtles themſelves were writ by others, he did it to prevent counterfeits, that no ſpurious writings might be obtruded upon the church: And whereas he ſays, *Grace be with you all*, it plainly intimates, that although this epiſtle be written by name to Titus, yet it was intended for the benefit and advantage of the whole church.

THE
EPISTLE OF St. PAUL
TO
PHILEMON.

This epiſtle was writ to a particular perſon, and upon a particular occaſion. The Perſon was Philemon, *an eminent officer in the church of* Coloſs; *and, as ſome ſay, ſucceſſor to* Timothy, *as biſhop of* Epheſus. *The occaſion this:* Oneſimus *a naughty ſervant, running away from his maſter* Philemon, *and carrying away probably ſomething of his maſter's ſubſtance with him, by the providence of God comes to* Rome, *where* St. Paul *was then a priſoner and preacher in bonds: God bleſſed the apoſtle's miniſtry, for the converſion of this fugitive, who was brought to a true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and after his converſion, for a time adminiſtered to* Paul *in priſon; but the apoſtle underſtanding that he was another man's ſervant, and particularly his dear friend* Philemon's, *ſends him back to his maſter, earneſtly deſiring him to pardon him, and to receive him into favour.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer, 2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-ſoldier, and to the church in thy houſe. 3 Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The writer of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, *Paul*; by his condition, *a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; by his office a *labourer*, a *ſoldier*, a *fellow-labourer*, and a fellow-ſoldier with Philemon and Archippus. Where *note*, That to be a labourer, a ſoldier, and a priſoner for Jeſus Chriſt, are the titles that St. Paul glories in, and not in worldly dignities. *Paul a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; yet was Paul a priſoner in *libera cuſtodia*, not ſo cloſely confined, but he had pen, ink, and paper; God gave Paul then, as Joſeph before, favour in the ſight of the keeper of the priſoner; Let perſecutors ſend their ſaints to priſon, God can provide a keeper for their turn. Happy was it for thee, Oneſimus, that Paul was ſent to goal; his impriſonment was the happy occaſion of thy ſpiritual liberty. 2. The perſons to whom the epiſtle is directed; firſt, and eminently to Philemon the maſter, and to Apphia, the miſtreſs of the family, in which, and with whom, Oneſimus had dwelt, but was run from. St. Paul writes to both judging the miſtreſs's conſent neceſſary for taking this fugitive back into her family, as well as the maſter's: Intimating thereby, That although the huſband, by the ordinance and appointment of God, has the higheſt place, the firſt and chief power in the government of the family, yet the wife being given him of God, as an aſſiſtant and fellow-helper in government, her ſubordinate authority given her by God is to be owned and acknowledged. Next, this epiſtle is directed to Archippus, who dwelt with, or near Philemon; him he calls his fellow-ſoldier, and Philemon his fellow-labourer. Where *note*, That the miniſters of the goſpel are compared to ſoldiers; they have enemies to encounter and conflict with, Satan's temptations, the world's perſecutions, ſinners corrupt luſts and affections. Let the miniſters of God then reckon beforehand upon a toilſome and troubleſome life; if they reſolve to be faithful, the devil will plant all his artillery againſt them. Laſt of all, the epiſtle is directed *to the church in Philemon's houſe:* by which ſome underſtand the company of Chriſtians that met together at his houſe to worſhip God; for Chriſtians then had not liberty publicly to perform that duty. Others underſtand it of Philemon's own family, which ſpeaks at once Philemon's privilege and duty, that he had ſuch a well ordered family, that it was a little church; that is, it was a lively image and repreſentation of the church, both in its doctrine and worſhip.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee
always in my prayers,

Obſerve here, Our apoſtle's holy inſinuation and pious wiſdom; that he might make a more eaſy way for his petition, he labours to poſſeſs Philemon with an opinion of his endeared affection towards him, and of his continual prayers even by name for him: *I thank my God, making mention of thee in my prayers.* Where *note*, That St. Paul did, and we may make particular mention of perſons and churches in our daily prayers to Almighty God: I make *mention of thee always in my prayers.*

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou haſt
toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints; 6
That the communication of thy faith may become
effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing
which is in you in Chriſt Jeſus. 7 For we have
great joy and conſolation in thy love; becauſe the
bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by thee, brother.

Our apoſtle having diſcovered to Philemon his fervent prayers for him, next makes mention of the excellent graces which were ſo orient and ſhining in him, namely, his faith and his love; his faith in Chriſt produceth love to him and to all ſaints; not to a party of Chriſtians only; *hearing of thy love and faith towards the Lord Jeſus, and* in him *towards all the ſaints.* The ſaints are to be loved next Chriſt, and in and for Chriſt. *Obſerve* next, St. Paul prays that Philemon's faith and love might be made manifeſt, to be effectual for producing all ſorts of good fruits in him and by him: *That the communication of thy faith may become effectual.* *Obſerve*, laſtly, The great joy and conſolation which the apoſtle had in the operativeneſs of Philemon's faith and love, whereby the the bowels of the ſaints were greatly refreſhed. *Learn* hence, That adminiſtering to the neceſſities of the ſaints, and relieving the bowels of the diſtreſſed members of Jeſus Chriſt, is a bleſſed evidence of the ſincerity of our love to Chriſt, and Chriſtians: There is a frozen charity and a lip-love found among many profeſſors, whom Chriſt will own at the great day; but ſuch as, by offices and kindneſs performed with a tender and pitiful heart, do refreſh the bowels of the ſaints, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf, whatever is done to thoſe his ſuffering members, Matt. xxv. and God himſelf is thereby refreſhed, Phil. iv. 18. *An odour of a ſweet ſmell, and a ſacrifice acceptable and pleaſing to God.* *Note*, laſtly, What the condition of the holieſt and beſt of God's ſervants in the world has been, is, and may be, namely, ſuch, that their bowels may ſtand in need of refreſhing, whilſt the wicked are fat, freſh, and flouriſhing; but, bleſſed be God, if his children miſs of refreſhment from men, their *time of refreſhment will come from the preſence of the Lord.*

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in
Chriſt, to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9
Yet for love's ſake I rather beſeech *thee*, being ſuch
a one as Paul the aged, and now alſo a priſoner of
Jeſus Chriſt. 10 I beſeech thee for my ſon Oneſimus,
whom I have begotten in my bonds: 11
Which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable, but
now profitable to thee and to me:

Obſerve here, The marvellous condeſcending humility of our apoſtle in theſe expreſſions: As an apoſtle, he was the higheſt ruler and officer in the church of God, and had the fulleſt authority and power that a perſon could have upon earth, to command, require, and enjoin Philemon to the practice of his duty; but he tells him, though he might be bold to enjoin, yet he rather choſe to beſeech: *for love's ſake I rather beſeech thee.* *Learn* hence, That church-rulers and governors, although they have a commanding power and authority, which upon occaſion they may and muſt make uſe of, yet they ſhould chuſe much rather in love to intreat, hoping *that* will work more kindly and effectually upon the minds of perſons. *Obſerve*, 2. The arguments St. Paul uſes as a ground of intreaty, *I Paul* deſire and *beſeech thee*, *I Paul the aged*, *I Paul a priſoner.* *Note*, He urges his years as an argument for granting his requeſt; that he was aged, and an aged miniſter of Chriſt: If honour be due to an aged perſon walking in the way of righteouſneſs, much more it is ſo to an aged miniſter, grey-headed in the ſervice of Chriſt, and having faithfully diſcharged his duty there. He alſo urges his ſufferings as well as his years; *I Paul a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt.* The ſufferings of Chriſt's miniſters in the cauſe of God ſhould by no means leſſen and diminiſh, but rather augment and increaſe that reverence, regard and reſpect which is deſervedly due and payable unto them. 3. The perſon whom he thus intercedes with affection for; Oneſimus, whom he calls his *ſon begotten in his bonds*; that is, ſpiritual ſon, converted to Chriſtianity by his miniſtry, when he was in priſon. Where *note*, That endearing love, and that fervent affection which the miniſters of Chriſt bear to their converts, to ſuch as they have gained unto Chriſt; it equals, nay, perhaps exceeds the natural affection of parents towards their own children. *Note* alſo, who they are that beſt deſerve the name of *fathers* in the church, verily thoſe that have begot moſt ſpiritual children unto God; ſuch as can ſay, "Lord, here am I, and the children which thou haſt given me." Nevertheleſs, for our comfort, God will, at the reckoning-day, account and treat ſuch as ſpiritual fathers who have been faithful, though unſucceſsful, in the work of Chriſt, becauſe they have caſt forth the prolific ſeed of the goſpel; therefore the cauſe of ſterility and ſpiritual barrenneſs cannot be imputed to them, they having exerted and put forth their beſt endeavours. *Note* alſo, The high honour which God confers upon his faithful miniſters; the ſcripture allows them, though but inſtruments, what is properly attributed to God himſelf, namely, to beget ſpiritual children; this is God's work: *Of his own will begat he us*, James i. 18. God allows that to be in an inferior ſenſe attributed to the miniſtry, which is ſtrictly applicable only to himſelf. 4. How the apoſtle wiſely anſwers the objections which Philemon might make againſt his requeſt, of receiving Oneſimus, that he had been vile, a fugitive, a thief, what not? St. Paul implicitly owns all that, yet with a ſoftening diſtinction, *he was unprofitable in times paſt, but now profiteth both thee and me*. Now St. Paul pre-occupating and anſwering this objection before Philemon made it, ſhews how hard it is for the beſt men to forgive and forget injuries done unto them, eſpecially by their relations, thoſe in their own families, whether children or ſervants. *Note* alſo, The character given of Oneſimus before converſion, *he was unprofitable*. Lord, what an uſeleſs, unprofitable creature is an unſanctified and unconverted ſinner! unprofitable to God, unprofitable to others, unprofitable to his own ſoul; but by converſion he becomes univerſally uſeful and profitable to all about him, but eſpecially to himſelf; others may have the benefit of our eſtate, our parts and gifts, but we ourſelves ſhall have the chief benefit, comfort, and advantage of our own grace.

12 Whom I have ſent again: thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels. 13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtered unto me in the bonds of the goſpel. 14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit ſhould not be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly.

Here are ſeveral arguments uſed by our apoſtle, why Philemon ſhould receive Oneſimus into his ſervice again. 1. Becauſe St. Paul had ſent him for that end, a long and tedious journey from Rome to Coloſs, and becauſe he came with the apoſtle's commendatory letters, and in his name. We are not eaſily to reject thoſe that come to us countenanced and encouraged with the commendations of the reverend and faithful miniſters of God. In the cloſe of the firſt argument, at the foot of the twelfth verſe, *obſerve* the endearing title he gives Oneſimus, he calls him *his own bowels*; *receive him that is my own bowels*. O Lord! certainly there is no ſtronger love, nor more endearing and endeared affection between any relations upon earth, than between the miniſters of the goſpel and ſuch of their beloved people whom they have been happily inſtrumental to beget unto thyſelf. How inexpreſſively dear is the ſoul of a poor ſervant to a faithful miniſter of Chriſt, and how lovely when once converted? *Receive him*, for he is as dear to me as if he had proceeded out of *my own bowels*. Again, Another argument is this; St. Paul ſends him, becauſe he was another's ſervant, even of Philemon his friend, and being very ſerviceable to the apoſtle, he would have gladly detained him; but could not ſatisfy himſelf to do it, without Philemon's conſent: Maſters have ſuch a right in their ſervants, and ſuch a right unto their ſervice, that they are not to be diſpoſed of, without their conſent. St. Paul, though he wanted yet would not detain Oneſimus, though a fugitive ſervant, without Philemon's knowledge: Chriſtian religion is no deſtroyer, but an eſtabliſher of civil rights. Oneſimus's converſion to Chriſtianity, gave him no manumiſſion and liberty from Philemon's ſervice, and accordingly our apoſtle remits and ſends him back to his old maſter Philemon.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldſt receive him for ever; 16 Not now as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, a brother beloved, ſpecially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the fleſh, and in the Lord?

Here our apoſtle anſwers an objection which poſſibly Philemon might make: Thus, "Oneſimus ran away from me, what reaſon have I to receive him again?" The apoſtle ſeems thus to reply upon it: If his departing from thee was ſo managed by the wiſe and merciful providence of God, that it might be an occaſion of thy receiving him again for ever, then for all his departure thou oughteſt to receive him. But verily thus it is, the wiſdom of God has thus over-ruled the matter; he went from thee a fugitive, thieviſh and purloining; but he returns a convert, a Chriſtian, a brother in the faith, and as ſuch to be entertained by thee, being doubly related to thee, both as a ſervant, and as a fellow-member of Chriſt. *Obſerve* here, 1. The large extent, and next, the over-ruling power of the divine providence: Its *extent*: It reaches not only to kingdoms and nations, but to families and perſons, even to poor bond-ſlaves; a fugitive runs not from his ſervice, but the providence of God eyes and obſerves it, nay, wiſely and mercifully over-rules it. Oh! the depth of divine knowledge and wiſdom, the providence of God concerns itſelf, and has a hand in thoſe actions of men which are ſinful, without any blemiſh to his holineſs; he concurs to the act, but not to the alaxy and diſorder of the action; he that rides a lame horſe, is the cauſe of his going, but not of halting. 2. The privilege of our ſpiritual conjunction in Chriſt, above any other civil conjunction. The former laſts *for ever*, the latter but *for a ſhort time*; the relation between huſband and wife, parent and child, maſter and ſervant, alas, it is but for a moment. Death will ſoon diſſolve all civil relations: But the ſpiritual relation and conjunction being effected, by the bond of the Spirit, is indiſſoluble, it is *for ever*. Death itſelf cannot diſſolve it, yea, it knits the knot faſter; *He departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever*. 3. That although Chriſtianity doth not take away the degrees of perſons, and the civil differences between man and man, yet it maketh us all equal and fellow-brethren in Chriſt. *Receive him* now, not barely *as a ſervant*, *but above a ſervant*, *as a brother in* Chriſt; you and he are now brethren by grace. *Learn* hence, That religious ſervants are more than ordinary ſervants, they are brethren in Chriſt; and when humility, fidelity, and prudence are found with them, as they are more than ordinary ſervants, ſo God expects that we ſhould give them more than ordinary reſpect, and we ſin in denying it. O ſervants, Would you have high reſpect ſhewed to you? Become then firſt humble ſervants to Jeſus Chriſt, and then faithful and prudent ſervants where God has placed you, and you ſhall never want reſpect either from God or men; for *them that honour God*, *he will honour*.

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myſelf. 18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. 19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not ſay to thee how thou oweſt unto me even thine ownſelf beſides.

Obſerve here, 1. Another argument wherewith St. Paul doth preſs Philemon to receive Oneſimus, and it is drawn from a partnerſhip and communion with him in the faith; if we are partners, and have communion and friendſhip one with another, as Chriſtians, comply with my deſires herein. *Learn* hence, That there is a communion, a fellowſhip, a partnerſhip between Chriſtians, and this communion which is between ſaints, ſhould make ſaints reſpect one another. *If thou count me a partner*, *receive him*; yea, *receive him as myſelf*; a very high expreſſion, ſtill diſcovering that affectionate tenderneſs which St. Paul bare to this new convert. 2. Another objection anſwered; Philemon might ſay, "How can I receive him that has wronged me, robbed me, and run away from me? ſure it is enough to pardon him; muſt I receive him too?" Our apoſtle implicitly grants, that there was a debt due from Oneſimus to Philemon; *If he has wronged*, that is, granting that he has done it. Where *note*, Religion deſtroys no man's property, nor does communion of ſaints make a community of goods; otherwiſe, from this community, Oneſimus, or St. Paul for him, might have pleaded an immunity both from reſtitution and puniſhment; St. Paul ackowledges, not denies the debt. But *obſerve* farther, He takes it upon himſelf; *Put it on my account*, *I will repay it*. It is not unlawful in itſelf, for one perſon to become bound and ſurety for another; yea, it is a work of mercy, which not only may be done, but ſometimes muſt be done, but always with due caution and conſideration. 3. The wonderful modeſty of the apoſtle in mentioning his own praiſes and commendations, *I ſay not that thou oweſt to me even thine own ſelf*, implying what great things he had done for Philemon in his converſion, ſo great as made Philemon a debtor, not only of his own goods but of himſelf too: However, the apoſtle only glances at it modeſtly, and that upon a juſt and great occaſion too: *I do not ſay*, (though I might have ſaid it) *that thou oweſt to me even thine own ſelf beſides*.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refreſh my bowels in the Lord. 21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay. 22 But withal prepare me alſo a lodging. For I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you.

Obſerve here, 1. A pathetic repetition of our apoſtle's former petition, with the force and ſtrength of a freſh and additional argument. Thus, "O my brother, that which revives me in a priſon, and refreſhes my bowels, now I am in bonds, that aſſuredly thou oughteſt to do; but thy remitting and receiving Oneſimus will thus refreſh me, therefore do it." *Learn* thence, That whatſoever Chriſtians know will rejoice the hearts, and revive the ſpirits of one another, ought in mutual condeſcenſion and kindneſs to be performed each towards another upon their mutual requeſts. How unnatural is it for one member to vex and grieve another? As unbecoming it is in the body ſpiritual, as it is in the body natural, *brother*, *let me have joy in the Lord*, *refreſh my bowels in the Lord*. *Obſerve*, 2. Our apoſtle's holy confidence in Philemon's obedience and compliance: *Having confidence in thy obedience*, *I know thou wilt do more than I ſay*. See here what credit and honour, conſcience and obedience puts upon a man; Philemon's good conſcience occaſioned St. Paul's confidence: It is a ſpecial honour when the general courſe of man's life is ſo ſteady, ſo uniform and even, that either our miniſters or pious friends dare to be confident in us, vouch for us, and engage for our obedience and compliance with whatever becomes us. 3. St. Paul having finiſhed his requeſt for Oneſimus, ſpeaks one word for himſelf, namely, that a lodging might be prepared for him, hoping it ſeems, for a deliverance out of priſon, by the help of the church's prayers, *Prepare me a lodging*. Religion is no enemy to hoſpitality; nay, it requires it, and encourages to it, Rom. xii. 13. Heb. xiii. 2. It is a duty incumbent upon all, but eſpecially miniſters: But an unkind world takes care that ſome have ſcarce bread ſufficient for their families, much leſs have any ability for hoſpitality, or indeed for thoſe neceſſary acts of charity which are required by God, and expected by man, to render their labours amongſt their people both acceptable and ſucceſsful. The miniſters of God, when they aſk bread of ſome, they give them a ſtone, and when they demand their dues of others, they ſting like a ſcorpion: but bleſſed be God: it is not thus univerſally. *Note*, laſtly, What it was St. Paul grounded his expectation of deliverance upon, namely the help and benefit of the church's prayers, *I truſt through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you*. *Learn*, That our deliverance from trouble is to be expected and ſought by the means of the prayers of ſuch as fear God; yet *mark*, Though prayer obtains much, yet it merits nothing at God's hand. *I truſt through your prayers I ſhall be given*, that is, freely given unto you: though we obtain bleſſings by prayer, yet not for the merit of our prayers. If mercy were due to us, thankfulneſs were not due to God. *For I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you.*

23 There ſalute thee Epaphras, my fellow-priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus; 24 Marcus, Ariſtarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers. 25 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

Our apoſtle being now come to the concluſion of his epiſtle, he ſhuts it up with ſalutations and prayer; firſt, he ſalutes Philemon from Epaphras, Marcus, Ariſtarchus, Demas, and Luke, ſome his fellow-priſoners, all his fellow-labourers. Here *note*, How graciouſly God provides for the comfort of his children in a priſon; he ſweetened St. Paul's affliction with the ſaints communion: It was no joy to St. Paul that Epaphras was in priſon, he had rather he had been preaching at Coloſs: But, ſeeing he was a priſoner, the apoſtle, no doubt, was very thankful that he was in the ſame priſon with him, where they had opportunity (it is hoped) to pray together, to diſcourſe, encourage and comfort one another: And *note* the cauſe of Epaphras' impriſonment, *in Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus. No doubt there were others in priſon beſides Epaphras, but none were St. Paul's fellow priſoners but he, becauſe, though ſufferers in the ſame priſon, yet not for the ſame cauſe, *Epaphras my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth thee. Obſerve*, Our apoſtle's concluding prayer, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit.* Here *note*, 1. The perſon prayed to, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, our anointed King; from *Chriſt* we are called *Chriſtans*, becauſe every one of us, in our meaſure, are partakers of a divine unction with and from him, 1 John ii. 20. *Ye have an unction from the Holy One.* This oil ran down from the head of our Great High Prieſt, to the very ſkirts of his garment. 2. The bleſſing prayed for, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy ſpirit*; that is, "May the ſpecial favour of God, both in its effects and influences, in its graces and comforts, reſide in thy ſoul and ſpirit; may the bleſſed Spirit of our Lord Jeſus evermore dwell in thee by his ſanctifying impreſſions, by his powerful aſſiſtances, and by his quickening influences." 3. He doth not pray for Philemon ſolely, though for him eminently, but for all the ſaints at Coloſs, who had obtained like precious faith with him: The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you, not *thy*, but *your* ſpirit: All the ſaints of God in general, yea, the whole race of mankind univerſally, muſt be remembered by us in our prayers. *Amen*, is a word that denotes our earneſtneſs or deſire to be heard, and our comfortable expectation of being anſwered: It teaches us, That whatever we pray for, ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly expected, and earneſtly deſired. They ſin in prayer, who either do not underſtand what they pray for, or do not earneſtly deſire what they pray for, or do not believe God's readineſs to grant what they pray for: Therefore, in teſtimony of our deſire and aſſurance to be heard in prayer we ſay, *Amen.*

LAUS DEO.

THE END OF THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
HEBREWS.

As touching the author and penman of this Epiſtle to the Hebrews, there have been many and various opinions; ſome have ſuppoſed it written by St. Luke, others by Barnabas, or Clemens, but moſt by St. Paul, which they attempt to prove from chapter xiii. 23. Know ye that our brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; *becauſe it is cuſtomary with St. Paul, when he writes epiſtles, to call Timothy his brother. And alſo from the words of St. Peter,* 2 Pet. iii. 15. As our dear brother Paul has written unto you in all his epiſtles. *Whence it is evident, that the apoſtle Paul had writ to them, to whom St. Peter was then writing; that is, to the believing Jews in general, and to thoſe of the diſperſion in particular. But ſince we are aſſured, that the Spirit of God did indite the book, we need not be over ſolicitous to find out whoſe hand it was that held the pen.*

The perſons to whom this epiſtle is directed, are ſtyled Hebrews; *that is, the believing Jews converted to Chriſtianity, chiefly thoſe that inhabited Judea, and in and about Jeruſalem: who though they had embraced the goſpel, yet they adhered to the Moſaic rites, and Jewiſh ceremonies, joining them with Chriſtianity, as neceſſary to ſalvation. Now, for this bare profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they were expoſed to a bitter perſecution by the unbelieving Jews. Our apoſtle, therefore, juſtly fearing leſt their ſufferings for Chriſtianity ſhould occaſion their apoſtacy from it, writes this epiſtle to eſtabliſh and confirm them in their holy profeſſion, by acquainting them with the ſad and fatal conſequences of a ruinous apoſtacy, and the fruitleſſneſs of former ſufferings, without a reſolute perſeverance in the Chriſtian faith, and patience under all tribulations.*

That St. Paul did not prefix his name to this epiſtle, as he did to others, the reaſon ſuppoſed is this, becauſe he was the apoſtle of the Gentiles, and not of the circumciſion, or of the Jews; and his name not being over-acceptable to them, he ſets it not at the front of this epiſtle, leſt the ſight of it ſhould have prejudiced the Jews, and taken them off from duly weighing and conſidering the weighty matters which he wrote about.

The general ſcope and deſign of this epiſtle is to inform the Hebrews, that the goſpel-miniſtry, or diſpenſation under the New Teſtament by Jeſus Chriſt, far ſurpaſſeth and tranſcendently excelleth the miniſtry of the Old Teſtament under Moſes and the prophets: and to prove, that Chriſt was greater than the angels, a greater perſon and lawgiver than Moſes, a greater prieſt than Aaron, a greater prince than Melchiſedec; and that the Levitical prieſthood, and old covenant, were to give place to Chriſt our great High Prieſt, and to the new covenant eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.

CHAP. I.

In the firſt chapter of this epiſtle, the proofs of the eternal Deity of Jeſus Chriſt are produced with ſuch clear evidence of ſcripture-light, that only a veiled heart, and obſtinate infidelity can reſiſt.

GOD who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by *his* Son,

Our apoſtle intending here a compariſon between the law and the goſpel, ſhews firſt wherein they both agree, and next wherein they differ. They agree (firſt) in this, that God was the author of them both: Both law and goſpel received their original from God himſelf; and God the Father, by way of eminency, was the peculiar author both of law and goſpel. *God*, that God, *who ſpake in times paſt by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son. Obſerve,* 2. The difference between the law and goſpel, with reſpect to the manner of their revelation. The revelation of the will of God under the law was, 1. At ſundry times: before the flood, by Enoch and Noah; after the flood, by Abraham, by Jacob, by Moſes, and all the prophets. 2. *In divers manners*; ſometimes by a lively voice, ſometimes by dreams and viſions, ſometimes by inſpiration and immediate revelation, ſometimes by Urim and Thummim, ſometimes by ſigns from heaven. 3. The revelation of the law was made of old, formerly, *in times paſt*; this of the goſpel was made *in theſe laſt days*. 4. That was made to the fathers, this to *us*. 5. That revelation was made by the *prophets*, this by the *Son*, Jeſus Chriſt. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That Almighty God did not leave the world only to the light of nature, and to know him barely by his works of creation; but beſtowed upon them the invaluable bleſſing of ſupernatural revelation, thereby to bring mankind to the clearer knowledge of their duty. 2. That the revelation which God was pleaſed to make of himſelf, his mind, and will, was gradual, and by part, not all at one time, and in one manner, but at *ſundry times*, and in *divers manners*. 3. That the goſpel diſpenſation is the moſt perfect revelation of the will of God, which God ever did, or ever will make to the ſons of men. 4. That as it is a perfect, ſo likewiſe a final revelation of God's mind and will to a loſt world: A farther diſcovery of the mind of God for man's ſalvation is not to be expected: The goſpel is the laſt effort which the divine mercy and goodneſs will make upon mankind, in order to eternal happineſs; herein God has ſpoken to us by his Son: and, if we will not hear him, he will ſpeak no more, we muſt expect no other; he can ſend no greater prophet, no dearer perſon to us than his own Son; and as he can ſend no greater, ſo he will ſend no other; for if we deſpiſe him, whom will we reverence? Now, the dignity of this perſon, our apoſtle proceeds in this and the next verſe to deſcribe.

— Whom he hath appointed heir of all things,

The title of *heir*, which is here given to Chriſt, ſetteth out his dignity and dominion, together with the right he has to both: namely, that of the ſonſhip; for what is an heir but his father's ſucceſſor; Chriſt, as a Son, being heir of all things, imports, that he is lord of all, and has a ſovereign empire and dominion over all perſons and things over all angels and men, whether living or dead. *Learn* hence, That God the Father has given and granted unto Chriſt his Son, as Mediator and Head of the church, a ſovereign power and authority over all perſons and things, both in heaven and in earth, to be diſpoſed of by him at his pleaſure, and according to the ſovereign purpoſe of his will; *whom he hath appointed heir of all things*.

— By whom alſo he made the worlds;

By whom not *for whom*, as the Socinians would ſuggeſt; the word ſignifies the efficient, not the final cauſe, according to Coloſ. i. 16, 17. *By him were all things created, and by him all things conſiſt*. And *by him*, not as an inſtrument or created cauſe, for then muſt he be created by himſelf, ſeeing all *things were made by him, and nothing made without him*, John i. 3. but as the principal efficient cauſe, according to St. John v. 19. *Whatſoever the Father doth, that doth alſo the ſon likewiſe*. The Father doth all by the Son, and the Son doth all from the Father. And by *making the worlds*, we are to underſtand his forming of the old world, not his reforming of the new; for if ſo, the apoſtles might be ſaid to make the worlds as well as Chriſt, becauſe they had a principal hand in converting and reforming the world. But by the worlds, here underſtand the viſible and material worlds, all things in heaven and earth, which were made by Chriſt, not as a ſubordinate inſtrument, but as a primary and principal agent, which ſets forth the omnipotent power of Chriſt, and conſequently proves him to be truly and really God. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by making the world and all things therein, by his own immediate power, has given a full and ample demonſtration of his Divinity, or being eſſentially and really God.

3 Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high.

Our apoſtle here proceeds in deſcribing the Divinity of Chriſt's perſon, by whom the Father has made known his will to us under the goſpel. He declares, 1. What he is. 2. What he does, or did. 3. The conſequent of both, or what he now enjoyeth. *Obſerve*, 1. Our apoſtle declares who, and what Chriſt was, and is, namely, *The brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*. As the brightneſs of the ſun is of the ſame nature with the ſun, and of as long continuance as the ſun, and cannot be ſeparated from the ſun, and yet the ſun, and the brightneſs of the ſun, are really diſtinct each from other. In like manner the Father and the Son are of one and the ſame eſſence, coeternal and inſeparable, yet the perſon of the one is diſtinct from the other. And as the ſun communicates its light and influence to us by its beams, ſo doth God communicate his goodneſs, and manifeſt himſelf to us by Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That the Son is of the ſame eſſence with the Father, yet a perſon really diſtinct from the Father, and all the incomprehenſible glory of the Father brightly ſhines forth in Chriſt his Son.

Obſerve, *And the expreſs image of his perſon*,——

That is, the expreſs character of God the Father's perſon, his natural image, and eſſential likeneſs; all the perfections ſhining forth in God the Father, are ſubſtantially in Chriſt the Son: Is the Father eternal, omnipotent, omniſcient, omnipreſent? So is the Son, whoſe character he is, whoſe reſemblance and image he bears; John x. 38. *The Father is in me, and I in him*; the ſame eſſential properties and nature being in each perſon, by virtue thereof their perſons are ſaid to be in each other. All the glorious perfections of the nature of God do belong unto, and dwell in the perſon of the Son of God. *Obſerve*, 2. Our apoſtle having declared what Chriſt is, next declares what he does; namely, that he *upholdeth all things by the word of his power*; that is, he exerts and puts forth the ſame omnipotent power in the work of preſervation, which he did in the work of creation, keeping it from ſinking into its original chaos of confuſion. This work of conſervation, ſay ſome, is a greater act of omnipotency than that of creation; by the *former*, all things were brought out of nothing, by the *latter*, they are preſerved from returning into nothing, which their own nature, and their perpetual conflict, by contrariety of qualities, would neceſſarily precipitate them into. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch is the nature and condition of the univerſe, that it cannot ſubſiſt one moment without continual ſupport; ſuch is the dependent condition of the whole creation. 2. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has the weight of the whole creation upon his hand, he upholdeth what himſelf created: and as well his upholding as creating, his conſervation as well as creation of all things by the word of his power, do prove him truly and really God. *Obſerve*, 3. A farther evidence and proof of the divinity of Chriſt, produced here by our apoſtle; as he made the world by his omnipotent power, and upholds it by his wonderful providence, ſo he redeemed it by his blood, *He by himſelf purged our ſins.* He that made the heavens, bowed the heavens, and came down from heaven, and became a ſacrifice for ſin on earth, and *by himſelf* alone, by himſelf without a partner, by himſelf without a comforter, expiated the guilt of ſin, and ſatisfied the juſtice of God for ſin, ſuffering as he was man, and ſatisfying as he was God, *who by himſelf purged our ſins.* *Learn* hence, That ſo great was the work of expiation of ſin, that it could no otherwiſe be really effected and accompliſhed, than by the ſacrifice and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, who was truly and really God. 4. The conſequent of all that Chriſt did, or his glorious condition after his humiliation, having *having purged our ſins, he ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high*; that is, God the Father clothed him with the higheſt honour, and endowed him with the greateſt power that heaven itſelf could afford; the right-hand is the place both of dignity and honour, and alſo of ſuperiority and power: Chriſt's ſitting at God's right hand imports his exaltation to the higheſt authority and moſt ſupreme dominion. *Learn* hence, That when our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had finiſhed his ſufferings upon earth, he was placed in the ſeat of the higheſt honour and authority, at the right-hand of God his Father in heaven, even to be the object of adoration both to angels and men, as the following verſes declare, in which our apoſtle thus ſpeaks:

4 Being made ſo much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee! And again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son. 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firſt begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him.

In the foregoing verſes, a compariſon was made between Chriſt and the prophets, here between Chriſt and the angels, and the preference and pre-eminence is given to him above them all. Angels were very glorious creatures, employed by God in giving of the law; but Chriſt whom God the Father employed in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, is far ſuperior to them, and has an excellency above them. 1. *A more excellent name*, they being called miniſters or ſervants, he ſtiled *a Son*. 2. A more excellent nature, his being a divine, theirs an angelical nature: yea, his human nature, by virtue of its union with the Godhead, has a dignity ſurpaſſing the nature of angels. 3. A more excellent office and function, as Mediator between God and man, which belongs not to any angel. And, 4. Conſequently a more excellent power and authority, with a right to adoration and worſhip, which the angels have not, but are commanded to worſhip him, *When he brought his firſt-begotten into the world*, that is, in the morning of the reſurrection, when he was in a glorious manner begotten from the dead; the Father ſays, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him*; and therefore he that is to be worſhipped, is greater than they that are to worſhip him. *Learn* 1. That the evidencing and declaring of Chriſt to be the Son of God, was the particular care and ſpecial work of God the Father; he ſaid it, he recorded it, he revealed it: *Thou art my Son.* 2. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Mediator of the new covenant, is, in his own perſon, God bleſſed for ever, to whom divine honour and religious worſhip is due and payable from glorified angels: *Let all the angels of God worſhip him.* 3. That the command of God is the ground and reaſon of all religious worſhip; the angels are to worſhip Chriſt, but the ground of their doing it is God's command; *He ſaith, Let all the angels of God worſhip him.* 4. That it can be no part of our duty to worſhip the angels, who are our fellow-ſervants in the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt; they that are to worſhip Chriſt with us ſurely are not to be worſhipped by us.

7 And of the angels he ſaith, who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son *he ſaith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a ſceptre of righteouſneſs *is* the ſceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity: therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.

Still our apoſtle goes on, comparing Chriſt and the angels together, and giving a tranſcendent preference to the one before the other. The angels are miniſtering ſervants, but Chriſt a Son; the angels are the prime inſtruments of the Father's providence, moſt zealous and active to accompliſh his pleaſure, but the Son is God; *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* God, not by analogy and deputation, as princes are, nor with a limitation and dimunition, as Moſes was made a god to Pharaoh, but abſolutely and really, as ſubſiſting in the divine nature; to the Son he ſaith, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* *Learn* hence, That it is the divine nature of Jeſus Chriſt that gives ſtability and fixedneſs, yea, immutability and unchangeableneſs to his throne and kingdom; *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And whereas the ſceptres of earthly kingdoms are often unrighteouſly managed, and their thrones do ruinouſly fall, the ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of Chriſt's kingdom; that is, all the laws, and the whole adminiſtration of his kingdom by his word and Spirit, are all juſt and equal, righteous and holy; *A ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* And, farther, the apoſtle declares, that the righteous adminiſtration of Chriſt in his kingdom, proceeds from his own habitual righteouſneſs and love thereunto: *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity*, and for that reaſon was dignified and exalted by God over and above all his fellows. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator, becauſe of his love to righteouſneſs, and hatred to ſin, is dignified and advanced by God, not only above all men, but likewiſe above all angels. *Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee above thy fellows.*

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands. 11 They ſhall periſh; but thou remaineſt: and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.

What proof more can be deſired of Chriſt's Divinity, than what is here given by our apoſtle? the name and attributes of God are given to him, as alſo an everlaſting throne and kingdom; divine honour is required to be paid to him: and here ſuch divine works are aſcribed to him, wherein no creature can have any ſhare of efficiency with him: ſuch is the making of the world, *Thou, Lord, laidſt the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands:* Here we have Chriſt's omnipotency declared, *Thou haſt laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are thy handyworks*; and his eternity and immutability aſſerted, *When the heavens periſh, thou remaineſt; when they wax old, and are changed, thou art the ſame.* *Learn* hence, That the whole world, the heavens and the earth being made by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is an evident proof that he is exalted above all creatures, and that he is an almighty and unchangeable God, *Thou, Lord, haſt laid*, &c. 2. That ſuch is the frailty of man's nature, and ſuch the periſhing condition of all created things, that nothing will or can yield ſtable conſolation to us, but a firm belief of the omnipotency and immutability of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

13 But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool?

This verſe contains a farther proof of Chriſt's pre-eminence above the angels, and that he is in reality the Son of God; namely, becauſe he ſits, in the quality of a Son, at the right hand of God the Father; equal to him in dignity, power, and glory, commanding all the viſible and inviſible world, moſt eaſily, yet irreſiſtably; though gradually ſubduing his enemies to a conſummate and complete victory. *To which of the angels ſaid he at any time?* The words are an interrogation, which have the force of a vehement negation, and imply, that God the Father did never ſay this to any of the angels, nor put ſuch honour upon any of them, as to ſay, Sit on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footſtool; but to Chriſt he ſaid it, Pſal. cx. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool.* *Learn* hence, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt is a ſpiritual king; and as ſuch has many enemies to his kingdom and government. Sin is an enemy to Chriſt and his kingdom; and makes an univerſal oppoſition to Chriſt and his government. Satan is a ſworn enemy to Chriſt and his throne, and he exerts his enmity by temptations and perſecutions. The world is an enemy alſo in the things of it, in the men of it, in the rule of it. The law is an enemy to Chriſt and his kingdom, not abſolutely, but accidentally, by reaſon of the conſequences that attend it: it ſlays them, Rom. vii. 9, 10, 11. which is the work of an enemy: In a word, death, the grave, and hell, are Chriſt's enemies. 2. That all Chriſt's enemies ſhall, in Chriſt's time, be made his footſtool; they are conquering now initially and gradually, they ſhall be conquered ere long finally and perfectly; and all his people ſhall be made complete ſharers in his victory and conqueſt. 3. That Chriſt's ſitting at God's right hand, in a certain and aſſured expectation of having his foes become his footſtool, is an undoubted proof of the Divinity of his perſon, and that he is eſſentially and really God. To none of the angels, or any of the creatures, ſaid he, at any time, Sit on my right hand; but to the Son he ſaid, *Sit on my right hand*, &c.

14 Are they not all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?

This is the laſt teſtimony produced by the apoſtle to prove Chriſt's pre-eminency above the angels: He is a Son, they are but ſervants; not only ſervants to Chriſt, but ſervants to believers, to the church of Chriſt, to the heirs of ſalvation. *Obſerve* here, 1. The nature of angels declared; they are ſpirits, without any thing material or corporeal belonging to them, yet having a power to aſſume a body, and appear in human ſhape, when they pleaſe. The ſcripture deſcribes them as excelling in ſtrength, purity, and holineſs, to be of great activity and ſwiftneſs, and gives intimation of ſeveral ranks and orders among them, diſtinguiſhing them by the names of principalities and powers, thrones and dominions; but what the difference of theſe names do import, none can poſitively declare. 2. Their general office declared. They are *miniſtering ſpirits*, they are God's domeſtic ſervants, they attend upon his throne, they expect his commands, they execute his pleaſure, and are in a conſtant readineſs to do his will. The angels are the great inſtruments of providence in the world; not that God needs them, or cannot manage without them; for he can do whatever he pleaſeth in heaven and earth. God can ſteer all human affairs with the leaſt nod and beck of his will, without any inſtruments at all; but his wiſdom and goodneſs thinks fit to honour his creatures with his commands, that ſo they may be capable of his favour and rewards. 3. The ſpecial office and employment of good angels, with reference to good men: They are ſent forth, there is their deſignation and appointment, *to miniſter*, that is their general end and employment, *for the heirs of ſalvation*, that is their more ſpecial and peculiar buſineſs; they have a charge of the bodies and ſouls of the ſaints whilſt alive; a ſpecial charge of their ſouls at death, to conduct them to bleſſedneſs, and probably a care and charge of their bodies after death, as may be gathered from St. Jude, ver. 9. *Learn* hence, 1. That the higheſt honour of the moſt glorious angels in heaven, is to miniſter to the ſaints by God's appointment here on earth. 2. That ſuch is the love and care of God towards his ſaints, that he ſends the moſt glorious attendants upon his own throne, to miniſter unto them and to take care of them. Behold then the aſtoniſhing regard which the great God has for good men, in that he appoints all his angels to miniſter to them, for the ſafeguard of their perſons, for the ſucceſs of their affairs, and for the ſecurity of their eternal ſalvation. Lord! what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him; that when thou madeſt him lower than the angels, thou ſhouldeſt yet make the angels miniſter unto him? Behold alſo the impiety of the church of Rome, in worſhipping of angels: Surely, if they are our fellow-ſervants, and miniſter unto us, we are by no means to worſhip them. See Rev. xix. 10.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle having proved his propoſition, namely, that Chriſt, the diſpenſer of the goſpel, was not only above Moſes the deliverer of the law, but far ſuperior to the angels themſelves; he comes, in this chapter, to draw an inference from his foregoing diſcourſe.

THEREFORE we ought to give the moſt earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let *them* ſlip.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing Chriſt is ſo excellent in his perſon, and ſeeing the goſpel has ſuch a glorious author as the bleſſed Jeſus, let us take great heed that we eſteem his perſon, revere his authority, reverence his miniſtry and his meſſage, and that our memories be not like leaking veſſels, ſuffering the word at any time to ſlip and run from us. *Learn* hence, 1. That the conſideration of the revelation of the goſpel of the Son of God, is a powerful motive to an high eſtimation of it, and a diligent attendance on it. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed*; that is, knowing the excellency of his perſon, and ſublimity of his doctrine. 2. That the true and only way of honouring our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Son of God, is by diligent attendance and obedience to his word: Where there is no obedience to the goſpel, there is no faith in, nor love unto Jeſus Chriſt, the author and diſpenſer of the goſpel. *Learn* 3. That there are ſundry times and ſeaſons wherein, and ſeveral ways and means whereby men are in great danger of loſing the word if they attend not diligently to its preſervation: *Leſt at any time*, ſome loſe the word in a time of proſperity others in a time of perſecution, ſome in a time of temptation. *Learn*, 4. That the word heard is not loſt without great ſin, as well as with the inevitable ruin of the ſouls of men; if we ſuffer the word to ſlip out of our memories, that we forget it; out of our hearts, that we deſpiſe it; out of our lives, that we are diſobedient to it; it is loſt as to us, and will end in our loſs, yea, in our ruin at the laſt. 5. That the only way to prevent this ſin and danger, under the word, is by a very diligent attendance upon it, and giving more earneſt heed to the things contained in it; we are to attend to the word before we hear, to bring us to it: to attend upon it in hearing, that it may be remembered by us; and and after we have heard it, that it may be practiſed by us. This conſideration, That it is the word of Chriſt, the great and mighty God, the wiſdom of the Father, that we are going to hear, will engage us to give the more earneſt heed to the things we hear, *Leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip.*

2 For if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; 3 How ſhall we eſcape we neglect ſo great ſalvation,—

The apoſtle having ſet forth the tranſcendent dignity of Chriſt's perſon and office, and ſhewn that he was a more excellent prophet than Moſes, a more excellent prieſt than Aaron, a more excellent king than Melchiſedec, hereupon he infers, that ſuch as deſpiſe the goſpel, the doctrine of this bleſſed Jeſus are far more inexcuſable than thoſe that were the tranſgreſſors of the law of Moſes, *If the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt*: that is, if the law given by the miniſtry of angels was firm and inviolable, and all the tranſgreſſors of it were juſtly and ſeverely puniſhed; how can we eſcape periſhing, if we neglect the goſpel, which makes a diſcovery of that great ſalvation which was purchaſed by Chriſt for loſt ſinners? The apoſtle's argument is drawn *(a minori ad majus)* from the leſs to the greater. Thus if Almighty God was ſo ſevere againſt the violation of a far meaner inſtitution, to wit, the law given by the miniſtry and diſpenſation of angels, how can we eſcape, that neglect to hear and obey the goſpel, which makes a tender, yea, the only tender of ſalvation to a loſt world? *Note* here, 1. The great care which God Almighty takes to make loſt ſinners happy: namely, by offering them a great ſalvation. 2. The great care which every one of us ought to take in order to our own happineſs and ſalvation, and that is, not to *neglect* it. 3. The great guilt which they contract, and the inevitable puniſhment God will inflict on ſuch as do neglect this great ſalvation, *How ſhall they eſcape? Learn* hence, 1. That there is a ſalvation held forth and tendered by Chriſt to loſt ſinners, in the goſpel. That this ſalvation thus held forth and tendered unto ſinners, is a great ſalvation; *great* in its author, Chriſt Jeſus; *great* in the price paid for it, the blood of Jeſus; *great* in the ſubject recipient of it, the whole man, ſoul and body; *great* in regard of the evils it ſaves us from, ſin, Satan, the curſe of the law, death and hell; *great* in reſpect of the gracious privileges it intereſts believers in. 2. That notwithſtanding this ſalvation is ſo great, yet there are ſome that neglect it. 3. That it is impoſſible for ſuch neglecters to eſcape. *Queſt.* 1. What ſhall they not eſcape? *Anſ.* The curſe of the law, the wrath of God, the ſentence of Chriſt denounced, and the ſentence of Chriſt inflicted. *Queſt.* 2. Why ſhall they not eſcape? *Anſ.* Becauſe ſuch perſons ſin againſt the remedy, the only remedy which the wiſdom of God hath found out for man's recovery; and accordingly, the mouth of God hath ſpoken it, the hand of God hath written it;

and the oath of God has confirmed it, that ſuch ſinners ſhall not eſcape; ſuch as ſin againſt the remedy muſt periſh without the remedy.

——Which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; 4 God alſo bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

Here we have a ſpecial reaſon aſſigned, why ſuch as reject the goſpel cannot eſcape divine wrath, becauſe the goſpel was firſt publiſhed and delivered by Jeſus Chriſt; it was clearly, plainly, ſweetly, and perſuaſively preached by himſelf firſt. The law was promulgated by angels, the goſpel proclaimed by the Son of God, and afterwards by his apoſtles; and God confirmed their teſtimony by *ſigns and wonders*, by miraculous powers, and *gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt: All which did ſignify God's approbation of their doctrine, and gave the world a confirmation of the truth and excellency of it, and conſequently gave credibility to it. Here *note*, That as the law of Moſes was confirmed by miracles, ſo was the goſpel of Jeſus alſo: nay, herein this was ſuperior to that. Moſes wrought ſigns and wonders, but the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were peculiar to the times of the Meſſiah, and were the proper confirmation of the goſpel diſpenſation. Yet *note* farther, That though the apoſtles had a power to work miracles, yet it was *according to God's will*, and not at their own pleaſure; they could not work miracles when they pleaſed, nor what they pleaſed: Whence it was evident, that not they, but God was the worker of them. And the more God's over-ruling will was ſeen in the miracles *then*, the greater confirmation have we of that doctrine *now*: *Which* (goſpel) *was at firſt ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by divers-miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.*

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak. 6 But one in a certain place teſtified, ſaying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him? 7 Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedſt him with glory and honour, and didſt ſet him over the works; of thy hands:

Still our apoſtle proſecutes his former deſign, which was to perſuade the Hebrews, that more heed is to be given to the word of Chriſt, the doctrine of the goſpel, than to the word or law delivered by angels, becauſe God had given a greater authority to Chriſt than ever he did to the angels, as appears by putting the world to come in ſubjection to Chriſt, and not to angels; yea, inaſmuch as angels themſelves are to be in ſubjection unto Chriſt, as a part of his kingdom, *Unto the angels hath he not put into ſubjection the world to come?* that is, the world of believers, gathered out of all nations by the preaching of the goſpel, is put under Chriſt's immediate power, and ſubject not to angels, but to Chriſt himſelf. *Learn* hence, That it is the great privilege of the goſpel-church, that it depends upon Chriſt as its immediate and only Head, and is not put in ſubjection to any other, either angels or men. The goſpel-church was not put in ſubjection to angels in its firſt erection or inſtitution, nor was it put into ſubjection unto angels, as to the rule and government of it when erected; but angels and ſaints are equally ſubjected unto Chriſt, who is both an head of vital influence, as alſo an head of authority, rule, and government to the whole church, and every member thereof. *Obſerve* next, the proof which the apoſtle brings for this out of the Pſalms, Pſalm viii. in which David breaks forth into admiration and wonder, at that glory and honour which God the Father put upon man at firſt in the work of creation, and next in the work of redemption: When the Son of God took the nature of man upon him, well might it then be ſaid, *Lord! What is man that thou* wert thus *mindful of him, and the* ſons of men, that thy dear and only Son did thus viſit them? *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch was the inconceivable love of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, towards the ſons of men, that he was free and willing to condeſcend unto any condition for their benefit and ſalvation: He that was the Creator of angels, was willing for our ſakes, to be made lower than the angels, *a little lower*, that is, for a little time lower than the angels, namely, during the time of his humiliation. 2. That this wonderful condeſcenſion of Chriſt to take the nature of man, his reſpect and care, his love and grace towards mankind, is juſt matter of great and eternal admiration. Oh! What is man that thou art mindful of him, and crownedſt him with dignity and glory.

8 Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we ſee not yet all things put under him.

We had an account of the depth of our Lord's humiliation before, of the heighth of his exaltation now, all things are and ſhall be put under him: for though God has given Chriſt dominion over all things, and all things are ſubject to his power, yet he hath not as yet exerciſed his complete power in ruining all his enemies, and reducing all his people to ſubjection; and this will not be ſeen until the laſt *ſaint* be converted, and until death, the laſt enemy, be deſtroyed. But yet, in the mean time, Chriſt is exalted with great triumph to his kingdom in heaven, and there crowned with dignity and honour, and glory in heaven. It is eaſy to believe, that every thing ſhall be put under him that riſeth up againſt him, in his own appointed time.

9 But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.

Obſerve here, 1. The wonderful humiliation and abaſement, the exinanition and deep depreſſion of the glorious Jeſus; he was made for a little time *lower than the angels*; that is, he was made man, and mortal, and did ſuffer death; 2. The manner of our Lord's death, *He taſted it*, he did really taſte of it, and but taſte of it; he taſted death;

that is, he died really and not in appearance only, he taſted it. Implying, that he underwent the bitterneſs of it. He found out experimentally what death was by dying, as a man finds out the bitterneſs of a thing by taſting. Again, he did but taſte of it, he was not finally overcome and vanquiſhed by it; he continued but a ſhort time under it, it was not poſſible that he ſhould be long holden of it; the dignity of his perſon rendered a ſhort continuance of him under the power of death ſufficient for our redemption. 3. The perſons for whom he taſted death or died; for others, not for himſelf; that is, for their room and ſtead; he underwent that death in our ſtead, which we ſhould have undergone in our own perſons. 4. The extent of Chriſt's death, he taſted death *for every man*; that is, Chriſt by his death has made God propitious to every man, made ſin remiſſible and every man ſaveable: The death of Chriſt renders God willing to be reconciled unto all ſinners; faith renders him actually reconciled. The reaſon why every man doth not obtain ſalvation, is not for want of a ſufficient propitiation. 5. The moving cauſe which inclined God to deliver up Chriſt to death, and to transfer our puniſhment upon him, and that was his own grace and free good-will, *That he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.* 6. The glorious reward of our Lord's ſufferings with reference to himſelf, *We ſee Jeſus, for ſuffering death, crowned with glory and honour.* As Chriſt's meritorious ſufferings for us, ſo ſhall our patient ſuffering for him be rewarded with the higheſt glory in heaven, 1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of all grace who hath called us into his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after ye have ſuffer a while, make ye perfect*, &c.

10 For it became him for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings.

Obſerve here, 1. The gracious title given to Chriſt, *the Captain of our ſalvation*; becauſe the whole work of ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, our guidance and conduct through ſin and ſuffering, unto glory and happineſs, is committed to him. As a captain he conducts with care, he leads on with power, he diſcharges his truſt with tenderneſs and love: He goes before us in obedience, in ſuffering through death, and into glory. 2. That God made Jeſus Chriſt the captain of our ſalvation perfect through ſuffering; that is, he was conſecrated and ſet apart for the office of a complete prieſt by his own blood, when he offered himſelf without ſpot to God. Every Levitical prieſt was conſecrated by the blood of a beaſt, ſacrificed; Chriſt was conſecrated by his own blood, for no other blood would be accepted. It is called the Father's act to conſecrate and make him perfect; but indeed it was the Son's own immediate act; the Father's by deſignation and appointment, but his own by actual performance, offering himſelf through the eternal Spirit without ſpot. 3. That Chriſt being conſecrated and perfected through ſufferings, hath conſecrated the way of ſuffering, for all that follow him to paſs through it into glory. Upon this conſecration of the way of ſuffering by Chriſt Jeſus, a believer's ſuffering becomes, 1. Neceſſary and unavoidable; the head and the members muſt be made conformable to each other, Rom. viii. 29. They are thereby made. 2. Uſeful and profitable; Chriſt has taken the curſe out of the croſs, and ſanctified the croſs to a ſpecial end and purpoſe; hereby likewiſe all ſufferings for the goſpel are. 3. Made honourable; no greater honour than to ſuffer for Chriſt, Acts v. 41. *The apoſtles rejoiced that they had the honour to ſuffer ſhame for his name.* And laſtly, ſufferings hereby are made ſafe to the ſons of God, yea, more ſafe than proſperity by far. Gold is not conſumed, but improved and preſerved in the furnace. *Obſerve*, 4. That ſuch is the merit and deſert of ſin, and ſuch the immutability and ſeverity of the juſtice of God, that there was no way poſſible to bring ſinners unto glory, but by the death and ſufferings of the Son of God; or, if poſſible, yet no other way ſo becoming God, *it became him for whom are all things*; and ſo expreſſive of his love and goodneſs to a loſt world, it would have been unbecoming God, the ſupreme Governor of the world, to have paſſed by the deſert of ſin, without a ſatisfaction; therefore his wiſdom contrived that grace ſhould be exerciſed, and juſtice ſatisfied, that ſin ſhould be puniſhed, and mercy magnified; that ſinners ſhould be ſaved and the glory of all God's attributes ſecured.

11 For both he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, *are* all of one. For which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my truſt in him. And again, behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.

In theſe words, the union of Chriſt and us, by his participation of the ſame nature with us, is declared: he and we *are all of one*; that is, of one and the ſame nature, of one ſtock and original; it was the product of the wiſe, merciful, and righteous counſel of God, that the Saviour of men ſhould have communion with them in their nature, that he might have right to redeem them by his propinquity and alliance with them; *Both he that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified are all of one.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was, and ought to be of the ſame nature and ſtock with thoſe whom he did redeem, and ſanctify unto God. Divine juſtice required, that the ſame nature which had ſinned ſhould ſuffer for ſin. The wiſdom of God was pleaſed to redeem man: Man muſt be redeemed by man: God as God could not die, therefore God becomes man, that he might be in a capacity to die; he that as man will redeem man, muſt be of the ſame nature with man. This Chriſt was, both by divine inſtitution, and by a voluntary ſuſception; *He that ſanctifieth, aud they that are ſanctified, are all of one.* 2. That Chriſt, having taken our nature upon him, accounts it no diſgrace to acknowledge and own us for his brethren; Chriſt will be aſhamed of none of his brethren but ſuch as are a ſhame unto him. 3. That notwithſtanding the union of nature which is betwixt Chriſt and us, yet in reſpect of our perſons, there is an inconceiveable diſtance between him and us: ſo that it is a marvellous condeſcenſion in him to call us brethren. Here *note*, That though Chriſt calls us brethren, yet it becomes us to call him Lord; and as ſuch to adore and worſhip him, to glorify and ſerve him, to honour and obey him.

14 Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame; that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.

Obſerve here, 1. The reality of Chriſt's aſſuming the human nature aſſerted: *As the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame.* Which is in effect the ſame he had aſſerted in the foregoing verſe, that *He that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified, are all of one*; that is, of one nature and original. 2. A twofold reaſon aſſigned, why Chriſt thus condeſcendingly aſſumed the human nature, namely, that he might deſtroy the devil, who had the power of death, and deliver his people that were under the ſlaviſh fear of death. Firſt, That he might deſtroy him that had the power of death. Here *note*, 1. The devil deſcribed in a very formidable manner, as one that had *the power of death*; not the ſupreme, but a ſubordinate power of death; a power of death as God's executioner to inflict it; the devil has the power of death, juſt as the hangman has the power of the gallows, to put thoſe to death whom the judge condemns only. 2. Him that has thus the power of death has Chriſt deſtroyed, that is, diſarmed and diſabled, not deſtroyed his being, but diſarmed him of his power and authority over the children of God. 3. That Chriſt did this by his own death; through death, that is, by his own dying, he deſtroyed him that had the power of death: It was upon the croſs that he ſpoiled principalities and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly; Chriſt by dying conquered death. The ſecond reaſon of Chriſt's appearing in our fleſh and nature, was to deliver his people from the ſlavery and bondage of the ſinful and ſervile fears of death. Here *note*, 1. That there is a natural fear of death which is not ſinful: Art thou afraid of death? Thou were not a man if thou didſt not fear it: There cannot but be in nature an averſion to its own diſſolution: and nature will always act like itſelf. 2. That there is a ſervile ſlaviſh fear of death, which hath both ſin and torment in it: A fear of death as penal, and drawing after it everlaſting puniſhment. 3. That unregenerate men, if a ſenſeleſs ſtupidity has not benumbed them, and a ſpirit of ſlumber fallen upon them, are in bondage under the ſervile and ſlaviſh fear of death. It will daunt the ſtouteſt man that ever lived to look upon death, when he can ſee nothing but hell beyond it. 4. That Jeſus Chriſt, by dying, has freed all his children from this ſervile and tormenting fear of death. 1. Chriſt has taken away the true reaſon of the fear of death, namely, the curſe and condemnation of the law of God, *The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law*; death has its wounding power from ſin, and ſin hath its condemning power from the law. 2. Chriſt hath aſſured believers that they ſhall not be loſers, but gainers, yea, great gainers by death, conſidering the private evils freed from, and the poſitive good they ſhall reſt in.

16 For verily he took not on him *the nature of* angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.

It may be rendered from the original thus: *He catched not hold on angels, but on man he catched hold.* A metaphor taken from a perſon that catches hold of another who is falling down ſome deep and dangerous precipice, to his inevitable deſtruction: Such a good and kind office did the Son of God for us, when he ſuffered angels to fall headlong from that ſtate of happineſs in which they were created, into that abyſs and gulph of miſery into which they had plunged themſelves by their voluntary tranſgreſſion; the like unto which had man alſo done, had he not been ſeaſonably catched by the Son of God in the arms of preventing grace and mercy. *Learn*, That it was not the angelical, but the human nature: It was the nature of fallen man, and not of lapſed angels, which the Son of God did vouchſafe to aſſume, and take into a perſonal union with his God-head. *Queſt.* Why would not Chriſt take upon him the nature of angels? Probably, becauſe they were the firſt tranſgreſſors, and God might judge it decent that the firſt breach of the divine law ſhould be puniſhed with death, to ſecure obedience for the future: Or, 2. Becauſe the angels ſinned without a tempter, they had no ſuperior rank of creatures already fallen, as man had, to ſeduce and draw them from their obedience to the Creator's will: Or, 3. Becauſe the angels ſinned againſt more clear and convictive light and knowledge; there was nothing of weakneſs, deceit, or ignorance, to leſſen the malignity of their ſin: they did not ſin by miſperſuaſion, but of purpoſed malice. But, after all, the reaſon why Chriſt took not hold on angels, but on man, the ſeed of Abraham, muſt be ultimately reſolved into the ſovereignty of God's will, who will be merciful to whom he will be merciful. Lord! why mercy, thy milder attribute, ſhould be exerciſed towards man, and juſtice, thy ſeverer attribute, be executed upon angels! Why veſſels of clay are choſen, and veſſels of gold rejected, muſt be reſolved into that love which paſſes knowledge! And we ſhall never fully underſtand the riches of this indiſcriminating grace, until thy dear Son ſhall appear at the great day as their Judge, and our Juſtifier. Then ſhall we feel the comfort of theſe words, that *Chriſt took not upon him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham.*

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people. 18 For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.

In theſe verſes our apoſtle illuſtrates what he had taught before, and confirms his foregoing propoſition concerning Chriſt's participating of fleſh and blood, and acquaints us here with one ſpecial end of it, namely, to be ſuch an High Prieſt as our exigencies and neceſſities did require: For we being perſons obnoxious to temptations and ſufferings of all ſorts, the wiſdom of God, and the nature of the thing required it, that Chriſt our great High Prieſt, ſhould in a ſpecial manner be able to relieve and help us:

In order to this, *Obſerve*, 1. How our apoſtle reports and re-aſſerts, that Chriſt was *in all things*, or every manner of way, *made like unto his brethren*; that is he aſſumed the human nature with all its eſſential properties, ſubjected to temptations and ſufferings, but not to ſin, for that would have been ſo far from conducing to the end aimed at, that it would have been utterly deſtructive of it. Had he been himſelf a ſinner, he could never have ſatisfied the juſtice of God for our ſins. 2. The general end of Chriſt's conformity to his brethren; namely, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt. That he might be our Prieſt, it was neceſſary that he ſhould partake of our nature; for every high prieſt for men muſt be taken from among men; this is not work for an angel, nor for God himſelf as ſuch: And that he might be our *merciful and faithful* High Prieſt, he was ſubject to *ſufferings* and *temptations*. With great condolency and tender ſympathy doth he exerciſe acts of mercy and compaſion towards the human nature; and thus was he merciful, and with great condeſcenſion and care doth he take notice of all the concernments of his brethren under wants and ſorrows, under all their temptations and ſufferings: And thus is he our faithful as well as merciful High Prieſt. *Learn* hence, That ſuch was the unſpeakable love of Chriſt towards his brethren, that he would refuſe no condition of life, neither ſufferings nor temptations, to fit him for the diſcharge of his office, which he had undertaken for them. Chriſt ſuffered, and was tempted, that he might ſuccour them that are tempted: He ſuffered under all his temptations, but ſinned in none; he ſuffered being tempted; but ſinned not, being tempted. 3. The ſpecial deſign and end of Chriſt's being our great High Prieſt; namely, *To make reconciliation for the ſins of the people.* From whence *learn*, That the principal work of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our great High Prieſt, and from which all other actings of his in that office do flow, was to make reconciliation or atonement for ſin; his interceſſion in heaven is founded on earth. The Socinians therefore, who deny the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, and his dying as a propitiation, or propitiatory ſacrifice for ſin, taking from us our hopes and happineſs: from Chriſt, his office and honour; from God, his grace and glory; they do indeed allow of a reconciliation in words, but it is of men to God, and not of God to men: They plead the expediency of our being reconciled to God by faith and obedience, but deny the neceſſity of God's being reconciled to us by ſacrifice, ſatisfaction, and atonement; ſo reſolved are theſe men to be as little as may be beholden to Jeſus Chriſt, that rather than grant that he has made any reconciliation for us by his blood, they deny that there was any need of ſuch a reconciliation at all, never conſidering the inflexibility of God's juſtice, nor the impartiality of his indignation againſt ſin. Oh! the depths of Satan; and Oh! the ſtupidity and blindneſs of thoſe men that are taken captive by him at his pleaſure.

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing chapters, aſſerted the doctrine of our Saviour's prieſthood, according to his conſtant method, he comes in this chapter to make application to that doctrine which he had declared and confirmed, that ſeeing Chriſt was ſo highly dignified and exalted, being the apoſtle and High Prieſt of our profeſſion, we ſhould diligently conſider *him both what he is in himſelf, and what he is to us. This* teaches *us, that all the doctrines of the goſpel, eſpecially thoſe concerning the perſons and offices of Jeſus Chriſt, ought to be improved by us unto practice and obedience.*

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, conſider the apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus.

Theſe words are an exhortation to the believing Hebrews, to *conſider* and ponder in their hearts the high dignity and excellency of Chriſt, as the great Prophet and Apoſtle of his church: and in them, *Obſerve*, 1. The title given to the Hebrews, unto whom the exhortation is directed; he ſtiles them, 1. *Holy brethren*, ſo they were all by external profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by internal ſanctification. *Learn* hence, That all the profeſſors of the goſpel are obliged to be holy, and ſuch as are real profeſſors of it, are ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, and made truly and really holy. 2. *Partakers of the heavenly calling*; that is, of that calling from heaven which makes you heirs of heaven, implying, that the only way to attain the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt in the goſpel, is by means of an effectual heavenly calling. *Obſerve*, 2. The duty exhorted to, and that is diligent conſideration, *Conſider Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, rationally attend unto, and with great intention of mind ponder upon the undertaking of the Son of God: For if you conſider him in his perſon and offices, you will firmly adhere to him and his moſt holy and excellent religion, without entanglements unto Judaiſm. *Learn* thence, That the ſpiritual and deep myſteries of the goſpel, eſpecially thoſe which concern the perſon and offices of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, do require our deep and diligent, our moſt attentive conſideration. *Obſerve*, 3. The title given to Jeſus Chriſt, the object of this conſideration, he is ſtiled the *Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our profeſſion*: that is, the firſt and chief apoſtle ſent of God to be the prime preacher of the goſpel, the firſt legate ſent from heaven, and the great High Prieſt that mediates between God and man. Here *note*, That the function of an Apoſtle and High Prieſt were the greateſt functions that ever God inſtituted in his church: None greater than an High Prieſt under the law, none greater than an apoſtle under the goſpel, both of them never conjoined in one man but here. *Learn* hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is all in all unto his church, the King, Prieſt, Prophet and Apoſtle of it, all in one: *Conſider the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our profeſſion.*

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo Moſes *was faithful* in all his houſe.

Becauſe the Jews had generally too high an opinion of Moſes, our apoſtle here enters upon a compariſon between Chriſt and Moſes, thus; " As Moſes was faithful, ſo was Chriſt in declaring the will, the whole will of God unto his church. Was Moſes univerſally faithful, faithful in all his houſe? So did the faithfulneſs of Chriſt extend itſelf to all the church. Did Moſes do every thing according to the inſtitution and appointment of God? So was Chriſt faithful to him that appointed him, doing all that in and for the church, which God had commanded him, and nothing elſe." *Learn* hence, That the worſhip of God in his houſhold and family, the church, is, for the ſubſtance of it, no leſs perfectly and completely ordered and ordained by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, now under the goſpel, than it was by Moſes of old under the law; I ſay, as to the ſubſtance of it, not as to every particular circumſtance. As, for example, The manner of celebrating the paſſover, in every minute circumſtance of it, is ſet down by Moſes, how it muſt be killed, and how eaten; but Chriſt has not ſo ſet down for the ſacrament; a general command we have to do this in remembrance of him; but neither the time when, nor place where, nor geſture in which, is particularly and expreſsly mentioned. The goſpel, which teaches us a more ſpiritual way of ſerving God, is not ſo particular in the circumſtantials of worſhip as the law was, and yet *Chriſt was faithful to him that appointed him, as Moſes* &c.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, inaſmuch as he who hath builded the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe. 4 For every houſe is builded by ſome man: but he that builded all things *is* God. 5 And Moſes verily *was* faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after; 6 But Chriſt, as a Son over his own houſe: whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Our apoſtle having in the preceding verſes, entered upon a compariſon between Chriſt and Moſes, and ſhewed in general wherein they were alike and did agree; he proceeds now to evince the preference of Chriſt, and to ſhew in ſundry ſignal inſtances his exaltation above Moſes: *This Man*, meaning the Meſſiah, *was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes*, &c. As if he had ſaid, "Chriſt is as much more honourable than Moſes, as the maker and maſter of the houſe is more honourable than the houſe: He that buildeth the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe; but Chriſt built the houſe, and Moſes was only of the houſe, or a part of it; therefore Chriſt ought to have more honour than Moſes, for all families or houſes are founded by ſome man; but he that built the church is the ſame that made all things, namely, God." Another propoſition, proving the ſame concluſion, we have in the next verſes: thus, "He that is a ſon over his own houſe, is of more honour than a ſervant in the houſe of another. But Chriſt is a Son over his own houſe; Moſes was only a ſervant in the houſe of another; therefore more honour is due to Chriſt than is payable to Moſes. *Learn* hence, 1. That the church is God's houſe, a building of God, a ſacred building, his ſpecial temple, the place of his conſtant and fixed reſidence. 2. That the building of the church, is ſo great and glorious a work, as that it could not be effected by any but him who was truly and really God: Such is the wiſdom of its contrivance, that none but a God could build it, and ſuch omnipotent power was required in the building of it, that we may admire its excellency, but cannot comprehend it. 3. That Chriſt, the builder of this church, the houſe of God, is worthy of all glory and honour, upon the account of that his building; he had indeed an eſſential glory from all eternity, the ſame with that of God the Father, which was clouded for a ſeaſon, by his taking upon himſelf the form of a ſervant: but there is a farther honour and glory which he received in his exaltation as Head of the church, and as Lord and Heir of the whole creation, which renders him the object of religious adoration. 4. That although every one that is employed as an inſtrument in building the houſe of God, and is faithful in his work and truſt, is with Moſes worthy of great honour, yet the honour of all ſuch inſtruments put together, is inferior and ſubordinate to the glory and honour of Jeſus Chriſt, the chief builder of the church. *Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.* The apoſtle having thus confirmed his argument, returns (according to his uſual manner) to make application of it unto the Hebrews, and improves it for enforcement of his exhortation unto conſtancy and perſeverance. *Whoſe houſe are we*; that is, believers who worſhip him according to the goſpel are ſo, upon this condition, *that we hold faſt our confidence*; that is, the confident poſſeſſion of our Chriſtian faith, and the joy and glorying in our hopes of the promiſed bleſſedneſs unto the end. *Learn* hence, That as it is an eminent privilege to be of the houſe of Chriſt, or a part of that houſe, ſo the greatneſs of the privilege requires an anſwerable duty; becauſe we are the houſe of God, it becomes us to hold faſt our confidence unto the end. 2. That as at all times, ſo eſpecially in a time of trial and perſecution, conſtancy in our Chriſtian profeſſion, is and will be a good evidence, both to ourſelves and others, that we are living ſtones in the houſe of God: *His houſe we are, if we hold faſt our confidence unto the end.*

7 Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To-day, if you will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I ſware in my wrath, They ſhall not enter into my reſt.

The apoſtle having proved our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be the great Prophet and teacher of his church, doth in theſe words draw an inference from the foregoing concluſion; namely, that ſeeing Chriſt is the chief Apoſtle and Prophet of his church, ſeeing he was a teacher ſent of God to inſtruct the world in the practice of their reaſonable duty, that therefore it is our obliged duty to hearken to Chriſt's voice, and that now to comply with his call and that preſently: *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* *Obſerve* here, 1. The perſon ſpoke of, and that is Chriſt; *his voice*, that is, the voice of Chriſt our great Apoſtle, ſpeaking in his goſpel. 2. A duty required of us in reference to his perſon, and that is, to hear and obey Chriſt's voice. 3. The circumſtance of time, and the ſpecial ſeaſon when this duty of hearing Chriſt's voice is to be performed, and that is preſently: *To-day if you will hear his voice.* 4. A cautionary direction given to all thoſe that ſit under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, and hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to them therein; namely, to take heed that they *harden not their hearts.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the voice which ſpeaks unto us in and by the goſpel, is Chriſt's voice. 2. That it is the great duty of all thoſe that ſit under the preaching of the goſpel, to hear and obey Chriſt's voice. 3. That it is not only their duty to hear Chriſt's voice, and anſwer his call in the goſpel, but to do it *now*, to do it preſently, and without delay: *To-day if you will hear his voice.* 4. That it is the duty and ought to be the ſpecial care, of all thoſe that ſit under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, and that hear Chriſt's voice ſpeaking to them therein, to take heed that they harden not their hearts. *Obſerve*, laſtly, from our apoſtle's drawing an inſtance out of the Old Teſtament, namely, that of the Jews in the wilderneſs, to inſtruct the Hebrews to make uſe of the preſent ſeaſon for hearing the voice of Chriſt under the New Teſtament: we *learn*, that Old Teſtament examples are New Teſtament inſtructions. The examples of our fore-fathers are of uſe and concernment to us, and ought to be the objects of our deepeſt conſideration: *Your fathers tempted me, and I was grieved with that generation.*

12 Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

The apoſtle having propounded the example of the Iſraelites, in the foregoing verſes, to the conſideration of the Hebrews, here he adviſes them to take care that they do not imitate the old Iſraelites in their unbelief, which will endanger our revolt from God now, as it did their's then: *Take heed leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.* Where *note*, The nature of ſin in general, and of unbelief in particular, declared; it is a departure from God, from the living God; the root of all apoſtacy is curſed infidelity: Unbelief ſets all the corrupt luſts and affections of the heart at liberty to act according to their own perverſe nature and inclination; for it makes the ſoul negligent, careleſs, and ſlothful in oppoſing ſin. *Note* farther, That there is need of great care and heedfulneſs, of circumſpection and watchfulneſs, leſt at any time, or by any means, there ſhould be found in us an evil heart of unbelief, to occaſion our backſliding from Chriſt, and the profeſſion of our faith in him: *Take heed leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing*, &c.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called, To-day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

Theſe words afford us a ſpecial remedy againſt the forementioned evil of apoſtacy, and that is mutual exhortation to conſtancy of religion: *Exhort one another*, miniſters the people, and the people their miniſters, and themſelves mutually. *Learn* hence, That ſedulous and mutual exhortation is a ſpecial means to preſerve Chriſtians from the ſin and danger of apoſtacy from Chriſt, and his holy religion: *Exhort one another daily.* *Obſerve* next, How this duty is amplified by the properties of it, it muſt be frequent, *Exhort one another daily*; and ſeaſonably, *whilſt it is called to-day.* We have but an uncertain ſeaſon for the due performance of moſt certain duties; how long it will be called to-day, we know not; the day of life is uncertain, and ſo is the day of the goſpel; a ſummer's day for clearneſs, a winter's day for ſhortneſs; our working day is a waſting day. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The great peril and danger which attend the neglecters and neglecting of this duty, *Leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* *Learn* hence, That ſin is very full of deceit, or exceedingly deceitful. 2. That the deceit which is in ſin, and inſeparable from it, tends exceedingly to the hardening of the ſinner. There are three eminent evils in ſin: pollution, by which it defiles; baſeneſs, by which it diſhonours; deceitfulneſs, by which it deludes us with a falſe expectation of what it is never able to perform.

14 For we are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end;

That is, hereby we ſhall declare ourſelves to be made partakers of Chriſt and his ſaving benefits, if we perſevere in the faith of the goſpel, of which we have begun to make a profeſſion; intimating, That ſuch Chriſtians as do renounce the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, either through fear or flattery, were never made partakers of Chriſt, nor ſavingly united to him: No better evidence of our intereſt in Chriſt, than what perſeverance gives.

15 While it is ſaid, To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.
16 For ſome, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes.

The intention of our apoſtle in theſe and the following verſes, is to confirm his preceding exhortation, to hearken unto the voice of Chriſt, ſpeaking in and by the goſpel; and this he does by propounding the example of the Iſraelites, who came forth out of Egypt under the conduct of Moſes, and heard the voice of God in the wilderneſs; they all came out of Egypt under the conduct of Moſes, and heard the voice of God in the wilderneſs; howbeit all did not provoke, but only ſome. *Note* here, 1. How the apoſtle again repeateth over the words of the Pſalmiſt, which he had mentioned before, v. 7, 8. *To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* From whence we may learn, that the repetition, yea, frequent repetition of matters of moment, is very uſeful and neceſſary: We can never hear that too often, which we can never learn too well. *Note* farther, The privilege which the Iſraelites of old enjoyed in the wilderneſs, and which we now enjoy under the goſpel: Both theirs and ours is this, *To hear the voice of God.* This is a very great privilege, but privileges are as men uſe them; in themſelves they are very valuable, but unto us they are no more than as they are prized and improved by us. Many, yea, moſt of them to whom Chriſt himſelf preached, finally periſhed; they got nothing by hearing his doctrine, through their unbelief, but an aggravation of their ſins, and haſtening of their ruin. Chriſt himſelf, in his whole miniſtry, was a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael. Let not his miniſters then be diſcouraged at the ſmallneſs of their own ſucceſs, knowing that they ſhall be a ſweet ſavour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved. *Note* laſtly, That although many, very many in the wilderneſs that heard the voice of God, provoked him, yet not all, ver. 16. *Some when they heard, did provoke, howbeit, not all that came out of Egypt.* *Learn* hence, That in the moſt general and viſible apoſtacy of the church, God evermore reſerves a remnant to himſelf to bear witneſs for himſelf by their faith and obedience: *They provoked, howbeit not all.* God always has, and ever will reſerve a remnant of faithful and undefiled ſouls unto himſelf, to maintain and keep up his own kingdom in the world, and to have a revenue of ſpecial glory from them, and by them, ſo long as the world continues.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had ſinned, whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs? 18 And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not? 19 So we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.

Obſerve here, the party grieved, God; the parties grieving, *the people of Iſrael:* The time of both, *forty years*; the occaſion of this grief, ſin in general, unbelief in particular, hardneſs of heart, and final apoſtacy: the puniſhment of ſin, *their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs.* *Learn*, 1. That ſin is the proper object of God's diſpleaſure, the only thing he is diſpleaſed with for itſelf, and with the ſinner for ſin's ſake. 2. That public ſins, or the ſins of ſocieties, are great, very great provocations unto God: It was not for their perſonal and private ſins that God was thus provoked, but for their confederacy in ſinning. 3. From their exemplary puniſhment, *their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs*; that God ſometimes makes men who have been wickedly exemplary in ſin, to be righteouſly exemplary in puniſhment. *And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not?* *Obſerve*, The *reſt* here ſpoke of is the land of Canaan, ſo called, becauſe God promiſed it to Abraham, to plant and ſettle his poſterity in it; and becauſe it typified heaven that eternal reſt which God has prepared for his ſaints; into this reſt the rebellious and unbelieving Iſraelites muſt not enter; God ſware the contrary, he ſware by himſelf, he ſware in his wrath, he ſware to make his ſentence irrevocable and immutable. Lord! thine oath ſtands as a bar againſt all unbelieving ſinners at this day, as it did againſt the Iſraelites of old, and cuts off all hope of future entrance into thy eternal reſt which they have eternally forfeited: *to whom ſware he*, &c. *Learn* hence, 1. That unbelief is the immediate root and cauſe of all provoking ſins. Did men believe the happineſs of heaven, they could not neglect it; did they believe the torments of hell, they would avoid them. 2. That the oath of God is engaged againſt all unbelief, and no unbeliever ſhall enter into the reſt of God, ver. 19. *We ſee they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.*

CHAP. IV.

This chapter is of the ſame nature, and carrieth on the ſame deſign with the foregoing; both of them containing an exhortation to faith, obedience, and perſeverance.

LET us therefore fear, leſt, a promiſe being left *us* of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Seeing you have ſo dreadful an example of God's wrath executed upon your fathers in the wilderneſs for their unbelief, take heed of their ſin, leſt ye ſuffer the like puniſhment." Here *note*, 1. The manner of the exhortation, and how the apoſtle includes himſelf in the admonition, *Let us fear*; it is wiſe and ſafe for the miniſters of God to include themſelves in the exhortations and admonitions which they give to others; for they need excitement, and the means of eſtabliſhment, as well as others. 2. The affection of fear, which our apoſtle recommends for their preſervation from falling; by which he means a fear of care, diligence, and circumſpection. Let us fear leſt we come ſhort and fail. Fear is a good monitor, and the beſt preſervative from ſin. 3. The duty exhorted to, leſt a promiſe of reſt being made, we ſhould fall ſhort of attaining it, as the Iſraelites did that fell in the wilderneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is matter of great and tremendous conſequence, to have the promiſes of God propounded to us; they are either a ſavour of life unto life, or of death unto death; one of theſe two will certainly be the conſequent of their propoſal. God will demand a ſtrict account of the ſons of men, of the entertainment given to his promiſes and threatenings. 2. That they which mix not the promiſes of God with faith, ſhall utterly come ſhort of entering into God's reſt. 3. That the failing of men through unbelief, doth no way cauſe the promiſes of God to fail or ceaſe; the veracity of God is engaged for the ſtability of the promiſe; ſo that though men, by their unbelief, may diſappoint themſelves of their expectation, yet they cannot bereave God of his faithfulneſs.

2 For unto us was the goſpel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

Obſerve here, 1. That the goſpel is no new doctrine, no new law, but one and the ſame to all perſons, and at all times, ever ſince the firſt publication of it in the original promiſe, Gen. iii. 15. It is the ſame for ſubſtance, though not for clearneſs of revelation; the ſame goſpel was preached to Adam, to Abraham, to the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, which was preached by Chriſt and his apoſtles, but with clearer light, evidence, and power in the adminiſtration of it: *Unto us was the goſpel*, the ſame goſpel *preached as well as unto them.* 2. That the generality of perſons, who have ſat under the preaching of the goſpel in all ages, have not ſavingly profited by it, *The word preached did not profit:* From the beginning it has been ſo, partly through careleſſneſs, and want of due attention in the hearers, and partly for want of meditation upon, and particular application of the word unto themſelves after they have heard it; partly through the neglect of prayer for a bleſſing upon the word they hear: For thoſe and the like cauſes, the word preached did not, nor does not profit. 3. Unbelief in man's heart is the great cauſe of that unprofitableneſs which is found in the word preached; unbelief hinders the efficacy of the word preached, by with-holding men from yielding their aſſent to the truths they hear, by hindering them from applying, from a particular and cloſe applying of the word they hear, to their own conſciences: And unbelief hinders men from calling upon God, by prayer, for a bleſſing upon the word they hear. 4. That the word preached them profits, and only then, when it is a mixed word: The original word is a metaphor taken either from ſeed, from meat, or from phyſic. As ſeed muſt be mixed with the ſoil, and with the dew and rain of heaven, or it will never ſpring and grow; or as meat muſt be mixed with the ſtomach, or it will not nouriſh; and as phyſic muſt meet and mix with the humour, gripe and put the patient to ſome pain, or it will never cure: So muſt the word be rooted in the heart, or it will never fructify in the life; it muſt be mixed with faith, with love, with humility, with patience, or it will never bring forth fruit with joy.

3 For we which have believed do enter into reſt, as he ſaid, As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt; although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, There is a reſt promiſed to us believers, as well as the typical reſt, Canaan, was promiſed to the Iſraelites. *Learn* thence, That the ſtate of believers, under the goſpel, is a ſtate of bleſſed reſt. There is a ſpiritual reſt which believers obtain entrance into by Jeſus Chriſt, in the faith and worſhip of the goſpel, beſides their eternal reſt in heaven. This ſpiritual reſt conſiſts in peace with God, in ſatisfaction and acquieſcence in God, and in means of communion with God. 2. That it is faith alone which is the only way and means of entering into this bleſſed ſtate of reſt: *We who have believed do enter into reſt:* As unbelief cuts off from, ſo faith gives an entrance into the reſt of God. It follows,—*As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt: Obſerve,* Here is a threatening, confirmed by the oath of God, that they who believe not ſhould never enter into his reſt; and promiſe, that ſuch as do believe ſhall certainly enter. *Learn* thence, That there is a mutual in-being of promiſes and threatenings in the covenant, which muſt be conſidered together, and cannot be ſeparated each from the other. Where there is a promiſe expreſſed, there a threatening is tacitly underſtood; and where there is a threatening expreſſed, be it never ſo ſevere, yet there is a gracious promiſe included: Nay, ſometimes God gives out a threatening for no other end, but that men may lay hold upon the promiſe. Thus the threatening that Nineveh ſhould periſh, was given out mercifully, that Nineveh might not be deſtroyed. It follows, *Although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.* That is, Almighty God, when he had perfected and finiſhed the works of creation in ſix days, reſted on the ſeventh day from his labour; ſhewing us, by his own example, that work and labour muſt precede our reſt: After God had finiſhed the glorious work of creation, he returns as it were into his own eternal reſt, and directs to ſeek reſt in himſelf; and, by his own example, teaches us, that our days of labour muſt go before our day of reſt.

4 For he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh *day* on this wiſe, And God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works. 5 And in this *place* again, If they ſhall enter into my reſt. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that ſome muſt enter therein, and they to whom it was firſt preached entered not in becauſe of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, ſaying in David, To-day, after ſo long a time; as it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jeſus had given them reſt, then would he not afterward have ſpoken of another day.

For the clearer underſtanding of theſe words, we muſt know, that there is a threefold reſt ſpoken of in ſcripture, all which are called *His*; that is, God's reſt, being all of his appointing and providing: Namely, 1. The reſt of the Sabbath-day, in remembrance of God's reſting from the work of creation. 2. The typical reſt in the land of Canaan. 3. An eternal reſt with God in heaven; of which the ſabbath and the Iſraelites reſt in Canaan were a type and figure. Now the apoſtle's deſign is to prove that the reſt which God principally intends for his people is this laſt reſt, namely, an everlaſting reſt with himſelf in heaven: and this he evidently proves, becauſe if that reſt which they had obtained in the land of Canaan, under the conduct of Joſhua, called (in Syriac) Jeſus, had been all the reſt which Almighty God ever intended for them, then it had been needleſs for David in the xcvth Pſalm, which was penned a long time after, even ſome thouſands of years, to make mention of any other reſt. But this he does; and therefore infers, that there is a third reſt yet to come, which, by the preaching of the goſpel, was now propoſed to them, and that under the ſame promiſes and threatenings with the former. If Jeſus or Joſhua had given them the true ſpiritual and eternal reſt here ſpoken of, in Canaan, then would not David afterward have ſpoken of another reſt after their reſt in Canaan; which ſeeing he has done, the apoſtle concludes, there muſt yet remain a farther reſt to be enjoyed by the people of God. From the whole *note,* That God has, by promiſe, given his people a full aſſurance of enjoying a reſt upon condition of faith; and this another manner of reſt than that of Canaan, which the Iſraelites of old did enjoy.

9 There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.

manner of reſt than that of Canaan, which the Iſraelites of old did enjoy.

9 There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.

From the foregoing promiſes the apoſtle draws this concluſion, That there remaineth yet a more glorious, perfect, and complete reſt for the people of God. *Obſerve* here, 1. Something implied, namely, That the people of God, whilſt here on earth have work to do, and labour incumbent upon them. Reſt and labour are correlates, the one ſuppoſes the other; the apoſtle affirming, that there is reſt remaining for them, ſtrongly ſuppoſes that there is labour at preſent belonging to them. God's people are an induſtrious working people: Chriſt's preſent call is to ſervice and duty. 2. That God has already given his people a foretaſte of, and ſome entrance into reſt, during their preſent ſtate of work and labour; the better to enable them for that, and the more to ſweeten that to them. The ſtate of ſin is a ſtate of all labour and no reſt; the ſtate of glory is all reſt and no labour; but the ſtate of grace is a mixed ſtate, partly of labour, and partly of reſt; of labour in reſpect of ourſelves, in reſpect of the world, againſt ſin, under affliction and perſecution: But of reſt in Chriſt, in his love, in his favour, and grace; and thus our labour makes our reſt ſweet, and our reſt makes our labour eaſy. 3. That there is reſerved and laid up in heaven, for all the people of God that ſerve him laboriouſly and faithfully here on earth, a ſure and certain, a complete and perfect, a glorious and everlaſting reſt; for its quantity, it is full of reſt; for its quality, it is unmixed reſt; reſt and nothing but reſt: For its duration, it is an eternal reſt; the leaſt fear of loſing or leaving it, would imbitter all the joy which the ſaints taſte in the fruition and enjoyment of it.

10 For he that is entered into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Into the ſpiritual heavenly reſt, mentioned in the foregoing verſe, the believer is ſaid to have entered, in this verſe; and this is done two ways, initially, inchoatively, and imperfectly in this life; fully, finally, perfectly, and completely in the next. They have now a preſent title and right to enter into his reſt, the actual enjoyment and full poſſeſſion of it is to come. *Obſerve*, 1. Believers have already entered initially into this reſt whilſt here on earth, and accordingly *have ceaſed from their own works*; that is, the works of the fleſh, the ſervice of ſin; theſe they have diſcarded by repentance and mortification. Here *note*, That before converſion a perſon is doing his own works, fulfilling his own will, and not God's; but after he ceaſes from all ſinful works, inchoatively though not perfectly: *He that hath entered into his reſt, hath ceaſed from his own works. Obſerve*, 2. That when believers have finiſhed all their works of evangelical obedience, they ſhall then, and not till then, fully and finally enter into God's reſt, and be for ever happy in the enjoyment of it. All men deſire reſt, but it is not to be found on earth, but in heaven; not in the creature, but in God. O happy they, which, believing the excellency and glory of this reſt, do work, wait, and wiſh for it, and with diligence and conſtancy, uſe all holy endeavours for the attaining and ſecuring of it.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Seeing there is ſuch an eternal glorious reſt prepared for, and promiſed to believers, then it is the duty, and ought to be the endeavour of every one of us to ſecure our title to it, and our intereſt in it, by a ſtedfaſt faith, and perſevering obedience, leſt, following the example of our forefathers in the wilderneſs, we fall and periſh as they did." *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a reſt promiſed to us under the goſpel, as there was to the Jews of old under the diſpenſation of the law. 2. That the Jews heretofore, by ſin in general, by unbelief and diſobedience in particular, did fall ſhort of the reſt propoſed to them, and never entered into it, but were deſtroyed by the juſt indignation of God. 3. That in the Iſraelites ſin and God's diſpleaſure, in the event of the one, and in the effects of the other, there was an example ſet forth, of what would be our lot and portion, if through unbelief we fall ſhort of the reſt which the goſpel propoſes to us: *Let us labour to enter into that reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example*, &c. It is our duty to improve examples, leſt we be made examples of divine diſpleaſure. 4. That we cannot rationally have the leaſt expectation of eſcaping vengeance under the guilt of thoſe ſins, which others, in like manner, being guilty of, have not eſcaped; for with God there is no reſpect of perſons. Did the Iſraelites miſs of the earthly Canaan? So ſhall we of the heavenly, through unbelief.

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow: and *is* a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Take heed eſpecially of unbelief; for the word of God, or doctrine of the goſpel, will quickly find you out, if you be guilty of it." There is a piercing power in the word of God, through the energy and efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit; it is here compared to a ſword, becauſe it does divide things moſt nearly united, and diſcover things moſt inward and ſecret, or rather God by the word doth this; he by the word pierces, *even to dividing aſunder of the ſoul and ſpirit*; that is, the actings of the underſtanding, and the motions of the will and affections, it cuts aſunder the moſt reſolute and compacted purpoſes of the will; yea, it pierces to the marrow, that is, the moſt ſecret and cloſe contrivances of the ſoul, the thoughts and intents of the heart. O mighty power of the word! and of God in and by the word, to convey ſtrength to the weak, wiſdom to the ſimple, comfort to the ſorrowful, light to the blind, and life to the dead; it brings ſouls out of the captivity of ſin into the bleſſed liberty of faith in Chriſt.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight; but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

There is not any one place of ſcripture, I think, which more fully informs us of the perfect and exact knowledge of Almighty God, as to all perſons and things, than this before us. *Obſerve*, 1. The object, all and every thing, our perſons, our actions, the manner of our actions, the deſign and end of our actions; he knows what we have been and done, and what we will be and do. 2. The full manifeſtations and clear repreſentation of all perſons and things unto God. (1.) All things are here ſaid to be *naked*, unclothed, their dreſs and paint taken off: Theſe words are an alluſion to bodies, which being ſtripped and unclothed, all ſee what they are; there may be many deformities, blemiſhes, yea, ulcers, upon a body undiſcerned, while it is clothed and covered; but when *naked*, every ſcar appears, and nothing is hid: *all things are naked in his ſight*; that is, he as plainly diſcerns what they are, as we diſcern what a body is that ſtands naked before us. The knowledge which God has of perſons and things, is a clear and diſtinct knowledge. (2.) All things are here ſaid to be *open* as well as *naked*, unto God; a metaphor taken, ſays St. Chryſoſtom, from the the ſacrificed beaſts, which being excorated, their ſkins plucked off, they were cut down from the neck to the rump, ſo that all the inwards of the beaſt lay bare, and every part might be clearly ſeen: It is one thing to ſee a ſheep alive, with its ſkin and fleece on, and another thing to ſee it naked and flayed; but a farther thing to ſee it opened and unbowelled, with all its inteſtines and inwards expoſed to the eye. Others think there is in the original word an alluſion to anatomiſts, who *open* and diſſect human bodies, the heart, the liver, the lungs, the bowels, all exactly appear, whether ſound or decayed: Such a kind of anatomy doth God make upon man's heart; his piercing eye ſees and diſcerns what is fleſh, and what is ſpirit in us, what is faith, and what is fancy, what is grace in reality, and what in appearance only. Doubtleſs the phraſe doth ſignify a moſt intimate, full, and thorough knowledge of all perſons, and all things, which is found in that God with whom we have to do, and to whom we muſt give an account for all that we have done.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt *our* profeſſion.

Our apoſtle comes now to aſſert the prieſthood of Chriſt, and to ſet forth the dignity and excellency of his office; from whence he encourages the believing Hebrews to perſeverance and ſtedfaſtneſs in the profeſſion of their faith in him. Here *note*, 1. The eminency of the perſon, *Jeſus the Son of God*; not by ſupernatural conception only, but by eternal generation alſo; this is the eminency of that perſon who is ſuperior to men and angels. 2. The excellency of his office, a Prieſt, an High Prieſt, a great High Prieſt: Not barely equal with Aaron, but ſuperior to him, and infinitely above him; the univerſal ſupreme Pontiff of heaven and earth, in compariſon of whom, all other prieſts, even the higheſt of them, were but ſhadows. 3. His relation to us, *We have him*; that is ſpecial intereſt in him, making profeſſion of obedience to him; and he is *paſſed* into the *heavens*, to open heaven to us, and to make interceſſion with the Father for us. This entrance of Chriſt's into heaven, was ſhadowed forth by the high prieſt's entrance into the holy of holies here on earth. 4. Our obligation to him, *Let us hold faſt our profeſſion*; that is, the profeſſion of our faith in him, without wavering, with conſtancy and perſeverance. *Learn* hence, 1. That great oppoſition ever has been, and always will be made unto the ſtedfaſtneſs of believers in their holy profeſſion. The apoſtle's exhortation plainly ſuppoſes oppoſition. 2. That it is our duty, in the midſt of all oppoſition, to hold faſt our holy profeſſion, without either apoſtatizing in the whole, or declining in parts of it. The glory of God is in the higheſt manner concerned in it, and aſſured deſtruction attends the omiſſion of it, and that in a peculiar, terrible, and dreadful manner, chap. x. 29. *Learn*, 3. That believers have great encouragement unto, and aſſiſtance in the ſtedfaſtneſs and conſtancy of their holy profeſſion, by and from the prieſthood of Jeſus Chriſt: For as he is our High Prieſt, he knows our temptations, pities us under them, affords us actual help and relief againſt them, he interceding with the Father, that our faith may not fail, and that we may be kept by the almighty power of God, through faith unto ſalvation. 4. That Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, was the Son of God; and the neceſſity of his being ſo, did thus appear; 1. Before the entrance of ſin there was no need of the office of prieſthood between God and man: For every one was then in his own name to go to God with his worſhip, which would have been accepted according to the law of creation. 2. Sin being entered into the world, there was no more worſhip to be performed immediately unto God; two cannot walk or converſe together, except they be agreed. 3. That the worſhip of God might be again reſtored in and to the word, it was indiſpenſibly neceſſary that ſome one ſhould interpoſe between ſinners and the holy God; for ſhould ſinners approach him immediately in their own names, he would be unto them a conſuming fire. 4. No creature could undertake the office of being a prieſt for the church of God, which now conſiſteth all of ſinners: Neither the nature of the office, which was to interpoſe between God and ſinners, nor the quality of the work, which is to make atonement for ſin, would admit of it. 5. Jeſus Chriſt therefore undertaking to be a Prieſt for ſinners, it was neceſſary he ſhould be what he was, the very Son of God; which denotes his divine perſon and nature, and that our great High Prieſt was eſſentially and truly God: *Seeing we have a great High Prieſt, even Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt our profeſſion.*

15 For we have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without ſin.

Theſe words contain a farther deſcription of Chriſt our great High Prieſt, by his merciful diſpoſition towards his people; he is ſaid to be *touched*; that is, ſenſibly affected with the *infirmities*, that is, the miſeries, ſufferings and calamities, which the human nature is exerciſed with, and expoſed to. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, now in heaven, doth exerciſe a tender and compaſſionate ſpirit towards his ſuffering children and ſervants here on earth; he has an experimental knowledge of what his people ſuffer, either from God, or from man, for God's ſake, as one that is intereſted in them, as one concerned for them, as one related to them, yea, as being one with them. The ſympathy of Chriſt with, and towards his ſuffering people, is a tender ſympathy, an extenſive ſympathy, it reaches all our infirmities, a proportionable ſympathy, anſwerable to every occaſion, a perpetual ſympathy; as long as he continues High Prieſt, and we remain ſubject to infirmities, ſo long will he be touched with the feeling of them. *Obſerve* farther, The aſſigned reaſon why our great High Prieſt is ſo ſenſibly affected with our ſuffering condition; namely, becauſe he was in all points tempted like as we are, ſin excepted. Chriſt, by aſſuming our nature, became humbly affectionate, and by ſuffering our infirmities, became experimentally compaſſionate. Here *note*, That temptation may be without ſin; it is not our ſin to be tempted, but to comply with the temptation. 2. That Chriſt was tempted, yea, in all points tempted like unto us: His temptations were in all points like ours: he was tempted to ſin, yet without ſin. There is a twofold temptation to ſin, inward and outward; inwardly Chriſt was not tempted to ſin, outwardly he was, and with greateſt vehemency aſſaulted both by men and devils to the worſt of ſins that ever man was; but he always reſiſted, and always overcame. Oh what a conſolation is this unto us under all our temptations, that Chriſt was in all things tempted like unto us, but without ſin!

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Theſe words are an inference drawn from the apoſtle's foregoing diſcourſe, "Seeing we have ſuch an High Prieſt as is before deſcribed, let us come with boldneſs, with freedom and liberty to the throne of grace, &c." *Note* here, 1. There is a throne of grace which believers may come unto; God has a throne of juſtice, and a throne of grace: If he looks upon man according to the law of works, he muſt needs ſit upon the throne of juſtice as a ſevere Lord, and ſtrict Judge, to condemn us; but being propitiated and atoned by the blood of Chriſt, his throne is a throne of grace and mercy, from which he repreſents himſelf to us as a God in Chriſt, as a God of forgiveneſs, as a God in covenant, and as a God that will have communion with us. 2. That believers may come boldly, and with confidence to this throne of grace; they have liberty to do it, they have authority to do it, and may have confidence and aſſurance of audience in the doing of it. 3. That all help, ſuccour, and ſpiritual aſſiſtance in every time of need, is found with God, and proceeds from mere mercy and grace in God, *That we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* 4. That the way to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need, is by a due application of ourſelves for it to the throne of grace: *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find help in time of need.*

CHAP. V.

Our apoſtle comes now, in this, and the following chapters, to diſcourſe of the prieſthood of Chriſt, as far more excellent than that of Aaron's, and conſequently that there was all imaginable reaſon to perſevere in Chriſtianity, in reſpect of this office likewiſe.

FOR every high prieſt taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins:

Obſerve here, The apoſtle deſcribes an high prieſt ſeveral ways. 1. By his original, *He is one taken from among men*; that is, of the ſame nature with themſelves, otherwiſe, he had not been capable of thoſe compaſſionate impreſſions which are required to the due diſcharge of his office. Thus Chriſt's participation of our nature was neceſſary to the diſcharge of his office as High Prieſt, and a manifeſt evidence that he will be tender and compaſſionate towards them whoſe nature he ſuſtains and bears. 2. He is deſcribed by the general nature of his office, he is *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*; that is, he was to act and negotiate, for the good of ſinful men, in things wherein they have to do more immediately with Almighty God; particularly to offer gifts, oblations, and ſacrifices for their ſins. Where *note*, That it was the entrance of ſin that made the office of the prieſthood neceſſary: Had it not been for ſin, every one might have gone to God in his own perſon, but now God will not be immediately treated with by any, but through the interpoſition of a Mediator; and he having firſt made an atonement for ſin. 3. The high prieſt is here deſcribed by the exerciſe of his office, and the ſpecial diſcharge of his duty, which is, *to offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins*, that is, to give ſatisfaction and make atonement for ſin. Here *note*, That the light of nature dictates to us, that ſomething ought to be offered unto God, in acknowledgment of his ſupreme dominion; and becauſe men are guilty of ſin, and God eſſentially juſt, ſacrifices muſt be offered, and a prieſt ordained to offer thoſe ſacrifices for the averting of his wrath, and procurings of his favour: But by what ſacrifices God will be atoned, and by whom, and in what manner they muſt be offered, not the law of nature, but the light of ſcripture, divine revelation, muſt teach us: *Every high prieſt taken from among men, is ordained for men*; that is, inſtituted and appointed of God, for the ſervice of man in things pertaining to God.

2 Who can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity:

Our apoſtle proceeds in giving the character of the high prieſt which God required under the law; he muſt have compaſſion for men, for ſinful men, being compaſſed with ſinful infirmities himſelf. *Obſerve* here, 1. A great and neceſſary qualification or endowment of an high prieſt, he he was, and is one able to have compaſſion; that is, able with all meekneſs and gentleneſs, with all patience and forbearance, to bear the infirmities, ſins, and provocations of men, even as a nurſe bears with the weakneſs and forwardneſs of a poor infant. *Obſerve*, 2. The peculiar object of his compaſſionate care and regard; namely, thoſe that are *ignorant*, and do wander *out of the way*; in theſe two words does the apoſtle compriſe all ſorts of ſinners whatſoever, with all ſorts and kinds of ſin. 3. A ſpecial reaſon rendered why the high prieſt was thus compaſſionate, becauſe *he himſelf is compaſſed with infirmities*; his own condition will mind him of his duty in this matter, being beſet on every hand with infirmities of his own. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is a mighty privilege to us, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, was encompaſſed with the ſinleſs infirmities of our nature. 2. That no ſort of ſinners are excluded from an intereſt in the care and love of our compaſſionate High Prieſt; ſuch as are *ignorant*, and ſuch as are *out of the way*, he has compaſſion upon both; none are excluded, but thoſe who by unbelief do exclude themſelves, and cauſe the blood of the reconciling ſacrifice to cry againſt them.

3 And by reaſon hereof he ought, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer for ſins.

That is, by reaſon of which infirmities he ought, both by God's command, and alſo from the reaſon and nature of the thing, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer ſacrifices for ſins. *Note* here, That this is a deſcription of the high prieſt under the law, not of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt under the goſpel, becauſe Chriſt had actually no ſin of his own to offer for, being holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners. This expreſſion therefore of offering for his own ſins, belongs to the weakneſs and imperfection of the legal high prieſt. *Learn* hence, That it was a part of the darkneſs and bondage of the church under the Old Teſtament, that their high prieſts had need to offer ſacrifices for themſelves, and their own ſins: This they did in the view of the people: They firſt took care to offer for their own ſins, and then for the ſins of others; whoſoever dealeth with God about the ſins of others, ought to look well, in the firſt place, unto his own; it is a great evidence of hypocriſy for men to be ſevere towards the ſins of others, and careleſs about their own ſins. *Learn*, 2. That ſuch was the abſolute holineſs, and ſpotleſs innocency of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, that what he offered was not for himſelf, but for his people. Atonement for ſinners was made by him who had no ſin of his own to atone for.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron: 5 So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high prieſt; but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. 6 As he ſaith alſo in another *place*, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

The foregoing verſes declare the perſonal qualifications of the High Prieſt; here we have his call and commiſſion to this office and function: The former made him meet for it, the latter gave him right unto it. *No man taketh this honour*; that is, the honour of prieſthood to himſelf, but only he that is called of God, as was Aaron, and his poſterity. *Note* here, 1. That it is an act of ſovereignty in God, to call whom he pleaſes to his work and ſervice. 2. That as it is an act of ſovereignty in God, ſo it is a ſpecial dignity and honour to us to be duly called to, as well as qualified for, his work and ſervice. 3. That the higheſt excellency, and utmoſt neceſſity of any work or ſervice to be here done for God, will, by no means, warrant our undertaking of it, and engaging in it, without a lawful call unto it. 4. That the more excellent any work of God is, the more expreſs ought to be our calling to it. *No man taketh this honour upon him, but he that is called of God*: It were well if our lay-preachers conſidered this. *Obſerve* next, How the apoſtle applies all this to Chriſt: *So alſo Chriſt our great High Prieſt, glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt*, uncalled, but he dignified him who ſaid unto him, *Thou art my Son*; *and thou art a Prieſt for ever*; without ſucceſſion, *after the order*, ſimilitude, and manner of Melchiſedec. *Learn* hence, That the office of the high prieſthood over the church of God, was an honour and glory to Jeſus Chriſt; it was ſo to his human nature, even as it was united to his divine nature. *Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt*, implying that his was a glory and honour, though not aſſumed, but conferred: and that as Aaron was called of God, ſo was Chriſt, but in a more excellent and glorious manner. By this we underſtand the intolerable pride, and bold preſumption of many in theſe times, who take upon them to officiate in matters of religion, though neither qualified for, nor called to this work; If ever any man or angel, then ſurely Chriſt might have taken this honour to himſelf, yet he did not uncalled: Verily, this will be the eternal condemnation of all ſuch uſurpers, who, without any commiſſion from God or man, undertake what they do not underſtand.

7 Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears, unto him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard, in that he feared;

Obſerve here, 1. A ſpecial act of Chriſt's prieſthood or prieſtly office, *He offered up*. 2. The ſubject-matter of his offering, *ſupplications and prayers*. 3. The intenſe manner of his offering, *with ſtrong cries and tears*. 4. The perſon to whom he offered, unto God, *who was able to ſave him from death*. 5. The time of his offering *in the days of his fleſh*; that is, in the time of this mortal life, when clothed with our frail nature. 6. The iſſue and ſucceſs of all this, *he was heard in that he feared*. *Learn* 1. That the holy Jeſus did not only take upon him our human nature, but the infirmities of our nature alſo. Chriſt had in this world a time of infirmities as well as ourſelves. True, his infirmities were ſinleſs, but ſorrowful and grievous, which expoſed him to all ſorts of temptations and ſufferings. 2. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, offered up moſt ardent prayers and ſupplications to Almighty God, in the days of his fleſh, upon his own and our behalf. The text mentions *prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong cries*. 3. That Chriſt ſhed tears as well as blood for a loſt world: He offered up ſtrong cries and tears:

by this he ſhewed the truth of his humanity, and that he did not accept only the human nature, but did alſo aſſume human affections. 4. That Chriſt's prayers were always heard, either in kind or in equivalency: He was not ſpecifically heard as to the paſſing of the cup from him, when he prayed in the garden; but he was equivalently heard as to the ſupport of his ſpirit, and as to ſupplies of ſtrength, to enable him to drink the bitter cup with ſilence and ſubmiſſion; *he was heard in that he feared*, by being delivered not from death, but out of death, as his followers muſt expect to be delivered.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he ſuffered:

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's eminent dignity; he was a *Son*, that is, the Son of God, and God himſelf; *the Word was God*, John i. 1. And as the Word was made fleſh, ſo he was nearer to God than any other perſon; he was a *Son*, a ſinleſs Son, yet a ſuffering Son; and *he learned obedience, by the things which he ſuffered.* 2. As Chriſt's eminent dignity, ſo his exemplary obedience; he learned obedience; not by perſonal ſpeculation, but by real experience; he experimentally underſtood what obedience was. *Note* here, That there are two ways of learning obedience. 1. By the comprehenſion of the mind. 2. By the experience of ſenſe. Chriſt as God was perfect in knowledge, nothing could be added to him, but when he became man, then he came to underſtand and learn by ſufferings, which was a new method and way of knowing. And the obedience which Chriſt learned, was free and voluntary, univerſal and complete, ſincere and pure, perſevering and conſtant. Chriſt learned this leſſon of obedience, not barely to know it, but to do it; to learn to obey, is to obey by the things which he ſuffered; he did perfectly learn, and experimentally underſtand, what obedience was. O bleſſed Jeſus! As didſt thou, ſo may we learn practical obedience by the things which we ſuffer.

9 And by being made perfect, he became the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him.

Obſerve here, 1. A choice and ſingular bleſſing and benefit ſpoken of, and that is, eternal ſalvation; which implies not only deliverance from hell, and redemption from eternal miſery, but the obtaining of eternal life and happineſs. 2. The author of this great bleſſing and benefit to mankind, namely, Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, who, by making atonement for us, and reconciling us to God, is ſaid to be the *author of eternal ſalvation* to mankind. 3. The way and means whereby he became the author of our ſalvation, and that was by *being made perfect*; the original word is an illuſion to one that runs in a race, where he that wins receives the crown. Thus Chriſt having finiſhed his courſe of ſufferings, and received the reward of them, by being raiſed from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God, he is ſaid to be *made perfect.* 4. The qualification of the perſons who are made partakers of this great benefit, or the condition upon which it is offered and tendered, and that is obedience, *He became the author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey him.* *Queſt.* 1. How does Chriſt *become the author of eternal ſalvation?* *Anſ.* As a rule and pattern, as a price and propitiation, and as an advocate and patron: By the purity of his doctrines, as a rule; by the piety of his example, as a pattern; by the merit of his obedience and ſufferings, as a propitiation; and by his prevailing interceſſion, as our Advocate now in heaven. Where *note*, That the virtue of his interceſſion in heaven is founded on his ſatiſfaction here on earth, in ſhedding of his blood for us. *Queſt.* 2. What obedience does the goſpel require as a condition, and is pleaſed to accept as a qualification, in thoſe who hope for eternal ſalvation? *Anſ.* Negatively, Not a bare external profeſſion of obedience, though accompanied with propheſying and working miracles, but an hearty and univerſal conformity to the precepts of the goſpel in ſincerity and uprightneſs; allowing ourſelves in the neglect of no known duty, nor in the practice of any known ſin. *Queſt.* 3. But is fallen man under a poſſibility now of performing this obedience? *Anſw.* We are no more ſufficient of ourſelves, and by any power of our own, to perform the conditions of the goſpel, than we are able to anſwer the demands of the law. But the grace of God is offered to us, and ſtands ready to aſſiſt us to perform the conditions which the goſpel requires. Conſequently, what the grace of God ſtands ready to enable us to do, if we be not wanting to ourſelves, that may properly be ſaid to be poſſible to us, and in ſome ſenſe in our power to perform. *Queſt.* 4. But is not making our obedience the condition of our ſalvation prejudicial to the freeneſs of God's grace, and the law of faith? *Anſ.* In no wiſe; ſeeing it is acknowledged, that faith is the root of all true holineſs and evangelical obedience; that we ſtand continually in need of aſſiſtance of God's grace, to enable us to perform that obedience which the goſpel requires, and is pleaſed to accept; and that God confers eternal life upon us, not for the merit of our obedience, but only for the ſake of Chriſt. The ſum of all is this, That it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary for a man to be a good man, that he may get to heaven; and that it is the greateſt preſumption in the world for any man to hope to attain to ſalvation without obedience, and a holy life. For though our obedience cannot merit heaven, yet it does qualify and fit us for heaven: though it doth not make us worthy, yet doth it make us *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.* And whoſoever finds fault with this doctrine, finds fault with the goſpel itſelf.

10 Called of God an high prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec.

Theſe words may be looked upon as an evidence and teſtimony, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was, and is the author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him, becauſe he is a *Prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec*; that is, becauſe his prieſthood is eternal. *Note* here, 1. That God was pleaſed to put a ſignal honour upon the perſon and office of Melchiſedec, that in him there ſhould be an early and excellent repreſentation made of the perſon and prieſthood of Jeſus Chriſt. Melchiſedec was an illuſtrious type of Chriſt; he was the firſt perſonal type of Chriſt that ever was in the world; after him there were many others, and he was the only type of the perſon of Chriſt that ever was in the world. Others were types of Chriſt in the execution of his office, but none but Melchiſedec were ever types of his perſon; for being introduced without father, without mother, without beginning of days, or end of life, he was made like to the Son of God, of whom it is ſaid, *Who can declare his generation?* And farther, Melchiſedec was a type of Chriſt in thoſe two great offices of a King and a Prieſt, which none but he ever was. 2. That the prieſthood of Chriſt was not after the order of Aaron, which was to expire, and not to laſt long, but after the order of Melchiſedec, which was to continue and laſt for ever: *Thou art a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.* The prieſthood of Chriſt is an eternal prieſthood, *He ever liveth to make interceſſion for us.*

11 Of whom we have many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered, ſeeing you are dull of hearing.

That is, of which prieſthood of Chriſt, as compared with Melchiſedec, we have much to ſay, which is not eaſy to make intelligible by words, to thoſe that are ignorant and dull of underſtanding. *Learn* hence, 1. That all Scripture-truths are not equally eaſy to be underſtood, but require a peculiar diligence in our attendance upon them, that they may be underſtood. 2. That it is the incapacity of hearers, through dulneſs and ſlothfulneſs, and want of preparatory knowledge, which makes ſcripture-teaching no more and no better underſtood: All our miſcarriages under the word, are to be reſolved into our own ſloth, negligence, and depraved affections; *We have many things to ſay, but ye are dull of hearing.*

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “When, for the time that you have profeſſed the Chriſtian faith, ye ought to have been able to have been teachers of it to others, you had need yourſelves to be inſtructed in the firſt rudiments of the Chriſtian religion, *and are become ſuch as have need of milk*, the food of babes, *and not of ſtrong meat*, the food of men.” *Learn* hence, 1. That the time when, and how long we enjoy the diſpenſation of the goſpel, is a circumſtance which muſt, in particular, be accounted for: whereas *for the time*, all have time, but all have not time alike: The day of the goſpel is not of the ſame length to all nations, churches, and perſons. 2. That it is reaſonably expected by God that perſons ſhould thrive and grow in knowledge and holineſs, proportionably to their time and means; and not doing ſo, is charged upon them as a great aggravation of their guilt: *For the time ye ought to have been teachers*; that is, of ability ſufficient for the teaching of others. They had not learned of their teachers, when the apoſtle had reaſon to hope they had been able to teach their learners. Many, after long teaching, are ignorant, and ought to be taught again the ſame things which they had long ago heard. 3. That the holy Scriptures are to be looked upon, conſulted with, and ſubmitted to, *as the oracles of God*; they are ſometimes called the living, ſometimes the lively oracles of God; becauſe they are the oracles of the living God, and alſo life-giving oracles to them that obey him. 4. That there are, in the ſcripture, truths ſuitable to the ſpiritual inſtruction and edification of all ſorts of perſons; there is in it both milk and ſtrong meat, plain doctrines and firſt principles neceſſary for all, and truths of a deeper ſearch that are profitable to ſome. “In the Scripture, ſaid one, there are ſhallows and there are depths: fords where the lambs may wade, and depths where the elephants may ſwim.”

13 For every one that uſeth milk *is* unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs: For he is a babe. 14 But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.

Our apoſtle here ſpeaks of the difference of doctrines under the metaphor of meats: From whence we may gather, 1. That the word of God, in the diſpenſation of it, is food provided for the ſouls of men. 2. That the word, as food, will not profit the ſoul until it be eaten, and digeſted: It is not food prepared, but food received, that nouriſhes. When manna was gathered and eaten, it nouriſhed the Iſraelites: But when gathered and laid by, it putrified and bred worms. Lord! what pains do ſome take to gather manna, to hear the word, but alas! it lies by them, and is of no uſe. *Learn*, 3. That as the goſpel is the word of righteouſneſs, ſo God requires and expects that all thoſe who live under the diſpenſation of the goſpel ſhould be ſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs. The goſpel is the word of righteouſneſs; it is ſo declaratively, it is ſo efficiently: Declaratively, as the ſeverity of God againſt ſin is hereby more fully revealed, and as the righteouſneſs which God requireth, approveth, and accepteth for our juſtification, is therein declared: And the righteouſneſs which God requireth in us, and expecteth from us, is hereby diſcovered alſo; and as it is the great inſtrument of working holineſs in us, and making us inherently righteous, ſo it is the word of righteouſneſs efficiently as well as declaratively: Our juſtification is wrought in us thereby, John xvii. 17. *Learn*, 4. That the ſpiritual ſenſes of believers, well exerciſed in the word of righteouſneſs, are the beſt and moſt undeceiving helps in judging of what is good or evil, what is true or falſe, that is propoſed to them: *Such by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed*, &c.

CHAP. VI.

Our apoſtle begins this chapter with an exhortation to the Hebrews, *to increaſe both in knowledge and obedience; exciting them to advance to an higher and more perfect degree of knowledge in the Chriſtian religion, than the firſt principles and ground-work of it.*

THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection;

In theſe words of the apoſtle, he ſeems to allude to the building of an houſe: As in that, we firſt lay a good and ſure foundation, but do not reſt there, but proceed in raiſing up the fabric; in like manner, it is neither ſatisfactory nor ſufficient to advance no farther in the Chriſtian religion, than the knowledge of the firſt principles of it; but endeavours muſt be uſed to attain a more perfect degree and meaſure of knowledge in the myſteries of the goſpel. *Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*, he means not leaving them ſo as to forget them, and lay them aſide, but to leave them by going beyond them and advancing farther and higher in the knowledge of Chriſtianity. *Learn* hence, 1. That in Chriſtianity, and other ſciences, there are certain rudiments and fundamental principles, which muſt and ought to be carefully taught. 2. That it is a neceſſary and uſeful practice, in the church of God, to teach the doctrine of Chriſtianity, in the firſt principles of it, plainly and ſummarily to young beginners. 3. That when the miniſters of the goſpel have laid a good foundation of ſcripture-knowledge in the underſtanding of their hearers, they muſt excite them by all preſſing conſiderations to make a farther progreſs in their knowledge, and leaving the doctrine of the beginning of Chriſt, *go on unto perfection*.

—Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptiſms, and of laying on of hands, and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

Still our apoſtle purſues his metaphor, in comparing Chriſtianity to a building, and the firſt rudiments or principles of the Chriſtian religion to a foundation which ſupports the ſuperſtructure. Next he ſummarily declares what theſe fundamental doctrines, and firſt principles of the Chriſtian religion are, namely, theſe ſix. 1. *Repentance*, or a turning from all ſinful works, called *dead works*, becauſe they end in death; dead, becauſe deadly; they proceed from death ſpiritual, and end in death eternal. 2. *Faith towards God*, or faith in God; that is, in the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Particularly, faith in the firſt original promiſe of God, to ſend Chriſt into the world to ſave us from our ſins, and granting remiſſion of ſins by him. Here *note*, How cloſely repentance and faith are united and knit together; where the one is, there is the other; and where either is not, there is neither. He repenteth not, who hath not faith towards God, and he hath not faith towards God, who repenteth not. 3. *The doctrine of baptiſms*; that is, of both the Chriſtian ſacraments, as alſo of the covenant of grace, of which the ſacraments are ſeals. Perſons admitted into the church by baptiſm, ought to be well inſtructed, as ſoon as capable of it, in the nature, uſe, and end of the ſacraments; acquainting them not only with the nature of the outward ſign, but with the neceſſity of the inward grace. 4. *The doctrine of laying on of hands*, to confirm the baptized perſons in the faith, and to oblige and enable them to keep the covenant they entered into with God, when they were baptized; which was done before their admiſſion to the Lord's table. Impoſition, or laying on of hands, was an ancient and venerable rite, uſed in the primitive church upon ſeveral occaſions; particularly, in ordination, in abſolution of penitents, in healing the ſick, in conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, Acts viii. 17. And, laſtly, in confirmation, when baptized perſons were brought before the church to acknowledge, confirm, and renew their baptiſmal covenant with God; and to receive the benefit of public prayer, and epiſcopal benediction, in order to the farther endowments of grace to perform their vows, adorn their profeſſion, and be admitted to the Lord's table, as complete members of the viſible church of Chriſt. 5. *The reſurrection of the dead*, a doctrine denied by the Sadducees, derided by the Athenian philoſophers, and perverted by heretics; but is a fundamental principle of the goſpel; the faith whereof is indiſpenſibly neceſſary unto our conſolation, and has a peculiar influence upon our obedience. This is the animating principle of goſpel-obedience, becauſe we are aſſured that our ſervices ſhall not only be remembered, but rewarded alſo. 6. *The eternal judgment*, which will doom men to everlaſting rewards and puniſhments in a future ſtate. The miniſters of the goſpel ought to dwell much upon this fundamental principle of religion, to repreſent the dread and terror of that eternal day to all men, to the intent they may be excited and ſtirred up to take effectual care that they fall not under the vengeance of that fatal day. Theſe ſix principles being laid down by the apoſtle, he tells them his reſolution, to endeavour the carrying of them on to a more perfect degree and meaſure of knowledge in the myſteries of the goſpel; in order to their becoming ſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs: *Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection*; *which we will do, if God permit.*

4 For *it is* impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, 5 And have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; 6 If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put *him* to an open ſhame.

By the *enlightened* here, underſtand thoſe that were baptized and embraced Chriſtianity: The ancients called baptiſm *illumination*, and baptized perſons *the enlightened*; becauſe of the divine illumination which was conveyed to the minds of men by the knowledge of Chriſtianity. *By taſting the heavenly gift*, and being *made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, underſtand ſuch as had not only heard of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, but had ſome experience of them themſelves; as alſo of the ſpiritual benefits conferred upon them in baptiſm, by the Holy Spirit. *By taſting the good word of God*, underſtand ſome reliſh of the truth and goodneſs of the goſpel, ſome pleaſure in entertaining it, by reaſon of the gracious promiſes of eternal life and happineſs contained in it. The goſpel that proclaimed remiſſion of ſins, was a *good word*; this good word they ſaw confirmed by miracles, tongues, and prophecy, and ſo could not but be convinced of the truth of it, which is here called a taſting it; who have *taſted the good word of God:* It follows, *and the powers of the world to come*; that is, the power of the goſpel-age; for the world to come, in the language of the prophets, doth ſignify the times of the

Meſſiah: and thus, *the powers of the world to come*, are the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghoſt beſtowed upon men, in order to the propagation of the goſpel; ſuch were the gifts of healing, caſting out devils, working miracles. Others, by *taſting the powers of the world to come*, underſtand ſome apprehenſions of the reſurrection and future judgment, with affections ſuitable thereunto. Now concerning theſe, ſays our apoſtle, *if they fall away*; that is, if they ſhall, after all this, apoſtatize from this profeſſion, out of love to this preſent world, or from fear of perſecution and ſufferings, if they ſhall relapſe either to heatheniſm or judaiſm, *it is impoſſible to renew them again to repentance*: that is, it is a thing very difficult, hardly to be hoped for, that ſuch wilful apoſtates ſhould be reſtored again by repentance: *ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame*; that is, they virtually, and in effect crucify him over again, and as much as in them lies: For, denying and renouncing of him, they declare him to be an impoſtor, and conſequently worthy of death. So that the plain ſenſe of the words ſeems to be this: "If thoſe that are baptized, and have received the doctrines of the goſpel, and are endowed with the gifts of the holy Ghoſt, ſhall yet, after this, apoſtatize from Chriſtianity, it is very difficult, and next to an impoſſibility, to recover ſuch again by repentance; ſeeing they are guilty of as great a crime, as if in their own perſons, they had put to death, and ignominiouſly uſed the Son of God." Here *note*, That it is not a partial apoſtaſy from the Chriſtian religion, by any particular vicious practice, but a total apoſtaſy from Chriſtianity, and more eſpecially to the Heathen idolatry, which is here intended. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That they which have been enlightened, awakened, and made partakers of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit in ſome meaſure, and taſted the ſweetneſs of the word and ways of God in ſome degree, may yet fall away. 2. That if ſuch do fall away, it is very difficult, though not altogether impoſſible, to renew them again to repentance: And that for theſe reaſons; 1. Becauſe of the greatneſs and heinous nature of the ſin, it being a downright apoſtaſy from God, againſt the cleareſt light and knowledge, and fulleſt conviction of a man's mind; and the higheſt affront to the Son of God, who revealed the Chriſtian religion to the world, and ſealed it with his blood. 2. Becauſe thoſe who are guilty of this ſin, do renounce and caſt off the means of their recovery, and therefore it becomes extremely difficult to renew them again to repentance: They reject Chriſt and his holy goſpel, and refuſe, the only remedy apppointed for their recovery. 3. Becauſe it is ſo high a provocation to God, to withdraw his grace and Holy Spirit from ſuch perſons, by the power and efficacy whereof they ſhould be brought to repentance: God juſtly leaving thoſe who ſo unworthily leave him. Lord! how fearful and fatal a condition is it, to begin in the ſpirit, and end in the fleſh; to decay in religion, and apoſtatize from grace; to have had ſome work of the Spirit and word upon our hearts, ſo as to have light and love, ſome taſte and ſavour of religion, ſome deſires after, and hopes of heaven; and, after all, to cool and give over, to revolt and backſlide, and have our latter end worſe than our beginning? *Seeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh*, &c.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briars *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto curſing; whoſe end *is* to be burned.

The deſign and ſcope of our apoſtle in theſe words is threefold. 1. To ſet forth the excellency and neceſſity of the goſpel, diſpenſed to us in the miniſtry of the word; he compares it to rain, which doth ſoften, refreſh, and fructify, the earth. 2. He diſcovers the different effect which the word of God, or the doctrine of the goſpel, has upon different perſons that ſit under the preaching and diſpenſation of it; the ſincere Chriſtian becomes fruitful under the dews and ſhowers of divine grace, and receives a bleſſing; but the barren and fruitleſs profeſſor is like an howling wilderneſs, or dry deſert, which, after innumerable refreſhing ſhowers, brings forth nothing but briars and thorns. 3. He declares the different ſtate and condition of ſuch perſons. A people that anſwers God's care and coſt, is like a field that drinks in the rain, bringeth forth herbs, and receives a bleſſing. But ſuch a people, as, after all the refreſhing ſhowers from heaven, and after all the culture and labour of God's huſbandmen on earth, ſhall remain buſhes and briars, barren and unfruitful under all, or worſe than ſuch; they are *nigh unto curſing* and their *end is to be burned*. Bleſſing attends the one, burning awaits the other. *Note*, 1. That what the rain is to the earth, that is the word of God, and the doctrine of the goſpel to the ſouls of men. Is the rain of heavenly extraction? So is the word of God. Does the rain fall by divine perfection? So does the word preached. Does the rain diſtil down gradually and ſucceſſively, not all at once? So does the word fall, here a little, and there a little. Does the rain mollify and ſoften, revive and refreſh, fructify and make fruitful where it falls? So does the word preached, Col. i. 6. The word of the goſpel is come unto you, *and bringeth forth fruit, ſince the day you heard of it*. In a word, as after plenty of rain there follows a great drought, and want of rain; ſo after a long and plentiful enjoyment of the goſpel, if people do not prize and improve their mercies, God will cut them ſhort, and deprive them of them. *Note*, 2. That it is poſſible for a people to ſit long under the miniſtry of the word, that ſpiritual rain, that celeſtial dew may be daily dropping and diſtilling down upon them, and yet that people may be buſh and briar after all; barren and unfruitful in the account of God. 3. That a people ſo remaining, and under ſuch advantages, are *nigh unto curſing, and their end is to be burned*. Barrenneſs under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, is always accompanied with an increaſe of ſin, and of condemnation alſo: Thoſe that are not, becauſe they will not be healed and reformed by the preaching of the goſpel, are righteouſly given up by God to extreme obſtinacy, and final obduration.

9 But, beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak. 10 For God *is* not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love which ye have

ſhewed towards his name, in that ye have miniſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter.

Obſerve here, 1. The holy wiſdom of our apoſtle, in mollifying the ſeverity of the foregoing communication and prediction; and the good hope, and firm perſuaſion he had of the Hebrews perſeverance in grace unto ſalvation, notwithſtanding all the cautions and warnings he gave them of apoſtaſy and apoſtates: *I am perſuaded better things of you, though I thus ſpeak.* We may repreſent the ugly and filthy face of ſin to our beſt friends, to the end that they may hate it, and eſcape it: We may be confident of another's ſincerity, and, as occaſion requires, publicly teſtify that confidence to themſelves: *We are perſuaded better things of you.* *Obſerve*, 2. The ground of this confidence declared: 1. The graces of God's Spirit found operative to them; their faith in Chriſt, and love to all his members; it was a working faith and laborious love that was found with them *they have adminiſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter.* Behold the nature of Chriſtian love, it is an immortal fire, ever burning, never dying. 2. Another ground of this perſuaſion, was the knowledge of God's faithfulneſs in remembering and rewarding this their labour of love: *God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love*; that is, God is righteous, and will certainly remember and reward your faith, your charity, and good works; for he has promiſed ſo to do, and he is faithful that has promiſed. *Learn* hence, 1. That faith, if it be a living faith, will be a working faith. Obedience is the fruit of faith, and we ought to look on obedience as our work. 2. That it is the will and pleaſure of God, that many of the ſaints and ſervants in this world be in ſuch a condition, wherein they ſtand in need of being miniſtered unto. 3. That the beſt evidence we can have of the ſincerity of our love, is its readineſs to miniſter to the ſaints in all diſtreſſes. 4. That both the labour of our ſufferings, and the labour of our ſervices ſhall be remembered, and rewarded by a righteous God: *God is not unrighteous to forget*, &c.

11 And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end.

Note here, 1. That although the apoſtle had a firm perſuaſion, that they were ſincere and upright, and would hold on their way, yet he exhorts them to ſhew the ſame diligence which they had done, and to perſevere to the end, as they had begun. *Learn* hence, That miniſterial exhortation unto duty is needful, even unto them that are ſincere in the practice of it, that they may abide and continue therein: *we deſire that you ſhew diligence unto the end.* *Note*, 2. The ſpecial duty he exhorts them to, and that is to attain a full *aſſurance of hope.* *Hope* is a certain and aſſured expectation of good things promiſed, accompanied with love, and a longing deſire to enjoy them. A *full aſſurance of hope*, is ſuch a fixed, conſtant, and prevailing perſuaſion, concerning the good things promiſed, and our certain enjoyment of them, as will ſupport us under, and carry us through all the difficulties and troubles we conflict with. *Learn*, That a good man may, in this life, arrive at an aſſurance of faith and hope, as touching the goodneſs of his condition in the life to come. The original word ſignifies a full gale of hope, a metaphor taken from ſailors, who enter the harbour with a full gale of wind both with facility and ſafety. The Chriſtian's ſoul is a ſhip ſailing in a tempeſtuous ſea: Faith repreſents the pilot, love the ſail, hope the wind that muſt fill the ſail: be the pilot never ſo confident, the ſail ſpread to the utmoſt, yet without a gale of wind the ſhip lies becalmed, moves not towards the harbour. A Chriſtian on earth without hope, is as a ſhip at ſea without wind. 3. The ſpecial means directed to, in order to the attaining of this full aſſurance of hope, and that is, *to ſhew diligence*, *the ſame diligence*, and that *to the end.* *Learn* thence, That Chriſtians ought by no means to wax ſecure, but to uſe all diligence to the end of their lives, for the heightening of their hope to a full aſſurance.

12 That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.

Our apoſtle, having exhorted the Hebrews to great diligence in good works in the former verſe, in this verſe endeavours to excite and provoke them to it by the examples of deceaſed ſaints, who are now reaping the reward of their former pains, and inheriting the promiſes. Here *note*, 1. A cautionary direction given, *that ye be not ſlothful*, either timorous and faint-hearted, or remiſs and negligent. God having engaged ſo firmly on his part, to let nothing be wanting which is requiſite to enable us to perſevere; if we miſs of the promiſe, that is, of heaven, the good promiſed, we muſt thank our own ſloth for it. 2. The great duty exhorted to, and that is, to be followers of the ſaints; *be followers of them*; that is, vigorouſly and conſtantly imitate them in their graces and gracious converſations. The graces of the ſaints (whether living or dead) are patterns preſented to our imitation. 3. The particular and ſpecial graces in the ſaints which we are to imitate and follow, namely, their faith and patience: their faith, that is, their firm truſt in God, and belief of his promiſes, relying on his word under all trials; and their patience, that is, their perſeverance in well-doing, and patient expectation under all delays, and conſtant adherence to him under all difficulties. *Learn* hence, 1. That heaven is not ours by purchaſe, but by promiſe. 2. That heaven is a promiſed inheritance, which ſaints, by faith and patience, have poſſeſſed. 3. That by being followers of them in their faith and patience, we may alſo come with them to inherit the promiſes.

13 For when God made promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf, 14 Saying, Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. 15 And ſo after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promiſe.

The apoſtle having told us in general, that the ſaints by faith and patience do inherit the promiſes, inſtances here particularly in Abraham, unto whom God made a promiſe of multiplying his ſeed greatly to him, and confirmed that promiſe by an oath; but Abraham waited long by faith and patience for the complete fulfilling of the promiſe; and ſo muſt we. God delights to be truſted by his people upon his word and oath; and when they do not live to ſee the promiſe of God fulfilled, they glorify him exceedingly, by dying in the faith and firm belief, that it ſhall be fulfilled in God's own appointed time. *Note* here, The wonderful condeſcenſion of God towards the infirmity of men, he ſwears, he ſwears by himſelf, he pawns and pledges his Godhead, and if he performs not what he promiſes and ſwears, is willing to forfeit it. *O fœlices nos? Quorum cauſa Deus jurat! O miſerrimi! Si nec juranti credamus.* "O happy man! For whoſe ſake God condeſcends to ſwear. O miſerable man! If we doubt of God's promiſe confirmed by his oath, in which he has laid down his Godhead as a ſtake and pawn, never to take it up again, if he fails in the leaſt jot in the punctual performance of it."

16 For men verily ſwear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all ſtrife.

Theſe words contain a reaſon, why God, in gracious condeſcenſion to man's infirmity, is pleaſed to confirm his promiſe with an oath; it is to determine a controverſy, and put an end to a ſtrife depending between God and the fallen creatures: And this is the general reaſon for an oath amongſt men, it is to put bounds and limits to the contentions and contradictions of men; to make an end of all ſtrife between them, which otherwiſe would be perpetuated, and to bring them to a mutual acquieſcency: *An oath for confirmation is an end of all ſtrife.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there is, as we are in a ſtate of nature, a ſtrife and difference between God and us. 2. That the promiſes of the goſpel are gracious propoſals of the only way and means for the ending of that ſtrife. 3. That the oath of God interpoſed for the confirmation of theſe promiſes, is every way ſufficient on God's part, to put a period to this ſtrife, and to eſtabliſh a firm peace with us through the blood of Chriſt.

17 Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation,—

Here the apoſtle acquaints us with the deſign of God in confirming his promiſe, namely, to manifeſt the immutability of his counſel to us; that is, by his decreee and purpoſe for our ſalvation; to the intent, that by his word and oath we might have ſtrong conſolation. So unſpeakable is the weakneſs of our faith, that we ſtand in need of the utmoſt condeſcenſion of God for its confirmation. *Note* here, That God has made many promiſes for the confirmation of his people's faith. God's oath is a ſurety for his promiſes; and that God's end, both in his promiſe and his oath is to give his people the higheſt aſſurance, and ſtrongeſt conſolation. *Queſt.* Why are we ſo hard to believe God upon his ſingle word; yea, can ſcarce truſt him upon his oath? *Anſ.* Becauſe of our guilt; now guilt is always full of fear, and fear full of ſuſpicion and diſtruſt; and becauſe the way of reconciliation is ſo rare and wonderful, that we can ſcarce concceive it, much leſs believe it; alſo the privileges of the goſpel are ſo glorious, that they exceed our belief: and becauſe we ourſelves are ſo falſe and fickle, both with God and one another, that promiſes, vows, and oaths, are all little enough to hold us. Now we are apt to meaſure God by ourſelves, therefore he gives us his oath. Inference, 1. How ought we to bind ourſelves to God by oath, ſeeing he condeſcends thus to bind himſelf to us? 2. How unreaſonable is it for the believer to diſtruſt God upon his oath? This is not only to accuſe God of a lie, but to impeach him of perjury. 3. How abſurd is it for the impenitent ſinner not to tremble at the threatenings of God, which are confirmed by an oath, as well as his promiſes? *I have ſworn in my wrath*, &c.

—Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us:

In theſe words there is an alluſion to the cities of refuge ſpoken of under the law: God appointed ſix of them for thoſe to fly unto, who were guilty of caſual homicide, or killing a man by chance, that ſo they might avoid the fury of the avenger of blood. Now theſe cities of refuge were an illuſtrious type of Chriſt. *Note* here, 1. Chriſt is the believer's city of refuge, the only ſanctuary for diſtreſſed ſouls. 2. That believers do by faith fly unto him for refuge, when the guilt of ſin, and the wrath of God for ſin, do purſue and follow them. This flying for refuge doth imply diligence and earneſtneſs, as in the caſe of life and death, yea, unwearied diligence; and it implies continuance in this refuge, when once got into it, not to ſtir out of it for all the world. Lord! open the eyes, and awaken the conſciences of all impenitent ſinners, make them ſenſible that the avenger of blood is at their heels, and that their damnation ſlumbers not, if they do not preſently fly from the wrath to come, and take ſanctuary in thy Son.

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entereth into that within the veil.

In theſe words we have the nature of a Chriſtian's hope deſcribed, 1. By a metaphorical: 2. By a typical ſimilitude. (1.) Obſerve the metaphor made uſe of, to ſet forth the nature and office of hope, it is compared to an anchor; *which hope we have as an anchor of the ſoul.* Doth the anchor hold faſt the ſhip, and keep it ſteady, both in ſtorms and tempeſts, and in the midſt of the moſt tumultuous waves? In like manner, the hope of eternal glory quiets, ſtays, and ſtrengthens the Chriſtians' ſpirit, when toſſed upon the waves of this troubleſome world. *Learn* hence, 1. That believers are expoſed to many ſtorms and tempeſts here in this world; their afflictions, perſecutions, temptations, fears, &c. are compared fitly to ſtorms, becauſe of their fierceneſs and violence, and becauſe of their tendency to ruin and deſtruction. 2. That theſe ſtorms would prove ruinous to the ſouls of believers, did not hope, the anchor of the ſoul, take faſt hold on the promiſes of the goſpel, which keep the Chriſtian firm and invincible againſt all oppoſitions. *Obſerve*, 2. Hope is deſcribed by a typical ſimilitude, it *entereth into that within the veil.* The veil here alluded to, is that which parted the holy of holies from the body of the temple, a type of heaven. The heavens are as a veil to the ſenſe and reaſon of man, there their ſight and their thoughts are bounded, they can neither diſcern nor judge of any thing that is above or within that veil: But faith and hope pierceth through it; no created thing can keep them at a diſtance from God himſelf. As the anchor ſtays not in the waves of the ſea, but pierces through them all till it comes to the ſolid bottom; ſo the Chriſtian's hope fixes on nothing under heaven; but pierces through all, till it *entereth into that within the veil*; that is, till it fixes on God as the author, on Chriſt as the purchaſer, on the Spirit as the inſurer, on the covenant as the conveyer of all grace, mercy, and peace. Here hope fixes itſelf, to hold the ſoul firm and ſtedfaſt in all the ſtorms that may befal it. *Learn* hence, 1. That the hope and faith of believers are inviſible unto the world; they *enter within the veil*, where the world's eye can never follow them. 2. That hope firmly fixed on God in Chriſt by the promiſe, will hold the ſoul ſteady, and keep the Chriſtian right, in all the ſtorms that may befal it.

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jeſus, made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

Obſerve here, The perſon ſpoken of, Chriſt; the ſubject matter ſpoken of him, his entering into heaven; and the quality in which he entered heaven; namely, as our forerunner. This denotes, 1. His public capacity, that he entered heaven in our name, and to negotiate our affairs. 2. His abſolute precedency, he is our forerunner, but he himſelf had no forerunner, none entered before him in their own names, but in his, and upon his account, through the virtue of his merits, and by the prevalency of his mediation. *Learn* hence, 1. That there is a place and ſtate of happineſs above, prepared for pious ſouls, which Chriſt is entered into, and has taken poſſeſſion of: This place may be conſidered in its amplitude and largeneſs, in its ſtability and firmneſs, in its ſanctity and holineſs, in its pleaſure and delightfulneſs, in its glory and bleſſedneſs, in its eternity and everlaſtingneſs: And this place is by Chriſt prepared for believers; namely, by his death and ſatisfaction, by his reſurrection and aſcenſion, by his mediation and interceſſion. 2. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is not only entered into heaven, but entered as our forerunner, to take and keep poſſeſſion of it in the name and ſtead of all believers. To enter heaven as our forerunner, implies, that he entered in our natures, that he keeps poſſeſſion of it in our names: As ſure as the Head is gone before the members, ſo certainly ſhall the members follow their Head: as a forerunner ſuppoſes others to follow after; and it implies, that Chriſt will put us into the actual poſſeſſion of heaven in his own time. Inference, 1. Is Chriſt gone before to heaven, then let us be willing to follow him in the way of obedience, and in the way of ſuffering, as well as to meet him in the end. 2. To make haſte after him. Did he fly as an eagle towards heaven, and ſhall we creep like a ſnail? Is not the boſom of Chriſt more deſirable than the arms of our deareſt friends? Shall we not enjoy all comforts in the enjoyment of our Comforter? 3. Let our hearts at preſent be with him. O! Where ſhould our hearts be, but where our Head is?

CHAP. VII.

Our apoſtle in this chapter continues his diſcourſe concerning the prieſthood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhewing us wherein Melchiſedec was a type of Chriſt.

FOR this Melchiſedec king of Salem, prieſt of the moſt high God, who met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, and bleſſed him; 2 To whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all: firſt being by interpretation king of righteouſneſs, and after that alſo, king of Salem, which is king of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without deſcent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a prieſt continually.

Here *obſerve*, 1. The perſon ſpoken of deſcribed by his name, Melchiſedec. Some take this Melchiſedec to be Shem the ſon of Noah; but this cannot be, becauſe his genealogy is exactly ſet down by Moſes. Others take him to be one of the poſterity of Japhet, the father of the Gentiles: In the midſt of theſe ſinners, above others, was Melchiſedec raiſed up an illuſtrious type of Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah. See here, how God can raiſe up inſtruments for his ſervice, and unto his glory, when, where, and how he pleaſeth. And *learn* hence, that this ſignal prefiguration of Chriſt, in the nations of the world, at the ſame time when Abraham received the promiſes for himſelf and his poſterity, gave a pledge and aſſurance of the certain future call of the Gentiles unto an intereſt in him and participation of him. 2. Melchiſedec is here deſcribed by his office; he was *king of Salem*, and a prieſt of the Moſt High God; yea, the firſt that was ſo by ſpecial inſtitution, and ſeparated to the office by God's approbation: None went before him, and none ſucceeded him in his office. Here *note*, That the firſt perſonal inſtituted type of Chriſt, was Melchiſedec, as prieſt; for in his kingly office he was not ſo directly typical of Chriſt. There were moral types of Chriſt's perſon before Melchiſedec, as Adam, Abel, and Noah, which repreſented him in ſundry things: But the firſt perſon, who was ſolemnly deſigned to repreſent Chriſt by what he was and did, was Melchiſedec the prieſt; teaching us, that the foundation of all that the Lord Chriſt had to do in and for the church, was laid in his prieſtly office, whereby he made atonement, and reconciliation for ſin. 3. Melchiſedec is deſcribed by ſeveral actions and circumſtances: (1.) *He met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings:* This meeting of Melchiſedec and Abraham, after Abraham had gotten the victory over all his adverſaries, was a type and repreſentation of the glorious meeting of Chriſt and his church at the laſt day; then he will bring out of his ſtores in heaven for their eternal refreſhment, as Melchiſedec brought forth bread and wine to refreſh Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings. (2.) He bleſſed him, Gen. xiv. 19. *And Melchiſedec ſaid, Bleſſed be Abraham of the moſt High God, poſſeſſor of heaven and earth.* Sacerdotal bleſſings were authoritative, and that by ſpecial inſtitution. In this bleſſing of Abraham by Melchiſedec, all believers are virtually bleſſed by Jeſus

Chriſt: Melchiſedec repreſented Chriſt in what he then did, and Abraham repreſented all his believing poſterity, in what he then received. (3.) Another ſacerdotal act, or exerciſe of prieſtly power aſcribed to Melchiſedec, is, that he received of Abraham tithes of all; the one paid them in a way of duty, the other received them in a way of office. *Note* here, The antiquity of tithes, and how very ancient they were; they were paid in Abraham's time, long before the ceremonial law, and therefore cannot be ſaid to be Jewiſh and Levitical. The patriarchs before the law, the Jews under the law, and the Chriſtians in times of the goſpel, have all paid this proportion: From whence ſome have concluded, that as the ſeventh part of our time, ſo the tenth part of our goods and eſtates were given to God from the beginning; the Lord of all our time, and proprietor of all our eſtate. Whatſoever we receive ſignally from God, in a way of mercy, we ought to return a portion of it to him in a way of duty. It is a certain ſign that a man has not engaged God in getting an eſtate, when he will not entitle him to any portion of it when it is gotten. *Obſerve*, 4. The apoſtle proceeds unto other inſtances in the deſcription of Melchiſedec, wherein he was made like unto the Son of God, ver. 3. *Without Father*, *without mother*, &c. which expreſſions muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but tropically, not of Melchiſedec as a man, but as a prieſt; for as a man, he had certainly both father and mother, though not recorded in ſcripture; he was aſſuredly born, and did not leſs certainly die than other men; but neither his beginning of days, nor end of life, are regiſtered and rehearſed, that he might be the fitter type of Chriſt, concerning whom it is ſaid, *Who can declare his generation?* But though Melchiſedec, as a man, had father and mother, yet as a prieſt he had no predeceſſor nor ſucceſſor; no predeceſſor from whom he might by birth receive his ſacerdotal power; no ſucceſſor who derived his prieſthood from him: Now herein alſo was Melchiſedec an illuſtrious type in Chriſt, who derived his prieſthood from no mortal predeceſſor, but immediately from his heavenly Father; neither will he tranſmit it to any ſucceſſor, but when all enemies are ſubdued, he ſhall reſign his prieſthood, together with his kingdom, to God the Father, who gave him both. 5. What is here aſſerted concerning Melchiſedec; namely, that he abideth *a prieſt for ever*; that is, things are ſo related concerning him in Scripture, as that there is no mention of the ending of the prieſthood of his order. We read of no reſignation of his office, or of the ſucceſſion of any perſon to him therein; and thus he remaineth a prieſt for ever. This was that which our apoſtle did principally deſign to confirm from hence, namely, that there was in the Scripture, before the inſtitution of the Aaronical prieſthood, a repreſentation of an eternal unchangeable prieſthood, to be introduced in the church; which he demonſtrates to be that of Jeſus Chriſt, of which Melchiſedec's prieſthood was a type.

8 Now conſider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the ſpoils.

Theſe words are the apoſtle's application of what was before diſcourſed; by comparing Melchiſedec's excellency with Abraham's, he ſhews Chriſt's excellency above Melchiſedec's, and he calls upon them to conſider this, *conſider how great this man was*. It will be fruitleſs, and to no advantage, to propoſe and declare the moſt important truths of the goſpel, if thoſe unto whom they are propoſed do not diligently enquire into them, and duly ponder and conſider of them. The Hebrews are here called upon to conſider: But what? And whom? Why, who Melchiſedec was, and how great a man he was? *Note* here, that the greatneſs of Melchiſedec did not reſpect either the endowments of his perſon, or the largeneſs of his dominion, or his riches and wealth, in which ſenſe ſome are ſaid to be great in ſcripture: but he is pronounced great with reſpect to his office, and in regard of his nearneſs to God on that account, as alſo in his repreſenting our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* farther, The proof here given of the greatneſs of Melchiſedec, in that no meaner perſon than Abraham, than Abraham the Patriarch, did give the tenth part of the ſpoils unto him. Here *remark*, That notwithſtanding the higheſt advantages and privileges which Abraham was poſſeſſed of, which rendered him almoſt adored by his poſterity, yet when the meaneſt duty was preſented to him, he readily complied with it. The higheſt privileges neither can nor ought to exempt any perſon from the performance of the meaneſt duty. Duty is our higheſt honour, and chiefeſt advantage; but privileges, promotions, dignities, and exhaltations, may become ſnares, and end in the ruin of men's ſouls. When a perſon is dignified and advanced in the church, if thereby he thinks himſelf exempted from the ordinary ſervice of the miniſtry, he is guilty of horrid pride and ingratitude: But if he farther indulge himſelf in the courſe of idleneſs, ſloth, ſenſuality, and worldlineſs, theſe are crimes unpardonable, and want a name to expreſs them.

5 And verily they that are of the ſons of Levi, who receive the office of the prieſthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham. 6 But he, whoſe deſcent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and bleſſed him that had the promiſes. 7 And without all contradiction the leſs is bleſſed of the better.

Still the apoſtle goes on to give Melchiſedec the preference above Abraham, and from then to infer, that Chriſt whom Melchiſedec typified, was much more excellent than Abraham, and all the Levitical prieſts which ſprang from him. The argument lies thus: "The law allowed Aaron and the other prieſts to take tithes of their brethren that ſprung from Abraham; but Melchiſedec received tithes of Abraham, who was none of his people, yea, and bleſſed Abraham alſo, which is a demonſtration that he was greater than Abraham; and conſequently it is evident, that Chriſt is greater than the Jewiſh prieſts; to bleſs authoritatively is an act of ſuperiority: Now Melchiſedec bleſſed Abraham, he is therefore greater than Abraham; becauſe he that bleſſed is greater than he whom he bleſſeth." Behold here the excellency of the office of God's miniſters, namely, to bleſs the people in God's name: They bleſs authoritatively, they bleſs declaratively, they bleſs optatively. God help them to take heed, leſt, by their miſcariages, they prove a ſnare and a curſe unto them whom they ought to bleſs.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witneſſed that he liveth.

Our apoſtle ſtill carrieth on the ſame argument, proving Melchiſedec's prieſthood to ſurpaſs and excel the Aaronical and Levitical prieſthood in the immortality of it: As the the leſs is bleſſed of the greater, ſo is that which is immortal greater and better than what is mortal; But ſuch is Melchiſedec, and his order of prieſthood. Indeed, in the Levitical order of prieſthood, though the prieſts be ſuperior to the people, and take tithes of them, yet they do die as well as the people: But we read not a word of Melchiſedec's death, he is a prieſt for ever; that is, he did typically prefigure Chriſt, who doth properly and indeed live for ever. Melchiſedec ever lives *ſecundam hiſtoriam*, Chriſt *ſecundum veritatem*. *Learn* hence, That the life of the church depends upon the everlaſting life of Jeſus Chriſt; He liveth for ever, when miniſters die or have their mouths ſtopped. This great High Prieſt lives, upon whom the life and preſervation, the continuance and ſalvation of the church does depend: *Here men die that receive tithes*. Note, *From their mortality*, that in the outward adminſtration of God's worſhip, he is pleaſed to make uſe of the miniſtry of frail, mortal, dying men. Zach. i. 5. *The prophets do they live for ever?* Aereby it does evidently appear that it is the power of God, and nothing elſe, which gives efficacy and ſucceſs to all goſpel adminiſtrations, 2 Cor. iv. 7. *We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels*, &c.

9 And as I may ſo ſay, Levi alſo, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchiſedec met him.

By Levi, we are to underſtand the Levites, or the Levitical prieſthood; they being in Abraham's loins, are ſaid to pay tithes in Abraham to Melchiſedec, which the apoſtle produces as an evidence, that Melchiſedec is ſuperior to the Levites, and greater than they; and conſequently, that Chriſt, whom Melchiſedec did typify, muſt needs be more excellent than they alſo. The argument runs thus: "They who receive tithes of others, are certainly ſuperior to them of whom they do receive them; but Melchiſedec received tithes of Abraham, and of Levi in Abraham's loins; therefore he is ſuperior to them, and of a more excellent order than they:" which is the great truth he hath been ſo induſtriouſly proving.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical prieſthood (for under it the people received the law) what farther need *was there* that another prieſt ſhould riſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law.

If *perfection*, that is, a perfect expiation and remiſſion of ſin, could have been made by the ſacrifice which the legal prieſts offered, there ſhould then have been no need that God ſhould inſtitute a prieſt of another and more excellent order, namely, his own Son, to be a prieſt after Melchiſedec's order, and not after the order of Aaron. Where *note*, That perfection is denied in the Levitical prieſthood, and aſcribed to the prieſthood of Chriſt. To perfect ſinful man, is to free him from the guilt of ſin, and from the direful and diſmal conſequences of ſin, and to make him righteous and holy, capable of communion with God, both here and hereafter. Now this the Levitical prieſthood could not do. *But Jeſus Chriſt has by one offering perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*, chap. x. 14. Thus the apoſtle infers the neceſſity of changing the prieſthood: And next he tells us, ver. 12. That the change of the Levitical prieſthood neceſſarily draweth along with it a change of the Levitical law, and the legal diſpenſation of the covenant of grace; for the Levitical prieſthood and the Levitical law do both ſtand and fall together: *The prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law*. By the changing of the prieſthood, underſtand the abolition of it; by the change of the law, underſtand the abrogation of it; by the word neceſſity, underſtand that the change was not caſual and contingent, but abſolutely needful, in regard of the imperfection and inability of the Levitical prieſthood to effect any ſuch thing. *Learn* hence, That the promulgation of the goſpel, and the inſtitution of Chriſtianity, did abrogate the Levitical law, and make it of no force. This might be the reaſon why God did not only by the death and ſacrifice of Chriſt, the great High Prieſt, aboliſh the Levitical prieſthood, but alſo deſtroyed the temple itſelf, where he had put his name, and never ſuffered it to be rebuilt; denoting thereby the utter abolition of the Levitical prieſthood, and the total abrogation of the ceremonial law.

13 For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For *it is* evident that our Lord ſprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning prieſthood.

In the foregoing verſes, our apoſtle had aſſerted the change of the prieſthood, and therewith the changing of the law. In theſe verſes he proves it by the tranſlation of the prieſthood to another tribe; namely, from Levi to Judah. The Levitical prieſthood was confined to one certain tribe, that of Levi, and to one certain family, that of Aaron: Whence it follows, that the tribe being changed, and God having inſtituted a prieſt of another tribe, the prieſthood muſt be changed alſo. Now it being evident, that Chriſt ſprang not of the tribe of Levi, but out of Judah, the apoſtle, from the changing of the tribe, ſtrongly infers the change of the prieſthood. *Note* here, 1. How it was a fruit of the manifold wiſdom of God, and a very great mercy and favour to give the law, but a far greater to take it away, 2. If under the law, the whole worſhip of God did ſo depend on the prieſthood, that, that failing, the whole worſhip was to ceaſe, as being no more acceptable to God, how much more will all worſhip under the New Teſtament be rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the great and only High Prieſt of his church.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another prieſt. 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life. 17 For he teſtifieth, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

That the Aaronical prieſthood was to be changed, and conſequently the whole law of ordinances that depended thereupon, and that the time was now come wherein this change was to be made, is the grand truth which our apoſtle here deſigns the confirmation of; it being indeed that truth, whereinto our faith of the acceptance of evangelical worſhip is reſolved: And accordingly he gives a farther proof of the change of the prieſthood from the different manner of the prieſt's conſecration. Thus the Levitical prieſt was ſet apart to his office by a number of carnal rites and outward ceremonies, which the law preſcribed to be uſed at the conſecration of Aaron and his ſons, who were purified with water, anointed with oil, ſprinkled with blood, clothed with prieſtly veſtments, initiated with ſacrifices, adminiſtered in an earthly tabernacle and temple. But ſays our apoſtle, the evangelical or goſpel High Prieſt, Chriſt Jeſus, was not conſtituted thus, or made a prieſt with ſuch carnal rites and outward ceremonies, but *with the power of an endleſs life*: That is, he was conſecrated Prieſt by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, having an immortal life ſuitable to his prieſthood, an authority to give eternal life to as many as depend upon the benefit of his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, *He was made, not after the law of a carnal commandment* (with corporeal ceremony and carnal duration) *but after the ſpiritual power of an endleſs life. Learn* hence, That all the outward ceremony which ſeemed to be wanting unto Chriſt, in his entrance into his prieſtly office, was on the account of a greater glory. Aaron was made a prieſt with great outward ſolemnity, Chriſt with none at all; yet all Aaron's ceremonial glory was nothing in compariſon of that excellent glory which accompanied thoſe inviſible acts of divine authority, wiſdom, and grace, which communicated Chriſt's office unto him.

18 For there is verily a diſannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Now the apoſtle comes to declare, that the Levitical prieſthood being aboliſhed, and the ceremonial law abrogated, the whole ſtate of the church, and the ſolemn worſhip of God therein, muſt neceſſarily be changed alſo. This he foreſaw would be a mighty ſurpriſal to the generality of the Hebrews, to hear that they muſt quit all their concern and ſpecial intereſt in the law of Moſes; and therefore he aſſigns a double reaſon for the abrogation and diſannulling of that law; the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof. Not that the law was weak in itſelf, or unprofitable to the end for which God made it; namely, to lead them to Chriſt, but weak and unprofitable for juſtification and ſalvation. They expected expiation of ſin, ſanctification and holineſs by it, without any regard to Chriſt and his ſacrifice, by whom alone it could be obtained. Thoſe things the law could not effect in its beſt eſtate; how vain was it then for the Jews to expect them when it was aboliſhed? *Obſerve* next, How the apoſtle proves the law to be weak and unprofitable, becauſe it *made nothing perfect. The law*, that is, the whole ſyſtem of the Moſaical ordinances, the legal covenant, *made nothing perfect*; that is, no perſon, how ſtrictly ſoever he obſerved, could be juſtified and ſaved by it: It could not of itſelf cleanſe from ſin, reconcile us to God, juſtify our perſons, ſanctify our natures, and procure ſalvation for us. Laſtly, Though the ceremonial law made nothing perfect, yet the goſpel law, called here a better hope, becauſe the promiſes of it are a good ground of hope, has efficacy, power, and virtue, to do all thoſe things for us, and by it we have freedom of acceſs to God. *The law made nothing perfect*, &c. *Learn* hence, 1. That the law could not juſtify or ſanctify any perſon, nor make him perfect, by reconciling him to God, and procuring ſalvation for him. 2. That believers of old, who lived under the law, did not live upon the law, but upon the hope of Chriſt, or Chriſt hoped for; could juſtification and ſalvation have been had any other way, or by any other mean, Chriſt's coming had been needleſs, and his death in vain. 3. That the introduction of a better hope by the goſpel, after a ſufficient diſcovery made of the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the law, did make all things perfect, or bring the church to that ſtate of conſummation, which was deſigned unto it. 4. That when all mankind were at an inconceivable diſtance from God, it was infinite condeſcenſion of grace to appoint his own Son, who was the bleſſed hope of the ſaints under the Old Teſtament, to be the only way and mean of our approaching unto him. When *the law made nothing perfect*, &c.

20 And inaſmuch as not without an oath *he was made prieſt*: 21 For thoſe prieſts were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec: 22 By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament.

Our apoſtle has not yet done with his ſeveral arguments to prove the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt's prieſthood above that of Aaron's: His argument in the verſes now before us lies thus; he that is made an unchangeable prieſt by the oath of God, is a better, greater, and more excellent prieſt, than any made ſo without it. But whereas the Levitical prieſts were made without an oath, by a law changeable at the will of the lawgiver; Jeſus Chriſt was made a Prieſt by the unchangeable oath of God. *The Lord ſware and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever. Learn* hence, 1. That nothing was wanting on the part of God, that might either give eminency and glory, or ſtability and efficacy to the prieſthood of Chriſt: This was both due to the glory of his perſon, and alſo needful to encourage and ſecure the faith of the church. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, being initiated into his office by the oath of God, his prieſthood is liable to no alteration, ſucceſſion, or ſubſtitution; but the church may continually draw nigh to God, in full aſſurance of his meritorious ſatisfaction and prevailing interceſſion, and receive from thence a ſolid foundation of peace and conſolation: *By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament. Obſerve* here, 1. The title given the goſpel-covenant, it is here called a better teſtament: But not for ſubſtance, but for clearneſs; for ſubſtance, the old covenant diſpenſation and the new are the ſame; but the latter is made more clear, more free, more full, more ſurely ratified, by the death of Chriſt, and accompanied with a more mighty operation of the Spirit of God. 2. The title here given to Chriſt, he is the *ſurety of a better teſtament.* Our ſurety, becauſe our ſacrifice. The Socinians own Chriſt to be the ſurety of the covenant in reſpect of his holy life, and exemplary death, ſealing it as a teſtimony by his blood, but deny him to be a ſurety in reſpect of his ſatisfaction, merit, and interceſſion. But alas! as our ſinful condition requires a mediator of redemption, ſo our changeable condition requires a mediator of interceſſion; and, bleſſed be God, he has appointed one for both, even his own and only Son, who is the ſurety of a better teſtament. *Learn* thence, That the Lord Jeſus was not only made a ſurety on God's part to us, to aſſure us, that the promiſe of the covenant on his part, ſhould be performed, but was alſo a ſurety on our part, to furniſh us with that grace and aſſiſtance which ſhall enable us to do, anſwer, and perform all that is required on our part, that we may enjoy the benefit of the covenant, grace here, and glory hereafter. Chriſt has undertaken, as ſurety of the covenant, firſt, to ſatisfy for ſin, by offering himſelf a propitiatory ſacrifice; and next to furniſh forth a ſufficiency of grace to enable for the fulfilling the conditions of the goſpel-covenant. Thus was Jeſus *the ſurety of this better covenant.*

23 And they truly were many prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death: 24 But this *man*, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood.

Now our apoſtle is come to his laſt argument, by which he proves the excellency of Chriſt's prieſthood above that of Aaron. The Levitical prieſts, he ſays, were many and mortal; their mortality was the cauſe of their multitude: they were cut off by death, and ſucceeded one another; but Chriſt is the one and the ſame to his church, *yeſterday, today, and for ever*; he had no partner, has no ſucceſſor, but executes an everlaſting unchangeable prieſthood in his own perſon. *Note* here, 1. That the multiplication of prieſts, particularly of high prieſts under the legal diſpenſation, was a manifeſt evidence of the imperfection of it; from Aaron the firſt high prieſt, unto Phineas the laſt, who was deſtroyed with the temple, are reckoned fourſcore and three high prieſts, who ſucceeded one another: of theſe, thirteen are ſaid to live under the tabernacle, eighteen under the firſt temple built by Solomon, and all the reſt under the ſecond temple: The ground of which multiplication of prieſts was this, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death. *Learn*, 1. That the prieſthood of Chriſt, as unchangeably exerciſed in his own perſon, is perpetual; and its perpetuity is a principal part of the glory of that office. *He continueth for ever*, having an *unchangeable prieſthood. Queſt.* But did not Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, die as well as Aaron, and other high prieſts? *Anſ.* Yes, he died as a prieſt, they died from being prieſts; he died as a prieſt, becauſe he was alſo to be a ſacrifice. The apoſtle doth not ſay, that he did not die, but that he always abideth; he abode a prieſt even in the ſtate of death, and after his reſurrection he became immortal, never to die more; he ever liveth, he dieth no more, death has no more dominion over him. See how he deſcribes himſelf, Rev. i. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead: and behold I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and death.*

25 Wherefore he is alſo able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.

Theſe words are a comfortable inference and concluſion, which our apoſtle draws from his preceding diſcourſe concerning the eternity and unchangeableneſs of Chriſt's prieſthood; ſeeing he lives for ever, he is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and that for ever. *Obſerve* here, 1. The complete power and ability of Jeſus Chriſt to ſave ſinners aſſerted: *He is able to ſave*, and that *to the uttermoſt*; that is, completely and everlaſtingly. *Learn* hence, That whatever difficulties lie in the way of ſalvation, and whatever oppoſitions do riſe againſt it, either with reſpect to the guilt of ſin, or to the power and dominion of it, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is able by virtue of his ſacerdotal office, and in the exerciſe of it, to carry on the work through them all unto eternal perfection: Such is the dignity of his perſon, ſuch is the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, that he expiates the guilt of ſin univerſally and perpetually. *Obſerve*, 2. The character and deſcription given of the perſons whom Jeſus Chriſt thus perfectly and eternally ſaves, *Such as come unto God by him*; thoſe, all thoſe, and only thoſe, whom God will ſave, are ſuch as come unto him for ſalvation by and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as mediator. Oh how injurious then are they to their own ſouls, who ſit down deſponding, either under the guilt, or under the power of their ſins, and conclude them either ſo great that they cannot be pardoned, or ſo ſtrong that they can never be vanquiſhed or overcome! 3. The reaſon of this power and ability in Chriſt to ſave ſinners to the uttermoſt aſſigned, and that is, the eternity of his prieſthood, the perpetuity and prevalency of his interceſſion; *Seeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* Here *note*, 1. The ſtate and condition of Chriſt as an High Prieſt, he ever liveth. He is always living in heaven a threefold life. (1.) The eternal life of God in his divine nature; this he liveth in himſelf. (2.) A life of inconceiveable glory in his human nature; this is a life which he liveth for himſelf. (3.) A mediatory life in heaven; and this he lives for us. *Note*,

2. What he doth as an High Prieſt in that ſtate and condition; *He maketh interceſſion for us.* *Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ever liveth to make interceſſion with his Father in heaven, on the behalf of all penitent believers here on earth. We are not to conceive of Chriſt as an interceſſor with his Father in heaven, in ſuch an humble ſupplicating manner as when here upon earth, with knees bended down, and eyes lifted up to heaven, this is inconſiſtent with his glorified ſtate. But it is ſuch a pleading and petitioning with his Father as is in the nature of a claim and demand; and it is ſuch a claim and demand made to his Father, as is accompanied with the preſenting the memorials of his death unto him. Chriſt need not uſe his mouth to plead with his Father in heaven, the bare ſhewing of his wounded body pleads prevalently and perpetually, and this interceſſion of Chriſt is a ſtanding evidence of the continuance of his love and care, his pity and compaſſion to us. Bleſſed be God that our great High Prieſt, who ſuffered for us, ever liveth in heaven to make interceſſion for us.

26 For ſuch an High Prieſt became us, *who* is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Obſerve here, 1. Something ſuppoſed and neceſſarily implied, namely, That we intend to come unto God, we had need of an High Prieſt to encourage and enable us thereunto; *Such an High Prieſt became us*; implying, that without an High Prieſt in general we can do nothing in this matter. 2. The care and kindneſs of God in providing for us, not only an High Prieſt but *ſuch an High Prieſt* as our condition required, one that has made atonement for us, procured acceptance, given us aſſiſtance, preſerved us in grace, and will preſerve us unto glory; behold the infinite wiſdom, love, grace, and goodneſs of God, in giving ſuch an High Prieſt, as in the qualification of his perſon, the glory of his condition, and the diſcharge of his office, was every way ſuited to deliver us from a ſtate of apoſtaſy, ſin, and miſery, and to bring us to himſelf through a perfect ſalvation. 3. The double character given of this High Prieſt in his purity. (1.) *He is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.* Thus he was in his conception, birth, life, and death, never tainted or ſtained with the leaſt ſin, but both habitually and actually more pure and holy than any prieſt on earth, or angel in heaven. (2.) In his dignity, *He is made higher than the heavens*; advanced above all the inhabitants of that glorious place, where he ever liveth, and keeps his reſidence, remaining a Prieſt for ever not to ſacrifice, but to apply effectually his former ſacrifice to all believers.

27 Who needeth not daily, as thoſe high prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice, firſt for his own ſins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himſelf.

This is, "As Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, had no ſin of his own to expiate, like other high prieſts, but his buſineſs was to offer for our ſins; ſo the oblation and offering he made upon that account, was not bullocks or rams, but *himſelf* in ſacrifice, and that *once*, and but once upon the croſs, which *once* offered ſacrifice was abundantly ſufficient to take away ſin; whereas other high prieſts offered for their own ſins, and for the people's ſins, and that often, which was a token of their inſufficiency and imperfection." *Learn* hence, 1. That no ſacrifice could bring us to God, and ſave us to perfection, but that wherein the Son of God himſelf was both prieſt and offering; ſuch an High Prieſt became us who offered himſelf once for all. 2. That the perfection of Chriſt's ſacrifice makes the repetition of it needleſs, and the often repeating of it would argue the imperfection both of prieſt and ſacrifice.

28 For the law maketh men high prieſts which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was ſince the law, *maketh* the Son, who is conſecrated for evermore.

That is, the Levitical law appointed men to be high prieſts that laboured under infirmities, were ſinners, and ſubject to mortality; but the promiſe made to Chriſt, and confirmed by God's oath long ſince the law was given, maketh the Son, and none but the Son (who is perfectly holy and conſecrated to this everlaſting office) a prieſt *for evermore.* *Learn* hence, 1. That there never was any more than two ſorts of prieſts in the church; the one made by the law, the other by the oath of God. 2. That the great foundation of our faith, and the main hinge whereon all our conſolation depends, is this, that our High Prieſt is the Son of God, and his everlaſting continuance in his office is ſecured by the oath of God.

CHAP. VIII.

Our apoſtle having proved the excellency of Chriſt's prieſthood in the former chapter; proceeds in this to ſhew his faithful execution of that his prieſtly office, for the good and benefit of his church.

NOW of the things which we have ſpoken, *this is* the ſum: We have ſuch an high prieſt, who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens; 2 A miniſter of the ſanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Obſerve here, 1. The apoſtle's preface, in which he doth briefly recapitulate the ſum and ſubſtance of his preceding arguments, *Now of the things which we have ſpoken, this is the ſum.* *Learn* hence, That when doctrines are important, and the matters treated of very weighty and momentous, we ſhould endeavour by all means to make an impreſſion of them upon the minds of our hearers, by a brief recapitulation of the things we have inſiſted on; thus doth our apoſtle here. *Obſerve*, 2. A declaration of the firſt general pre-eminence of our High Prieſt, and that is taken from his preſent ſtate and eternal condition. *He is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens.* A throne, a ſceptre, a crown, are enſigns of majeſty, and ornaments of ſovereign power: To ſit in the throne, is to poſſeſs ſovereign power and dominion: This Chriſt now enjoys in heaven, as the reward of his deep humiliation, and as the higheſt degree of his exaltation. *Learn* hence, That the principal glory of the prieſtley office of Chriſt depends on the glorious exaltation of his perſon. *Obſerve*, 3. Another pre-eminence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our great High Prieſt; he is called a miniſter of the ſanctuary. *A miniſter*; this intimates to us, that our great High Prieſt, in the height of his glory, condeſcends to diſcharge the office of a public miniſter in the behalf of his church. Our thoughts ſometimes dwell upon what Chriſt did for us on earth, but too ſeldom are they taken up with the contemplation of what he is ſtill doing for us in heaven. And a *miniſter of the ſanctuary or true tabernacle*; that is, not of the literal ſanctuary and tabernacle here below, for Chriſt never entered into that, but of the ſanctuary of heaven, in which dwelleth all that was repreſented in the ſanctuary here below: Chriſt our great High Prieſt abides in the ſanctuary of heaven for us continually; always repreſenting the efficacy of that blood whereby atonement was made for all our ſins. O bleſſed Jeſus! Thy being continually in heaven, will draw our hearts and minds continually thither, if ſo be we are really intereſted in thy holy miniſtration.

3 For every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices: wherefore *it is* of neceſſity that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he ſhould not be a prieſt, ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things—

That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is our great High Prieſt under the goſpel, the apoſtle had ſufficiently demonſtrated and confirmed before. *Obſerve* here, How he next declares what is the nature, duty, and office of Chriſt as our High Prieſt: namely, *to offer gifts and ſacrifices.* A prieſt that has nothing to offer is no prieſt at all; Chriſt therefore offered as well as other high prieſts: but what! Bullocks and rams? In no wiſe: He offered himſelf, his whole human nature, ſoul and body. As to the typical ſacrifices he did not, could not offer them, were he upon earth, becauſe he was not of the tribe of Levi, whoſe proper office it was to meddle with thoſe offerings; therefore leaving the ſhadow to them, he offered the ſubſtance, himſelf; that is, his own body, ſignified by thoſe ſhadows. *Learn* hence, That there was no ſalvation to be had for us, no, not by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, without his ſacrifice and oblation; *It was of neceſſity that he ſhould have ſomewhat to offer*, as well as thoſe prieſts had of old, according to the law. No ſalvation without atonement for ſin; no atonement for ſin but by ſacrifice; no ſacrifice ſufficient for atonement but the death of Chriſt; and whoever looks for ſalvation otherwiſe than in the faith and virtue of that ſacrifice, will be diſappointed and deceived. But although the oblation was made by Chriſt on earth, yet the continual application of its efficacy to the ſouls of believers is made by Chriſt now in heaven; without which, neither their acceſs to God, nor their peace with God could be maintained, v. 3, 4. In the fifth verſe the apoſtle aſſerts, that the levitical prieſts here below did perform thoſe adminiſtrations which were but ſhadows of heavenly things above. *Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things.* Where *to ſerve*, is to officiate as prieſts, in offering gifts and ſacrifices: but this their ſervice was not ſpiritual and heavenly, but carnal and earthly: yet a ſhadow and imitation of heavenly things. *Learn* hence, That God alone limits the ſignification and uſe of all his own inſtitutions. The miniſtry of the prieſts of old was only in and about earthly things, not heavenly things, yet have a reſemblance and ſhadow of heavenly things. We muſt not take any thing out of God's inſtitutions which he has put in them, nor muſt we put more in them than God has furniſhed them withal. To expect that from any ordinance or inſtitution of God which he never intended or deſigned, is to make an idol of the ordinance, and the way to render it uſeleſs, yea, pernicious and perilous to us; to put that into an ordinance which God never put into it, and to expect more from an ordinance than God ever promiſed, is to overthrow it.

— As Moſes was admoniſhed of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For ſee, ſaith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.

The words imply, that divine inſtitution is the only pure rule of religious worſhip: Moſes did nothing of his own head when he built the tabernacle, but had his directions in every thing from God. If perſons will carve out the worſhip of God according to their own fancies, they may pleaſe themſelves perhaps, but they never can pleaſe their maker; for nothing is pleaſing to God, as to the ſubſtance of religious worſhip, but what is of his own preſcribing; conſequently all that theatrical pomp which is found in the church of Rome, and makes the worſhip of God a dead thing, is a mere fornication in religion, and an abomination in the ſight of God. All their human inventions are intolerable preſumptions. And as Moſes was bound to give directions according to the pattern given him, ſo the prieſts, in their adminiſtrations, were bound to follow Moſes' directions. Yet after all, the things which Moſes was concerned about, were carnal things; the tabernacle was earthly, the offerings carnal, yet ſhadows of better things, even of heavenly; for the ſanctuary was a ſhadow of a heavenly ſanctuary; the prieſt, of a better prieſt; the ſervice, of a far better ſervice: This ſeems to be the intention of our apoſtle.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo is he the mediator of a better covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, proves the excellency of Chriſt's miniſtry or prieſthood above that of Aaron and his ſons, from the excellency of the new covenant (or the new diſpenſation of the covenant of grace) above the old, of which he was the mediator. Now the more excellent the covenant, the more excellent the miniſtry. *Learn* hence, 1. That the goſpel-covenant, or the new covenant, was the beſt covenant that ever God made with man; not but the old and new covenant were the ſame for ſubſtance, though not for clearneſs; indeed temporal things were types and ſhadows of better things, even of heavenly things: And accordingly believers under the old teſtament were ſaved by a covenant of grace as well as we. *Learn*, 2. That the goſpel-covenant is therefore a better covenant, becauſe eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes; their promiſes of old were chiefly temporal, though not only temporal promiſes. Ours are chiefly ſpiritual; yet are temporal things promiſed us alſo; but more rarely, and with the exception of the croſs, or rather they are thrown in as additions to ſpiritual promiſes, Matt. iv. 33. But the promiſes of the covenant of grace are therefore better, becauſe ſtrength and aſſiſtance is engaged for, and graciouſly offered, in order to enable us to perform the conditions of them: The law required ſinleſs obedience; the goſpel accepts ſincere obedience, and offers grace to perform it. *Learn*, 3. That Jeſus Chriſt is the mediator of this better covenant: As there was a covenant made between God and man, ſo there was need of a mediator that the covenant might be effectual; for a mediator is neceſſary, both where there is a controverſy and difference, and alſo where there is an imparity and diſtance between perſons: In both reſpects Chriſt is mediator; and his mediation was needful, that he might bring us to God. God ſtood upon terms before he would pardon ſin. Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and that by blood, and that blood of infinite value; therefore Chriſt is firſt a ſponſor before a mediator; he firſt ſatisfies for the breach, before he goes about to make up the breach between God and the ſinner.

7 For if that firſt *covenant* had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond. 8 For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold, the days come (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael and with the houſe of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. What is charged on the firſt covenant, and that is faultineſs: By which we are not to underſtand any ſinful faultineſs, but defectiveneſs and imperfection only: For it was not faulty in the matter and ſubſtance of it, and it was inſtituted and ordained by God, but therefore called faulty becauſe it was obſcure, was not ſo ſurely ratified, and not attended with that virtue, power, and efficacy which the new covenant is accompanied with. *Obſerve*, 2. Wherein conſiſteth that defectiveneſs and imperfection of the firſt covenant which is here complained of; namely, 1. In its inability to juſtify and ſave us, becauſe of our inability, through the weakneſs of the fleſh, to anſwer the demands of it, Rom. viii. 3. *What the law could not do in that it was weak*, &c. The law was not properly weak to us, but we were weak to that. 2. The legal covenant required exact obedience, but afforded no ſpiritual aſſiſtance for the performance of what is required: But the covenant of grace, the new covenant, is called a *miniſtration of the Spirit*; and under the goſpel we are ſaid not to *ſerve in the oldneſs of the letter*, but *in the newneſs of the ſpirit*. Now, ſays the apoſtle, ver. 8. Almighty God finding fault with the Jews for breach of the former covenant, declared by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 31. That the covenant he would make with all true Iſraelites for time to come, ſhould not be like that which he made with their fathers in Egypt, which they continued not in the obſervation of (wanting thoſe aſſiſtances from the Holy Spirit to enable them thereunto, which are procured for us by Chriſt); accordingly, *I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord*, but gave them up for their ſins, into the hands of their enemies. *Obſerve*, laſtly, How Almighty God makes the imperfection of the old covenant, and the Iſraelites inſtability therein, the reaſon of his making a new covenant with us, in which grace and aſſiſtance is offered to enable us to obey and perſevere in obedience: *Finding fault with them*; that is, for the breach of the former, he ſaith, *Behold the days come that I will make a new covenant with them*. From the whole, *note*, 1. That the grace and glory of the new covenant are much ſet off and manifeſted by comparing it with the old. *Note*, 2. That nothing but effectual grace from Chriſt will ſecure our covenant obedience one moment: What greater motives, or ſtronger outward obligations to obedience could any people under heaven have, than the Iſraelites had? But they quickly turned out of the way: therefore, in the new covenant, is this grace promiſed in a peculiar manner, as we ſhall ſee in the next verſe.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons with whom this covenant is made, the houſe of Iſrael, and the houſe of Judah; not made with them as a political body, becauſe their policy was to be diſſolved, but as a part of the univerſal church. *Obſerve*, 2. The author of this covenant, and that is God himſelf, *I will make it, ſaith the Lord*. *Note*, That the aboliſhing of the old covenant, and eſtabliſhing the new, is an act of ſovereign wiſdom, grace and authority in God: *I will make a new covenant*. *Obſerve*, 3. What is the great and comprehenſive promiſe of the new covenant: *I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts*; that is, 1. I will make a clear and perſpicuous revelation of my mind and will unto them, and give them a thorough knowledge and underſtanding of my laws, ſo that their own conſciences ſhall condemn them when they do tranſgreſs them. And, 2. By my Holy Spirit I will make a deep and efficacious impreſſion of them upon their hearts and ſpirits. Where, *note*, That the precepts of the old covenant are all of them turned in promiſes under the new; their preceptive and commanding power remaineth; but grace is promiſed for the performance of them. *Note* farther, That the work of grace, in the new covenant paſſeth on the ſoul, in all its powers and faculties, to their change and renovation: *I will put my laws into their minds*, &c. And conſequently, to deny the neceſſity and efficacy of the ſanctifying and renewing grace of God in the habits and acts of it, is plainly to overthrow the evangelical covenant. *Obſerve*, 4. What is the relation which is here ſaid to enſue between God and his people; *I will be to them a God*, &c. Here *note*, 1. God's relation to us; *I will be to them a God*, I who am all-ſufficient in myſelf, will be your all-ſufficient preſerver, and your all-ſufficient rewarder. As nothing leſs than God's becoming our God can relieve and help us; ſo nothing more can be required thereunto. *Note*, 2. Our relation to God, *They ſhall be to me a people*; that is, a ſpecial and peculiar people, owing dependency upon him, and profeſſing all ſubjection and obedience to him. And *obſerve*, God undertakes for this, *they ſhall be to me a people*. *Learn* thence, That God doth as well undertake for our being his people, as he doth for his being our God: He that aſſumes them into that relation freely, will preſerve them in it powerfully; *I will be to them a God*, &c.

11 And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying Know the Lord, for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.

Theſe words are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively: They are a promiſe, that under the new covenant diſpenſation the Holy Spirit ſhall be ſo plentifully poured forth, and the light of the goſpel ſo clearly ſhine forth, that there ſhall not be ſuch need as under the law, to teach men the knowledge of God, and their duty to him; they ſhall not need, in ſuch a manner as formerly, to inſtruct one another in the meaning of the types and ſhadows of the law: *they ſhall all know me:* that is, all ranks and degrees of men, all ſorts and conditions of perſons, ſhall own me to be the Lord. *Note* here, What abuſe is put upon this text by ſome, who bring it to ſet aſide the neceſſity of human teaching; for it is by ſuch teaching that God gives men the knowledge of himſelf. *Learn* hence, That there is a duty incumbent on every man to inſtruct others according to his ability and opportunity, in the knowledge of God. But, Lord, pity us, we have more, that mutually teach one another ſin, folly, vanity, yea, villainy of all ſorts, than the knowledge of God, and the duty we owe unto him! This is not what God here promiſeth believers in a way of grace, but what he hath given up careleſs unbelieving profeſſors to, in a way of vengeance.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

This is the great fundamental promiſe of the covenant of grace, pardon of ſin. Thence *learn*, That free and undeſerved grace, in the pardon of ſin, is the original ſpring and foundation of all covenant-mercies and bleſſings. *Obſerve* farther, How copiouſly the Spirit of God ſets forth the benefits of pardoning grace, I will forgive and forget; *I will be merciful, and remember no more*; pardoning mercy is full, as well as free. *Obſerve* laſtly, The aggravating names here given to ſin, it is called *unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe nothing can be more unequal and unjuſt, than for man to ſin againſt God his creator, his ruler and benefactor; and *iniquity*, or a tranſgreſſion of the law, an erring and ſwerving from the rule of holineſs, which we are to walk by. *Learn* hence, 1. That the aggravations of ſin are great and many, which the conſciences of convinced ſinners ought to have great regard unto. *Learn*, 2. That we can never underſtand aright the glory and excellency of pardoning mercy, unleſs we are convinced of the greatneſs and vileneſs of our ſins in theſe ſeveral aggravations of them. *Learn*, 3. That the covenant of grace fully aſſures us, that there are riches of grace, and abundance of pardoning mercy in God, which diſpoſes him, for Chriſt's ſake, to be merciful to penitent ſinners' unrighteouſneſs, and to remember their tranſgreſſions no more, how many and henious ſoever they have been.

13 In that he ſaith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the firſt old. Now that which decayeth, and waxeth old, *is* ready to vaniſh away.

The apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, proved the inſufficiency of the old covenant, and the neceſſity of the new, and given the preference to the latter above the former; in this laſt verſe he acquaints us with the abrogation of the old covenant, *it is made old*; and with the abolition of it, *it is ready to vaniſh away:* As old things loſe their power, ſtrength, and vigour; ſo the old covenant loſt its binding power and obliging force. And as that which waxeth old moulders away by little and little, till at laſt it does totally vaniſh, and utterly periſh; thus the legal diſpenſation by little and little decayed, until it wholly ceaſed at laſt; yea it is obſervable, that the whole policy and Jewiſh government did vaniſh away, and totally expire in a few years after the writing of this epiſtle. *Learn* hence, 1. That the outward appearance of the legal adminiſtration was glorious, and very taking to the Jews: The fabric of the temple, the ornaments of the prieſts, the order of their worſhip, had a glory in them which dazzled the eyes, and captivated the minds and affections of the people. *Learn*, 2. That all this glory did gradually vaniſh, and at laſt totally diſappear; all the glorious inſtitutions of the law were at beſt but as ſtars in the firmament of the church, and conſequently were all to diſappear at the riſing of the ſun of righteouſneſs: *In that he ſaith, a new covenant*, &c.

CHAP. IX.

Our apoſtle in this chapter makes a compariſon between the old and new covenant, between the legal and evangelical diſpenſation, ſhewing that the former was to ceaſe, and that it was greatly to the church's advantage that it ſhould do ſo.

THEN verily the firſt *covenant* had alſo ordinances of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary.

In this, and the following verſes, the apoſtle gives as a particular and diſtinct view of the typical ordinances in the old covenant under the Moſaic diſpenſation, and alſo of their accompliſhment in Jeſus Chriſt: And here in general he acquaints us, that the firſt covenant had an outward legal ſervice, with ſundry rites and ordinances of divine worſhip, and a worldly ſanctuary, raiſed by men, of earthly materials; a temporary tabernacle; *verily the firſt covenant had ordinances of divine ſervice*, &c. *Obſerve* here, That there never was any covenant between God and man, but had ſome ordinances and inſtitutions of divine worſhip annexed unto it; the original covenant of works, had the ordinances of the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The covenant of Sinai, whereof the apoſtle here ſpeaks, had a multitude of them, and the goſpel-covenant is not deſtitute of them; witneſs our ſacraments and public worſhip. *Obſerve*, 2. That all ordinances for worſhip muſt be reſolved into divine ordination or inſtitution, as that which renders them acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God: A worſhip not ordained by God is not acceptable to God: it had ordinances of worſhip. *Obſerve* laſtly, How God can animate outward carnal things with an hidden inviſible ſpring of glory and efficacy. So he did their ſanctuary with its relation unto Chriſt, which was an object of faith, which no eye of fleſh could behold.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the firſt wherein *was* the candleſtick, and the table, and the ſhewbread; which is called the ſanctuary. 3 And after the ſecond vail, the tabernacle which is called the holieſt of all: 4 Which had the golden cenſer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant: 5 And over it the cherubims of glory ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat; of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly.

In theſe verſes, the Holy Ghoſt by the apoſtle ſets before our eyes the beautiful face of God's public worſhip, under the ceremonial law. And firſt, He deſcribes the place appointed by God for his ſolemn worſhip. This was, firſt, the tabernacle, then, the temple: The tabernacle was an ambulatory temple; the temple a ſtanding tabernacle. The tabernacle was a type and figure of Chriſt's incarnation, whereby the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, as it dwelt typical in the tabernacle; this tabernacle had two parts, the ſanctuary, or holy place, and the *ſanctum ſanctorum*, or the *holy of holies*. Our apoſtle tells us what ſacred utenſils were by God's appointment in both theſe places. 1. In the ſanctuary there was the *candleſtick*, repreſenting that fulneſs of light which is in Chriſt, and which is by him communicated to the whole church. The *table* whereon ſtood the *ſhew-bread*, typifying the ſaints communion with Chriſt, and with one another; alſo the ſhew-bread itſelf, which typified Chriſt, as being the only bread of life to his church, the only ſpiritual food of the ſoul that nouriſhes it into life eternal. 2. In the holy of holies there was the *golden cenſer*, which was to hold the incenſe. This repreſented the interceſſion of Chriſt, which gives efficacy to the prayers of all believers: The prevalency of all our prayers depends on the incenſe which is in the hand of our merciful High Prieſt. *The ark of the covenant overlaid with gold:* this, with the mercy-ſeat, which covered the ark, was the moſt glorious and myſterious utenſil of the tabernacle, the moſt eminent pledge of the divine preſence; called the ark of the covenant, becauſe the two tables, in which the ten commandments were writ by the finger of God, were kept in it; next the *golden pot*, in which the *manna* was laid up, and miraculouſly kept from putrefaction, (which of itſelf would have ſtunk in a few days) a type of Chriſt the bread of life. Then *Aaron's rod that budded:* This originally was the rod of Moſes, wherewith he fed his ſheep in the wilderneſs, and afterwards wrought his miracles, and particularly ſmote the rock with it till it guſhed out water. When Aaron was called to the office of the prieſthood, it was delivered unto his keeping. This rod of Moſes, wherewith he ſmote the rock, is commanded to be laid up in the tabernacle, becauſe the ſpiritual rock that followed them was to be ſmitten with the rod of the law, that it might give forth the waters of life unto the church. Laſt of all, *the tables of the covenant*; that is, the two tables of ſtone cut out by Moſes, and written on by the finger of God, containing the ten commandments, which were the ſubſtance of God's covenant with the people. Theſe two tables of ſtone were, by the expreſs command of God, put into the ark, and there was nothing elſe in the ark but them. The pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, were laid up in the holy of holies, near the ark, but not in it, which were of no effectual uſe in the ſervice of God, but only kept as ſacred memorials. Having thus deſcribed what was in the ark, next the apoſtle tells us what was over the ark, namely the cherubims and the mercy-ſeat. The cherubims were *Alata animalia*, winged creatures, of human ſhape, but with wings, to denote their angelical nature; there were two of them, one at each end of the ark, ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat; from between theſe cherubims, over the mercy-ſeat, it was that God manifeſted his majeſtical preſence, ſpake unto Moſes, and gave out his oracles as a prince ſpeaks from his throne. The mercy-ſeat was of pure beaten gold, the meaſure of it exactly anſwering the ark: This covered the ark wherein the law was; and was a type of Chriſt, who fully covers our ſins, the tranſgreſſions of the law, out of God's ſight; and is therefore called by the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 25. our propitiatory, or propitiation, or mercy-ſeat. *For if thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt mark iniquities, according to the law, who could ſtand?* Theſe are the particular things which the apoſtle thought fit to take notice of, in the Jewiſh tabernacle; all which we ſee pointed at Chriſt; and there was in them all, more or leſs, a repreſentation of the perſon and mediation of Chriſt. Hereunto were they deſigned by divine wiſdom, to denote, that in him alone is God well pleaſed, in him alone will he be glorified.

6 Now when theſe things were thus ordained, the prieſts went always into the firſt tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice *of God*.

Our Apoſtle having given an account, in the preceding verſes, of the ſtructure or fabric of the tabernacle, in the two parts of it which belonged to the prieſts; namely, the holy place, and the holy of holies, (for of the firſt court, the court of the people, he ſays nothing); he comes now to diſcourſe of the ſervice, which, by the appointment of God, the prieſts were to perform in this magnificent ſtructure.

Where *obſerve*, 1. The perſons adminiſtering, the *prieſts* only, and they of the poſterity of Aaron: All others were forbidden upon pain of exciſion. 2. The general foundation of the ſervice of theſe prieſts in the ſanctuary, *they entered* into it, but were to go no farther; they muſt not ſo much as look into the holy of holies; no, nor yet abide in the ſanctuary when the high prieſt entered into the moſt holy place. 3. The time of this their entrance into the ſanctuary to diſcharge their ſervice, *always*; that is, every day, and at all times, as occaſion did require. 4. The ſervice itſelf, *accompliſhing the ſervice of God*; theſe ſervices were either daily or weekly: Daily, were dreſſing the lamps, ſupplying them with holy oil, morning and evening; alſo the ſervice of the golden altar, on which the prieſts burnt incenſe every day. The weekly ſervice of the ſanctuary was the changing of the ſhew-bread every ſabbath-day in the morning. All the ſervice was typical, repreſenting the continual application of the benefits of Chriſt's ſacrifice unto his church to the end of the world. The tabernacle itſelf, and the inhabitation of God in it, was a type of the incarnation of the Son of God. All the utenſils of it were repreſentations of his grace. He is the light and life of the church, the lamp and the bread thereof. The incenſe of his interceſſion renders all our obedience acceptable unto God; and accordingly, there was continual application unto theſe things without intermiſſion, every day: Signifying unto us, that a continual application unto God by Chriſt, and a continual application of the mediation of Chriſt by faith, are the ſprings of the light, life, and comfort of the church.

Having thus deſcribed the prieſt's ſervice in the firſt part of the temple, ver. 6. he comes now to declare the ſervice and adminiſtration of the high prieſt in the ſecond part of the temple, or holy of holies, ver. 7.

7 But into the ſecond *went* the high prieſt alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf and for the errors of the people.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon adminiſtering deſcribed, *The high prieſt alone*; none of the prieſts were permitted to be ſo near him as the ſanctuary when he adminiſtered in the moſt holy place. Thus ſacredly was the preſence of God, in the holy of holies, made inacceſſible, not only to the people, but even to all the prieſts themſelves. The great truth which was repreſented and ſhadowed forth was, that there is no entrance into the gracious preſence of God, but by our great High Prieſt the holy Jeſus. The *high prieſt alone*, and no other perſon, entered into the holy of holies. 2. The high prieſt engaging in his ſervice, *He entered through the vail into the holy place*. This was a type both of the entrance of Chriſt into heaven, and of our entrance by him into the throne of grace. We read, Matt. xxvii. 15. of the rending of this vail, at the death of our Saviour, from top to bottom: Signifying thereby, that the way was laid open into the holy place, and the gracious preſence of God diſcovered, and made acceſſible to all that come into him by Jeſus Chriſt. 3. The time of this ſervice expreſſed, it was *once* only *every year*; and the day, the preciſe day of the year, determined, Lev. xvi. 29. to wit, the tenth day of the month Tizri, anſwering our September, called the great day of atonement; on which day ſuch a complete atonement was made for ſin, that the Jews had a ſaying, "That on the day of expiation all Iſrael was made as innocent as in the day of creation." 4. The nature of this ſervice; the apoſtle tells us, it was *not without blood*, that is, he did it by blood, ſprinkling it ſeven times with his finger towards the mercy-ſeat, Lev. xvi. 11, 12. There is an emphaſis in the expreſſion, *not without blood*, to manifeſt the neceſſity of the death and blood-ſhedding of Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, and the impoſſibility of our entering into the gracious preſence of God without the blood of the reconciling ſacrifice Chriſt Jeſus. 5. For whom this blood was offered; firſt, for *himſelf*, then for the people; that is, for his own ſins, and the ſins of the people: This argued the great imperfection of that ſtate; whereas Chriſt our great High Prieſt was not to offer up the blood of goats, but his own blood, not for himſelf at all, but for others only; not once a-year, but once for all; *by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*.

8 The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding.

The apoſtle, in this verſe, declares the ſpiritual uſe and ſignification of the Levitical ſervice, and what the Holy Ghoſt did intend thereby; namely, that the true and proper means to enter into heaven, the holy of holies, was not ſo fully and clearly manifeſted; and that heaven, repreſented by the holy of holies, was as yet inacceſſible; for Chriſt firſt entered into heaven as our forerunner, with his blood to appear before God, and thereby to prepare the way for our entrance after him. Hence *learn*, 1. That the Holy Ghoſt's deſign, in all the Levitical ſervice, was to direct the faith of believers to Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah, who was ſignified thereby; *the Holy Ghoſt thus ſignifying*. 2. That although typical inſtitutions, attended diligently unto, were ſufficient to direct the faith of the Jews unto the expectation of a real expiation of ſin, and a gracious acceptance with God thereupon; yet the clear manifeſtation of the way of expiation of ſin by the blood of Chriſt, is the great privilege and diſcovery of the goſpel. 3. Although the ſtanding of the firſt tabernacle was a great mercy and privilege, yet the removal of it was a greater, becauſe it made way for the bringing in of that which was much better, the goſpel-ſtate.

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then preſent, in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices, that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience, 10 *Which ſtood* only in meats and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal

ordinances, impoſed *on them* until the time of reformation.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The firſt tabernacle was but a figure, or typical repreſentation of good things to come, ſerving only for the preſent non-age of the church: for the gifts and ſacrifices then offered could not, of themſelves, perfectly juſtify, ſanctify, or ſave any man, nor could they pacify the conſcience of the ſinner. Where *note*, That conſcience cannot be ſatisfied until God's wrath be pacified. Now, the ceremonial rites could not pacify God's wrath, becauſe they could not ſatisfy God's juſtice: nothing but the blood of Chriſt could do that, which thoſe ſacrifices were only typically repreſentations and prefigurations of. *Obſerve* farther, The apoſtle's reaſons why thoſe legal rites could not make them perfect; namely, becauſe the nature of them was ſuch, that they reached only to the outward man, conſiſting only, for the moſt part, in *meats, drinks, and divers waſhings*, that concerned the fleſh and body of man, which did not, of themſelves, commend any man to God, and were impoſed upon them as a yoke, until the times of reformation; that is, the time of the Meſſiah, the time of the New Teſtament diſpenſation. *Note* here, The great imperfection of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, it was weak and imperfect, and conſequently not to be continued. *Note* farther, That nothing can give peace to conſcience but what gives ſatisfaction to God's juſtice. Whoever ſeeks it any other way, than by virtue of Chriſt's atonement, will never attain it in this world, or in that which is to come: *No offerings could make him that did the ſervice perfect*, &c.

11 But Chriſt being come an high prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

Our apoſtle having ſhewed, in the preceding verſes, how, and after what manner, the levitical prieſts executed their office, he comes now to declare how, and after what manner, Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, did alſo execute his. And, 1. As the levitical prieſts had a tabernacle, an earthly ſanctuary, to officiate in; ſo Chriſt had a greater and more perfect tabernacle to execute his office in, namely, that of his own body, not like theirs, made with hands, but miraculouſly formed in the virgin's womb, by the overſhadowing power of the Holy Ghoſt; in which tabernacle the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt ſubſtantially. The human nature of Chriſt was that tabernacle in which the Son of God adminiſtered his ſacerdotal office in this world, and wherein he continueth yet ſo to do in heaven by his interceſſion. And well may this tabernacle be called *greater*, being ſo not in quantity and meaſure, but in dignity and worth; and *more perfect*, that is, more perfectly fitted and ſuited to the end of a tabernacle, both for the inhabitation of the divine nature, and the means of exerciſing the ſacerdotal office, in the making atonement for ſin, than the other was. *Learn* hence, That the human nature of Chriſt, in which he exerciſed and diſcharged the duties of his ſacerdotal office, in making atonement for ſin, is the greateſt, moſt perfect, and excellent ordinance of God, far excelling thoſe that were moſt excellent under the Old Teſtament. The glory of this tabernacle of our Saviour's body in heaven, will be the object of holy admiration unto all eternity, as it was admirably fitted and perfected for ſervice and uſefulneſs here on earth. 2. The apoſtle declares, That as Chriſt had a more excellent tabernacle, ſo he was incomparably a more excellent High Prieſt than ever the legal diſpenſation had; *They* entered the holy of holies, *He* entered heaven; *They* entered often, *He* but once; *They* entered with the blood of goats and calves, *He* in his own blood. And the effect, fruit, and benefit of it was unſpeakable: thereby he *obtained eternal redemption for us*. *Note* here, That whereas it is ſaid that Chriſt entered into heaven with his own blood, it is not ſo to be underſtood, as if he carried the material blood which he ſhed with him into heaven, in a veſſel, or otherwiſe, as the high prieſt carried the blood of the ſacrifice in his hand into the moſt holy place: but that Chriſt preſented his body in heaven, out of which the blood was ſhed, and, by the merit of his death, made expiation for ſin, and purchaſed eternal redemption for ſinners. *Learn* hence, That the entrance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our great High Prieſt, into heaven, to appear in the preſence of God for us, and to ſave us thereby to the uttermoſt, was a matter ſo great and glorious, that it could not be accompliſhed, but by his own blood. No other ſacrifice was ſufficient to this end: *not by the blood of bulls and goats*.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh; 14 How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God?

The apoſtle had aſſerted, in the former verſe, That eternal redemption was the fruit of Chriſt's ſacrifice; he proves it in theſe, and that by an argument drawn from the leſs to the greater: thus, "If, ſays he, the blood of bulls and goats, and the water that was mixed with the aſhes of the burnt heifer, (or the red cow, mentioned Numb. xix.) purified from ceremonial uncleanneſs, and procured the external ſanctification of the fleſh, or outward man; how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, by the external Spirit, (that is, his Godhead, his divine nature) offered up himſelf, his whole man, ſoul and body, a ſacrifice, without ſpot, to God the Father, be able to purge our conſciences from all ſpiritual impurity and uncleanneſs of ſin, (that dead, becauſe deadly work) and render us fit to ſerve the living God in an holy courſe of Chriſtian obedience? *Note* here, 1. That Chriſt's offering himſelf to God was a ſpecial act, as High Prieſt of the church, wherein he gave up himſelf in a way of moſt profound obedience, to do and ſuffer whatever the juſtice of God required unto the expiation of ſin, even to the ſhedding of his blood. 2. That Chriſt's Godhead it was, which rendered the ſuffering of his manhood infinitely meritorious; or that Chriſt's blood was effectual, not ſimply, as it was material blood, but as offered by the eternal Spirit; his blood, though not the blood of God, yet was the blood of him that was God. 3. That the purging of our conſciences from dead works is an immediate effect of the death of Chriſt, and a benefit which, upon our faith and obedience, we are made partakers of. 4. That the beſt works of men, antecedently unto the purging of their conſciences by the blood of Chriſt, are but dead works, unſuitable to the nature of the living God. Lord help us to remember, that when we come to hear, to pray, or perform any act of worſhip, that we are doing it to the living God. O how improper for, and unſuitable to, a living God, are dead ſervices, without life, without heart, without ſpirit?

15 And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the New Teſtament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions *that were* under the firſt teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a teſtament *is*, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator. 17 For a teſtament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all whilſt the teſtator liveth.

Theſe words repreſent unto us one ſpecial benefit accruing by the death of Chriſt, namely, the ratification of the goſpel-covenant; for by this means the took upon him the glorious office to be the mediator of the new covenant, that by the intervention of his death he might make ſatisfaction for the ſins of believers under the Old Teſtament, as well as for thoſe that live under the new; and that as well thoſe that lived before Chriſt's coming in the fleſh as ſince, might, by virtue of his death, obtain the promiſed eternal inheritance. *Note* here, That God deſigned an eternal inheritance unto ſome perſons: that the perſons deſignned are them that are called; that the way and manner of conveying a right and title to this inheritance, was a promiſe: that there was an obſtacle to the enjoyment of this inheritance, which was tranſgreſſion againſt the firſt covenant; that this obſtacle might be removed, and the inheritance enjoyed, God made a new covenant, which had a mediator, who expiated ſin by the ſacrifice of his death. *Note* farther, That the efficacy and merit of Chriſt's death and mediation extends itſelf to all that are effectually called, as well thoſe that lived before his coming in the fleſh, as to thoſe that lived ſince. *Note* laſtly, How the covenant of grace is here called a Teſtament, becauſe it received its ratification and confirmation by the blood of Chriſt. All things required in a teſtament are here found, namely a teſtator deceaſed, Chriſt Jeſus; legacies bequeathed, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal bleſſings; legatees named, the heirs of promiſe; conditions required, upon which only the legacies may be obtained, faith, repentance, and ſincere obedience; ſeals annexed, baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper; witneſſes ſubſcribing, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt. The ſum is this, That the death of Chriſt is the foundation, life, and ſoul of the new covenant; and that the new covenant is of the nature of a teſtament, and the benefits promiſed therein; to wit, remiſſion of ſin, reconciliation with God, ſanctification on earth, and glorification in heaven, are legacies freely left us by our deceaſed teſtator, who *was dead but is alive again, and lives for evermore*, to execute his own will and teſtament, of which the ſcripture is the inſtrument, and the ſacraments the ſeals. *Learn* from the whole, 1. That there is an irrevocable grant of the whole inheritance of grace and glory made unto believers in the new covenant. 2. That as the grant of theſe things is free and gracious, ſo the enjoyment of them is ſecured againſt contingencies, by the death of Chriſt the great teſtator.

18 Whereupon, neither the firſt *teſtament* was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people, 20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover, he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle and all the veſſels of the miniſtry. 22 And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood; and without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.

Our apoſtle having entered upon a compariſon between the firſt and ſecond covenant in the former verſes, he goes on to proſecute it in theſe; ſhewing that both of them were *dedicated*, that is, confirmed by blood. The firſt covenant which God made with Iſrael in Horeb, had not its ſanction without typical blood. The uſing of the blood for the ſanction of leagues and covenants was a very ancient rite, and probably ſignified, that the parties confederating did thereby engage blood and life for the obſervation of them. Now that the covenant between God and Iſrael was thus ſolemnized, and received its confirmation by blood, the apoſtle makes appear from the hiſtory of Moſes, Exod. xxiv. unto which he appeals; where we find the *ſprinkler* to be Moſes, the *ſprinkling* to be blood, the *things ſprinkled* where the *book* wherein the covenant was written, and the people who engaged themſelves in the covenant. Now the uſe and end of this ſprinkling upon the people, was the confirmation of the covenant on their part, as the ſprinkling of it upon the altar was the confirmation on God's part. And the words added to the action were, *this is the blood of the covenant*; that is, this is the blood by which the covenant is confirmed, and made inviolable betwixt God and you: He calls it the *blood of the covenant*, becauſe it was a ſign of it, and a ſeal confirming it. In like manner, the new covenant was confirmed by blood, even by the blood of Chriſt, as is evident from his own words, Luke xxii. 20. *This cup is the new teſtament in my blood for remiſſion of ſins.* Remiſſion of ſin is one principal bleſſing promiſed in the new covenant; but this promiſe had been in vain, if Chriſt's blood had not been ſhed to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and thereby make ſin remiſſible: For though man had repented, and could have made even hell itſelf to ſwim with his tears, yet his ſins could not have been remitted, had not this blood made it remiſſible:

So that the blood of Chriſt is the firm and immoveable baſis and foundation upon which the new covenant was fixed. This is the firſt part of our apoſtle's deſign in theſe words; namely, to prove the neceſſity of Chriſt's blood for confirmation of the new covenant. Next, he proves the efficacy of that blood for taking away of ſin; telling us, that the tabernacle, the veſſels, and all the utenſils thereunto belonging, yea, all things which were purified, were ceremonially purified by blood; and that, as without ſhedding of blood *then* there could be no remiſſion, ſo no acceptance with God *now* without the ſhedding of the blood of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That in all things wherein we have to do with God, and whereby we approach unto him, it is the blood of Chriſt, and the application of it to our own conſciences, that gives a gracious acceptance with God; without this all is unclean and defiled *now*, as without ſhedding of blood there was no purification *then*.

23 *It was* therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If the tabernacle and utenſils thereunto belonging, which were patterns and types of heavenly things, muſt be conſecrated by the blood of bulls and goats, much more muſt the heavenly things themſelves, which were ſhadowed by them, be purified and conſecrated by better blood than the blood of beaſts, even with the precious blood of Jeſus Chriſt." *Learn* hence, 1. That there is ſuch uncleanneſs in our natures, in our perſons, in our duties, in all our ſervices, that, unleſs they and we are purified by the blood of Chriſt, neither we nor they can have any acceptance with God. 2. That the ſacrifice of Chriſt is the one only everlaſting fountain and ſpring of all ſanctification and ſacred dedication, whereby the whole new creation is purified and dedicated unto God. 3. That neither heaven itſelf, nor heavenly things, could have been made meet for us, or we for them, had not they been dedicated, and we purged, by the ſacrifice of Chriſt. By *heavenly things* here we may underſtand *heaven* itſelf, of which the tabernacle was a type. Now as the purification of the tabernacle was only to prepare it to be a place in which their perſons might be preſented before God; in like manner, was heaven itſelf prepared and purified for us by our Lord's entrance into it, with his own attonement, or propitiatory ſacrifice. Chriſt's entering into heaven, and his appearing with his blood of ſprinkling in the preſence of God for us, procures the acceptance of our prayers and praiſes whilſt we live, and our admiſſion into thoſe heavenly manſions of bliſs and glory prepared for us when we die.

24 For Chriſt is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon ſpoken of, and that is Chriſt, our great high prieſt, the mediator of the new covenant. 2. What is ſpoken of him, 1. Negatively, That he is not entered into the holy place of the ſanctuary, or tabernacle made with hands, that is, built by the hands of men, which was a figure of the true holy of holies, to wit, heaven. All God's appointments in his ſervice have their proper ſeaſon, their proper glory, beauty, and uſe; even the tabernacle, and the external utenſils thereof, made with men's hands, had ſo, whilſt they had the force of a divine inſtitution. 2. Poſitively, He is entered into heaven itſelf, the place of the peculiar reſidence of the preſence, majeſty, and glory of God: where all his bleſſed ſaints enjoy him, and his holy angels miniſter unto him. *Obſerve*, 3. The end of our great high prieſt's entrance into heaven declared, *now to appear in the preſence of God for us*. The prieſts of old, when they entered the holy place, were forced ſoon to go out again to prepare for a new ſacrifice: But his word *now* is expreſſive of the whole ſeaſon and duration of time, from the entrance of Chriſt into heaven, until the conſummation of all things: There is no moment of time in which it may not be ſaid, he now appeareth *in the preſence of God for us*. *Learn* hence, That the continual appearance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for us in heaven, as our great high prieſt, in the preſence of his Father, is the foundation both of our ſafety and our comfort, from whence relief may be derived upon all occaſions, whatever difficulties, temptations and trials may be before us.

25 Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the high prieſt entereth into the holy place every year, with blood of others; 26 (For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world) but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

Our apoſtle in theſe words, ſets forth the excellency of Chriſt's ſacrifice from its ſingularity; it needeth no repetition, as their ſacrifices of old did: Their ſacrifices were repeated often, and their repetition was an evidence of their imperfection; but Chriſt's once offering himſelf a ſacrifice was ſufficient, in regard of the infinite worth and dignity of his perſon: *Once in the end of the world*, in the goſpel-age the laſt age of the world, *hath he appeared to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*. Here *note*, That the virtue of Chriſt's ſacrifice once offered, did extend itſelf to all times, and purchaſed pardon for ſins committed in all ages, even long before it was offered; For the death of Chriſt muſt be conſidered, not as a natural, but as a moral cauſe; not as a medicine that heals, but as a ranſom that frees a captive. A captive may be releaſed upon aſſurance given that a ranſom ſhall be paid. Though it be not actually paid. Thus the death of Chriſt was available to purchaſe pardon for believers before his coming, becauſe he interpoſed as their ſurety; and is therefore called the *Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, not only in reſpect of God's decree, but Chriſt's efficacy: The ſalvation we derive from him, was ever in him; Chriſt's once offering was ſufficient; his ſacrifice may be often commemorated, but only once offered. Such indeed is the abſolute perfection of the once offering of Chriſt, that it ſtands in need of, and will admit of no repetition in any kind.

Note farther, That this once offering of Chriſt is always effectual unto all the ends of it, now and hereafter, even no leſs than it was in the day and hour when it was actually offered. This ſacrifice needs no repetition like thoſe of old, but is always freſh in the virtue of it, and needs nothing but renewed application by faith for the communication of its effects and fruits unto us; *for by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* Though the ſufferings of Chriſt were neceſſary to the expiation of ſin, yet he ſuffered neither more nor oftener than was neceſſary; to have ſuffered often was altogether needleſs, and would have been uſeleſs. *Note* laſtly, The great end for which Chriſt once became a ſacrifice, namely, *to put away ſin*; plainly implying, that ſin had erected a dominion, a tyranny over all men, as by a law; that no power of any mere creature was able to diſannul or aboliſh this law of ſin; that the deſtruction and diſſolution of this law of ſin, was the great end of Chriſt's coming, to diſcharge his prieſtly office in the ſacrifice of himſelf: *Now in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away, to aboliſh and deſtroy, &c.*

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without ſin, unto ſalvation.

Theſe words may be conſidered relatively and abſolutely. Relatively thus; "As God has appointed that all men ſhould once die penally for ſin, and then be judged, ſo did he determine that Chriſt ſhould once ſuffer penally, to expiate ſin, and take away the guilt of it fully. And as after death men muſt appear the ſecond time to judgment, ſo, after his once offering to take away ſin and death, Chriſt ſhall appear the ſecond time to beſtow upon us eternal ſalvation." *Note* here, That Chriſt's being offered to take away the ſins of many, cannot be meant of his taking them away in the Socinian ſenſe, to wit, by his holy doctrine, which was confirmed by his death, but of his bearing our ſins by way of imputation: For this is evident from the oppoſition here between his firſt appearance and his ſecond: *Chriſt was once offered to bear our ſins,* but he *ſhall appear a ſecond time without ſin?* Why? Did he not appear the firſt time without ſin? Yes, certainly he did, as to any inherent guilt; for the Scripture aſſures us *he had no ſin.* What then is the meaning of the oppoſition, at his firſt coming he bore our ſins; at his ſecond coming he ſhall appear without ſin? The words can have no other imaginable ſenſe but this; that at his firſt coming he ſuſtained the perſon of ſinner, and died as a ſacrifice; but at his ſecond coming he ſhall appear as a judge, to confer eternal life on thoſe who are made partakers of the ſacrifice of his death. Thus the words are to be conſidered *relatively. Abſolutely* thus, *It is appointed for all men once to die.* Here is the firſt word of certainty, *all men muſt die:* then the word of ſingularity, they *muſt once die,* not often; once and but once; they die by ſtatute and appointment. The ſupreme Lord of life and death appoints man his time, both for coming into the world, and going out of it: We come in at his command, and leave it at his diſpoſe. *And after death the judgment:* The word after ſignifies the order of time; for death goes before, and judgment follows it. The judgment is both particular of every individual perſon, and general and univerſal of all: after which follows the final, eternal, and unalterable condition of man, either in a ſtate of miſery, or felicity. The parties judged will be angels and men: the perſon judging, Jeſus Chriſt: he, by redeeming mankind, obtained right and power to judge mankind; ſuch a Judge as the power of the mightieſt cannot daunt: ſuch a Judge as the ſubtilty of the wiſeſt cannot delude; ſuch a Judge as the riches of the wealthieſt cannot bribe: In a word, ſuch a Judge as there is no appealing from, or repealing of his ſentence. O great day! when the ſtiffeſt knee ſhall bow at the tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſtrongeſt back ſhall break under the inſupportable burden of a Redeemer's wrath! when the Alexanders and Cæſars, which once ſhook the earth, and made the world to tremble, ſhall revere and lie proſtrate at the foot of Chriſt! And, Lord, ſeeing that judgment is before us, let us ſeriouſly believe it, daily expect, duly prepare for it; let no profit tempt us, no pleaſure entice us, no power embolden us, no privacy encourage us, to do that thing which we cannot account for at thy tribunal. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

Our apoſtle's deſign in this chapter, is twofold; firſt, To ſhew the weakneſs and imperfection of the Levitical ſacrifices conſidered in themſelves, and the neceſſity and efficacy of the ſacrifice of Chriſt. Secondly, To improve this doctrine unto faith, obedience, and perſeverance in our Chriſtian profeſſion unto the death, by ſeveral weighty arguments.

FOR the law having a ſhadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things,—

In the former part of this chapter, the apoſtle proves the impotency and imperfection of the levitical ſacrifices by ſundry arguments; namely, firſt, from the nature of them, they were but *ſhadows*; from the plurality of them, they were many; from the repetition of them, they were often; and from the inefficaciouſneſs of them, they could not take away ſin. The former of theſe is taken notice of, in this firſt verſe, *The law having a ſhadow of good things to come.* An alluſion probably to the art of painting, wherein a ſhadow is firſt drawn; and afterwards the very image itſelf: or a metaphor taken from the ſhadow of a body in the light of the ſun. As a ſhadow is the repreſentation of a body; a juſt and true repreſentation of it, and of nothing elſe, yet but an obſcure repreſentation of a body; the life, vigour, and ſpirit of a body, cannot be repreſented by it: Thus was it between the ſacrifices of the law, and the ſacrifice of Chriſt; the blood of thoſe ſacrifices were repreſentations of Chriſt; they were a juſt repreſentation of Chriſt: He was the idea in the mind of God, when Moſes was charged to make all things according to the pattern ſhewed him in the mount; and they were but an obſcure and dark repreſentation of him; the glory and efficacy of theſe good things appeared not viſible in them. *Learn* hence, That whatever there may be in religious inſtitutions, and the diligent obſervation of them, if they only *ſhadow* forth Jeſus Chriſt, and do not actually exhibit him to the faith of believers, with the benefits of his mediation, they cannot make us *perfect*, nor give us acceptance with God.

——Can never with thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then, would they not have ceaſed to be offered? becauſe that the worſhippers once purged ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins. 3 But in thoſe *ſacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of ſins every year.

Here we have a ſecond argument to prove the impotency and weakneſs of the legal ſacrifices; and it is drawn from the repetition and non-ceſſation of them. Thus, “ Thoſe ſacrifices which were often repeated, year by year, could not of themſelves make ſatisfaction for ſin, or purge the conſcience of the ſinner from guilt. Had juſtice been ſatisfied, and conſcience quieted, there had been no reaſon why thoſe ſacrifices ſhould have been ſo often repeated. But the caſe was otherwiſe, for in their moſt ſolemn ſacrifices there was a commemoration and confeſſion made of their former ſins by the high prieſt every year; which was an intimation to them, that they needed a new and better ſacrifice for the expiation of ſin; namely, that of the Meſſiah, in and by which alone remiſſion of ſin was to be expected, and obtained.” *Learn* hence, 1. That the repetition and reiteration of the ſame ſacrifices, is an evident demonſtration of their weakneſs and inſufficiency. Accordingly the church of Rome, by affirming the ſacrifice in the maſs to be the very ſame with that which Chriſt offered on the croſs, do prove an inſufficiency in the ſacrifice of Chriſt for the expiation of ſin, if the apoſtle's argument here be good: for he affirms, that all ſacrifices that muſt be repeated are weak and inſufficient. *Learn*, 2. That although repeated ſins have need of repeated confeſſion, and renewed pardon, yet they have no need of a ſacrifice; *For he who is once purged has no more conſcience of ſin*, that is, though he knows he has many ſins, yet he has not a trembling, tormenting, accuſing conſcience, becauſe he is purged, and his ſins pardoned, through that one ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn*, 3. That the diſcharge of conſcience from the guilt of ſin, by virtue of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, is a full demonſtration of the ſufficiency of the virtue of that ſacrifice; and that there needs no reiteration of it, but only freſh applications made unto it by repeated acts and exerciſes of faith.

4 For *it is* not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins.

The intendment of our apoſtle in theſe words, is to prove, that the ſacrifices of the law could not expiate ſin, nor make reconciliation with God, which the ſacrifice of Chriſt alone was ordained and appointed to. Here *obſerve*, 1. The ſubject-matter ſpoken of, The blood of bulls and goats: they were accompanied with great ſolemnity and pomp of ceremony in their celebration; and the people had a great eſteem and veneration of them in their minds; but when all was done, that which was offered was no more than the blood of bulls and goats. 2. That which is denied of theſe ſacrifices, namely, the *taking away of ſins*: To take away ſin, is to make atonement for ſin, to expiate the guilt of it before God, by a ſatisfaction given, or price paid, that it ſhall never bind over the penitent ſinner unto puniſhment. 3. The manner of the negation; It was *impoſſible that the blood of bulls and goats ſhould take away ſins*. Impoſſible from divine inſtitution; they were never deſigned for that end, therefore could never effect it; for the virtue of every inſtitution depends upon its deſignation to its end. Now the blood of bulls was only deſigned to repreſent the taking away of ſin, but never by itſelf to effect it. And it was alſo impoſſible from the nature of the thing; for how could the blood of a beaſt expiate the ſin of a man? ſatiſfaction muſt be made for ſin in and by the ſame nature that had ſinned. *Learn* hence, That it was utterly impoſſible that ſin ſhould be taken away before God, and from the conſcience of a ſinner, by any other blood than the blood of Chriſt: It is this alone that cleanſeth us from all ſin, for he alone was the propitiation for them.

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me. 6 In burnt-offerings and *ſacrifices* for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure. 7 Then ſaid I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above, when he ſaid, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for ſin thou wouldſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure *therein* (which are offered by the law); 9 Then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. 10 By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once *for all*.

Our apoſtle having ſhewed the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the Levitical ſacrifices in the former verſes, he comes now to declare the efficacy and ſufficiency of Chriſt's ſacrifice, and of his bleſſed undertaking, to do, fulfil, perform, and ſuffer all things required by the will and wiſdom, by the holineſs and righteouſneſs of God, unto the complete ſalvation of the church. And this he doth by a quotation out of the Old Teſtament, Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8. Where Chriſt is brought in, as newly made man, ſpeaking to his Father, in and after this manner: “ Foraſmuch as thy wiſdom did inſtitute, and formerly appoint ſacrifices, as types to prefigure the ſacrifice of thy Son, but thou didſt not intend their longer continuance, when he ſhould once be offered up; purſuant to this holy will and pleaſure of thine, I am now come into the world: Thou haſt prepared me a body, an holy and innocent human nature, fit to be united to my glorious Godhead; in which nature I will ſuffer, and, by my ſufferings, ſatiſfy thy juſtice for ſin; and, by the ſufficiency of my ſacrifice, put a period to all the Levitical ſacrifices that did precede me, and prefigure

figure me. *Learn* hence, 1. That in the fulneſs of God's appointed time, Chriſt came into the world to accompliſh that which the Levitical ſacrifices did only prefigure, but could not effectuate. 2. That in order thereunto, Chriſt did aſſume the human nature, and offered in himſelf that nature willingly to his Father, as a ſacrifice to atone divine diſpleaſure. 3. That by this one ſacrifice and oblation of Chriſt, which he performed in obedience to the will of God, all that believe in him are juſtified and ſaved, do obtain remiſſion of ſin, grace here, and glory hereafter; *By which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all.*

11 And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring, and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, which can never take away ſins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool: 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.

Our apoſtle ſtill proceeds upon his former argument, namely, to aſſign a farther difference between Chriſt and the Levitical prieſts. 1. The Levitical prieſthood conſiſted of a plurality of perſons; the prieſts were many; by reaſon of death they had many ſucceſſors; but the evangelical prieſthood conſiſted but of one ſingle perſon, the Lord Jeſus, called here, *this man*. 2. The Levitical prieſthood conſiſted of a plurality of ſacrifices; there were alſo many, many in number, and many in kind, bulls, lambs, goats, *&c.* but the ſacrifice which Chriſt offered was but one, as to the kind, namely, *That body which was prepared*, ver. 5. 3. The Levitical ſacrifices were oft-times offered, ver. 11. but the ſacrifice of Chriſt was but once offered. 4. The Levitical ſacrifices could never take away ſin; but Chriſt by the ſacrifice of his death took away ſin for ever, fully and everlaſtingly. 5. The Levitical prieſts ſtood and miniſtered, ver. 11. *Every prieſt ſtandeth daily.* This is the poſture of ſervants; but Chriſt ſits, which is the poſture of a Lord; *This man after he had offered* ſat down. 6. They ſtood daily miniſtering and offering, becauſe their ſacrifices could not take away ſin; but Chriſt did his work fully by one offering, and after that ſits or reſts for ever in heaven. *Learn* hence, 1. That Chriſt crucified is the only divine and proper ſacrifice under the goſpel. *Divine*, becauſe its inſtitution and appointment was of God: *proper*, becauſe all the eſſential properties of an expiatory ſacrifice were found in this. It was a living creature offered by a prieſt; it was offered to God, and it was a ſweet ſavour unto him; and it is the only proper ſacrifice of the goſpel: Doing good is called a ſacrifice, Heb. xiii. 16. Righteouſneſs is called a ſacrifice, Pſal. iv. 5. but not properly, but alluſively and metaphorically only. *Learn* 2. That the ſacrifice of Chriſt is but of one kind, and was but once offered; yet is of ſuch unſpeakable value, and everlaſting efficacy, as to take away ſin fully and finally, and to perfect all them that are or ſhall be ſanctified to the end of the world. The virtue of this ſacrifice reacheth backward as far as Adam, and reacheth forward to the laſt believer ſpringing from Adam: And as it reacheth backward and forward to all believers, in former, preſent, and future ages, ſo to all the ſins of all believers, which are fully purged and expiated by it; the deſign and end of this oblation being to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving a full and adequate compenſation and ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God, for the wrong done to the holineſs of his law. Thus our Jeſus, *by one offering, has perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.*

15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us: for after that he had ſaid before, 16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: 17 And their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now, where remiſſion of theſe *is*, *there* is no more offering for ſin.

Our apoſtle had aſſerted the perfection of Chriſt's ſacrifice in the former verſes, he proves it in theſe by the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, recorded, Jer. xxxi. 31. where after he had promiſed a new covenant inſtead of the old, and had ſaid, *This is the covenant I will make with them after thoſe days*, namely, when the days of the Old Teſtament are expired, then he ſays, *I will put my laws into their hearts, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Now ſeeing God promiſeth, under the new covenant, ſanctification and remiſſion of ſin to all believers, of which covenant Chriſt is Mediator, and by whoſe death the covenant is ratified and confirmed, therefore this one ſacrifice once offered up is abundantly ſufficient. And if remiſſion of ſins be obtained by Chriſt's one ſacrifice, there needs no repetition of it, nor any other offering for ſin. *Learn* hence, That the ſacrifice of Chriſt was of that excellent virtue and tranſcendent merit, that by once offering it took away ſin, all ſin, and made it eternally remiſſible; and upon faith actually and eternally remitted: To what purpoſe then ſhould there be any more offerings for ſin? Yea, they who look for and truſt to any other, fall into that ſin for which there is no remiſſion provided in the covenant, nor ſhall any other offering be accepted for them for ever; for they deſpiſe both the wiſdom and grace of God, the blood of Chriſt, and the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt; whereof there is no remiſſion. Here now we are come to a full end of the doctrinal part of this epiſtle, concerning the nature of Chriſt's prieſthood, the neceſſity and efficacy of his ſacrifice, the power and prevalency of his interceſſion. O glorious myſteries; the light of the church of the Gentiles, the glory of the people Iſrael, the foundation and bulwark of evangelical faith!

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh; 21 And *having* an high prieſt over the houſe of God: 22 Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.

The apoſtle having thus finiſhed the doctrinal part of his diſcourſe, and informed their judgment of the excellency of the evangelical ſervice above the Levitical ſacrifices, he comes now, in the applicatory part of his diſcourſe, to direct their practice in ſeveral weighty and important duties, which appeared to be incumbent upon them; as namely, to *draw near to God*, ver. 22. to perſevere in the Chriſtian profeſſion, ver. 23. to ſtir up one another to love and good works, ver. 24. to continue in Chriſtian communion, ver. 25. The firſt duty exhorted to, is *to draw near to God*, ſeeing we have *boldneſs*, &c. *Let us draw near with a true heart.* *Note* here, 1. The duty exhorted to, and that is, *to draw near to God*; in general, to worſhip him; in particular, to pray unto him, and ſeek remiſſion of ſin and eternal life from him; to come unto God as cloathed with glorious majeſty, ſitting upon a throne of grace, and propitiated by the blood of Chriſt. 2. The manner of performing this duty, *with a pure heart, and in full aſſurance of faith*: with the heart, or we give him a ſkin inſtead of a ſacrifice; with ſincerity of heart, which is the life and ſoul of all acceptable worſhip; and with a *full* aſſurance of faith, grounded upon the fidelity of God, and the immutability of the promiſe. 3. The qualifications of the perſon: He that draws near to God, muſt, 1. Have his *heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience*, that is, his ſoul cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt, and freed from the accuſations of an evil condemning conſcience. 2. His *body waſhed with pure water*, to wit, the laver of regeneration, which was ſignified by the legal waſhings. 4. The encouragement we have thus to draw near to God; and that is threefold, 1. We have *a new and living way* unto the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus; an alluſion to the legal diſpenſation, wherein the high prieſt had a way to paſs through the vail with blood into the holieſt, to expiate the people's ſins, and obtain mercy for them: Ours is called *a new way*, becauſe newly *made manifeſt*; and *a living way*, becauſe it leads to and ends in life eternal; or a living way, in oppoſition to the typical way of going into the holieſt, which was a *dead* way to all but the high prieſt, and to him too if he entered above once a-year, and then alſo if he entered without blood. Farther, this new and living way is here ſaid to be conſecrated through the vail of Chriſt's fleſh; that is, made paſſable for penitent ſinners, the throne of grace made acceſſible through the blood of a Mediator. When Chriſt died, the vail of the temple was rent, to ſignify that our great High Prieſt was ready to enter the holy place of heaven, to procure eternal redemption for us. 2. Encouragement is *boldneſs*, or freedom and liberty to enter into the holieſt; a freedom for our prayers to enter heaven whilſt we live, and a right and liberty for our perſons to enter it when we die. 3. The mean, whereby we obtain this liberty, *By the blood of Jeſus*. We, that before could not come near him for our ſins, may now come near him by faith in the blood of his Son; for that blood ſatisfied juſtice, merited divine favour, and made God acceſſible. *Learn* hence, 1. That as ſin had made God inacceſſible to ſinners, as ſinners; ſo the blood of Chriſt, that new and living way, has made him acceſſible to believers. 2. That although, from the firſt promiſe of Chriſt, there was always a way for believers to come to God, yet was not ſo manifeſt, as it was after Chriſt's death and aſcenſion, and the goſpel's revelation.

23 Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering: for he *is* faithful that promiſed.

The ſecond duty which the apoſtle exhorts the Hebrews here unto, is perſeverance in the Chriſtian faith and hope, in order to the actual enjoyment of the great reward. Where *obſerve*, 1. The duty itſelf, *to hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith*; not blindly, without due examination; but, having examined the grounds and foundations of our faith, to maintain the profeſſion of it againſt all temptations and terrors of the world, occaſioned by ſufferings and perſecutions, and againſt all the cunning arts and inſinuations of buſy and diſputing men, whoſe deſign is to unhinge us from our religion, and make us proſelytes to their party and faction: Thus let us *hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*. 2. The reaſon of enforcing this duty, becauſe *he is faithful that has promiſed*. Mark the gradation: We have a promiſe, even a promiſe of eternal glory, as the reward of our perſeverance. This promiſe is God's promiſe, not man's, and the promiſe of a faithful God, who neither can nor will change his mind; he can as ſoon change his being as change his word and promiſe; *He is faithful that has promiſed.*

24 And let us conſider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works.

Obſerve here the duty exhorted to, To *conſider one another*, that is, to watch over one another. This conſideration reſpects the gifts, the graces, the temptations, the dangers of one another, and is the foundation of all thoſe mutual duties of warning, exhorting, and admoniſhing one another: Duties, God knows, generally loſt amongſt us, and with them is the glory of the Chriſtian religion departed from us. *Learn* hence, That the mutual watch of Chriſtians over each other, and their mutual exhortations of each other unto goſpel-duties, is neceſſarily required, as a ſpecial mean for their preſervation in their Chriſtian profeſſion. *Obſerve*, 2. The duty we are to *provoke* and be *provoked* unto, and that is, *to love and good works*; that is no true faith which can be ſeparated from love; and that is no true love that is ſeparated from good works. The great end of chriſtian communion amongſt believers, ſhould be to excite one another to love; which is the ſpring and fountain of all good works; and to provoke one another to good works; as the genuine effect and fruit of a ſincere love to God and our neighbour.

25 Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching.

Obſerve here, 1. That in the apoſtle's times there were chriſtian aſſemblies, in which chriſtians did meet together to worſhip and ſerve God, and to edify and comfort one another; and, in times of peace and liberty, they had convenient places erected, and ſeparated for that end and uſe.

The light of nature, as well as of ſcripture, dictates that God is to be worſhipped ſolemnly and publicly; that public worſhip pleaſes him moſt, and that he accepts it beſt. 2. It was the manner and cuſtom of ſome then to forſake the public aſſemblies; ſome out of ſloth and negligence; others out of fear of perſecution: This was a dangerous ſin, and ſo continues. God and Chriſt eſteem themſelves forſaken, when their worſhip and worſhippers are cauſeleſly forſaken. 3. The duty intimated and directed to, *not to forſake the aſſembling together, as ſome do*; for chriſtian aſſemblies are the life, the food, and nouriſhment of our ſouls: conſequently forſaking of church-aſſemblies is uſually the forerunner of apoſtaſy. 4. The great inducement and encouragement to this duty, *becauſe the day approacheth.* What day? *Anſw.* The day of Jeruſalem's approaching deſtruction to them; the day of death and judgment coming upon, and haſtening towards us. *Learn* hence, That the intimations given of approaching judgments, ought to influence unto ſpecial diligence in all evangelical duties. 2. That to ſee evidently the approaches of death and judgment, and yet not to be ſedulous and diligent in the duties of divine worſhip, is a ſign and token of a backſliding frame, tending unto final apoſtaſy from Chriſt and his holy religion.

26 For if we ſin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.

In theſe verſes the apoſtle gives a vehement enforcement of his preceding exhortation, to an unfainting perſeverence in the profeſſion of chriſtianity; and this is drawn from the dreadful conſequences of apoſtaſy. We have here the nature of the ſin expreſſed, the impoſſibility of deliverance from the guilt of it declared, and the puniſhment that will unavoidably follow upon it aſſerted. *Obſerve,* 1. Wherein the nature of this ſin conſiſts, *if we ſin wilfully,* that is, by renouncing chriſtianity. Where *note,* How our apoſtle puts himſelf in among the number; to ſhew that there is no reſpect of perſons in this matter, but thoſe who have equally ſinned, ſhall be equally puniſhed. *Note* farther, That the apoſtle, by ſinning wilfully, does not mean every wilful ſin, and that there is no recovery after any voluntary ſin committed; but by wilfully, he means obſtinately, maliciouſly, and with deſpite. *Obſerve,* 2. The ſeaſon and circumſtance of this ſin, *After we have received the knowledge of the truth,* that is, after the goſpel has been preached unto us, and we, upon conviction of its truth, and ſenſe of its power, have taken upon us the public profeſſion of chriſtianity: After we have dedicated ourſelves to Chriſt in baptiſm, and joined ourſelves unto the body of his church: After all this, to relinquiſh and renounce the chriſtian profeſſion, either for fear of ſuffering, or love of this preſent world, expoſes us to an unutterable and inevitable condemnation. 3. What the apoſtle charges as an aggravation of this ſin, namely, that it cannot be expiated, *There remains no more ſacrifice for ſin:* For God has no other Son to offer as a ſacrifice for ſin, if this be rejected; and no other Spirit to make that ſacrifice effectual, if the Holy Spirit be deſpiſed, and finally reſiſted; and therefore no ground of hope can remain for ſuch apoſtates. The puniſhment of ſins unpardonable is unavoidable: It is an eternal decree of divine juſtice, that the ſacrifice of Chriſt ſhall never benefit that man, who finally falls away after he has received the knowledge of the truth. 4. The dreadful and tremendous judgment here threatened to apoſtates, and what they muſt eternally expect, namely, the *fiery indignation,* and fearful wrath of the juſt and holy God. From the whole *learn,* 1. That there is an inſeparable connection between apoſtacy and eternal ruin. 2. That the minds of wretched apoſtates are oft-times filled with dreadful expectations of approaching wrath. 3. the dread and terror of God's final judgment againſt apoſtates, is, in itſelf, inconceivable, and accordingly ſhadowed out by things of the greateſt dread and terror in the world. 4. That God's fiery indignation, though it ſhall devour his adverſaries, yet ſhall it never eat them up; it ſhall eternally prey upon them, but never conſume them, or annihilate their being. O myſterious fire! whoſe ſtrange property is always to torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume. God grant that we may never experimentally know, or feelingly find, either where hell is, or what it is.

28 He that deſpiſed Moſes' law, died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes: 29 Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace?

The apoſtle here confirms what he had before ſpoken, of the ſad and certain deſtruction of apoſtates; and compares it with the puniſhment inflicted on the breakers of Moſes' law. If thoſe, under the teſtimony of two or three witneſſes, of that apoſtacy died without mercy; how much ſorer puniſhment is due to the contemners of Chriſt, who tread under foot, that is, vilify and undervalue our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, eſteeming him as one that died a public malefactor; counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; that is, a common thing; making nothing of the ſolemneſt rite that ever was uſed in the world for the confirmation of any covenant, to wit, the ſhedding of the blood of the Son of God, *and doing deſpite unto the Spirit of grace:* as if he were guilty of lying and falſehood, in bearing witneſs of the divine power of Chriſt. *Learn* hence, 1. That although to tranſgreſs Moſes' law was an heinous offence, yet to ſin wilfully againſt the goſpel, after we have received the knowledge of it, is far more heinous. 2. That to revolt from and rebel againſt God, loving ſinful man, againſt Jeſus Chriſt ranſoming and redeeming captive ſlaves, and againſt the Holy Spirit ſanctifying and cleanſing polluted ſouls, comes neareſt the ſin of devils; and as the ſin is the more heinous, ſo the puniſhment muſt be far more grievous: for God has allotted different degrees of puniſhments unto different degrees and aggravations of ſins. *Learn* 3. That the puniſhment of final apoſtaſy is eternal without the moſt diſtant hope of mercy, and without the leaſt relaxation of puniſhment; for they ſhall have judgement without any mercy.

30 For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me; I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord. And again, the Lord ſhall judge his people.

The apoſtle had declared in the verſes before, the certain judgment of apoſtates: Here he declares the judge, the Lord; and the judgment, *vengeance*; *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord:* Where, by vengeance, is meant vindictive juſtice in puniſhing ſinners. The apoſtle's argument ſeems to lie thus; "If God profeſſes himſelf an avenger of all ſin and injury done to his people, as he certainly doth, Deut. xxxii. 36. much more will he ſhew himſelf an avenger of ſo horrible an indignity offered to his Son and his Holy Spirit." *Learn* hence, That the conſideration of the rihteous nature of God, and that incloſure he has made of vengeance, to himſelf under an irrevocable purpoſe for its execution, gives undubitable aſſurance of the unavoidable deſtruction of all wilful apoſtates.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, winds up his whole argument againſt the wilful deſpiſers of the goſpel, taken from the aggravation of that ſin, with the ſeverity of the puniſhment that would certainly befal them that are guilty of it. *Note* here, 1. The deſcription given of God, he is the *Living God:* ſo called, both by way of oppoſition unto all dead and dumb idols, and alſo with reſpect to his lively power and ſtrength, whereby he is able to avenge the ſins of men; and likewiſe to ſignify the eternal duration of his exiſtence. He ever liveth to execute his wrath, and inflict vengeance on the apoſtate ſinner. *Learn*, That the name of the living God is full either of terror or comfort to the ſouls of men. O Lord! thine attributes, which are the principal delight of all ſincere chriſtians, and the ſpecial object of their hope and faith, are an eternal ſpring of dread and terror to all impenitent ſinners. *Note*, 2. What is the effect and fruit of all ſin in general, and of apoſtacy in particular, namely, a falling into God's hands. There is a threefold hand of God mentioned in ſcripture; his protecting hand, his correcting hand, and his wrathful and revenging hand. It is ſafe and comfortable to fall into God's protecting hand; it is profitable and beneficial, though not pleaſing and delightful, to fall into God's chaſtening and correcting hand; but to fall into his angry hand, his wrathful and revengeful hand, this is ſad and fearful: either to fall under this ſentence of his wrath in this life, or under the full and final execution of that wrath in the life to come. 3. The tremendous dreadfulneſs of that wrath; it is a fearful, dreadful thing, that which no tongue can utter, no heart conceive. *Who knoweth the power of thy wrath?* Pſalm xc. *Learn* hence, That the wrath and vengeance which the ever-living God will certainly inflict upon all wicked ſinners in general, and upon all wretched apoſtates in particular, is very dreadful and tremendous: and ſo muſt needs be, becauſe it is a wrath inconceivably great, and unavoidably ſure and becauſe it is the wrath of a juſt God, of an almighty God, and of an ever-living God.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after which ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.

Our apoſtle here proceeds to a new argument to perſuade Chriſtians to perſeverance, drawn from the conſideration of their former ſufferings for chriſtianity: "Since ye were illuminated, that is, baptized into the chriſtian faith, ye endured courageouſly afflictions, a fight of afflictions, yea, a great fight of afflictions." *Learn* hence, That the wiſdom of God oft-times permits and ſuffers perſons, at their firſt converſion, to fall into manifold trials and temptations: carnal relations now firſt ſcoff, then frown, and at the laſt caſt off. The world hates them, marks them out for perſecution, loads them with calumny and ſlander. But *obſerve* farther, the apoſtle directs *them to call to remembrance* their former ſufferings: He does not mean the remembrance of what was bitter and afflictive in their ſufferings, but the cauſe for which they ſuffered, and the preſence of God enjoyed by them in and under their ſufferings: This would encourage, embolden, and ſtrengthen unto duty: *Learn* hence, That a wiſe management of former experience is a great direction and encouragement unto future obedience.

33 Partly, whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed.

Here our apoſtle particularly mentions the ſufferings which the primitive ſaints underwent for the ſake of chriſtianity, and reduces them to three heads, ſhame, pain, loſs: They ſuffered in their names, by being diſgraced; in their perſons by being ſcourged; in their eſtates, by the ſpoiling of their goods. Let all that make profeſſion of the name of Chriſt expect and provide for ſuch ſufferings, eſpecially for reproaches. We may put a due value upon our names and reputations, but muſt not be over-ſolicitous about the preſervation of them. Let us keep in the way of our duty, and leave our good name to God's care and keeping. The world firſt thunders out reproaches, then falls into a ſtorm of perſecution. *Learn* hence, That all temporary ſufferings, in all their aggravating circumſtances, in all their formidable dreſs and appearance, may be, and ofttimes are, the lot and portion of thoſe who have undertaken the profeſſion of chriſtianity. *Ye endured a great fight of afflictious, whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock to the world.* The chriſtians here were expoſed to the world as it were upon a ſtage, or in a theatre where multitudes might gaze upon them, revile, and make a ſport of them.

34 For ye had compaſſion on me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.

The firſt words of this verſe, *Ye had compaſſion on me in my bonds*, prove St. Paul to be the author of this epiſtle;

for who elſe could there be, whoſe bonds for the goſpel where ſo known, and ſo famous among the believing Jews? His bonds were firſt at Jeruſalem, afterwards at Rome, the two capital cities of the Jews and Gentiles. And St. Paul declares here what a tender ſympathy and fellow-feeling with him in his ſufferings they did expreſs: *ye had compaſſion on me in my bonds*, that is, ye owned me in my ſufferings, ye ſympathized with me under my ſufferings, ye adminiſtered to my ſuccour and relief when burthened with my ſufferings. *Obſerve* next, he reminds them of their deportment under their own ſufferings; *Ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods.* Probably, the bread which they eat, the clothes which they wore, the beds whereon they lay, were taken from them by their perſecutors: yet all this ſpoil was taken joyfully; not more joyfully by the ſpoilers, than it was by the ſpoiled. *Learn*, It is the peculiar glory and excellency of the goſpel, that it gives inſuperable joy unto the chriſtian's mind, under the greateſt outward ſufferings: *They endured joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods. Obſerve* laſtly, The reaſon of this their chriſtian patience under ſufferings; they had a *ſubſtance*; they had a ſubſtance in heaven; and they had a better ſubſtance in heaven than they loſt upon earth; and they knew they had it, *knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better*, &c. *Learn* hence, That faith, by giving an incomparable preference to the things of heaven, above all periſhing things on earth, affords abundant joy and full ſatisfaction in the loſs of them all, upon the account of an aſſured intereſt in better things.

35 Caſt not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompenſe of reward.

As if he had ſaid, "Seeing you have endured ſo much, never ſhrink back from a bold and courageous profeſſion of Chriſt and his holy religion, which will be crowned with a great recompenſe of reward." *Obſerve*, 1. The exhortation, *Caſt not away your confidence* and courage in the free poſſeſſion of chriſtianity, like cowardly ſoldiers, that in the heat of the battle do caſt down their ſhields and armour, and run away. The chriſtian is a ſpiritual ſoldier; he muſt not ſhrink, or give back, but die a conqueror rather than be taken priſoner. 2. The reaſon which enforces the exhortation, *(Which hath a great recompence of reward,) mark, the reward is certain*, and that it is due to ſuch as perſevere. Perſeverance and the reward are inſeparably joined together, ſo that the one ſhall infallibly follow the other. Hence *learn*, That in all times of ſuffering, and in the approaches of them, it is the duty of believers to look upon the glory of heaven, under the notion of a refreſhing and all-ſufficient reward; *Caſt not away your confidence*, &c.

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe. 37 For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry.

Ye have need of patience: But had they it not already, when they endured ſuch a great fight of afflictions? Yes, aſſuredly; the meaning thereof is this: "Ye have need of the continued excerciſe of patience;" implying, that without the conſtant exerciſe of patience, none can paſs through tribulation to the glory of God, and their own advantage. We have need of patience to perform difficult duties, to reſiſt ſtrong temptations, to wait for an anſwer of our prayers, and alſo to wait for the reward of our patience. After we have done the will of God, we have need of patience to enable us to wait for the receiving of promiſe, that is, the good promiſed. Here *note*, that the glory of heaven, firmly believed, will powerfully ſuſtain the chriſtian ſpirit under ſufferings. 2. That patience is as neceſſary to enable us to expect and wait for the reward of our ſufferings, as it is needful and neceſſary to ſupport and uphold us under ſufferings. *Obſerve* farther, The comfortable aſſurance which the apoſtle gives, both of the certain coming, and ſpeedy coming of Chriſt to reward their faith and patience: *he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. Note* here, The chriſtian's ſuffering ſeaſon will be ſhort, Chriſt will come to call him off. *He will come, and will not tarry*; and when he comes, no difficulties ſhall be able to ſtand before him, but ſuch as have ſuffered patiently, ſhall be rewarded gloriouſly.

38 Now the juſt ſhall live by faith, but if *any man* draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.

Theſe words, *The juſt ſhall live by faith*, are taken out of the prophet Habakkuk, and are three times made uſe of by St. Paul, in his epiſtles, Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii, 11. and in this place. By the juſt man, underſtand a juſtified man; by the life which he lives, underſtand a life of ſanctification and of glorification, a life of grace and holineſs, and a life of glory and happineſs. *Learn*, That whatever life the believer lives, after a more excellent manner, and for more excellent purpoſes and ends than other men, he lives that life by the help and aſſiſtance of his faith.—In the following words, *But if any man draw back*, &c. *Obſerve*, 1. The crime ſuppoſed, if any man that has embraced chriſtianity, ſhall, either for ſufferings feared or felt, draw back from his holy profeſſion. The word ſignifies to ſneak and ſlink away out of fear; and the apoſtle means by it, a quitting our profeſſion of chriſtianity for fear of ſuffering. *Learn* hence, That in and under great, ſharp, and long trials, perſons are in danger of drawing back from that profeſſion of the goſpel wherein they are engaged. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſentence pronounced upon this crime, *My ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*; that is, God will be exceedingly diſpleaſed with him, and puniſh him very ſeverely; intimating, that apoſtacy from God's true religion, is a ſin highly provoking to him, and will be moſt ſeverely puniſhed by him. Here *note*, That theſe threatnings imply, that there is a poſſibility of their falling away, conſidered in themſelves; but not that they are ever totally deſerted by the Holy Spirit, and left under the reigning power of ſin. Theſe threatnings are intended to awaken their care, and have a ſingular influence on their preſervation. From the whole *learn*, That backſliders from the goſpel are, in a peculiar manner, the abhorrency of the ſoul of God: *If any man draw back*, &c.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

Obſerve here, 1. A twofold oppoſite ſtate, namely, them that *draw back*, and them *that believe*, that is, perſevere in believing: *we are not of them that draw back.* Intimating, 1. That in the viſible church there ever have been, are, and will be, a number of hypocrites, who, for fear of ſuffering in a time of perſecution, will draw back. 2. That it is every chriſtians duty to evidence to his own conſcience, and alſo to give evidence to others, that he is not of this ſort or number: *we are not of them who draw back. Obſerve*, 2. A two fold oppoſite event, *perdition* on the one hand, and *ſalvation* on the other. The firſt of theſe is denied, the latter is affirmed, concerning theſe Hebrews: *we are not of them that draw back unto perdition*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The actual influence of apoſtaſy on the one hand to deſtruction; nothing can free apoſtates from eternal ruin. 2. The actual influence of faith on the other hand to the ſaving of the ſoul. Thence *learn*, That ſincere faith will carry men through all difficulties, hazards, and troubles, unto the certain enjoyment of eternal bleſſedneſs. *We are of them that do believe*, &c.

CHAP. XI.

Our apoſtle having, in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, ſpoken of the juſt man's living by faith, he comes, in this chapter, to give an excellent deſcription of it, and paſſes many high encomiums upon it, ſhewing both what it is, and what great things it has done in all ages of the church.

NOW faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.

Obſerve here, 1. The thing deſcribed, or the ſubject ſpoken of, and that is faith; that faith whereby the juſt man lives, the apoſtle here ſpeaks of, though not as juſtifying, but as it is effectually uſeful in our whole life, eſpecially unto conſtancy and perſeverance in the chriſtian profeſſion, which was the great duty urged and enforced in the foregoing chapter. 2. The deſcription itſelf, it is the *ſubſtance of things hoped for.* 1. That is, it is a confident and firm expectation of the good things which God has promiſed, giving the good things hoped for, a real ſubſtance in our minds and ſouls. 2. It is *the evidence of things not ſeen*; that is, it evidences the reality and certainty of future things, it realizes the inviſible realities of another world unto our minds, and cauſes us to believe them as ſtrongly as what we ſee with our bodily eyes. *Learn* hence, That a lively faith gives ſuch a reality, certainty, and preſent being to things hoped for, and yet to come, as if they were viſibly ſeen and actually enjoyed.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Having in the former verſe deſcribed faith, in this and the following verſes he enters upon the juſt praiſe and deſerved commendation of this divine and excellent grace, which has ſuch an univerſal influence into all the parts of the chriſtian life. In this verſe, to commend that faith which he had in the former verſe deſcribed, he brings in the experience of the elders, or Old Teſtament ſaints, all true believers from the foundation of the world, who by faith obtained from God a good teſtimony, recorded in the holy ſcriptures. *By it*, or through it, as a condition appointed and ordained of God; not for it, or by the worth and influence of it, as a meritorious cauſe, the elders or ſaints of God, from the beginning of the world, obtained a good report. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Old Teſtament ſaints had the ſame kind of faith that we have, and were ſaved in the ſame manner that we are; they had the ſame promiſes, the ſame terms of grace, the ſame meritorious purchaſe by the blood of Chriſt: He is therefore called *the Lamb ſlain from the beginning of the world*, ſlain in God's purpoſe and decree, ſlain in the types and figures of his death; though his blood was not actually ſhed, yet was it decreed to be ſhed, and ſo was as effectual to them as to us. 2. That the renown of the Old Teſtament ſaints was their faith, that made them famous; not their priority in living before us, not their longevity in living many years beyond us, not upon account of their other graces, which yet rendered them truly excellent, are they ſaid to obtain a good report, but upon the ſcore and account of their faith. Abel was famous for righteouſneſs, Enoch for walking with God, Abraham for obedience, Moſes for meekneſs, but the crown is ſet upon the head of their faith only; *by it the elders obtained*, &c.

3 Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that the things which are ſeen were not made of things which do appear.

The deſign of the apoſtle in theſe words is to prove, that faith ſatisfies itſelf in the word of God, concerning the way and manner of the world's creation; for though the world be now viſible, and the things contained in it are ſaid to be ſeen, yet the original framing and making of the world has a principal place among things not ſeen. *Learn* hence, That by faith aſſenting to divine revelation, and not by reaſon, we underſtand the truth and wonders, the ſeaſons and cauſes, the manner and end of the world's creation. Reaſon indeed tells us that there was a creation, conſequently a creator; but reaſon without divine revelation could never have diſcovered the circumſtances and manner of the creation, which wholly depended upon the will of God. Reaſon and nature could never have known them, had not God in his word firſt revealed them: The old heathens could never determine who made the world, nor when, or how it was made, nor whence, and out of what it was made. Reaſon may propound the queſtion, how was the world made, and all things therein? But revelation muſt reſolve it. A poor child learns more by his catechiſm, than all the philoſophers ever learnt by their profound reſearches, and painful ſtudies. *Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed*, it follows, *by the word of God*, that is, both by his external and imperial word, his word of command, ſaying, *Let it be*; *He ſpake,* *and it was done*, Pſal. xxxiii. 9. And alſo by his eſſential and ſubſtantial word, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom God made the worlds, Heb. i. 2. in that order which Moſes has hiſtorically related. *Obſerve*, laſtly, How and after what manner the world was made, not out of any pre-jacent or pre-exiſtent matter, but out of nothing: That which was not at all, could not be ſeen: *the things that are ſeen, were not made of things that do appear*. Here *note*, That the power of God framed many things out of nothing, as the heaven of heavens, the dwelling place of God, and angels, immediately; other things mediately out of the chaos, that is, ſuch rude, undiſpoſed, and unfit matter, as had no diſpoſition to receive ſuch a form, as it did actually receive from the power of God; and may therefore deſervedly be called a creation out of nothing. *Learn* hence, That in the works of creation, though other attributes of wiſdom and goodneſs viſibly appeared, yet none were ſo eminently conſpicuous as the power of God. Well might St. Paul ſay, Rom. i. 20. That herein was manifeſted *his eternal power and Godhead*.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet ſpeaketh.

From a general declaration of the nature of faith in the foregoing verſes, our apoſtle proceeds to give inſtances of the efficacy and power of faith in particular perſons, in this and the following verſes. And he begins here with Abel. But why not with Adam? Becauſe Adam was the firſt ſinner, and the greateſt of ſinners; and although received to grace and mercy, yet after his fall Moſes ſpeaks little of him, nothing very notable; neither did Almighty God put that honour upon Adam which he put upon his ſon Abel; he had the honour to ſhed his blood for Chriſt, and for teſtifying his faith in him; and accordingly Abel is here repreſented as the firſt evangelical believer, *By faith Abel*, &c. *Obſerve*, 1. The action which Abel performed, he offered ſacrifice to God; he offered a ſacrifice moſt excellent, and he offered it by faith. But did not Cain bring his offering of faith too? Yes, no doubt, he believed the being of God, and conſidered him as a creator and preſerver, and accordingly offered the fruits of the earth, as an acknowledgment that all theſe things were made, preſerved, and beſtowed on man by God. But Abel's faith was fixed on God, not only as a creator, but as a redeemer alſo, accompanied with a ſenſe of ſin and guilt truſting in the ways of redemption and recovery which God had provided. Here *note*, That the performance of the outward duties of divine worſhip, is not the rule of the acceptance of men's perſons with God, but a difference and diſtinction is made from the inward principle, whence thoſe duties do proceed. Cain and Abel both offered ſacrifice, but not from a like principle, nor yet for a like end. *Obſerve*, 2. The effect and fruit of Abel's faith, it procured a teſtimony and witneſs from God himſelf that he was righteous; he teſtified that he had reſpect to his perſon by the approbation of his offering. Our perſons muſt be juſtified before our performances can be accepted. God has firſt reſpect to the offerer, then to the offering; for the perſon muſt recommend the gift, not the gift recommend the perſon. Laſtly, The privilege of Abel's faith: *by it, being dead, he yet ſpeaketh*. Some underſtand the words in a paſſive ſenſe, he is ſpoken of; he being dead, there is an honourable mention of him. Religion is the trueſt honour, and the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance. Others in an active ſenſe, and ſo the words import, that the dead ſaints do yet ſpeak, and that ſomewhat worthy to be heard and obſerved; they ſpeak by the precious graces with which they were enriched; they ſpeak by the holy life they maintained, by the good works they wrought, by the eminent ſervices they did for God and man, by their ſharp trials, by their bitter ſufferings; by theſe they ſpeak, to the honour of religion, and to the furtherance of the goſpel. God's Abels, his dead ſaints, do thus ſpeak when laid in the duſt.

5 By faith Enoch was tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.

The ſecond inſtance is Enoch, concerning whom our apoſtle affirms, that he was tranſlated, and that he was tranſlated by faith; tranſlated from one condition to another; from grace to glory, from earth to heaven. He was gathered by God, both in body and ſoul, to himſelf; and in a way of eminent grace and favour freed from death. Hereby God gave the world a convincing teſtimony, that the body is capable of eternal life and happineſs. But how was he tranſlated by faith? *Anſw.* Not efficiently; faith was not the efficient cauſe of his tranſlation. That was an immediate act of divine power; not meritoriouſly, for it is recorded as an act of ſovereign grace and favour; but inſtrumentally only; he was by faith brought into that ſtate and condition of favour and acceptance with God, as to have this peculiar privilege conferred upon him. Some we find are carried to heaven by ſpecial prerogative, by privileged diſpenſation; *By faith Enoch was tranſlated*, &c. But *obſerve* farther, What went before his tranſlation, and that was his pleaſing God; before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God. Such as would live with God hereafter, muſt ſtudy and ſeek to pleaſe God by walking with him here; would we come where Enoch is, we muſt walk as Enoch did. There is no hope of living with God in heaven, if we do not pleaſe him here on earth.

6 But without faith *it is* impoſſible to pleaſe *him*: for he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.

Without faith, that is, without juſtifying faith, without faith in the Meſſiah, for that is the faith here ſpoken of, there is no poſſibility of pleaſing God, and if ſo, then no poſſibility of being ſaved without faith. This appears partly from the divine conſtitution, God has ſo appointed it, partly from the nature of the thing itſelf; faith being the firſt regular motion of the ſoul towards God, no works, no duties, no performances whatſoever can pleaſe God without faith. *He that cometh to God*, that is, hath any acceſs or approach to him in a way of worſhip, or any acceſs or acceptance into his grace and favour, he *muſt believe*, 1. God's being; 2. God's bounty: *that he is: and that he is a rewarder of ſuch as diligently ſeek him. Learn* hence, 1. That the firſt point of faith, if we would have any thing to do with God, is firmly to believe that there is a God: *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is.* 2. That the fountain of all obedience and ſervice to God, is a firm belief of his being a *rewarder of all them that diligently ſeek him.* 3. That the whole iſſue of our finding God when we ſeek him, depends upon our diligently ſeeking of him; he is a rewarder of them, of all and only them, that diligently ſeek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon ſpoken of, Noah, an eminent perſon in the line of the church, and one that walked with God, and found grace in the eyes of the Lord, 2. What was ſpoken of him; *he was warned of God*, touching his deſign and purpoſe to deſtroy and drown the old world. 3. What was the effect of this warning, it produced in Noah fear and obedience; fear of the threatening, and obedience to the command; he was moved with fear, and prepared the ark. 4. The exerciſe, yea, eminent exerciſe of Noah's faith; neither the difficulty of the work, nor the length of time, an hundred and twenty years; nor his want of ſucceſs all that time of preaching, nor the contempt and ſcorn caſt upon him by the whole world, could weaken his hands, or diſcourage his heart, in the leaſt from going on with his work. 5. The conſequent of Noah's faith and obedience with reſpect unto the world, *he condemned the world*; not as a judge, properly and authoritatively, but as a witneſs, by plea and teſtimony; he condemned it by his doctrine, by his example, and left it altogether without excuſe. 6. The fruit and effect of Noah's faith and obedience with reference to himſelf: *He became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith*: that is, of the happineſs promiſed to them who are juſtified by faith; he was evidenced and declared to be a righteous perſon.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

The next illuſtrious inſtance of the efficacy of faith we have here in the perſon of Abraham, who obeyed the call and command of God in leaving his own native country, to go he knew not whither, and to receive an inheritance he knew not when. Where *note*, 1. The foundation of Abraham's faith and obedience, and that was the call of God; he had an immediate command to go out of his own country into a certain place with a promiſe to receive it for an inheritance: *Get thee from thy coutry*, relations, friends, and all outward enjoyments, is a command becoming the greatneſs of God to give; and ſelf-denial in fact, or reſolution to comply with ſuch a command from the great God, is the foundation of all ſincere profeſſion. 2. What was the principle of Abraham's obedience in complying with this call of God, and that was his faith: *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed.* True faith, where ever it is, bringeth forth ſincere obedience; theſe two can no more be ſeparated than the light and the ſun, than the fire and heat; obedience is the daughter of faith, and faith the parent and principle of obedience. 3. The difficulty, and therein the excellency of his obedience; *he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.* If faith be once ſatisfied in the call and command of God, it will follow him when it cannot ſee a ſtep of its way; over hills and mountains, through dales and valleys, fearing nothing. He that has God's call, need not fear God's conduct.

9 By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as *in* a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe. 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker *is* God.

The apoſtle ſpake of the place which Abraham was called from, in the foregoing verſe, namely, out of Ur of the Chaldees: He here ſpeaks of the place he was called to, Canaan, ſtyled the land of promiſe, that is, the land which God had newly promiſed to give unto him. Where *note*, 1. Abraham's act of obedience; *he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country*; he was there a ſojourner, not an inheritor, moving up and down from place to place, until God thought fit to ſettle him and his poſterity. Abraham was a ſojourner both in his condition of life, and his diſpoſition of heart. Canaan was a type of heaven, and accordingly Abraham expected a better country, with a city which had *foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. Learn*, That the children of God here on earth, where they have beſt right, and moſt poſſeſſions, are but ſtrangers and pilgrims. *Note*, 2. The manner of his ſojourning in this land, *dwelling in tabernacles.* This was both an act of policy, and an act of piety; of policy, that they might live peaceably, without giving umbrage to the natives, or occaſioning any envy or grudge from them; and of piety, to expreſs their hopes and deſires of a better country. 3. Abraham's companions, his fellows, and followers, in this act of obedience; he ſojourned with Iſaac and Jacob as heirs of the ſame promiſe; Where *mark*, How all the ſaints of God are of the ſame ſpiritual diſpoſition; they are animated by the ſame Spirit governed by the ſame laws; they act from the ſame principle, and for the ſame end, and deſire nothing more than to live together, and to enjoy God and one another. *Note* 4. The reaſon rendered why Abraham eſteemed himſelf but as a ſtranger in Canaan, becauſe his thoughts ran much upon heaven, of which Canaan was a type; *He looked for a city which had foundations*, &c. Where *obſerve*, 1. Abraham's act of expectation, he looked for it, he rationally expected it; it was not a blind hope, but well built on the power and promiſe of God. 2. What he looked for, *a city*; not Jeruſalem, an earthly city, as ſome would have it, for that was not poſſeſſed until eight hundred years after, and then only by his poſterity for a limited time; but an heavenly city, a ſettled, quiet habitation, a ſuitable dwelling for them that have had a life of trouble in this world. 3. The city itſelf deſcribed, 1. By the nature of it; *it has foundations*, in oppoſition to tents and tabernacles which had no foundation, but were moving, ambulatory dwellings, ſupported only by ſtakes and cords; this city is founded upon the eternal power, the infinite wiſdom, and immutable counſel of God. 2. By the maker and builder of it, *God*; he is the contriver, framer, and erector of this city; and as he is the maker, ſo he is the diſpoſer of it alſo; pleaſe God, and he will give it thee, none can give it thee without him, he will never give it thee without pleaſing of him.

11 Through faith alſo Sarah herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed.

Our apoſtle having ſpoken of Abraham's faith before, makes an honourable mention of his wife Sarah's faith here. It is a bleſſed thing when huſband and wife are one in the faith, as well as one fleſh. When the conſtant companion of our lives draws with us in the ſame yoke of religion. *Note*, 1. The perſon whoſe faith is here commended, *Sarah herſelf*, a woman, a barren woman, and a barren woman well ſtricken in age; a woman weak in ſex, may be ſtrong in faith. Though Sarah at firſt laughed, yet ſhe afterwards firmly believed. And the apoſtle takes no notice of the former but applauds the latter. Oh! with what great indulgence doth God cover the failings of his children, but proclaims aloud their graces to the world! Men do not thus; they will overlook all that is good in others, and report only what is amiſs. Sarah's laughing, Rahab's lie, Job's impatience, are not mentioned, but their graces are remembered. Who would not ſerve ſuch a gracious maſter, that winks at our failings, but accepts and rewards our weak ſervices and ſincere graces? 2. The commendation and fruit of Sarah's faith, ſhe received by it ſtrength and ability for conception; probably ſhe recovered her youthful vigour, and received a general reſtoration of nature, to an ability for all its primitive operations, which was before decayed by age; ſhe received ſtrength to conceive ſeed when paſt age. *Learn* hence, That it is the property of faith to expect a bleſſing abſolutely above the uſe of means, when we have a particular and ſpecial warrant from God ſo to do, as Sarah had in this caſe. *Note*, The ground of Sarah's faith, *Becauſe ſhe had judged him faithful that had promiſed*, that is, ſhe reſolved her faith into, and reſted upon, the veracity of God in the accompliſhment of the promiſe which is the proper and immediate object of faith. *Learn*, That wherever we exerciſe and put forth faith, we muſt take care and be ſure that we have a promiſe to exerciſe it upon, otherwiſe it is not faith, but fancy: God's promiſe, and not God's power, is the ground of faith; it is not what God can do, but what he will do, and what he has engaged and promiſed to do, that is the ground of faith: He can quench all the fire in hell: But where has he ſaid he will do it? *She judged him faithful who had promiſed.*

12 Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *ſo many* as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea-ſhore innumerable.

The words acquaints us with that gratuitous remuneration and gracious reward which God gave Abraham and Sarah, as the fruit of their faith, namely, the bleſſing of a numerous poſterity; there ſprang of them, and both of them *as good as dead*, with reference to the procreation of children, a numerous iſſue, like the ſtars of heaven, and the ſand of the ſea. Hence *learn*, That the God of nature, at his own pleaſure, works things above the power of nature in its ordinary efficacy and operation; by weak and dead means he often produces mighty effects. 2. That whatever difficulties and oppoſitions lie in the way of the accompliſhing God's promiſes, they ſhall have an aſſured accompliſhment on God's part, if faith be kept up in lively exerciſe on our part.

13 Theſe all died in faith;—

That is, all the fore-mentioned ſaints, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, they all died in the faith of the promiſed Meſſiah, believing he ſhould come, and expecting ſalvation by his coming. It is not enough for a Chriſtian to live in the faith, but he muſt alſo die in the faith; and to die in the faith is an honourable and happy manner of dying; it is a greater happineſs to die in the Lord, than to die for the Lord; if a man die for the Lord, and be not in the Lord, he is not bleſſed in his death: A man may die for the Lord's cauſe, yet not for the Lord's ſake, but out of vain-glory.

—Not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Obſerve here, The great trial which the faith of the Old Teſtament ſaints was put unto, they died, *not having received the promiſes*; that is, they went to their graves before the great bleſſings God had promiſed were accompliſhed. Faith is contented with the promiſe, though it wants actual poſſeſſion of the good things promiſed. God wou'd have believers, in all ages of the church, to live by faith, and promiſes not actually performed: And it is a great honour to God, when we are ready to die, to go to the grave with aſſurance, and to profeſs our confidence that God will make them good: *Theſe all died not having received the promiſes.* Yet *obſerve*, The actings and exerciſe of their faith towards theſe promiſes, which they had not yet received in their accompliſhment: 1. They *ſaw them afar off*, at a great diſtance: It is the property of faith to eye the bleſſings promiſed at a diſtance; ſo that no diſtance of time or place can weaken faith as to the accompliſhment of divine promiſes. 2. They *were perſuaded of them:* This imports the mind's ſatisfactory acquieſcing in the truth of God for the accompliſhment of his promiſes: A firm perſuaſion of the truth of God's promiſes, and a quiet waiting for the accompliſhment of them at a great diſtance, is an eminent fruit of faith. 3. They *embraced them*, the word ſignifies, they ſaluted and hugged them. Whence *note*, That faith is an act of the will, as well as of the underſtanding: there is in faith adherence as well as aſſent; an embracing as well as a perſuaſion; the heart cleaves to the promiſe with love, delight, and complacency, *and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth:* So they were in outward condition, wandering from place to place; ſo they were in affection and diſpoſition, looking upon this world as their pilgrimage, and heaven as their home and proper country; becauſe thence they are born, there lies their inheritance, there are all their kindred, there is their longeſt abode. Chriſtians ſhould not only account, but confeſs themſelves pilgrims, and diſcover it by their journeying and mending their pace heavenward.

14 For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly, that they ſeek a country. 19 And truly if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: 16 But now they deſire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "They that ſay ſuch things, namely, that they even in the land of promiſe, are pilgrims and ſtrangers, do declare plainly that they ſeek a country where they may reſt and dwell, when this their pilgrimage on earth is ended." Now this country was not Chaldea, but heaven; a glorious city which God prepared for them, as an abundant recompence for their earthly country, which they left at God's command. Here *note*, 1. That heaven is the Chriſtian's proper country; they are born from heaven, their converſation is in heaven, their eternal habitation is there, their head and huſband, their friends and kindred, are there; and it is theirs by a right of donation, by a right of purchaſe, by a right of poſſeſſion, and by a right of conqueſt. 2. That this heavenly country is by far the better, yea, the beſt of countries; beſt in regard of the largeneſs and extent of it; beſt in regard of the ſafety and ſecurity of it; beſt in regard of the order and government of it; beſt in regard of the company and ſociety dwelling in it; all ſaints, none but ſaints, none but perfect ſaints; beſt in regard of the immunities and privileges belonging to it, and in regard of the duration and continuance of it; a country that can never be invaded, never be conquered. 3. That the ſincere chriſtians have ſtrong deſires after, and vehement longings for, this better, this beſt of countries: *Now they deſire a better country:* And God *is not aſhamed to be called their God*— they that by their faith give glory to God, in acknowledging his faithfulneſs in this life, he will never be aſhamed of them, either in life, or at death, or after death, *Learn*, 1. That it is the greateſt privilege, honour, and advantage, that any can be made partakers of, that God will bear the name and title of their God. 2. God's owning of believers as his, and of himſelf to be their God, is an abundant recompence of all the hardſhips which they undergo in this their pilgrimage. The top and ſum of all happineſs, is to have the Lord for our God.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: And he that had received the promiſes offered up his only begotten *ſon*; 18 Of whom it was ſaid, that in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

The next perſon inſtanced in, for the fame of his faith, is Abraham, who was deſervedly ſtyled the *father of the faithful:* Him God tries in a very extraordinary manner, by putting him upon offering up his ſon Iſaac. Where *note*, That where God gives much grace, he tries grace much; the greater the faith, the greater the trial; ſtrong faith muſt prepare for ſtrong trials. Here Abraham's faith was tried, whether he would depend upon God's promiſe above reaſon; his obedience was tried, whether he would yield to God's command againſt nature; his love was tried, whether his affection was not more warm towards his ſon, than to his God; and his fear was tried, whether he did reverentially acknowledge and ſtand in awe of God, by adoring his ſovereignty and dominion over him. Trials are the beſt touchſtone of faith; without which men will want the beſt evidence of its ſincerity: And great trials in believers are an evidence of great faith. *Obſerve* farther, The excellency of Abraham's faith and obedience upon this trial, *he offered up his ſon Iſaac*; that is, he did in part and was ready to have done it thoroughly, had not God countermanded him. *Learn* hence, That where there is a divine command obliging us to obedience, it is the wiſdom and duty of faith, to cloſe its eye againſt all inſuperable difficulties and dangers. Abraham objected not againſt the horrid nature of the command, to kill his ſon, his own ſon, his only ſon, the ſon of the promiſe; but deliberately, and upon due conſideration, was ready to execute what God required. Lord! what a ſtrong faith was here, fortified with an impregnable reſolution, that could make Abraham hold out three days againſt the violent aſſaults of his own nature, and the charming preſence of his own ſon, enough to melt his heart; yet nothing made him ſtagger in his duty, but he performs a moſt miraculous act of obedience, in defiance of all difficulties. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The fruit and ſucceſs of Abraham's faith; he believed God could and would raiſe Iſaac from the grave, and he receives him again in a figure, as one ſnatched out of the very jaws of death. There is no ſuch way to enjoy the continuance of an earthly comfort as by reſigning it up to God: *Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up even from the dead*, &c.

20 By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau concerning things to come.

Note, That there is a bleſſing by way of prayer, and a bleſſing by way of prophecy, foretelling what ſhall befal perſons

ſons in time to come; of this kind is Iſaac's bleſſing. The patriarchs were in a peculiar manner directed and guided by God, and their bleſſing was a conferring of a right to the parties bleſſed. Thus Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau *concerning things to come*; that is, concerning the great and future things which ſhould happen to their poſterity after them. *Note* here, Eſaus (wicked men) having their portion in outward bleſſings as well as Jacobs, as well as the beſt and holieſt of men; partly as they are God's creatures, partly as they deſcend from parents in covenant with God, and partly becauſe they make ſome profeſſion of the name of God: And God will be behindhand with none, but ſo far as they do good they ſhall ſee good.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph: And worſhipped *leaning* upon the top of his ſtaff.

Obſerve here, in dying Jacob, the frame and carriage of holy men in their dying ſeaſons to bleſs their children, and worſhip their God. Jacob bleſſed Joſeph and his two ſons, laying hold on the covenant made with Abraham. It is no ſmall privilege to be born of parents taken into viſible covenant with God, and no ſmall comfort, when God comes to take away ſuch parents from us, to have the benefit of their bleſſings and prayers. Jacob, when dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph; and as he bleſſed them, ſo he worſhipped God with religious worſhip, and in a devout manner, *leaning upon the top of his ſtaff*. *Learn* hence, That our addreſſes to God, ought to be exceeding reverent, both as to the frame of our ſouls, and alſo to the geſture of our bodies; we cannot always be affectionate in prayer, for affection depends upon the vigorous motions of the bodily ſpirits; but we ſhould always be reverent and ſerious in prayer, otherwiſe it is no worſhip. *Learn* farther, That where faith gives a willing mind, bodily infirmities ſhall be no let and hindrance from duty.

22 By faith Joſeph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Here we have a two-fold inſtance of Joſeph's faith when dying. 1. *He made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael*; he ſaid unto his brethren, *Behold, I die, but God ſhall bring you unto the land which he hath ſworn unto your fathers.* See how the good man dies in the faith of the promiſe. Thence *learn*, That it is of ſingular uſe, and great advantage to the church, that ſuch believers as have been eminent in profeſſion, ſhould, in their dying moments, teſtify their faith in the promiſes of God; ſo did Jacob before, ſo did Joſeph now. The ſecond inſtance or evidence of Joſeph's faith was, that he *gave commandment concerning his bones*; that is, he took an oath of his brethren that they ſhould carry his bones out of Egypt, and bury them in Canaan, thereby owning and profeſſing himſelf to be of the poſterity of Abraham; and thereby alſo encouraging the faith and expectation of his brethren and their poſterity, to hope for their deliverance out of Egypt, and be put into the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land; ſo that it is evident that there was faith, much faith, ſhewed by Joſeph in diſpoſing of his bones. The papiſts' plea from hence, for paying veneration to their relics, is weak and contemptible: This was a ſpecial charge given in faith to do what was done; and to ſhut them up in a coffin, and decently bury them, was all that was done. Now to take example from hence, to dig men's bones out of their graves, to enſhrine them, and place them upon altars, to carry them in proceſſion, to adore them, to aſcribe miraculous operation to them, caſting out of devils, and the like, is fond and ridiculous.

23 By faith Moſes, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, becauſe they ſaw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

In theſe words the faith of Moſes's parents is celebrated; the birth of Moſes fell out in the very height and fury of Pharaoh's perſecution, when the king had given commandment to deſtroy all the male children; Moſes was then born and hid by his parents, and preſerved as a deliverer of the church of God. Oh! how blind are all the perſecutors and oppoſers of the church of God! When they think all things ſecure, and their counſels ſo deeply laid, that God himſelf cannot deliver out of their hands, then doth the Almighty lay in proviſion for his church's deliverance, and their deſtruction. Now was Moſes a deliverer born and hid. But *obſerve* a double cauſe of Moſes's hiding: the firſt external, *They ſaw he was a proper child*; they had a perſuaſion that God would provide a perſon to be their deliverer; and they ſaw ſomething divine in Moſes to ſtir up their faith, and raiſe their expectation, that he might be the perſon. The ſecond internal and moving cauſe, *They were not afraid of the king's commandment*, or bloody decree. *Learn* hence, 1. That the commands of kings and princes have oft-times been a very great trial to the children of God; ſo was Nebuchadnezzar's command to worſhip the golden image, and ſuch was Pharaoh's command here. 2. Kings and princes muſt not be obeyed in things contrary to the word of God: obedience without reſerve is to be paid to none but God.

24 By faith Moſes, when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter;

The next perſon whom our apoſtle inſtances in, is Moſes himſelf, whoſe faith and ſelf-denial were moſt evidently conſpicuous in all the inſtances of them. *Obſerve*, 1. His great ſelf-denial, with all the enhancing circumſtances of it: *When he came to years, he refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter.* *Note* here, 1. The circumſtance of time, *When he came to years:* It was no childiſh act, when he knew not what he did, but when he came to age, and underſtood: Nay, farther, this was when Moſes was newly come to age, in the prime and vigour of his time, when he had juſt began to taſte the ſweetneſs of youthful pleaſures: The world appears a dead and dry thing in the winter of old age, but looks green and beautiful in the ſpring of youth: but Moſes when come, juſt come, to years, refuſed it. 2. The circumſtances of his education, he had been bred from a child in a princely way and manner, he never knew what belonged to a low eſtate: Thoſe that never had much, forſake but little when they forſake all: Want will never much pinch thoſe who never underſtood plenty; but thoſe that have enjoyed fulneſs all their days, for them to ſtoop voluntarily, from the height of eaſe and honour, to the depth of affliction and hardſhip, is admirable. Thus did Moſes, he refuſed honour, and choſe affliction. 3. The circumſtances of his obligations, Pharaoh's daughter had ſaved his life, adopted him for her ſon, given him princely breeding, *He was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians*; and ſet her heart upon him as her own. However Moſes breaks through all and away he goes. But whither went he? Why, to a company of poor bondmen, labouring at the brick-kilns, to take his lot of ſuffering with them. 4. The circumſtances of his expectations; how very fair and certain a proſpect he had of enjoying the crown of Egypt; he did not refuſe it becauſe he deſpaired of attaining it, for he was an adopted heir unto it. Laſtly, That all this was not a raſh and ſudden determination, but a deliberate and adviſed choice, Acts vii. 23. St. Stephen ſays, he made this choice *when he was fully forty years old*; that is, when he was of ripeſt judgment, and in the height of proſperity and reputation: He did not only, as Joſephus ſays, at three years old caſt a crown, given him for a play-toy, to the ground, and trample it under his feet; but as the apoſtle ſays here, when he came to be a man, he treated it with no more reſpect, *but refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharoah's daughter.* Behold here Moſes' faith, and eminent ſelf-denial, in chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the worſhippers of the true God, than to gain a kingdom by renouncing God and his holy religion. From whence *learn*, That faith is a grace which will teach and enable a perſon openly to renounce all worldly advantages at God's call, when we cannot enjoy them with an upright mind, and a good conſcience. *Queſt.* But how did Moſes come to know his ſtock and race, that he was an Hebrew born, and not an Egyptian, no ſon of Pharoah's daughter? *Anſw.* He found himſelf circumciſed, and ſo belonged to the circumciſed people. The token of God's covenant received in infancy, duly conſidered, is a muſt effectual mean to preſerve perſons in the profeſſion of the true religion. Add to this, that his own mother was his nurſe, and continually with him, and probably his father frequently; who being perſons fearing God, took care very early to impreſs him with the principles of the true religion, and with the deteſtation of the Egyptian idolatry.

25 Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

Obſerve here, 1. The common lot and uſual condition of God's people in this world; it is an afflicted ſtate and condition. 2. That wicked men oft-times enjoy pleaſures in the ways of ſin, whilſt good men meet with much affliction in the work of holineſs. 3. That notwithſtanding this, all wiſe and good men do rather chuſe afflicted godlineſs, than pleaſant and proſperous wickedneſs. 4. That a ſpiritual eye can ſee an excellency in the people of God, when in the loweſt ſuffering condition; will join itſelf unto them, and appear with, and for them, though it be with great loſs, and much hazard. Moſes here choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the ſhort ſinful pleaſures of Pharaoh's court.

26 Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt; for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.

The former verſe acquainted us with the general choice which Moſes made of affliction with the people of God; this acquaints us with one ſort and particular kind of affliction which he choſe, namely, reproach for Chriſt; this he counted his glory, his riches, his treaſures, beyond all the riches and treaſures of Egypt. *Note* here, That the people of God have been, and uſually are, a people under reproach; not only a perſecuted, but a reproached people; the foundation of all ſufferings is laid in reproach: this is the cover for all. The Jews, by reproaches, firſt ſtirred up the rage of the people againſt Chriſt before they attempted to take away his life. *Note*, 2. The reproach of good men is the reproach of Chriſt, becauſe he and they are but one myſtical body, and becauſe of the near union that is between them. The reproach of the wife is the reproach of the huſband, eſpecially if ſhe be reproached for his ſake, and upon his account. Again *obſerve*, What an high eſteem a gracious perſon has of reproaches in the cauſe of Chriſt; he eſteems them his glory, his treaſure, his greateſt treaſure; he rejoices and takes pleaſure in them, and very much values himſelf by them. Verily no man deſerves the name of a chriſtian till he has ſuch an eſteem of Chriſt, and value for him, that the worſt things in the world, even perſecution and reproach, ſhould be preferred by him before the great things of the world, when they ſtand in competition with him, or in oppoſition to him. Laſtly, The ground of Moſes' faith, ſelf-denial, contempt of the world, and all its excellent actions, and that was the recompence of the reward he had reſpect unto; *for he had reſpect unto the recompence of reward.* Where *note*, That there is a reward laid up for good men; that it is lawful, yea, laudable, very expedient, yea, very neceſſary and needful, for a chriſtian to eye his reward, and to have reſpect unto it in the whole courſe of his obedience; and this doing will be a mighty encouraging motive to undergo all hardſhips and difficulties in the way of religion; *he had reſpect*, &c.

27 By faith he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible. 28 Through faith he kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them. 29 By faith they paſſed through the Red ſea as by dry *land*; which the Egyptians aſſaying to do were drowned.

Our apoſtle having deſcribed the faith of Moſes, with reſpect to his ſufferings with the people of God, in the former verſes, comes now to inſtance in the power and activity of it with reſpect to their deliverance, in theſe verſes. Where *note*, 1. The ſpiritual fortitude which attended his faith, *he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king*; even the wrath of the greateſt king upon the earth is to be diſregarded, if it lays againſt our duty to God. 2. The reaſon or ground of this his fortitude and courage, *he endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; that is, he ſaw him by faith whom he could not ſee by ſenſe; he ſaw him in his omnipreſence, power, faithfulneſs, and had a fixed truſt in him at all times, and on all occaſions. *Learn* hence, That there is nothing inſuperable to faith, whilſt it can keep a clear view of the power of God. *Note*, 3. The commendation of Moſes' faith, from a due obſervation of a double ordinance of worſhip, namely, *the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood*. As to the former, Moſes' faith in keeping the paſſover had reſpect to its divine inſtitution, to the command for its perpetual obſervance, to the ſacramental nature of it, to the myſtical or typical ſignification of it. *Learn* hence, That a vigorous and lively exerciſe of faith, is always required unto the right and due celebration of a ſacramental ordinance; *by faith he kept the paſſover*: it follows, —*and the ſprinkling of blood*. This was a temporary ordinance and obſervation, annexed to the firſt celebration of the paſſover, not repeated afterwards; the ſprinkling of the blood on the ſide-poſts of their houſes, was a token that the deſtroying angel ſhould paſs over thoſe houſes, and none ſhould be deſtroyed in them; but this rite, though it ceaſed with the firſt paſſover, yet it abides for ever in its myſtical ſignification; God hereby teaching us, that unleſs we are ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, our Paſchal-lamb, no other privilege can ſecure us from the diſpleaſure of God, and everlaſting deſtruction; *by faith he kept the paſſover, and ſprinkling of blood*, ver. 28. *Note*, 4. A farther inſtance of the power and efficacy of Moſes' faith in paſſing through the Red ſea, ver. 29. Probably he entered firſt into the ſea, at the head of the people, himſelf, both to conduct them, and to encourage them; the waters doubtleſs were raiſed to a very great height on both ſides of them; and though they were a wall unto them, yet it was a mighty act of faith, to put themſelves between ſuch walls, as were ready every moment to fall upon them, had they not been under an almighty reſtraint. *Learn* hence, That faith will overcome all fears and dangers, and find a way through a ſea of difficulties, under the call, and at the command of God. But how came it to paſs that the Egyptians going in the ſame path through the Red ſea, were drowned, in which the Iſraelites were preſerved? *Anſw*. The Egyptians' entering in was an act of preſumption, the Iſraelites was an act of faith. God commanded the Iſraelites to go through; now, as faith gives courage to obey God in difficult duties, ſo it gives encouragement to hope that ſafety ſhall evermore accompany duty.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compaſſed about ſeven days.

After the faith of Moſes and the Iſraelites at the Red ſea, we have here the faith of Joſhua and the Iſraelites before Jericho, recorded and related. Jericho was a walled and well fenced city, and a frontier town, that kept them from entering into Canaan. God commanded them not to fight, but to walk, to go round the city ſeven days, and he would give them an unexpected entrance into it; they believe and obey, and the ſucceſs was according to their deſire; *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The grace exerciſed, *faith*; they believed God upon his word, they enter Canaan at this frontier town; God remembers his promiſe, and diſappoints not the faith and expectation of his people. 2. The readineſs and exactneſs of the people's obedience, they compaſſed the town ſo many days, they do what God commands, and no more; here is no mount raiſed, no engine planted, no ſword drawn, they only walk, not fight. Doubtleſs the men of Jericho made themſelves merry with this ſight, and ſaid one to another, "What, will theſe men beat down our city with their eyes? Will they conquer us only by gazing upon us?" And farther, As the army only muſt encompaſs the city, ſo muſt the prieſt blow with ram's horns; a contemptible mean! Had they made uſe of the ſilver trumpets of the ſanctuary, that had been a good ground to hope for ſucceſs, they being the ſymbols and ſacred ſigns of God's preſence with them; but verily trumpets of ram's horns ſeemed more fit to move laughter, than to do execution; yet aſſuredly, no ram of iron could have been ſo forcible for battery as theſe ram's horns, when God had appointed them. It is the praiſe of omnipotency oft-times to work by improbabilities. 3. The event and ſucceſs which followed their faith, and accompanied their obedience, *The walls of Jericho fell down*. Nothing can ſtand before the power of God, and the faith of his people. If we will believe God's promiſes, and execute his commands, we need no ſhifts nor artifices, no power nor policy of our own to work deliverance for us. *Learn* hence, That when faith makes uſe of the means preſcribed by God, though it cannot diſcern what influence the means can have to the end aimed at, yet the iſſue and event ſhall certainly be according to God's appointment, and faith's expectation.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the ſpies with peace.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon ſpoken of, Rahab, a Gentile, an Amorite, an harlot, who kept a victualling houſe in Jericho, and ſo was both harlot and hoſteſs, defiled both in body and mind with idolatry and adultery. 2. What is ſpoken of her: She believed; *by faith, Rahab*, &c. She was converted to God before the ſpies came to her, by what ſhe had heard of him and his mighty works. Behold here a bleſſed inſtance! 1. Of the ſovereignty and freedom of God's grace. 2. Of the power and efficacy of divine grace, in calling and converting a perſon given up by her own choice to the vileſt of ſins, even to the ravings of luſt: But no ſinner nor ſin is to be deſpaired of, in whoſe cure ſovereign grace is engaged. *Obſerve*, 3. The effect and fruit of her faith, *ſhe received the ſpies with peace*; that is, entertained them ſafely, concealed them, gave them intelligence, expoſed herſelf to danger in the conveyance of them; an eminent fruit, a ſpecial evidence, and an high demonſtration of her faith; indeed ſhe told an officious lie; but God pardoned it, and the apoſtle here makes no mention of it; the Holy Ghoſt lays, as it were, the finger upon the ſcar, and covers it out of ſight, contrary to the practice of the malignant world, who overlook all the good, and reflect only upon the evil of an action; whereas God takes notice of the good, but paſſes by the evil. 4. The benefit and advantage ſhe received by her faith, ſhe *periſhed not*; that is, when the credulous and idolatrous people of Jericho were deſtroyed, ſhe and her family were preſerved. From the whole *learn*, 1. That God is ready to ſhew wonderful mercy to penitent ſinners, if they return to him, and believe in him, how great ſoever their ſins have formerly been. 2. That true faith, wherever it is, will ſhew itſelf by ſome eminent effect, and notable fruits of it. 3. That the rewards of faith are excellent, and truly glorious; as ſhe was preſerved from the common ruin at Jericho, ſo ſhall all believers be ſaved from that wrath and deſtruction which ſhall come ere long upon the impenitent and unbelieving world.

32 And what ſhall I more ſay? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samſon, and *of* Jepthah; *of* David alſo, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets: 33 Who through faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raiſed to life again:—

In theſe, and the following verſes, our apoſtle ſums up the remaining teſtimonies which he might have produced to ſhew the great things which faith had aſſiſted perſons to do, and alſo enabled them to ſuffer the hardeſt and moſt terrible things that could be encountered with; in the verſes now before us, an account is given us, of the great things of all ſorts, which faith has enabled to do; particularly, it was faith that made them fearleſs whom God raiſed up, in the days of the judges, to conflict with the enemies of the church; it was faith that aſſiſted them in the combat, and rendered them victorious in the conflict; it was faith rendered Gideon ſucceſsful over the Midianites, Barak over the Canaanites, Samſon over the Philiſtines, Jephthah over the Amorites, David over the Jebuſites and Moabites; it was faith in the promiſe of God that made them courageous, and rendered them victorious: there is nothing ſo great, ſo difficult, or ſeemingly inſuperable, that ſhould hinder us from acting faith in all things, even things more great and excellent than the conqueſt of earthly kingdoms. *Obſerve* next, Our apoſtle having enumerated the perſons believing, he now reckons up the noble acts and honourable atchievements of their faith, *Through faith they ſubdued kingdoms*; So did Joſhua ſubdue all the kingdoms in Canaan, and David all the kingdoms about it, viz. Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, and the Philiſtines; theſe were ſubdued by faith, becauſe what they did was in obedience to God's command, and in the accompliſhment of his promiſes, for he had given all thoſe kingdoms by promiſe to the Iſraelites, before they were ſubdued by them; thus they are ſaid to ſubdue kingdoms by faith. Yet *note*, That they made uſe of all other heroic virtues beſides faith; courage, valour, military ſkill, and military ſtratagems: faith excites all graces and virtues, and puts them in motion. *Wrought righteouſneſs*; they executed the judgments of God on the enemies of the church, and adminiſtered juſtice impartially to all that were under their rule and government; and this working righteouſneſs is a fruit of faith, for unbelief is the cauſe of all the injuſtice and oppreſſion that is in the world. *Obtained promiſes*; that is, the good things promiſed; ſo did Abraham by faith obtain a promiſed ſon Joſhua, a promiſed Canaan, David a promiſed kingdom: but there was a great ſpace of time between the promiſe and the performance, which put their faith ſometimes hard to it. *Stopped the mouths of lions*; thus Daniel, chap. vi. *becauſe he believed in his God*, ver. 23. and the faith which heretofore ſtopped the mouths of lions, can ſtop the rage of the moſt ſavage oppreſſors and perſecutors, whenever God pleaſes. *Quenched the violence of the fire*; ſo did the three children's faith, Dan. iii. *not a hair of their head was ſinged*, they knew not which way God would deliver them, but they committed themſelves to the omnipotency and ſovereignty of God in the diſcharge of their duty, with a full perſuaſion that one way or other he would deliver them. *Eſcaped the edge of the ſword*, as did David the ſword of Goliah and Saul, though ſometimes his fear prevailed that he ſhould one day periſh by the ſword of Saul. Fear may be in caſes of danger, and yet faith at the ſame time have the principal conduct of the ſoul; by faith David eſcaped the edge of the ſword; ſo did the Jews the ſword of Haman, and Elijah the ſword of Jezabel. *Out of weakneſs were made ſtrong*; ſome apply this to Gideon and his three hundred men, Judg. vii. 15. others to Hezekiah, who by the power of faith was, in a wonderful manner recovered, and reſtored from a deſperate ſickneſs to perfect health, Iſa. xxxviii. *Waxed valiant in fight*, ſo did Joſhua, Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and David, who through faith in the promiſe, and of the preſence of God with them, feared neither the number nor ſtrength of their enemies. David often declares, that God *girded him with ſtrength to the battle, and taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight; ſo that though an hoſt encamped againſt him, yet his heart was not afraid. Turned to flight the armies of the aliens*; thoſe aliens were the heathens and idolaters, Philiſtines and the Midianites, who were enemies to Iſrael, and to the God of Iſrael, and they made them fly, and turn their backs; for as they fought for God out of a principle of faith, ſo God fought for them, according to the faithfulneſs of his promiſe, which was the ground of their confidence and courage. *Women received their dead raiſed to life again*; this is applied to the widow of Zerephath, and the Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 36. 1 Kings xvii. 23. They were raiſed by the prophet's faith, and received by their mothers, when raiſed, with joy and thankfulneſs. Theſe ten inſtances did the apoſtle ſelect and chuſe out of many, to give, of the great things that had been done through faith, thereby to aſſure the Hebrews, and us with them, that there is nothing too hard nor difficult for faith to effect, when it is ſet on work, and managed according to the power of God.

—And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection. 36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and ſcourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and impriſonment. 37 They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword: They wandered about in ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 Of whom the world was not worthy: They wandered in deſerts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

Our apoſtle having in the foregoing verſes aquainted the Hebrews with the great things which faith enabled the Old Teſtament ſaints to do, he now lays before them an account of the hard and difficult things which faith enabled them to ſuffer, and here reckons up the ſharpeſt and bittereſt ſufferings that human nature perhaps can be expoſed to; but to do the greateſt things, and to ſuffer the hardeſt, is all one to faith. Faith ſtands ready for both, as God ſhall call. *Note* here in general, that the evils enumerated are of ſuch various ſorts and kinds, as to compriſe every thing that may befal believers on the account of their chriſtian profeſſion: Do we meet with temptations, ſcorns, mockings, ſcourgings, bonds, impriſonments, yea, death itſelf, by all ſorts of tortures and extremities? This is our encouragement, that others, in the cauſe of God, have undergone them, and been carried victoriouſly through them; but the particulars in this little book of martyrs follow. *Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance.* In this paſſage and ſeveral others here following, the apoſtle is concluded to refer to the ſtory in the Maccabees, which though written after the cloſing of the canon of the ſcripture, when there was no extraordinary prophet in the church, yet the matters of fact were then freſh in memory, and are here alluded to, particularly Eleazar, 2 Mac. vi. 28. who was beaten to death, when he had been perſuaded and allured to accept deliverance by tranſgreſſing the law; and alſo the mother and her ſeven ſons, they expected a *better reſurrection*, better than what their proſecutors offered them, even a glorious reſurrection of their bodies at the laſt day. *Others had trials of cruel mockings*, as Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 24. and others; and *ſcourgings*, as Jeremiah, chap. xx. 2. &c. and xxxvii. 15. *Alſo bonds and impriſonments*, as Joſeph in Egypt, and Jeremy in the dungeon; ſome were *ſtoned*, as Zacharias the ſon of Jehoida, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. Others *ſawn aſunder*, as Iſaiah under the tyranny of Manaſſeh; others were tempted with fair promiſes and great rewards, but refuſing, were *ſlain with the ſword*. *Learn* hence, That torments in the caſe of religion have been a very old invention of the devil and the world, and they have placed great hopes of prevailing by them; but no inſtruments of cruelty, no endeavours of health, ſhall ever prevail againſt the faith of God's elect. *They wandered about in ſheep-ſkins*, &c. This ſome refer to Elijah, who was deſtitute and fed by ravens, 1 Kings xvii. 4. but it has been the portion of many of God's faithful ſervants to be driven from their habitations, ſometimes by the cruelty of the laws, ſometimes by force and violence. *Of whom the world was not worthy*; that is, the men of the world think the ſaints of God not worthy to live amongſt them, whereas the world is not worthy of ſuch excellent company; and therefore, as ſoon as their work is done, God removes them. *Learn* hence, 1. That God's eſteem of his people is never the leſs becauſe of their outward ſufferings and calamities, whatever the world judgeth of them; they eſteem them the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things; but God is of another mind. 2. Let the world think as highly and as proudly of itſelf as it pleaſes, God thinks it at all times, but eſpecially when it perſecutes his people, baſe, and unworthy of their ſociety. *They wandered in deſerts and mountains:* Behold here the ſtate and condition of ſome of the ſervants of the Living God, who, when driven from all inhabited places, took up their lodgings in deſerts and mountains, in *dens and caves of the earth*. *Learn* hence, That oft-times it is much better, and more ſafe for the ſaints of God to be in a wilderneſs, among the beaſts of the fields, than in a ſavage world inflamed by the devil into rage and perſecution.

39 And theſe all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promiſe.

That is "All the forementioned ſcripture ſaints, with others that lived from the beginning of the world, and the firſt giving out of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, Gen. iii. 15. all and every one of theſe *obtained a good report through faith*, that is, a good teſtimony that they pleaſed God; nevertheleſs they received not the promiſe, that is, the actual exhibition of the promiſe, Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah; the promiſe they had, but not the thing promiſed, this was not in their days exhibited. Chriſt was not then come in the fleſh; this promiſe was made by God to the elders from the beginning, but not actually accompliſhed until the fulneſs of time." *Learn* hence, That the Old Teſtament ſaints had from the beginning the promiſe from God, concerning the exhibition of Chriſt in the fleſh for the redemption of the world; which promiſe they were perſuaded of the truth of, embraced it with deſire, longing for the actual accompliſhment of it, and thus enjoyed the benefit of it as well as we.

40 God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect.

The better thing here ſpoken of, is the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh. Lord, what were we? And how were we better than they, that this better thing ſhould be reſerved for us? They ſaw the promiſe afar off, we enjoy it at hand, *That they without us ſhould not be made perfect*; without us, is ſa much as without the things which are actually exhibited unto us. God never intended or deſigned, that the infant condition of the church ſhould be made perfect before the exhibition of Chriſt; that is, that they ſhould be juſtified and ſaved by any ſacrifices or ſervices done in their time, but by looking to the ſacrifice and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, whereby both they and we are perfected. *Learn*, That it is Chriſt alone who was to give perfection and conſummation to his church; all the outward glorious worſhip of the Old Teſtament, though it pleaſed God, yet had no perfection in it; this God reſerved for our times, *that they without us*, &c.

CHAP. XII.

Our apoſtle comes now to reinforce his exhortation to patience and conſtancy in the cauſe of Chriſt, from the teſtimony before inſiſted on, with new additional motives, encouragements, and directions.

WHEREFORE, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes,—

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Seeing we, who are now called forth to ſuffer, have before us ſo many inſtances of the faithful, who, like a cloud of witneſſes, have gone before us, and by the help of their faith conquered all impediments that lay in the way of their ſalvation, let us take encouragement from them to quit ourſelves like men; and as runners in a race, let us caſt off all worldly incumbrances which will entangle us, and avoid all ſin, eſpecially a boſom corruption, which eaſily beſets us, and as eaſily overcomes us, and let us run with patience and perſeverance the race of chriſtianity ſet before us. *Note*, 1. That the Old-Teſtament ſaints are here called *witneſſes*, *a cloud of witneſſes*, and *a cloud encompaſſing us*; they are witneſſes of this grand truth, namely, that faith will carry believers ſafely through all that they may be called to do and ſuffer in the profeſſion of the goſpel; they are called *a cloud of witneſſes*, partly for their number, there being a great multitude of them; partly for their direction, there being a leading virtue in them. As there was a cloud that went before the children of Iſrael to lead them in the wilderneſs, ſo this cloud of witneſſes leads us up and down the wilderneſs of this world, in the darkeſt night of our ſorrows and ſufferings; and they are ſaid to *encompaſs us*, becauſe the ſcripture every where encompaſſes us with them, ſo that we can be in no ſuffering ſtate or condition, be it never ſo ſad, but we may turn our eye, and behold the face of ſome or other of theſe worthies looking upon us, and encouraging of us to patience and perſeverance; and therefore, to faint in our profeſſion, whilſt we are encompaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, is a great aggravation of our ſin. *Learn* hence, That it is a ſpecial honour which God puts upon his ſaints departed, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffered and died for the truth, that even, after their death, they are witneſſes to faith and obedience in all generations.

—Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, 2 Looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith;

Note here, 1. Chriſtianity is a race, a race ſet before us by God, and it is our duty faithfully and perſeveringly to run it. 2. That in order to the running of this race, all impediments muſt be laid aſide: *Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us.* By *every weight* is generally underſtood the world, its riches, honours, pleaſures, preferments, which oft-times are a peculiar obſtruction to conſtancy and perſeverance in the profeſſion and practice of chriſtianity; this dead weight muſt be *laid aſide*, by mortifying our hearts and affections towards the world, for it is inordinate love to theſe things which gives them their weight and incumbrance; where this grace is in its due exerciſe, the world cannot influence the mind into any diſorder, nor make it unready for its race. By *the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us*, ſome underſtand all ſin in general, others a boſom-beloved ſin in ſpecial, others timorouſneſs and fear in particular; all ſoftneſs and tenderneſs, with reſpect to ſuffering. In the original word rendered *eaſily beſet us*, ſome think there is an alluſion to the long garments worn in the eaſtern countries; which, dangling about a man's heels, unfit him for running a race. As a man that has a burthen on his back, or a long garment hanging down to his heels, is altogether unfit to run a race, ſo unready are they for the ſpiritual race, who are entangled with the love of the world, or with any ſinful compliances. 3. That patience is a grace very neceſſary to enable a perſon to run the race of Chriſtianity which God has ſet before him. Such is the unevitableneſs and unavoidableneſs of the Chriſtian's trials; ſuch the multiplicity and variety of them; ſuch the long duration and continuance of them, that there can be no perſeverance without patience. 4. The way diſcovered, and the means declared, how, and by which we attain this grace and patience, namely, by *looking unto* Jeſus. *Learn* hence, That looking unto, and beholding of Chriſt in his patience, is a notable mean to excite and ſtir us up to the practice and performance of our duty. *Note*, 5. The ſpecial title given here to Chriſt, he is ſtyled *the author and finiſher of faith* in his people; he is deſervedly ſtiled the *author* of our faith, becauſe his holy doctrine is the foundation of our faith; becauſe his holy ordinances are ſpecial means of faith, and his holy Spirit the producer of faith in the ſouls of his people, and his precious blood the purchaſer of faith, and all grace, for his people. And he is the *finiſher* of our faith too, as well as the author of it, inaſmuch as he has, by his promiſe, engaged to perfect what he has begun, Phil. i. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it*, &c. And inaſmuch as he doth by his interceſſion plead with the Father for the believer's preſervation in faith, and perſeverance in holineſs unto the end; *I have prayed that thy faith fail not*, Luke xxii. 32.

—Who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Obſerve here, 1. How our apoſtle having propounded the example of ſuffering ſaints before, to provoke them to patience and conſtancy under their tribulations, he propounds now the example of a ſuffering Saviour, and bids them *conſider him*; *Qualis ſit*, compare his ſufferings with your own, conſider what he was, and who you are: was not he the Son of God? Had not he all glory and power in his hand? Yet he *endured*, &c. conſider him therefore. *Learn* hence, That the frequent conſideration of Chriſt in his ſufferings, is the beſt mean to keep up faith, and encourage patience under our own ſufferings. *Obſerve*, 2. How our apoſtle particularly enumerates the ſufferings which our

Lord Jeſus underwent, he *endured the contradiction of ſinners*; that is, the great oppoſition made to his doctrine, the ſlander caſt upon his miracles, the indignities offered to his perſon, the malicious and unwearied attempts againſt his life. Next he endured the pain of the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame of the croſs. Pain and ſhame are the two conſtituent parts of all outward ſufferings, and they were both eminent in the death of the croſs; no death more cruel and painful, no death more opprobrious and diſgraceful, and never did theſe appear in any perſon's death to that degree of extremity, as in the death of Chriſt; yet he patiently endured them with an holy compoſure of ſoul, without reviling the villanous Jews, or threatening them with that vengeance and deſtruction which it was in his power to have brought upon them every moment. Lord! never any example of patient ſuffering like to thine, nor can any equal to it be given in human nature. *Learn* hence, That the manner of Chriſt's enduring ſufferings, particularly pain and ſhame, ought to be continually before us, that God may in ſome meaſure be glorified by us, according thereunto, when we are called into a ſuffering condition. *Obſerve*, 3. What it was that carried Chriſt through his ſufferings, it was *the joy that was ſet before him*; that is, ſay ſome, his glorious exaltation; rather the proſpect of that glory which would redound to God and his church by his patient ſuffering: The glory of God, and the ſalvation of mankind, were now ſet before him, and he valued them above life, honour, reputation and eaſe, and every thing that was dear unto him. Accordingly it was called *his pleaſure*, Iſa. liii. 10. *Learn* hence, That herein is Chriſt our great example, in that he was influenced and acted, in all that he did and ſuffered, by a conſtant reſpect to the glory of God, and the ſalvation of his people: *for the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs*, &c. *Obſerve*, 4. The reward of our Lord's patient ſufferings declared, he is therefore *ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.* God's throne implies his majeſty and power, the right hand of his throne implies the higheſt honour, dignity and power, next to God. Chriſt's advancement above angels, and all creatures, is hereby intimated: This glorious eſtate was the great reward of his ſufferings; *he became obedient unto death*, therefore God thus highly exalted him. *Obſerve* laſtly, The advantage we ſhall reap and receive by eyeing Chriſt in, and imitating his patience under all our ſufferings; it will prevent our being *wearied and faint in our minds.* *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch ſufferings may befal us in the way of our profeſſion, as may cauſe us to faint and grow weary. 2. That when we do begin to faint and grow weary under ſufferings, it is our duty to look unto Jeſus, and conſider him as an example of the greateſt patience and conſtancy of mind: *look unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith, and conſider him who endured*, &c.

4 Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.

Here the apoſtle ſubjoins another reaſon why the Hebrews ſhould be reconciled to a ſuffering condition; becauſe what they had already ſuffered was but a flea-bite, compared with what Chriſt and the forementioned cloud of witneſſes ſuffered; he and they reſiſted unto blood, which you never yet did; *Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood*, &c. By *blood* is meant death and loſs of life; though they had reſiſted bravely, and ſuffered manfully, yet their lives were ſafe. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as are engaged in the chriſtian profeſſion have no ſecurity, but that they may be called forth to the utmoſt ſufferings, even to the ſealing of it with their blood. 2. That whatever befals us on this ſide blood, is to be looked upon as a fruit of divine tenderneſs and mercy towards us. 3. It is highly diſhonourable to faint in the cauſe of Chriſt and the goſpel, under leſſer ſufferings, when we know there are greater to be undergone by ourſelves and others, on the ſame account. 4. That it is a noble ſtruggle to reſiſt even unto blood, in oppoſing ſin, and ſtriving againſt it, both in ſtriving againſt the ſin which others commit, and in ſtriving againſt the ſin which others, by promiſes or threatenings, would tempt us to commit. O how honourable a warfare is it to be engaged againſt ſuch an enemy as ſin is!

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children —

As if he had ſaid, "By growing weary and faint in your minds, you will plainly ſhew, and evidently declare, that you have forgotten that exhortation which God gives, Prov. iii." The want of a diligent conſideration and due remembrance of God's promiſes, recorded in Scripture for our encouragement unto duty, and ſupport under difficulties, is very ſinful, and of dangerous conſequence unto our ſouls.

—My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

Note here, 1. A ſweet and endearing compellation, *my ſon*. *Learn* hence, That good men, when under the greateſt trials and heavieſt afflictions, are God's ſons; he calls them *ſons*, and he deals with them as with ſons. 2. The nature of the ſaints afflictions declared; not judgments, but chaſtiſements, and fatherly rebukes; the original word ſignifies ſuch a correction as a father gives his child for his inſtruction, and bringing him to a ſenſe of his duty. *Learn* hence, That all the afflictions which God lays upon his children are not the effects of his vindictive anger, but the fruits and effects of his paternal love. *Note*, 3. A cautionary direction given againſt two very dangerous extremes in the time of affliction, namely, deſpiſing correction and fainting under it. It is the duty, and ought to be the endeavour, of all the children of God, when under his fatherly hand, to take care that they neither deſpiſe his chaſtiſements, nor faint under them. When God has taken away one of our comforts, to ſay, "Let him take all if he will; if my children muſt die, let them die; if my eſtate muſt go, let it go." This is to deſpiſe. God cannot bear to ſee us bear his hand thus lightly. The other extreme is fainting: if, when goods are taken away, the heart is taken away, and when relations die, the ſpirit of a perſon dies with them, *Deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening*, &c.

6 For whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.

A reaſon is given in theſe words, why we ſhould not faint under divine chaſtiſements, becauſe God chaſteneth every one whom he loves. Here *note*, That love is antecedent unto chaſtening, and that chaſtening is conſequential unto love. 2. That divine love and fatherly chaſtenings are inſeparable; *whom he loveth*, that is, whomſoever he loveth, *he chaſteneth*, none goes free. 3. That no perſon then has any reaſon to complain of his portion of fatherly chaſtiſements, ſeeing it is the conſtant way and manner of God's dealing with his children. 4. That in and under all our chaſtiſements, the reſignation of ourſelves to the ſovereign pleaſure, and infinite wiſdom of God, is the only means to preſerve us from fainting and weakneſs.

7 If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons: for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons.

Obſerve, 1. He does not ſay, If ye be chaſtiſed, but, *if ye endure chaſtiſements, God dealeth with you as with ſons*; if ye endure them with faith and patience, with ſubmiſſion and perſeverance, ſo as not to faint under them. *Learn* hence, That a patient endurance of chaſtiſements is of great price in the ſight of God, as well as of ſingular uſe and advantage unto us. Afflictions and chaſtiſements are no pledges or aſſurances of our adoption, but when and where they are endured with patience. *Obſerve* farther from theſe words, *What ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not?* 1. That every one of God's ſons, more or leſs, ſtands in need of his fatherly chaſtiſements. 2. That God is very careful, as a wiſe and tender father, to correct and chaſten all his children. 3. That God, in correcting of his children, dealeth with them as with ſons; he is the world's ſovereign, but the believer's father; as he is the governor of the world, he treats men righteouſly in his judgments; as he is the Father of believers, he treats them graciouſly in afflictions. *Obſerve* again from theſe words, *If ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers*, (that is, all ſons are partakers) that all true children are under God's fatherly diſcipline; and all that are not under his diſcipline, are not his children, *then are ye baſtards and not ſons.* *Learn* hence, 1. That God's family, or viſible church in this world, has ſome baſtards in it, ſons that may have gifts and outward enjoyments, but are not heirs, and have no right to the heavenly inheritance. 2. That this is a great evidence of it, that they are not the genuine ſons of God, becauſe they go unchaſtiſed; not that they are altogether without affliction, for they are in trouble like other men, but they are not ſenſible of divine chaſtiſements in their afflictions, they do not receive them, bear them, and improve them as ſuch, but are impaired by their afflictions, rather than improved by them; they come cankered out of the furnace, and leprous out of Jordan; afflictions that ſhould refine them from their droſs, and purify them from their filth, boils their ſcum and impurity more into them. *Learn*, laſtly, That a joyous ſtate of freedom from affliction, is ſuch as we ought to watch over with great jealouſy and fear, leſt it ſhould be a leaving us out of the diſcipline of the family of God; not that we may deſire afflictions as ſuch, much leſs excruciate and torment ourſelves; but we may pray that we may not want any pledge of our adoption, leaving the ordering and diſpoſal of all things to the will of God.

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave *them* reverence: ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection unto the Father of ſpirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chaſtened *us* after their own pleaſure; but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.

Theſe words are a freſh argument to perſuade chriſtians to a patient enduring of divine chaſtiſements: the argument is drawn from the leſs to the greater, thus: "If our earthly parents chaſtened us only a few days, and after their own pleaſure, and yet we were ſubject to them, how much more ought we to be ſubject to God our heavenly Father, who chaſtens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs?" *Note* here, 1. Earthly parents do and may chaſtiſe the children of their fleſh, and they ought to reverence them for ſo doing, and pay a reverential ſubmiſſion to their paternal chaſtiſements. 2. That the motive of, and rule which parents too often follow in correcting of their children, is their own will and pleaſure; they have frequently a greater regard to their own paſſions, than to their children's advantage, and correct oftener in humour than in reaſon, erring ſometimes in the matter, ſometimes in the manner, ſometimes in the meaſure of their corrections. 3. That great is the difference between divine and parental chaſtiſements. (1.) In their author, one is the father of our fleſh, the other of our ſouls and ſpirits; they are the immediate product of his power, which is a fundamental reaſon for our patient ſubmiſſion to God, in and under all afflictions. (2.) In their end, the one for their own pleaſure, the other for his children's profit, to make them partakers of his holineſs, by renovation, ſanctification, and mortification: The carrying on of theſe things in us, is that which God deſigns in all his chaſtiſements. *Learn* hence, That we can have no greater pledge and aſſurance of divine love in afflictions than this, that God by them brings us nearer to himſelf, and makes us more like himſelf; if under divine chaſtiſements we find no increaſe of holineſs, they are utterly loſt, and we have nothing but the trouble and ſorrow of them. *Note* laſtly, The duty we owe to God, the Father of ſpirits, and that is ſubjection, together with the benefit and advantage of it; by being in *ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits*, we ſhall *live*. Now this ſubjection unto God, conſiſts in an acquieſcency in his right and ſovereignty to do what he will with his own, in an acknowledgment of his wiſdom and righteouſneſs in all his dealings with us, in a mighty ſenſe of his care and love, and in an entire reſignation of ourſelves to his holy will in all things. And behold the advantage and benefit of this ſubjection to God in our chaſtiſements, we ſhall *live* a ſpiritual life on earth, and an eternal life in heaven. The rebellious ſon under the law, that refuſed ſubjection to his earthly parent, was ſtoned to death: ſee Deut. xxi. 18. and died without mercy; but they who yield ſubjection to God in their chaſtiſements ſhall live and not die.

11 Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby.

Our apoſtle, in theſe words, ſeems to obviate an objection againſt a compliance with his exhortation to bear divine chaſtenings with ſilence and ſubmiſſion; and this is taken from the trouble and ſorrow wherewith chaſtiſement is accompanied; this he takes for granted is ſo, but takes of all the weight of the objection, by oppoſing the benefit of affliction thereunto. *Learn* hence, 1. That all afflictions for the preſent are grievous to the fleſh, and painful to human nature. 2. That though afflictions are grievous, yet their fruits are gracious to a believer; God in his ſovereign wiſdom doth ſo diſpoſe and manage his people's afflictions, that he makes them end in an happy fruit, even in the fruits of holineſs and ſanctification; and after affliction has done its work, and wrought kindly, God comes in with comfort and joy, and cheering cordials follow bitter phyſic. *Obſerve* farther, How the benefit of chaſtiſement is expreſſed in a threefold gradation. Affliction yieldeth *fruit:* it is no dead and dry thing, but this rod bloſſoms, and brings forth almonds. The fruit it yieldeth is *the fruit of righteouſneſs*, namely, patience, ſubmiſſion to the will of God, weanedneſs from the world, mortification of ſin, purity of heart, holineſs of life, farther readineſs and greater fitneſs for ſuffering; theſe are the ſweet fruits which God enables his to gather from the ſour tree of affliction. And this fruit of righteouſneſs, which affliction yields, is *peaceable fruit*, becauſe it is a pledge and evidence of our peace with God, and becauſe it brings peace into our minds. By theſe fruits of righteouſneſs our hearts are quieted, our minds compoſed, all tumults allayed, and we enabled to poſſeſs our ſouls in peace. O happy fruit of affliction! bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſtiſeſt. *Obſerve*, laſtly, Who they are that are bleſſed with theſe ſpecial benefits of affliction, only thoſe that are *exerciſed* thereby. The original word is an alluſion to thoſe in the public games, who ſtrip themſelves naked, and put forth all their ſtrength for maſtery. To be exerciſed by chaſtiſements, is to have all our ſpiritual ſtrength put forth, all our faith and patience tried to the utmoſt. *Learn* hence, That a chriſtian can never find any benefit in chaſtiſements, unleſs he be exerciſed by them, that is, unleſs his graces be ſtirred up by them to an holy and conſtant exerciſe, for hereby alone they yield the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. 13 And make ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Seeing ſo glorious fruits ſpring from ſanctified afflictions, be not dejected in mind, nor ſuffer fear to ſeize upon you, which weakens the hands, and enfeebles the knees, and cauſes them to ſmite one againſt another; but be reſolute for God, make ſtraight paths in the way of chriſtianity, not ſtepping once out of it to avoid perſecution, leſt they who are already *lame* and feeble, the weak and wavering chriſtians, be diſheartened and moved by your example to turn out of the way, but let them rather by your conſtancy be confirmed in their chriſtian courſe." *Learn* hence, 1. That in the running of our ſpiritual race, we muſt put forth our utmoſt ſtrength and activity; but where the courſe is long, and difficulties great, we are apt to grow weary and deſpond, our *hands hang down*, and our *knees* grow feeble. *Learn*, 2. That faintneſs and wearineſs in duty, and dejection and deſpondency as to ſucceſs, are great evils, and of fatal conſequence unto others as well as ourſelves, which therefore we muſt with all intention of mind watch againſt: *Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. Learn*, 3. That negligent and careleſs walking in time of proſperity, and puſillanimity and weakneſs in time of trial, is a great mean of turning aſide thoſe that are lame and weak out of the paths of viſible holineſs, *leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way*. 4. That the ſight and due conſideration of a chriſtian's courage and conſtancy, will tend very much to the healing of the lame and weak chriſtians whilſt they are in the way, whoſe recovery, when quite turned out, will be very difficult, if not impoſſible.

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

Our apoſtle having now finiſhed his exhortation unto patient perſeverence in the profeſſion of the goſpel under all ſufferings and afflictions, he next proceeds to a preſcription of practical duties incumbent upon chriſtians at all times in the daily courſe of their converſation, two of which are contained in this verſe, namely, to *follow peace and holineſs*; the former contains our duty to man, the latter our duty to God. Here *obſerve*, That both duties are enjoined in one and the ſame precept, and alſo with one and the ſame penalty: *Without which*, that is, without following of both which, without purſuing and endeavouring after both, *no man ſhall ſee the Lord*. Indeed, if a perſon follows holineſs, though he cannot obtain peace, he may ſee God, provided he purſues peace, and the fault none of his that he doth not find it; but if he does not purſue peace, though he pretends never ſo much to holineſs, he cannot be happy; for a chriſtian muſt be of a peaceable, as well as of a pious converſation: Peace and holineſs, peaceableneſs and purity, are here joined together, and he can neither be happy in this or the next world, that puts them aſunder. *Obſerve* farther, The manner how peace and holineſs muſt be followed, namely, with intenſe endeavours: The original word imports a vehement purſuit, a metaphor taken from huntſmen, who follow the chace, and purſue their game, though it flies before them: If peace may be had, though it be upon hard terms, we muſt endeavour to ſecure it, for it can never be bought too dear, if it be not purchaſed by ſin and baſeneſs. A frame and diſpoſition of ſeeking peace with all, is eminently ſuited unto the doctrine and grace of the goſpel. A froward ſpirit, ready for ſtrife and contention, eaſily provoked, and retaining long a ſenſe of injuries, is directly contrary to the ſpirit and temper of the goſpel. *Obſerve* likewiſe, How that holineſs towards God muſt be accompanied with peaceableneſs towards man. It is evangelical holineſs, which is here required; which muſt be an inward holineſs, an univerſal holineſs, a ſincere and real holineſs, an humble and ſelf-denying holineſs, a growing and progreſſive holineſs, a conſtant and perſevering holineſs, and ſuch an holineſs towards God, as is always accompanied with righteouſneſs towards men. Laſtly, The abſolute neceſſity of holineſs in order to eternal bleſſedneſs, *without it no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* The future ſight of God in glory depends peremptorily on our preſent holineſs, not as the meritorious cauſe of it, but as a neceſſary qualification and preparation for it, and as it is the indiſpenſible condition of our obtaining of it. The ſoul is by holineſs made meet and fit for the enjoyment of God in happineſs, Col. i. 12. Lord! how miſerably miſtaken will they be, who expect to ſee God to their comfort hereafter, who have lived and died in an unholy ſtate here?

15 Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God; leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled.

Our apoſtle having declared what our duty is with reſpect to ourſelves, in the foregoing verſes, here acquaints us how much it is our duty to take care of, and watch over others, to do what in us lies, that none may fall ſhort of the grace of God, that is, fall from the grace of God, and the profeſſion of chriſtianity; ſo that it is very plain, that apoſtacy is the ſin here pointed at, their falling back from chriſtianity to Judaiſm, for fear of perſecution: This is deſervedly called a *root of bitterneſs ſpringing up*, according to Deut. xxix. 18. *A root that beareth gall and wormwood.* *Learn* hence, 1. That looking diligently unto the good of others, and to prevent their falling into ſin, eſpecially into the ſin of apoſtaſy, is a duty we are obliged to by the light of nature, and the royal law of love. 2. That the root of apoſtaſy from God, and the profeſſion of chriſtianity, may abide inviſibly in and among eminent profeſſors of religion. It is here called *a root*, becauſe at the beginning it is hidden in the hearts of men, and cannot be diſcovered until it ſprings up; and it is called a *root of bitterneſs*, becauſe of its noxious and poiſonous qualities, its bitter effects and fruits. 3. That there is no man profeſſing the goſpel who comes ſhort of the grace of God, but it is by reaſon of himſelf and his own ſin: Unbelief, negligence and ſloth, are the true cauſes why ſuch perſons do fail of the grace of God.

16 Leſt there *be* any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſal of meat ſold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.

Our apoſtle proceeds in theſe verſes to warn them againſt ſuch ſins as would occaſion their apoſtacy and falling from the grace of God, and they are fornication and profaneneſs: *Leſt there be any fornicator,* &c. Where *note*, How the apoſtle puts fornication and profaneneſs together, becauſe they uſually go together; fornicators, ſuch eſpecially as are habitually ſo, do always grow profane, and profane perſons do ſet light by fornication, and they are ſins very ſeldom forſaken; few fornicators and profane perſons do ever come to repentance. By *fornication* underſtand all conjunction with women out of wedlock, be it with ſingle or married perſons. By *profane perſons*, underſtand ſuch as mock religion, who lightly regard its promiſes and threatenings, who deſpiſe or neglect its worſhip, who ſpeak irreverently of its concerns. 2. The inſtance which the apoſtle gives of a profane perſon, in the perſon of Eſau: *Leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau.* The ſcripture makes no mention of his fornication; but the way whereby he manifeſted his *profaneneſs* is declared, namely, that *for one morſal of meat he ſold his birthright.* Which birthright had many privileges belonging to it, as namely, a double portion of the paternal inheritance, a right of rule and government over the family, power and dominion, dignity and ſuperiority belonging to him, but eſpecially the honour of prieſthood, all which did belong to the firſt-born. Add to theſe the bleſſing which run from Abraham in the patriarchal line, and was communicated from father to ſon, containing an incloſure of all church-privileges, and preſervation of the promiſed ſeed. Now Eſau, by ſelling his birthright, did virtually renounce his right unto this bleſſing, wherein the promiſed ſeed and the church-ſtate were contained, and doing all this upon a ſlight conſideration, for a meſs of pottage, or a morſal of meat; and in a regardleſs manner, utterly unconcerned at what he had done. This was his profaneneſs; and accordingly the ſcripture ſays, *Thus Eſau deſpiſed his birthright.* *Learn* from hence, How much it concerns all perſons not to glory in their outward privileges: Eſau here was the firſt born of Iſaac, circumciſed according to the law of God, and partaker in all the worſhip of God, yet he proved an outcaſt from the covenant, and promiſes thereof. *Profane Eſau!* The 17th verſe acquaints us with the fruitleſſneſs of Eſau's ſorrow for parting with his birthright, and the uprofitableneſs of his endeavours in order to the recovery of it; when he would have inherited the bleſſing afterwards. This *afterwards*, ſay ſome, was not leſs than forty years, for he ſold his birthright when he was young, and when he deſigned the recovery of the bleſſing, Iſaac was old: Thus long did he live in ſin, without any ſenſe of it, or repentance for it; but falling into diſtreſs, it fills him with perplexity, and he ſeeks the rocovery of the bleſſing: And herein he was a type of all unbelievers, and obſtinate refuſers of the grace of Chriſt. *Learn* from his example, That there is a time coming when the profaneſt ſinners upon earth will be found upon their knees at God's door, ſeeking, and that earneſtly, with ſtrong cries and tears, for the obtaining of that bleſſing which they now ſinfully undervalue, and ſcornfully deſpiſe. *Afterwards Eſau would have inherited the bleſſing, and ſought it carefully with tears.* It follows, he was rejected; that is, by his father Iſaac; and found no place with him for repentance. Iſaac would not change his mind, nor recall the bleſſing, which as a prophet of God he had conferred on Jacob. *Learn* hence then, That ſuch ſinners as now neglect the ſeeking of the bleſſing in God's time, have great reaſon to fear that they ſhall not find it in their own time, though they ſeek it with tears ſalter than thoſe of Eſau. Profane contemners of the grace of God, ought to fear being excluded from the mercy of God; and as Iſaac did not, God will not repent or altar his righteous ſentence upon them. This ſad event had the profaneneſs of Eſau, and the like will they meet with who deſpiſe the grace of God.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, 19 And the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more: 20 For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a dart. 21 And ſo terrible was the ſight, *that* Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.

Our apoſtle's deſign being to bring over the Hebrews fully from Judaiſm to chriſtianity, he enters here upon a deſcription of both ſtates, ſhewing the excellency of the one above the other. He deſcribes firſt the legal ſtate of the church under the Old Teſtament, and the manner of their forefathers entering into covenant with God at Mount Sinai. And then he ſets forth the evangelical ſtate, whereunto they were called, and into which they were entered. In the verſes now before us, he ſets forth the dread and terror of the Moſaic diſpenſation, and the way and manner how their forefathers under the Old Teſtament entered into their church-ſtate; telling them, that they *came to a mount that might be touched*, that is, to Mount Sinai in the deſert of Arabia, a barren and fruitleſs place, full of buſhes and brambles, but without water or food; intimating, that ſuch as are under the law, in a ſtate of ſin, bring forth no acceptable fruit unto God; and as there was no water in the deſert, but that which the people lived upon was brought out of the rock, and that rock was Chriſt; it intimates, that from Chriſt alone were all their and our refreſhments: The law affords none, but thunders from its fiery mouth, wrath and a curſe. Farther, this mount is ſaid to be *what might be touched*; that is, a ſenſible, carnal thing, expoſed to feeling; intimating how low and inferior the giving of the law was in compariſon of the promulgation of the goſpel, which was from heaven. The law was given from a mount that might be touched by man or beaſt, though if either touched it they muſt die, to intimate the bondage and fear the people were in, who might not ſo much as touch the mountain where were the ſigns of God's preſence: But the goſpel was promulged from heaven, and the Son of God ſent down on purpoſe from thence to plant and propagate it here in the world. The ſecond thing which the apoſtle tells them they were come unto, was to *fire that burned*. This fire that burned on the mount was a token of God's preſence, and a diſtinct mean of filling the people with dread and fear. This fire repreſented the purity and holineſs of God's nature, his jealouſy and ſeverity againſt ſin. Thus the law repreſents to us the holineſs and ſeverity of God, with his anger and diſpleaſure againſt ſin and ſinners, but there leaves us conſumed, without relief by Jeſus Chriſt. Unto fire the apoſtle adds *blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt*; which blackneſs and darkneſs might be cauſed by thick clouds and ſmoke that covered the mount. This darkneſs was a type of that utter darkneſs of hell, which the tranſgreſſors of the law deſerved; and the tempeſt and terrible ſtorms were emblems and ſigns of God's fiery indignation and fearful vengeance on the wicked violators of his holy law, and might alſo point out and ſignify the effects of the law then delivered; namely, to bring the ſoul into darkneſs, that it can ſee no light either for its direction or conſolation; and it raiſes a tempeſt in the mind, of diſquieting, perplexing thought, without relieving or encouraging a ſinner to look out after any relief, until Chriſt in his goſpel ſays, *Behold me, behold me*. It follows, ye are come *to the ſound of a trumpet*: This was not a real trumpet but the ſound of a trumpet formed, in the air by the miniſtry of angels waxing louder and louder, to ſignify the nearer approach of God; alſo as this trumpet did ſummon the people to appear before the Lord as a legiſlative trumpet, in like manner there ſhall be a judicial trumpet, to ſummon the world to appear before Chriſt at the great day. After the ſound of the trumpet followed the voice *of words*; that is, the voice of God in a terrible manner promulging the law out of the midſt of the fire, in a language underſtood by that people. As the ſound of the trumpet, ſo the voice of God was loud, majeſtic, terrible, and like thunder. *Queſt.* But why was there ſuch vaſt ſolemnity uſed at the giving of the law? *Anſ.* To ſignify the majeſty and authority of him who was the ſupreme lawgiver, even the Lord of heaven and earth: and that the greater the outward ſolemnity was, the greater the inward impreſſion might be upon the minds of the people; and to ſignify, that if the promulgation of the law was ſo awful, that the tranſgreſſion of it would be fatal, and the tranſgreſſors' puniſhment very dreadful. *Obſerve* laſtly, The event of this ſight and hearing on the part of the people: Fear made them deſire that they might hear this voice no more: And God's deſign in all, was to cauſe them to long for, and look after that great prophet, Chriſt Jeſus, by whom God would ſpeak unto them more comfortably, and by whom they might have acceſs to the throne of grace more freely. *They intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken unto them any more*, becauſe it heightened their fear and dread to the utmoſt. *Learn* from hence, That the ſight and voice of God will be very dreadful to us; and there will be no appearance for us before him with confidence and peace, unleſs we have an anſwer in readineſs with us to all the words of the law, even all that the law requires of us; and ſuch as truſt to their own works and merits to anſwer for them, or to any thing whatſoever, beſides the blood and ſacrifice, the mediation and ſatisfaction, of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſurety of the new covenant, will find themſelves eternally deceived. The next evidence the apoſtle gives of the dreadful promulgation of the law, and conſequently of the miſerable ſtate of them that are under its power, appears in this, that the people *could not endure that which was commanded*; that is, the ſeverity of that command, that if a beaſt touched the mountain, *it ſhould be ſtoned or thruſt through with a dart.* All this was to ſhew the abſolute inacceſſibleneſs of God, in and by the law, and at what diſtance we ought to keep ourſelves from every thing that falls under the courſe of the law. It is added laſt of all, *That Moſes himſelf did exceedingly fear and quake.* From whence *obſerve*, How all perſons concerned were brought to an utter loſs and diſtreſs at the promulgation and giving of the law, from whence no relief is to be obtained, but by him alone who is *the end of the law for righteouſneſs unto all them that believe.*

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels: 23 To the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; 24 And to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

Our apoſtle having given an account, in the foregoing verſes, of the ſtate of the Jewiſh church under the law, comes now to declare that more excellent ſtate whereunto believers are called in and by the goſpel. The privileges here ſummed up, partly reſpecting the church militant, and partly the church triumphant. *Obſerve* then, The glorious privileges of the goſpel-ſtate, and what believers are ſaid to come to, whilſt militant here on earth. 1. They are ſaid to come unto *mount Sion, the city of the living God, the new Jeruſalem*; not to mount Sinai, which was full of terror and diſcomfort, but to mount Sion, full of all ſpiritual bleſſings. Where *note*, The goſpel-church is called the city of the living God. A city is a place of ſafety and a place of honour, a place of peace and reſt. The ſouls of ſinners can find no place of reſt or ſafety under the law, but we have all theſe things by the goſpel; reſt in Chriſt, peace with God, ſafety in divine protection, &c. And as a king dwells in his city, ſo God dwells in the church of believers; "That is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell," ſays God, "for I have a delight therein." Oh, what manner of perſons ought they to be who are the denizens of the city of God! Alas! the great number who pretend highly to the church, and its privileges, are citizens of this world only, and altogether unfit for this holy ſociety. 2. Believers are next ſaid to come to an *innumerable company of angels:* to come to theſe, is to be of their ſociety: and they and we are one in Chriſt; the angels above, and believers below, make up but one corporation or family; they are our fellow-citizens, and our fellow-ſubjects. True, they are above us, and at a mighty diſtance from us, yet upon occaſion very near us; and though we do not ſee them, yet they love us, have a ſpecial care of us, and are miniſtering to us, as heirs of the ſame ſalvation with themſelves. 3. They are come to the *general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born*; that is, they are of the number of God's regenerated and adopted ones, of thoſe that are born again, whoſe names are regiſtered in heaven. As the firſt-born under the law had a right to the inheritance, to a double part of the inheritance; ſo they who are intereſted really in the goſpel-church, have a right to all that God has provided, and Chriſt hath purchaſed, even to the whole inheritance of grace and glory. O glorious privilege, to be brought unto this bleſſed ſociety, this general aſſembly of the firſt-born! Eſpecially if we conſider what company, what ſociety, what aſſembly we belong unto without it, which is no other than that of devils, and the ſeed of the wicked ſerpent. 4. They are come *to God the judge of all*; that is, they have acceſs to God by Jeſus Chriſt; acceſs to his favour by juſtification, and acceſs into his preſence by prayer and ſupplication, yea, acceſs to him as a judge, without terror or conſternation. Bleſſed privilege! Believers have a comfortable acceſs to God as the judge of all; with all their cauſes and complaints, he will hear them, plead their cauſe, and judge for them, and make their oppreſſions unſafe to the greateſt of the ſons of men. 5. Believers are ſaid to come *to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.* Come to them, though not in the ſame place with them, until death; yet we and they have the ſame God and ſovereign, the ſame head and Saviour, the ſame expectation of a glorious reſurrection. *Note* here, 1. There are ſpirits of men in a ſeparate ſtate and condition, capable of communion with God and the church. 2. That all the ſpirits of juſt men departed, are made perfect; their race is conſummated, perfect deliverance from all ſin and ſorrow is completed, and a full reward enjoyed; their faith is heightened into ſight, and all their graces elevated into glory. 3. That yet are they ſpirits ſtill, and no more than ſpirits; and though perfected ſpirits, yet there is wanting the laſt finiſhing ſtroke from the hand of God to render the bodies as well as the ſpirits of juſt men for ever perfect in the morning of the reſurrection. 4. Believers are here ſaid to come to *Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant*; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Your fathers came to a mount of fire and ſmoke, of darkneſs, terror, and death, where there was no mediator to make their peace with God, no blood to cry for mercy, and to cleanſe them from ſin; but you, by forſaking Judaiſm, and coming over to chriſtianity fully, are come into that ſociety where Chriſt is mediator and prieſt; where the blood of Chriſt ſprinkled upon your ſouls cries aloud for mercy, and cleanſes from all ſin. *And to the blood of ſprinkling, which ſpeaketh better things than the blood of Abel.* Intimating, that Chriſt's blood ſolicits God with ſtronger cries for mercy, than did ever Abel's for revenge. *Queſt.* But what are thoſe *better things* which the blood of Chriſt ſpeaks above and beyond the blood of Abel? *Anſ.* 1. It ſpeaks better things from God unto us, namely, that his juſtice is ſatisfied, his wrath appeaſed, the condemning guilt of ſin expiated, and the majeſty of God fully reconciled to all believers. 2. It ſpeaks better things to God for us, namely, to be at peace with us, to reſt in his love towards us, to furniſh us with all grace here, and to fit us for glory hereafter. O bleſſed Jeſus! thy blood never cried as Abel's did, for vengeance on them by whom it was ſhed, but pleaded for pardon, and obtained pardon on the behalf of many of them, Happy they! who by faith are made partakers of this typical blood of ſprinkling, which ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel.

25 See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh. For if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more *ſhall not we eſcape*, if we turn away from him that *ſpeaketh* from heaven.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, given a ſummary account of the two ſtates of the law and the goſpel, with the incomparable excellency of the latter above the former, he gives them an exhortation and cautionary direction to take heed that they did not turn a deaf ear to ſo excellent a perſon as Chriſt was, preaching to them by his doctrine: *ſee that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh.* Here *note*, in general, That to refuſe any who ſpeak unto us in the name and authority of Chriſt, is to refuſe Chriſt himſelf. This may be applied to all the faithful preachers of the goſpel, however they may be deſpiſed in and by the world. But it is here the perſon of Chriſt that is particularly intended. To refuſe him here, is either to reject his doctrine, and not to receive it, or having received it, to renounce it; ſo that this refuſal includes both unbelief and apoſtaſy, either of which are fatal and dangerous to the ſons of men. *Obſerve* next, The reaſon drawn from the heinouſneſs of the ſin, and the grievouſneſs of the puniſhment; *if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth*; that is, Moſes, who delivered his meſſage here below, *much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven*; that is, Jeſus Chriſt his Son, ſent down from heaven, perſonally to deliver his holy doctrine; and now ſpeaking to us from heaven by his holy Spirit, in his miniſters and apoſtles. *Note* here, 1. That Chriſt did in former times ſpeak unto his church by Moſes and the prophets. 2. That in theſe latter times he vochſafed to ſpeak unto his church perſonally himſelf. 3. That after he perſonally diſappeared and left the world, he vouchſafed ſtill to ſpeak unto his church by his Spirit in the miniſtry of the word. 4. That though to refuſe Chriſt, when ſpeaking here on earth, was a grievous ſin, and deſerved a fearful puniſhment; yet to refuſe him now ſpeaking from heaven, is a more grievous ſin, and deſerves a greater puniſhment, conſidering who ſpeaks, what he ſpeaks, and from whence he ſpeaks; the goſpel was a myſtery brought to us from the boſom of the Father, the cleareſt revelation of God's will, and the fulleſt manifeſtation of his love, and yet, few regard it, moſt reject it, to their unutterable and inevitable condemnation.

26 Whoſe voice then ſhook the earth; but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven: 27 And this *word*, yet once more ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "The voice of God, at the promulging of the law on mount Sinai, ſhook the earth: but he promiſed after this to ſhake all nations, and that Chriſt, the expected Meſſias, the deſire of all nations, ſhould come, which is now fulfilled." *Queſt.* But what means our apoſtle by God's ſhaking not the earth only, but alſo heaven? *Anſw.* He means thereby all the Moſaical worſhip, all the Judaical ſtate, theſe were ſhaken at the coming of Chriſt, in order to the introduction of the immoveable goſpel-ſtate, which was perpetually to remain. *Learn* hence, That the coming of the Meſſias was to be the laſt diſpenſation of God for the ſalvation of mankind, and conſequently was to be perpetual and unchangeable. The apoſtle argues from the words, *once more*, that the former diſpenſation ſhould be removed, to make way for that which ſhould perpetually remain. Several things are here aſſerted by our apoſtle, 1. That there were ſome things which were intended by God to be ſhaken, namely, the Levitical prieſthood, and all the Jewiſh ſacrifices and ſervices; theſe things were to be ſhaken, moved, yea, altogether removed out of the way. 2. That there were things that could not be ſhaken or removed, but remain; theſe were the goſpel-ſtate, the chriſtian religion, which ſhall continue until time ſhall be no more. 3. That the former things were removed, that the latter might be introduced and eſtabliſhed; the law and the goſpel were inconſiſtent; the legal and evangelical adminiſtration could not ſtand in force together, therefore there was a neceſſity for the nulling of the one, in order to the eſtabliſhing of the other. 4. That the removal of the law, to bring the more perfect adminiſtration of the goſpel, doth prove the ſtability and immutability of the goſpel, that it ſtands faſt for ever; there ſhall be no more ſhaking, no farther alteration in matters of religion to the end of the world. For thus it follows,

28 Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a conſuming fire.

Obſerve here, 1. That the apoſtle calls the diſpenſation of the goſpel, *a kingdom that cannot be ſhaken*, in oppoſition to the law, which was an imperfect and alterable diſpenſation; the goſpel-revelation is full and final, there is no need of any farther revelation after this, nor of any change of that religion which was brought from heaven by the Son of God, in regard of the perfection of it, and its admirable fitneſs to reform the world, and recover mankind out of their loſt eſtate and lapſed condition, and to bring them to eternal happineſs; and this by the purity of its doctrine, and the power of its arguments, to work upon the minds of men by the clear diſcovery of the mighty rewards and puniſhments of another world; we have received now *a kingdom that cannot be ſhaken*. 2. The inference which the apoſtle draws from the perfection and perpetuity of this revelation which God has laſt of all made to the world by his Son, *let us have grace to ſerve God acceptably*; that is, let us live as becometh thoſe to whom God hath made ſo clear and perfect a revelation of his mind and will; we have all the advantages of divine revelation which the world ever had, and the laſt and moſt perfect that the world ever ſhall have; we have not only Moſes, but Jeſus; not only the moral law, but the glorious goſpel, which the Son of God came down on purpoſe from heaven to declare to the world. *Obſerve*, 3. The manner how God muſt be ſerved, *with reverence and godly fear*. Reverence in divine ſervice looks at God's glorious excellency and majeſty, and at our own unworthineſs, together with that infinite diſtance between him and us; and *godly fear* is a religious awe upon the ſoul in holy duties, from the conſideration of the great danger of ſinful miſcarriages in his worſhip. 4. The reaſon making the foregoing duty neceſſary, *For our God is a conſuming fire. Our God*, intimates a covenant relation. *Note* hence, That the believer's *God is a conſuming fire*, but not to believers: or if ſo, not to conſume their graces, but their corruptions only, or at moſt their corruptible comforts. 2. That though God takes us near to himſelf, and into covenant with himſelf, yet he expects that we conſider who he is, and what he is, even a *conſuming fire*, and a *jealous God*.

CHAP. XIII.

Our apoſtle being now come to the concluſion of this moſt excellent epiſtle, cloſes it with an exhortation to ſeveral evangelical and moral duties, thereby pointing out to the miniſters of the goſpel, the right order, and beſt method of preaching, namely, firſt to unfold the myſteries of the goſpel, with the grace of God therein, and then to improve it to practical holineſs in the duties of obedience.

LET brotherly love continue.

Love being the fountain and foundation of all moral duties, our apoſtle begins with it, and places it at the head of all the reſt, as comprehending our whole duty towards our neighbour. *Note* here, The duty commanded is *love*; the ſpecial duty recommended is *brotherly love*, or that brotherly affliction which every true chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt for grace's ſake; and the manner of the injunction or command is, that this brotherly affection do *continue* and conſtantly abide, not in the pretence and appearance of it only, but in the truth and reality of it, for there are innumerable occaſions which will be ready to impair and weaken it, if it be not well grounded; alas! unſuitableneſs of natural tempers, differences in judgment, and matters of opinion, inconſiſtent worldly intereſt, readineſs to provocation, or to be provoked, pride on the one hand, or envy on the other, will ſadly occaſion the temporary decay, yea, at laſt the total loſs of this noble grace, if it be not well grounded, and deeply rooted. *Learn* hence, That *brotherly love* is very apt to impair and decay, if we endeavour not continually its preſervation and revival. Lord, how marvellous is it, that ſo many amongſt us can perſuade themſelves that they are chriſtians, and yet be not only ſtrangers, but enemies to this grace and duty of love! How is the power and glory of chriſtianity weakened through want of it! and verily, until this holy love be again revived amongſt us, the intereſt of chriſtianity will run very low, yea, the concerns of religion will more and more run to ruin.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers: for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares.

The ſecond duty here exhorted to is hoſpitality, eſpecially towards ſtrangers, which conſiſted in receiving them into their houſes, and furniſhing them with all needful accommodations. In thoſe eaſtern countries inns were not ſo ready as with us, and chriſtians were generally poor, not able to bear their own charges in their travelling from place to place. Strangers, even amongſt heathens, were accounted ſacred, and under the peculiar protection of God. And a puniſhment was appointed for thoſe that were inhoſpitable towards them. Hoſpitality is a preſcribed duty, but this part of it, to wit, the entertaining of ſtrangers, which was ſo great a virtue in ancient times, is now driven out of the world by the wickedneſs of ſome, and the covetouſneſs of others; few ſtrangers are worthy to receive entertainment, and as few have hearts to give it. *Obſerve* farther, The manner of preſcribing this duty, *Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers*; no doubt a poſitive command is included in the prohibition, *forget not*; that is, remember to do it, be always in a readineſs for the diſcharge of this duty; our hearts ought to be always in a gracious diſpoſition towards ſuch duties as are attended with difficulty or charge; the liberal mind deviſeth liberal things. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The reaſon enforcing the duty, hereby *ſome have entertained angels unawares*: ſo did Abraham and Lot entertain three angels, in the appearance of men, not knowing who or what they were. By receiving ſtrangers out of faith in Chriſt, and love to God, we may receive precious ſaints, and (which is more) ſome bleſſed angel ſent to keep them, and (which is moſt of all) Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who at preſent reſents, and will hereafter acknowledge and reward, ſuch kindneſſes ſhewn to his members as done to himſelf, Matth. xxv.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body.

Hoſpitality towards ſtrangers was expreſſed in the foregoing verſe; here, compaſſion towards ſufferers, ſuch as are captives, priſoners in bonds, either upon a religious or civil account. Here *note*, 1. That bodily bondage is a bitter bondage; captivity is a moſt grievous calamity. 2. That we are very prone to forget others' captivity, when we ourſelves are in proſperity. 3. That ſuch as are in bonds for Chriſt's ſake eſpecially, and his holy goſpel, ought particularly to be remembered by us, they are and ought to be the peculiar objects of our compaſſion; although, conſidering the cauſe in which they ſuffer, it is better, and more honourable, to be in bonds for Chriſt, than to be at liberty with a raging perſecuting world; for bonds and impriſonment for the truth, were conſecrated to God, and made honourable by the bonds and impriſonment of Chriſt, himſelf, and commended to the church in all ages, by the bonds and impriſonment of the apoſtles, and the primitive witneſſes to chriſtianity. *Note* farther, How we are to be mindful of them, and in what manner, by viſiting of them, adminiſtering to them, ſympathizing with them, praying for them, and all this *as bound with them*, which implies an act of union, as members of the ſame myſtical body, and ſuffering in and for the ſame common cauſe; *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them*; it follows, *and thoſe that ſuffer adverſity, as being in the body.* This implies, that there are many kinds of afflictions beſides bonds; that we are prone to forget thoſe who ſuffer lighter and leſſer afflictions; if they be not in bonds, we are ready to forget them, though they ſuffer much adverſity; but the command is more general, to remember all that are in any kind of adverſity, whether they ſuffer in body, name, or eſtate, by ſickneſs, pain, loſſes, reproaches, or any kind of calamity; the profeſſors of religion are exempted from no ſorts of adverſity, and under every kind of it we muſt remember them, and ſympathiſe with them, becauſe we ourſelves are *in the body with them*; that is, ſay ſome, we are members of the ſame myſtical body with them, and therefore when one member ſuffers, all the members are to ſuffer with it. *Yourſelves are in the body*; that is, ſay others, in the ſame ſtate of natural life, ſubject and obnoxious to the ſame ſufferings, and within the reach of the ſame adverſities. *Learn* hence, That a ſenſe of our own being continually obnoxious unto ſufferings during this life, ought to incline our minds to a diligent conſideration of others in their ſufferings, ſo as to diſcharge all duties of love and helpfulneſs towards them, as an evidence of our intereſt in the ſame myſtical body with them, and as a ground of juſt expectation of the like relief and compaſſion from them.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:—

Our apoſtle having, in the former verſes, directed chriſtians to their duty one towards another, in this, and the following verſes, he directs them to perform their duty towards themſelves; and becauſe the two radical comprehenſive luſts of corrupt ednature are uncleanneſs and covetouſneſs, he therefore commends unto their care and practice thoſe two great duties of chaſtity and contentation, the former in this, the latter in the next verſe. Now here *obſerve*, That to prevent the former ſin, the ravings of unbridled luſt, our apoſtle preſcribes the remedy which God appoints, *marriage*; that is, the conjunction of two individual perſons that have freedom in choice and conſent, and have power over themſelves, not being within the degrees of affinity or conſanguinity prohibited, between whom there reſults ſuch an indiſſoluble union, that thereby they become one fleſh; ſuch marriage he affirms to be honourable, and to be ſo eſteemed in regard of its author, God himſelf, Gen. ii. 18. in regard of the place, paradiſe; in regard of the time, in man's innocency; in regard of the end and uſefulneſs of it, the continuation of the race of mankind? thus it is honourable, and ought to be had in honour. The apoſtle adds, that it is thus *honourable in all*; that is, among all orders, ranks, and degrees of men, that are called thereunto; the remedy is equally provided by God for all; and therefore for the church of Rome to deny it to their clergy, is to uſurp authority over the conſciences of men, and to judge themſelves too pure for an inſtitution of their maker, which our firſt parents in innocency did not think themſelves too pure for. *Learn* hence, 1. That divine inſtitution is ſufficient to render any ſtate or condition of life honourable, and conſequently the ſtate of marriage. 2. That which is honourable by divine inſtitution, may be rendered abominable by the miſcarriages of men. 3. That it is an horrid contempt of the authority of God, and a bold uſurpation over the conſciences of men, to forbid the ſtate of marriage unto any, which God has made honourable among them all. Next to the ſtate of marriage, the apoſtle adds the duty of that ſtate, *the bed undefiled*, in oppoſition to the defiled bed of whoremongers and adulterers, and the preſervation of marriage-duties within their due bounds.

—But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Having exhorted to conjugal purity and chaſtity in the former part of the verſe, he adds a very cogent reaſon and forcible motive to it in the latter words, becauſe *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*; that is, all perſons who in a ſingle ſtate of life do know one another carnally, without a marriage-vow or covenant between them; if both parties be ſingle, their filthineſs is called fornication; if either of them be married, adultery; neither of them ſhall eſcape the judgment of God; that is, temporal puniſhment in this life, and eternal damnation in the next. *Learn* hence, That whatever light thoughts men have of the ſin of uncleanneſs, yet we are aſſured it doth in its own nature deſerve eternal condemnation, and ſuch as live and die impenitently in it, ſhall certainly periſh for it; and if ſo, then all occaſions of, and all temptations leading to thoſe ſins, are to be avoided, as we love our ſouls; for of all ſinners, thoſe who have habitually given up themſelves to the luſts of the fleſh, are moſt rarely and difficultly brought to repentance.

5 *Let your* converſation *be* without covetouſneſs; *and* be content with ſuch things as ye have. For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.
6 So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.

Obſerve here, A dehortation, or negative precept, *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs.* By *converſation*, we are firſt to underſtand the diſpoſition of the mind, then the actions of the life, both ought to be free from all inordinate love to, and endeavours after, more of this world than God is pleaſed to give unto us. By covetouſneſs, we are not to underſtand, as if a provident and prudential care for the things of this life were forbidden, or as if all endeavours to maintain our right to what God has given us were unlawful; but by *covetouſneſs* is meant an eager and unſatiable deſire after, accompanied with reſtleſs and unwearied endeavours for the things of this life, proceeding from an undue valuation of them, and an inordinate love unto them. *Learn* hence, That as all ſin in general, ſo covetouſneſs in particular, is inconſiſtent with a chriſtian converſation, according to the goſpel. No ſin at this day doth more ſtain the glory of chriſtianity than this doth. Alas! the profligate lives of debauched perſons, their blaſphemies, adulteries, drunkenneſs, and ſuch like, do not half the miſchief to religion which this ſin doth, becauſe the perſons guilty of it pretend to religion, which the other concern not themſelves with. 2. A poſitive injunction, *Be content with thoſe things that you have.* Contentment is a gracious diſpoſition of mind, whereby the chriſtian reſts ſatisfied with that portion of the good things of this life which the wiſdom of God aſſigns him, without complaining of the *little* which God gives to him, or envying the *much* which God beſtows on others. Yet know, that contentment with what we have, is not inconſiſtent with, nor excluſive of an induſtrious diligence, and an honeſt and moderate care to increaſe what we have, for ourſelves and families. Honeſt induſtry is the command of God, and he has given us ſix days in ſeven for the exerciſe of it; but it is utterly excluſive of all covetous deſires, of all anxious cares, of all priding ourſelves in, and boaſting of, what we have received, contemning and deſpiſing others, a vanity which men of weak minds are only guilty of. 3. The argument to enforce the duty; *For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* The words are a promiſe, a promiſe of God, a promiſe of his preſence and providence to aſſure us of both, and that he will never leave us. He uſes five negatives, *I will not leave thee,* I will not, I will not, I will not forſake thee. Where *note,* That the vehemency of the expreſſion, by the multiplication of the negative particles, is both an effect of divine condeſcenſion, and gives the utmoſt ſecurity to the faith of believers, that God will be preſent with them, and comfortably provide for them; ſo that the words are a ſtrong reaſon to dehort from covetouſneſs, and to exhort to contentedneſs; for having God preſent with us, to take care of, and provide for us, we have all things in him, and a promiſe from him, that we ſhall not want any thing that is good and needful for us; only we muſt allow God this liberty, and give him leave to judge what is needful, and when it is needful. 4. That though the foregoing promiſe is made to Joſhua, yet the apoſtle applies it to all believers, and draws comfort from it; *We may boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper.* Here *note,* That whatſoever promiſe is made in particular to any one believer, if there be not ſome ſpecial reaſon which confines and ties it to his perſon, every believer may apply it to himſelf. This promiſe which God made particularly to Joſhua for his ſupport, under that great difficulty in conquering the land of Canaan, the apoſtle here applies to the caſe and ſtate of particular believers: *We may therefore boldly ſay, &c.* Believers having the ſame grounds that he had, may uſe the ſame confidence that he did, though our circumſtances and his are not the ſame. All the promiſes of God's gracious preſence made to the prophets and apoſtles of old, all believers may apply to themſelves in their ſuffering ſtate.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.

The next duty recommended to them, is reſpect to the ſpiritual guides, and eccleſiaſtical governors, whom God by death, or perſecution at any time, removes from them, and that is, to preſerve their memory freſh amongſt them as a precious treaſure; *Remember them that have the rule over you.* Secondly, To propound their holy converſation to their daily view, in a chriſtian imitation of thoſe evangelical graces, and moral virtues, which were ſo orient and exemplary in their rulers' lives. *Learn* hence, 1. That it ought to be the care of the church's guides to ſet before their people, and leave behind them, ſuch an example of faith and holineſs, as that it may be the duty of the church to remember them, and follow their example. 2. That it is the ſtanding duty of that people whom God hath honoured with the enjoyment of a ſpiritual guide and ruler, perſeveringly to follow their faith in the ſoundneſs of it, and in the ſtedfaſtneſs of faith, and to imitate their converſation, by exemplifying thoſe evangelical graces, and chriſtian virtues, which did ſo oriently ſhine forth in the lives of their miniſters.

8 Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Theſe words may be underſtood three ways; with reſpect to the perſon of Chriſt, to the office of Chriſt, and to the doctrine of Chriſt. 1. With reſpect to the perſon of Chriſt, he is eternal and immutable in every ſtate of the church, and in every condition of believers he is the ſame, and always will be the ſame in his divine perſon; he is, ever was, and ever will be, all in all unto his church. 2. He is *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever*; not only in reſpect of his perſon, but in regard of his office. The virtue of the legal ſacrifice expired with the offering, but the precious oblation of Chriſt hath an everlaſting efficacy to obtain full pardon for believers: His blood is as powerful to propitiate God, as if it were this day ſhed upon the croſs. 3. He is *the ſame, &c.* in regard of his doctrine, that remains unchangeable and irrevocable. The goſpel is the laſt revelation of the mind of God, made known by Jeſus Chriſt, that ever will be laid before the world: Such therefore as reject him, and his doctrine, reject the laſt remedy, the only remedy, and muſt needs periſh, without any poſſibility of recovery. *Learn* from the whole, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was, from the beginning of the world the immutable object of his church's faith, and the conſideration of Jeſus Chriſt in his eternity, immutability, and indeficiency in his power, as he is always the ſame, is the great encouragement of believers in the profeſſion of their faith, and a mighty ſupport under all the difficulties they meet with upon the account thereof.

9 Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines.

There is an inference in theſe words, from what was aſſerted in the former, concerning the immutability of Chriſt, and his doctrine; namely, thus; Seeing that the doctrine of Chriſt taught by the apoſtles is as Chriſt himſelf, *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever,* therefore the apoſtle dehorts them from being carried *about with divers and ſtrange doctrines*; that is, in ſhort, the doctrines of thoſe that mingled judaiſm and chriſtianity together, by cleaving to the legal obſervation. *Note* here, The nature of the falſe doctrines, and what efficacy they have upon the minds of men; in themſelves they are light and vain like the wind, toſſing men up and down as the wind and the waves do the ſhip that wants ballaſt, turning them out of their courſe, and endangering their deſtruction; therefore ſays the apoſtle, Take heed that ye *be not carried about*, &c.

— For *it is* a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

By *meats*, here, underſtand diſputes and controverſies about the difference of meats: By *grace*, underſtand the doctrine of the goſpel, and the ſanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, which fixes and eſtabliſhes the heart, and keeps the chriſtian ſteady and ſtedfaſt. *Learn* hence, That it is far better to have the heart filled with divine grace, than the head with diſputes and controverſies in religion: *It is good that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, and not with meats.* The reaſon is added, *They have not profited them that are occupied therein:* that is, to obſerve the doctrine concerning a religious diſtinction of meats, ſince the goſpel has been entertained, is altogether unprofitable and unavailable: yea, meats of themſelves profited not thoſe who obſerved them, even whilſt the inſtitutions concerning them were in force. *Learn* hence, That thoſe who decline from the grace of God, as the only mean to eſtabliſh their hearts in peace with him, do labour in that whereby they ſhall receive no advantage.

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which ſerve the tabernacle.

Theſe words are brought in as a farther reaſon why the chriſtian Hebrews ſhould not return to Judaiſm, or any other doctrine different from the goſpel of Chriſt; *We* chriſtians, ſays the apoſtle, *have an altar*; that is, a ſacrifice, a prieſt offered upon, and ſanctified by, the altar of the croſs. *Note* here, That the church of Chriſt under the New Teſtament has its altar, as well as the Old Teſtament diſpenſation had theirs. The altar which we have is Chriſt, alone, and his ſacrifice; for he was both prieſt, altar, and ſacrifice, all himſelf, and ſtill continueth ſo to be. 2. That this altar is every way ſufficient in itſelf for the ends of an altar; and therefore the introduction of any other ſacrifice requiring a material altar, is derogatory to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and excluſive of him from being an altar. *Obſerve* next, The perſons excluded from having any right unto, or expectation of benefit by, this altar, namely, ſuch as *ſerve the tabernacle*; that is, ſuch as cleave ſtill to the worſhip appointed for the Jewiſh tabernacle, and adhere to the Moſaical obſervations. They have no right to this altar by any divine inſtitution, no right by virtue of their office, and relation to the tabernacle. *Learn* hence, That all privileges of what nature ſoever, without a participation of Chriſt, as the altar and ſacrifice of his church, are of no advantage to them that enjoy them.

11 For the bodies of thoſe beaſts, whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary by the high prieſt for ſins, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, “As the beaſts ſlain for atonement, whoſe blood was brought into the ſanctuary, were not to be eaten by the prieſt, but burnt without the bounds of the camp of Iſrael; in like manner, Chriſt, when he was to be offered up, to ſanctify the people with his own blood, went without the gates of Jeruſalem to ſuffer; ſignifying, that as they rejected him as unworthy to live with them, ſo he departed from them, and their political and legal ſtate. Accordingly, *Let us go forth unto him without the camp*; that is, let us go unto him from the Jewiſh ſtate and ceremonial law, bearing his reproach of the croſs, which muſt be expected by us. *Obſerve* here, That Jeſus Chriſt in his ſuffering did offer himſelf unto God: That the end of his offering was to ſanctify the people: This he deſigned, and this he accompliſhed by his *own* blood, ſo called emphatically, partly in oppoſition to the ſacrifice of the high prieſt, which was the blood of bulls, and not their *own*; and partly to teſtify what our ſanctification coſt Chriſt, even his *own* blood. *Obſerve* farther, The circumſtance of place where our Lord ſuffered, it was *without the gate* of the city of Jeruſalem; intimating, that he had now finally left the city and church of the Jews, and accordingly he denounced their deſtruction as he went out of the gate, Luke xxiii. 28, 29, 30. And by thus turning his back upon the temple, he plainly ſhewed, that he had now put an end to all ſacrificing in the temple, as unto divine acceptation; and by going out of the gate, he declared that his ſacrifice, and the benefits of it, were not included in the church of the Jews, but equally extended unto the whole world; and by going out of the city as a malefactor, and dying an accurſed death, he plainly declared that he died a ſin-offering; that his death was a puniſhment for ſin. *Obſerve* laſtly, Our duty to go forth to him without the camp; this implies a relinquiſhing of all the privileges of the temple and city. 1. A turning our backs eternally upon all Jewiſh obſervations. 2. An acceptance of the merit of his ſacrifice. 3. The owning of Chriſt under all that reproach and contempt that was caſt upon him in his ſuffering without the gate, and not being aſhamed of his croſs. 4. In our conformity to him in ſelf-denial and ſuffering; all which are comprized in this apoſtolical exhortation, *Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* The ſum is this, “That we muſt leave all to go forth to a crucified Saviour; and if we reſolve ſo to do, we muſt expect and prepare to meet with all ſorts of reproaches.”

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come.

Theſe words may de conſidered either relatively or abſolutely: Conſider them with relation to their context, and their ſenſe is this; “How chearfully ought believers, according to the advice in the foregoing verſe, *to go forth to Chriſt without the camp, bearing his reproach*, when they conſider their preſent ſtate and condition, that they have no city here below, that was now the ſeat of divine worſhip, whereunto it was confined, as the Jews did at Jeruſalem, before the aboliſhment of their ceremonial worſhip; *but* *they ſeek one to come*, even the heavenly Jeruſalem, where they ſhall worſhip God in his temple day and night?" Conſider the words abſolutely in themſelves, and two things ſeem to be intended and deſigned by them. 1. That our condition in this world is very uncertain and unſettled, *we have no continuing city here*. 2. It implies a tendency to a future ſettling, and the hopes and expectations we have of a happier condition, into which we ſhall enter when we go out of this world. *Learn* hence, 1. That the world never did, nor ever will, give a ſtate of ſatisfactory reſt unto believers; it will not afford them a city of reſt, hardly a place of refuge; they muſt therefore ariſe and depart, for this is not their reſt. 2. That as God has prepared a city of reſt for believers, ſo it is their duty to ſeek and ſecure it, and continually endeavour the attainment of it, in the way of his own appointment.

15 By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: For with ſuch ſacrifices God is well-pleaſed.

Our apoſtle having, at the tenth verſe, declared, that we chriſtians have an altar, to wit, Jeſus Chriſt; here we are directed to offer a ſacrifice, without which an altar is of no uſe: *By him let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually*. Where *note*, 1. Chriſtians are to offer a ſacrifice to God, and to none but God; no creature, angel or ſaint, has any part in it: Praiſe them we may, but offer a ſacrifice of prayer or praiſe to them we may not. 2. That the chriſtian's ſacrifice, which he preſents to God, and none but him, is not propitiatory but gratulatory, a ſacrifice of praiſe. We pretend to no expiation of ſin, we owe that to a better ſacrifice. What we offer is the fruit of our lips, not the fruit of our fields, or of our flocks, but of ſuch lips as confeſs to his name. 3. The time when, and the perſon by whom this ſacrifice of praiſe is to be offered to God, and that is *continually*, conſtantly, morning and evening; not putting Almighty God off with leſs under the goſpel, than the Jews offered to him under the law, which was the morning and evening ſacrifice: And all this by Chriſt; *By him let us offer*, by him who is our peace may we find acceſs. It is his merit and mediation that crowns our ſacrifices and obtains acceptance for it. 4. Another ſacrifice eſpecially recommended to our care, as exceeding acceptable and well pleaſing unto God, and that is the ſacrifice of almſgiving, beneficence and bounty, doing all the good we can, and communicating to the relief of ſuch as want; *but to do good*, &c. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Take heed you do not put God off with the fruit of your lips, the prayers and praiſes which coſt you little, but now he calls for the labour of your hands, and for a part to be given to him in his poor members, of what he has given to you; therefore be ſure you forget not to do good and communicate, *for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*, with none better pleaſed than this, pleaſed with none without this:" Intimating, 1. That it is dangerous to the ſouls of men, when attendance unto one duty is abuſed, to countenance the neglect of others; when men give God daily a ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe, but with-hold from him in his members the ſacrifice of almſgiving; they give him the fruit of their lips, which coſt them nothing; but *to do good and communicate*, which will coſt them ſomething, this they forget. 2. That ſuch works and duties as are peculiarly uſeful to men, are peculiarly acceptable unto God: *With ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves. For they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account: That they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that *is* unprofitable for you.

Two things are here obſervable: 1. The miniſter's duty towards his people. 2. The people's duty towards their miniſters. In the former, *note*, 1. The duty required, *to rule*, to *watch*: God makes the biſhops and paſtors of his church here guiding rulers in church-affairs; they rule not with rigour, but with lenity and benignity; they watch over them, that they may guide and lead them with rational guidance and conduct. 2. The ſubject of this ruling power and authority, it is not over their eſtates, but their perſons, particularly and principally their ſouls. *They watch for your ſouls*; as Jacob watched over Laban's, ſo do the miniſters watch over Chriſt's flock, by day and night. 3. The great engagement and obligation that lies upon them thus *to rule*, and thus *to watch*; *they muſt give an account*, that is, of their work and office, of their duty and diſcharge; there is a great ſhepherd, a chief ſhepherd, as Chriſt is called the prince of ſhepherds, to whom all inferior ſhepherds muſt give an account of their office, of their work, and of the flock committed to their charge. 4. The different accounts that will be given by the miniſters of God at the great day, ſome with joy, others with grief. It is matter of the greateſt joy to us when we find ſouls thriving under our miniſtry, and bleſſing God for the benefit they find by it; but on the other hand, the ſadneſs of our hearts under the barrenneſs and unprofitableneſs of many under our miniſterial labours, is not eaſily to be expreſſed. O God; with what ſighing, with what groaning, with what inward heavineſs and mourning, our accounts unto Chriſt are now given and accompanied, thou only knoweſt, and wilt make manifeſt at the great day. *Obſerve*, 2. The people's duty declared with reference to their ſpiritual guides and rulers, and that is, to *obey them*, and ſubmit themſelves; *Obey them that rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves*: obey their doctrine, and ſubmit to their diſcipline, but neither with a blind and implicit obedience: Obey their doctrine, *teaching you all things whatſoever Chriſt has commanded them*; and ſubmit to their rule whilſt it is exerciſed in the name of Chriſt, and according to his inſtitution. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as ſupreme Head of his church, has ordered and ordained that there ſhall be officers of his church, to guide and teach, to rule and watch over it to the end of the world. 2. That the due obedience of the church in all its members unto the rulers of it, in the diſcharge of their office and duty, is the beſt mean of its edification, and an happy cauſe of order and peace in the whole body: *Obey them*, &c.

18 Pray for us. For we truſt we have a good

conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly. 19 But I beſeech you the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner.

In theſe words, *obſerve*, 1. A requeſt made by the apoſtle to theſe Hebrews for prayer; *pray for us:* The prayers of the meaneſt ſaints may be uſeful to the greateſt apoſtles, both with reſpect to their perſons, and the diſcharge of their office. 2. The ground which gave him confidence to aſk their prayers, and aſſurance that he ſhould receive them; *we truſt we have a good conſcience in all things.* Behold here with what modeſty and humility the apoſtle ſpeaks of himſelf, even in things of which he had the higheſt and fulleſt aſſurance; *we truſt we have a good conſcience in all things. Queſt.* What is a good conſcience? *Anſw.* A good conſcience is a conſcience enlightened by the word of God, a conſcience awakened by the Spirit of God, a conſcience purified and pacified by the blood of Chriſt, a conſcience univerſally tender of all God's commands. *Obſerve* 3. The teſtimony given of his having a good conſcience, *willing in all things to live honeſtly*; a reſolution and will, accompanied with conſtant endeavours to live honeſtly, is a fruit and evidence of a good conſcience; the word *willing* denotes readineſs, reſolution, and endeavour. 4. How he preſſes for an intereſt in their prayers, with reſpect to his preſent circumſtances, and his deſign of coming to them; *I beſeech you the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner.*

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle having in the former verſe deſired their prayers for him, in this verſe he adds thereunto his own prayer for them, a moſt glorious and excellent prayer, encloſing the whole myſtery of divine grace in its original, and the way of its communication by Jeſus Chriſt, a prayer evidently proceeding from a ſpirit full of faith and love. *Obſerve* here, 1. The title aſſigned and given to God, *The God of peace.* But why the God of peace, rather than the God of power, or the God of grace, or the God of glory? Becauſe the divine power was not put forth in raiſing Chriſt from the dead until God was pacified: Juſtice incenſed expoſed him to death; but juſtice appeaſed freed him from the dead. 2. The titles aſſigned and given to Chriſt, and they ſeem to expreſs his threefold office, of a prophet, in that he ſtiles himſelf the *great ſhepherd of the ſheep*; of a prieſt, that he is ſaid to be *brought again from the dead, by the blood of the everlaſting covenant*; and of a king, in that he is ſtiled *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Note,* Chriſt is a ſhepherd, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep; a ſhepherd, becauſe as a ſhepherd he rules and governs his people, as a ſhepherd he leads them by his heavenly doctrine and inſtructive example, as a ſhepherd feeds them with his word, yea, with his precious body and blood; he is ſtiled not *the* but *that* ſhepherd, namely, that was promiſed of old, the object and the hope of the church from the beginning; and *that great ſhepherd,* becauſe great in his perſon, great in his power, great in his undertaking, great in his glory and exaltation, above the whole creation; and the *great ſhepherd of the ſheep,* becauſe they are his own, a little flock in the midſt of wolves, which could never be preſerved, were it not by the power and care of this *great ſhepherd. Obſerve,* 3. The work aſſigned to God as a God of peace, he *brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Chriſt is ſaid to raiſe himſelf in regard of immediate efficiency, but God the Father is ſaid to raiſe him in regard of ſovereign authority. God the Father, to whoſe juſtice the debt was due, by letting Chriſt out of the priſon of the grave, acknowledged himſelf ſatisfied; the God of peace, to evidence that peace was now perfectly made, brought Chriſt again from the dead. But how did he do this? It is anſwered, *by the blood of the everlaſting covenant,* that is, by the blood of Chriſt himſelf, which ratified and confirmed the covenant. 4. The things prayed for, (1.) Perfection in every good work to do the will of God; it is not an abſolute perfection that is here intended, but a readineſs to every good work or duty of obedience. (2.) *To work in them that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight*; by this underſtand the actual gracious performance of every known duty. *Note,* That the efficacy and actual efficiency of divine grace, in and unto every act of obedience and duty, is here prayed for, and relied upon. *Obſerve* laſtly, A doxology, or aſcription of all glory to Chriſt, *to whom be glory,* &c. All grace is from him, and therefore all glory to be aſcribed to him: The whole diſpenſation of grace will iſſue in the eternal glory of Jeſus Chriſt.

22 And I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; with whom, if he come ſhortly, I will ſee you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the ſaints. They of Italy ſalute you. 25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

Our apoſtle had ſhut up and cloſed his epiſtle before; he adds theſe verſes by way of poſtſcript: Now he begs of them kindly to accept, and wiſely to improve the exhortations given them in this epiſtle, wherein he had handled many weighty matters in few words. He lets them know that Timothy was ſet at liberty, and probably gone forth to preach the goſpel, with whom, if he returned ſhortly, he hoped to come unto them, being deſirous to ſee them: And thus, with ſalutations to them all in general, and to church-governors in particular, both from himſelf and the Chriſtians in Italy, he wiſhes them an increaſe of all grace, and an abundant ſenſe of the love and favour of God in Chriſt; ſaying, *Grace be with you all. Amen.*

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

The epiſtle of St. James, together with the ſix following epiſtles, have gone under the name of catholic epiſtles for many ages, becauſe, ſay ſome, they were not written to a particular city or country, as moſt of St. Paul's epiſtles were, but to all the Chriſtian Jews abroad, diſperſed into ſeveral countries throughout the world, whoſe ſuffering condition rendered the conſolation which this epiſtle affords very needful and neceſſary, as being greatly ſupporting. The author aud penman of it was St. James, commonly called James the Leſs, and our Lord's brother, the ſon of Alpheus, ſtyled alſo James the Juſt, and biſhop of Jeruſalem; conſequently its authority cannot reaſonably be queſtioned. The deſign of the epiſtle is, firſt, to eſtabliſh the Chriſtian Jews in a well-ordered religious courſe of life, and to fortify them againſt ſuffering from the unbelieving Jews: Secondly, to correct a pernicious error about the ſufficiency of a naked faith, and empty profeſſion without practice, &c. *which ſprung from a miſunderſtanding and abuſe of the way of juſtification by faith: The deſign of St. Paul in ep.* Rom. *(of which we have the ſame in* Acts iv. 12.*) was to manifeſt that Chriſt was the only one, and Chriſtianity the only way, to ſet us criminals clear with God, ſo as to bring us to himſelf in glory. And St. James ſhews us, that it is not the bare belief and profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith, but the power and practical improvement of it, that muſt make or render it ſaving to us.*

CHAP. I.

JAMES, a ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad, greeting,

Obſerve here, 1. The author and penman of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, James; by his office, *a ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, by ſpecial office as a diſpenſer of his goſpel. It is the higheſt honour that can be conferred upon the greateſt perſon, to be the ſervant of Chriſt, eſpecially in the quality of an ambaſſador. *Note* alſo, How St. James ſtyles himſelf the ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some read the words conjoined, others disjoined; conjoined thus, *James, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, who is God and Lord*; and thus the fathers urged this text againſt the Arians; to prove the divinity and godhead of Chriſt; others read the words disjoined, thus, *James, a ſervant of God, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* This latter reading ſeems moſt natural, and leſs ſtrained, and affords an argument for proving the divinity of Chriſt no leſs weighty than the former; for as the Father is Lord as well as Jeſus Chriſt, ſo Jeſus Chriſt is God as well as the Father, and God will have all to honour the Son as they honour the Father. 2. The perſons to whom this epiſtle is directed, *to the twelve tribes ſcattered abroad*; that is, to ſuch and ſo many of the Jews as were converted to chriſtianity, and were now diſperſed and ſcattered into ſeveral countries and nations; to them is St. James excited and moved by God to write and direct this excellent epiſtle. Here *note*, by the way, theſe three things: 1. That God's own people in general may be diſperſed and driven abroad from their own countries and habitations; it is no new thing to ſuffer in this kind, Heb. xi. 38. thoſe, of whom the world was not worthy, wandered in deſarts and mountains, woods and caves. 2. The ſeverity of God towards the people of the Jews, in particular they were a ſinning people, a ſinful people, weary of God, ſick of his worſhip, ſevere to his Son: and God grows ſick and weary of them, and according to his threatening, Deut. xxviii. 64. ſcattered them from one end of the earth unto the other, among all people. Lord! how dangerous and unſafe it is to reſt upon, and glory in our outward privileges! None had more, none had greater privileges than the Jews, yet for their ſins the land ſpewed them out, and God diſperſed them, yea, made them an hiſſing and a bye-word among the nations. 3. The tenderneſs of God's love and care towards the faithful amongſt them in and under this diſperſion, he ſtirreth up St. James to write to the ſcattered tribes, and to apply ſeaſonable comforts to them, and to all chriſtians with them in their ſuffering ſtate, which accordingly he does throughout this whole epiſtle.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.

Our apoſtle's deſign in this epiſtle being to ſupport the believing Jews under their great ſufferings for the cauſe of chriſtianity, he firſt acquaints them with the nature of thoſe ſufferings which they might expect to fall under for the ſame; he calls them *temptations*, that is, trials, they are correcting trials for ſin, and they are experimental trials of the truth of grace, and of the ſtrength of grace; the afflictions of God's children are trials caſtigatory, probatory trials. *Note* 2. The advice given in theſe trials, to count it joy, all joy, when they fall into temptations, yea, into divers temptations; not that afflictions are in themſelves joyous, the temptation or trial is not matter of joy, but of ſorrow and heavineſs conſidered in itſelf, but becauſe of their good effects and ſweet fruits, in proving our faith, and increaſing our patience; but mark, he ſays, *when ye fall into temptations*, not when ye run yourſelves into them, or draw them upon yourſelves; we looſe the comfort of our ſufferings, when, either by guilt or by imprudence, we bring them upon ourſelves. *Note* here, That trials, how evil and afflictive ſoever in themſelves, and in their own nature, yet adminiſter occaſion of great joy to ſincere chriſtians, Rom. v. 3. *We glory in tribulations*; it denotes the higheſt joy, even to exultation and raviſhment; that there is joy reſulting from the conſideration of the glory that redounds to God, of the honour done to us, of the benefit done to the church, and ourſelves, by confirming the faith of others; evidencing the ſincerity of grace to ourſelves, preparing us for, and giving us a ſwifter paſſage to heaven. 3. Our apoſtle's argument to preſs them to joy in, and rejoice under their afflictions; and this is taken, 1. From the nature of them, they are trials of faith. 2. From the effect and fruit of them, they beget or work patience. *Learn* hence, 1. That the afflictions which the people of God meet with, are trials of all their graces, but eſpecially of their faith. This is a radical grace; we live by faith, we work by love: Now of all graces, Satan has a particular ſpite againſt the chriſtian's faith, and God has a particular care for the preſervation and perfection of it, *Knowing the trial of your faith worketh patience*; that is, it adminiſters matter and occaſion for patience, and by the bleſſing of God upon it, it produces and increaſes patience; often trial puts us upon frequent exerciſes, and the frequent exerciſe of grace ſtrengthens the habits of grace: Conſequently the more our trials are, the ſtronger will our patience be. *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. That is, "Let your patience and perſeverance under ſufferings reſolutely continue and hold out to the end;" this the apoſtle urges, becauſe ſome perſons bore out the firſt brunt and onſet of perſecution, but being exerciſed with adverſity and length of trials, they fainted. Now, as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If we will be complete chriſtians, our patience muſt run parallel with our ſufferings; thus ſhall we be perfect, not with an abſolute perfection, but with a perfection of duration and perſeverance." *Learn*, That afflictions ſanctified by God do tend exceedingly, not only to the increaſing, but perfecting of a chriſtian's patience. *Queſt*. But when has patience its perfect work, making the chriſtian perfect and entire? *Anſw*. When there is a ſtrong faith, as the foundation of that patience; when there is a chriſtian fortitude and courage, enabling us to ſuſtain trials; when there is an exact knowledge of our duty to bear afflictions with a meek and quiet ſpirit, with a forbearing and forgiving ſpirit, yea, with a praying ſpirit, which includes the height of charity, under the the higheſt provocations; in a word, when there is found within us and entire truſt and dependency upon God's power and promiſe, and a cheerful ſubmiſſion, and quiet reſignation of our wills to his moſt holy, wiſe, and righteous will, in and under the ſharpeſt trials and heavieſt afflictions that can befal us; then *has patience had its perfect work*, and the ſuffering chriſtian, in a goſpel qualified ſenſe, may be ſaid *to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.

5 If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him. 6 But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed. 7 For let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. A truth neceſſarily ſuppoſed, that every man, more or leſs lacketh wiſdom to enable him patiently to bear, and prudently to manage, the afflictions of this life; and that there is need of great wiſdom to enable us to glorify God in a ſuffering hour. 2. The perſon directed to in order to the obtaining of divine wiſdom, for the patient bearing of afflictions; *Let him aſk it of God*. He that wants wiſdom, let him go to the fountain of wiſdom. God gives not his bleſſings ordinarily without aſking, and the beſt of bleſſings may be had for aſking; of the two it is better to aſk and not receive, than to receive and not aſk. 3. A great encouragement for all that lack wiſdom to go unto God for it, drawn firſt from the bountiful manner of his giving, *He giveth liberally*, without upbraiding. Secondly, From the certainty of the gift, *It ſhall be given him*. God's liberality in giving what we aſk, and many times more than we aſk, yea, more than we can either aſk or think, is a mighty encouragement to faith and fervency in prayer, to perſeverance and importunity in praying; eſpecially if we conſider what is added, that as God giveth *liberally*, ſo he *upbraideth not*; that is, he neither upbraids them with their frequency and importunity in aſking, nor yet with their great unworthineſs of receiving; but inſtead thereof, ſubjoins an aſſurance of granting. It is a mighty encouragement to pray, when we conſider there is not only bounty in God, but bounty engaged by promiſe. *Obſerve*, 4. The condition required on our part muſt be obſerved and fulfilled, as well as the promiſe made on God's part: *But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering.* *Queſt.* What is it to aſk in faith? *Anſw.* The perſon praying muſt be in a ſtate of believing: The petitioner muſt be a believer; the thing aſked for muſt be an object of faith, by being the ſubject-matter of ſome promiſe; a fervent prayer for that which God never promiſed, is a foul ſin. Again, The manner of aſking muſt be faithful, with a pure intention of God's glory, with cheerful ſubmiſſion to God's will, with fiducial recumbency upon God's promiſe, with great fervency and warmth of ſpirit; he that will prevail with Jacob, muſt wreſtle with Jacob for a bleſſing. 5. The evil and danger of wavering and doubting in the matter of prayer; the evil of it is this, that it is perplexing and tormenting to the mind: *He that wavereth is driven and toſſed like a wave of the ſea*; an elegant ſimilitude to ſet out the nature of doubting, when upon our knees in duty. And the danger of it is expreſſed, *Let not that man think he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* *Note*, That doubtful and unbelieving perſons when they pray, though they receive ſomething, yet they can expect nothing. Let him not think to receive any thing; if he does, it is more than could be expected, becauſe more than God has promiſed. Doubting in prayer is a provocation to God; and when a man's prayer is a provocation, how can he expect his prayer ſhould either be heard or anſwered?

8 A double-minded man *is* unſtable in all his ways.

By a *double-minded man*, we are to underſtand one that is divided in his own thoughts between two different ways and opinions, as if he had two minds, or two ſouls; many ſuch there were in the apoſtle's days, Judaizing brethren, that ſometimes would ſort with the Jews, ſometimes with the chriſtians; many ſuch there are in our days, divided betwixt God and the world, between holineſs and ſin; like a needle between two load-ſtones, always wavering to and again, pointing frequently to both, but never fixed to either: Such a man, ſays our apoſtle, *is unſtable in all his ways*; that is, in all his actions. *Learn* hence, That whilſt men's minds are divided between God and their luſts, they muſt neceſſarily lead very anxious, uncertain, and unſtable lives, always fluctuating in great anxiety and uncertainty; for he is always at odds with himſelf, and in perpetual variance with his own reaſon: Where men's minds are double, their ways muſt neceſſarily be unſtable.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10 But the rich, in that he is made low: becauſe as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away. 11 For the ſun is *no ſooner* riſen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Our apoſtle having finiſhed his neceſſary digreſſion concerning prayer, in the foregoing verſes, returns now to his former argument, concerning bearing affliction with joy; and urges a ſtrong reaſon here to enforce the duty, *Let the brother of low degree*; that is, ſuch a chriſtian as is brought low by perſecution and ſufferings for Chriſt, let him rejoice that God has exalted him, and made him rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom: Nothing is more certain, than that the greateſt abuſes and ſufferings for Chriſt are an honour and exhaltation to us; he adds, *But let the rich rejoice in that he is made low*, that is when he looſes any thing for Chriſt: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Let the poor chriſtian rejoice, in that he is ſpiritually exalted, and the rich man rejoice, in that he is ſpiritually humbled; a rich man's humility is his glory." *Obſerve* next, The apoſtle rendereth a reaſon why the rich man ſhould have a lowly mind, in the midſt of his flouriſhing condition, becauſe all the pomp and grandeur of riches fades like a flower, and he himſelf alſo is beautiful, but fading; fair, but vaniſhing: And he purſues this ſimilitude of a flower in the eleventh verſe, ſhewing, that as the flower fadeth preſently before the heat of the ſcorching ſun, ſo the rich man fades, and all his riches are both tranſitory and paſſing. *Learn* hence, That it may and ought to comfort a chriſtian that ſuffers loſs for Chriſt by perſecutors and perſecution, to conſider, that the things which he loſeth for the ſake of Chriſt, are things of a fading nature, which could not have been kept long by him, had they not been rent from him; but that which he ſecures by his perſeverance, is an everlaſting treaſure, reſerved in the heavens for him; by parting with that which he could not keep, he makes ſure of that which he can never looſe: Well therefore may the rich man rejoice in his humiliation; *Let the brother*, &c.

12 Bleſſed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

In theſe words the apoſtle lays down a forcible argument to perſuade chriſtians to bear ſufferings and perſecutions with invincible patience, drawn from the bleſſedneſs which attends ſuch a condition: *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptations*, &c. *Note* here, 1. The character of the perſon whom God pronounceth bleſſed; namely, Not the man that eſcapeth temptations and trials in this life, but he that *bears* them with courage and conſtancy, with patience and ſubmiſſion. 2. A deſcription of that ample reward which ſhall be conferred upon ſuch ſufferers; *They ſhall receive the crown of life*: where *obſerve*, The felicity of a future ſtate is ſet forth by a crown, to denote the tranſcendency and perfection of it; and by a crown of life, to denote the perpetuity and duration of it. *Note*, 3. Here is an intimation of the time when this tranſcendent reward ſhall be diſpenſed, namely, when the ſuffering chriſtian has finiſhed his courſe with patience and perſeverance: *When he is tried he ſhall receive*, &c. *Learn* from the whole, That a patient and conſtant enduring of trials and afflictions in this life, ſhall certainly be rewarded with a crown of bleſſedneſs and immortality in the life to come.

13 Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. 14 But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed. 15 Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.

There are three ſorts of temptations ſpoken of in ſcripture, temptations of *ſeduction*, temptations of *ſuggeſtion*, and temptations of *affliction*; the laſt were ſpoken of in the former verſes, *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation:* the ſecond ſort are ſpoken of in this verſe, *Let no man ſay when he is tempted* to ſin, *I am tempted of God, &c. Note* here, 1. That God is not the author of ſin, nor tempts any man to the commiſſion of it; if he did, our evil actions could not be properly ſins, nor juſtly puniſhable by God; for no man can be juſtly puniſhable for that which he cannot help, and no man can help that which he is compelled unto; and it is very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the ſame perſon ſhould both tempt and puniſh. To tempt unto ſin, is contrary to the holineſs of God: And after that to chaſtiſe for complying with the temptation, is contrary to the juſtice of God; God then is not the author of the ſins of men. 2. That men are very apt to charge their ſin upon God, and to lay their faults at his door. *Let no man ſay* ſo; intimating, that men are very ready and apt to ſay ſo; and that it is not only a fault, but an impious aſſertion, to ſay that God tempts any man to ſin. *Let no man ſay:* He ſpeaks of it as a thing to be rejected with the utmoſt deteſtation, a thing ſo impious and diſhonourable to God. 3. The reaſon and argument, which the apoſtle brings againſt this impious ſuggeſtion, *God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man*; that is, he cannot be drawn to any thing that is evil himſelf, and therefore it cannot be imagined he ſhould have any inclination or deſign to ſeduce others: He can have no temptation to ſin from his own inclination, for he has a perfect antipathy againſt it; and there is no allurement in ſin to ſtir up an inclination in God toward it, for it is nothing but crookedneſs and deformity: And how can he be ſuppoſed to entice men to that which his own nature does abominate and abhor? For none tempts others to be bad, but thoſe who are firſt ſo themſelves. Inference, 1. No doctrine then ought to be aſſerted, or can be maintained, which is contrary to the natural notions which men have of God, as touching his holineſs, juſtice, and goodneſs. Inference, 2. If God tempts not us, let us never tempt him: This we do, when we tempt his providence, expecting its protection in an unwarrantable way; as when we are negligent in our calling, and yet depend upon God's providence to provide for our families, which is to approve our folly, and to countenance our ſloth. *Note*, 4. The true account which our apoſtle gives of the prevalency and efficacy of temptation upon men, it is their own innate corruption, and vicious inclination, which doth ſeduce them to it, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn aſide of his own luſt, and enticed. Mark*, He does not aſcribe it to the devil; he may and does preſent the object, and by his inſtruments may and does ſolicit for our compliance: His temptations have a moving and exciting power, but can have no prevailing efficacy but from our own voluntary conſent; it is our own luſts cloſing with his temptations which produce the ſin: For God's commanding us to reſiſt the devil, ſuppoſes that his temptations are not irreſiſtable. *Learn* hence, That man's worſt enemy, and moſt dangerous tempter, is the corruption of his own heart and nature; becauſe it is the inmoſt enemy, and becauſe it is an enemy that is leaſt ſuſpected: A man's luſt is himſelf, and nature teaches us not to miſtruſt ourſelves; What reaſon have we then perpetually to pray, that God would not lead us into temptation, but keep us by his good providence out of the way of temptation, becauſe we carry about us ſuch luſts and inclinations as will betray us to ſin when powerful temptations are preſented to us! There is no ſuch way then to diſarm temptations and take away the power of them, as by mortifying our luſts, and ſubduing our vicious inclinations. 5. The account which our apoſtle gives of the pedigree, birth, and growth of ſin: When *luſt*, that is, our corrupt inclinations, and vicious deſires *have conceived*, that is, gained the conſent and approbation of the will, it bringeth forth and engageth the ſoul in ſin; and ſin, when it is finiſhed in the deliberate outward action, and eſpecially when, by cuſtomary practice, it becomes habitual, bringeth forth death, the wages of ſin: the firſt approaches of ſin are uſually modeſt but afterwards it makes bolder attempts; our wiſdom is to reſiſt the firſt beginnings of ſin, for then we have moſt ſtrength, and ſin leaſt; to ſuppreſs ſin in the thoughts, to mortify luſt in the heart, before it breaks forth in the life, and at laſt iſſue and terminate in death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning.

As if he had ſaid, "Be not deceived about the cauſes of good and evil; ſin and death are certainly from ourſelves. Let us therefore never aſcribe either our ſins or our temptations unto God; but every good and perfecting gift is of God's free donation and grace, even from above, from the Father of lights, (both of the light of nature, and the light of grace) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning* from good to evil; he is unchangeable in his nature and being, and in his attributes and properties." *Learn* hence, 1. That we are very prone to err in our notions and apprehenſions, as touching the authors of good and evil; too ready to conclude either God or Satan to be the author of the ſin we commit, and ourſelves the authors of the good we do: *Do not err, my beloved brethren*, in this matter. 2. That as ſin, which is nothing but evil and imperfection, is not from God, but wholly from ourſelves, and our own corrupt hearts; ſo whatever is good, perfect, or praiſe-worthy, is wholly from God, and not from ourſelves; we are neither by nature inclined to that which is good, nor are we able of ourſelves to perform it; both inclination and ability are from God, who is the fountain of goodneſs and perfection, and can never ceaſe to be ſo, for with

with him is *no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning*. 3. That God being the infinite Father of lights, he hath no eclipſes or decreaſes, no ſhadows or mixtures of darkneſs, but always ſhines with a ſettled and conſtant brightneſs, always is, and was, and to all eternity will be, immutably the ſame, and never undergo the leaſt change, either of his eſſence and being, or of his properties and perfections; *With whom is no variableneſs*, &c. As nothing argues greater imperfection than inconſtancy and change, ſo the greater and more glorious the divine perfections are, the greater blemiſh and imperfection would mutability be; were God changeable, it would darken all his other perfections, and raze the foundation of all religion; for who could either fear or love, truſt or ſerve that being who is fickle and inconſtant! What ſecurity could there be in his promiſes? And who would regard the terror of his threatenings, were he not invariable, and without ſhadow of changing.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we ſhould be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures.

Theſe words are very expreſſive of four things, namely, of the efficient cauſe, the impulſive cauſe, the inſtrumental, and the final cauſe of our regeneration. *Obſerve*, 1. The author and efficient cauſe of regeneration; he that is the *Father of lights*, mentioned in the foregoing verſe, begat us, *Note*, That God, and God alone, is the prime efficient cauſe of regeneration; it is ſubjectively in the creature, it is efficiently from God: Chriſt appropriates this work to God, Matt. xi. 23. The Scriptures appropriates it to God, Pſal. xxxiv. 9. called *his ſaints*. And God himſelf appropriates it to himſelf, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within them*, &c. *Obſerve*, 2. The impelling, impulſive, and moving cauſe of regeneration, *his own will: Of his own will begat he us*; by his mere motion, induced by no cauſe, but the goodneſs of his own breaſt, of his own will, and not naturally, as he begat his Son from eternity; *of his own will*, and not neceſſarily, by a neceſſity of nature, as the ſun enlightens and enlivens, but by an arbitrarineſs of grace; *of his own will*, and not by any obligation from the creature; by the will of God, and not for the merit and deſert of man. 3. The inſtrumental cauſe of our regeneration, the word of truth, that is, the goſpel, which is the great inſtrument in God's hand for producing the new birth in the ſouls of his people. Here *note*, The goſpel is called *truth* by way of excellency, *the word of truth*, that is, the true word; and alſo by way of eminency, as containing an higher and more excellent truth than any other divine truth, the goſpel declares the truth of all the Old Teſtament types. 4. The final cauſe of our new birth, *that we ſhould be a kind of firſt fruits of his creatures*, that is, of his new creatures, the chief among his creatures; the firſt-fruits were the beſt of every kind to be offered to God, and were given as God's peculiar right and portion; thus the new-creature is God's peculiar portion taken out of mankind, which being conſecrated to God by a new begetting, they ought to ſerve him with a new ſpirit, new thankfulneſs, as lying under the higheſt obligations unto new obedience.

19 ¶ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath. 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Seeing God has put ſuch an honour upon his word, the word of truth, as by it to beget us to himſelf; therefore be ſwift to hear it, prize it highly, and wait upon the means of grace readily and diligently; but *be ſlow to ſpeak*, that is, to utter your judgments of it, much more *ſlow* in undertaking to be a teacher and diſpenſer of it; alſo *ſlow to wrath*, or to contentions about the words and points of divinity: Wrath and paſſion hinders all profit by the word, either preached, read, or diſcourſed about; and a forcible reaſon is rendered why all wrath ſhould be ſuppreſſed, becauſe the *wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God*; that is, man's ſinful anger will never put him upon doing thoſe things that are juſt and righteous in God's account: Or there is a figure in the words; more is intended than expreſſed; the meaning is, that the wrath of man is ſo far from working the righteouſneſs of God, that it worketh all manner of evil." *Learn* hence, That man's anger is uſually evil, and very unrighteous: Anger, juſtly moderated, is a duty, but ſuch a duty as is very difficultly managed without ſin; raſh, cauſeleſs, and immoderate anger, gratifies the devil, diſhonours God, diſcredits religion, wounds our own peace.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your ownſelves.

Theſe words are a direction given for the right hearing of, and due profiting by the word of God. In order to the former, our apoſtle ſhews, 1. What we muſt lay aſide, namely, *all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs*; that is, all ſenſual luſts, and angry paſſions. And, 2. *Receive with meekneſs*, calmneſs, and ſubmiſſion, the *engrafted word*; that is, the word planted and ſown in our hearts by the hands of Chriſt's miniſters: *which is able to ſave our ſouls*, that is, from hell and damnation; yet does not the word ſave of itſelf, but God by the word; the power of the word is not intrinſical, but extrinſical, derived from God, whoſe the word is. *Learn* hence, 1. That as all ſin in general, ſo anger, wrath, and malice in particular, ought to be laid aſide by us at all times, but then eſpecially when we go forth to hear the word of God. 2. That the word muſt be received with all meekneſs of ſpirit, if we would hear it with profit and advantage; there muſt not be found with us either a wrathful fierceneſs, or a proud ſtubborneſs, or a contentious wrangling, but humility and brokenneſs of ſpirit, docibility and tractableneſs of ſpirit, under the word, otherwiſe all our hearing will be an addition to our ſin, and an aggravation of our condemnation. 3. That the word muſt not only be apprehended and received by us, but implanted and engrafted in us, or it will never be able to ſave our ſouls; *receive the engrafted word which is able to ſave your ſouls*. *Queſt.* But how may we know when the word is an engrafted word? *Anſw.* When it is a fruitful word, Col. i. 6. *The word of the truth of the goſpel* *is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit.* 4. Though hearing of the word be a duty, yet it muſt not be reſted in; be hearers, but not only hearers: Alas! bare hearing of the word is the leaſt part of chriſtianity, and the lighteſt part of chriſtianity; though we be intelligent hearers, though we be very diligent and attentive hearers, though we be affectionate hearers, yea, though we make great proficiency in knowledge by our hearing, yet all this will deceive us at laſt, if nothing farther be added to it. 5. That the doers of the word are the beſt hearers, yea, the only hearers in God's account: Not to hear at all is atheiſtical, and produces no religion; to hear, and not to know and be affected with what we hear, is ſtoical, and breeds a blind religion; to know, and not to do, is Phariſaical, and breeds a lame religion; the practical hearer is the only approved hearer in the account of God: *A good underſtanding have they that do thy commandments*, Pſal. cxi. Laſtly, Without this, all our hearing is but ſelf-deceiving; and this is the moſt ſhameful deceit, the moſt dangerous deceit, and, if timely care and endeavours prevent not, an irreparable and eternal deceit.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs: 24 For he beholdeth himſelf, and goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

In theſe words our apoſtle declares the vanity and unprofitableneſs of a bare hearing of the word, by a ſimilitude taken from a man looking in a glaſs; though he ſees in a glaſs his own natural face which he was born with, whilſt he is looking in it, yet no ſooner is he gone from it, but he forgets the figure and faſhion of his own countenance, having had only a ſlight and tranſient view of it; ſo in like manner, the preaching of the word has not an awakening influence, and leaves not an abiding impreſſion upon moſt hearers, who are willing to be deceived, and to deceive themſelves, by a bare and naked hearing of divine truths. *Learn* hence, That the word of God is a glaſs, or as a glaſs, in which the ſoul's complexion may be ſeen: In this glaſs we may ſee both God and ourſelves. Chriſt's beauty, and our own deformity, both our diſeaſe, and our remedy. 2. That the glaſs of the word muſt not be careleſly and curſorily looked into, with a ſlight and ſuperficial glance, but if we deſire to have all the ſpots and blemiſhes of our ſouls thoroughly diſcovered, we muſt keep it before our eyes continually, and daily dreſs our ſouls by it.

25 But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.

Obſerve here, 1. The title given to the word of God particularly the goſpel, it is called *liberty*, a *law* of liberty, and a *perfect* law of liberty: partly becauſe it calleth us to a ſtate of liberty and freedom, and teacheth us the way to true liberty, and offers us the aſſiſtance of a ſpirit of liberty; partly becauſe it ſpareth none, but dealeth with all perſons freely, without reſpect of perſons; the goſpel, or word of God, then is a law of liberty. 2. The duty here required, with reference to this law of liberty, namely, to look into it, and continue therein, to look into it with an accurate and narrow inſpection, as the diſciples did into Chriſt's ſepulchre, and as the angels look into the myſteries of ſalvation, 1 Pet. i. 12. To look into the law of liberty, implies deepneſs of meditation, and liveline ſs of impreſſion; and continuing therein, imports perſeverance in the knowledge, faith, and obedience of the goſpel, in order to our fruitfulneſs in good works: *If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you*, ſays Chriſt, *ye ſhall bring forth much fruit*, John xv. 5. 7. *Obſerve*, 3. The reward promiſed and inſured to ſuch as look into the goſpel, that law of liberty, that continue in it, and are doers of the work required by it, *they are bleſſed in their deed*; there is a bleſſedneſs annexed to the doing of that work which the word of God requires; yet mark the diſtinctneſs of ſcripture-phraſe; the apoſtle doth not ſay, that the doers of the word ſhall be bleſſed *for* their deed, but in their deed; it is an evidence of our bleſſedneſs, not the ground of it, the way, though not the cauſe of bleſſedneſs.

26 ¶ If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

Obſerve here, 1. That there have been, are, and ever will be many profeſſors of religion, who ſeem, and only ſeem to be religious. That an unbridled and ungoverned tongue, is a certain ſign and evidence of a man's being only ſeemingly religious; it ſeems there were many unbridled tongues, in the apoſtle's days, amongſt the profeſſors of chriſtianity, which put the apoſtle upon ſpending the whole third chapter about the government of the tongue; the grace and word of God are bridles, which we are to put on, to reſtrain us from ſinful and exceſſive ſpeaking. 3. That ſuch a man as pretends to religion, and ſeems to be religious, without bridling and governing of his tongue, all his religion is but vain, and ſelf-deceiving: *Vain*, that is, empty; in ſhew and appearance only, nothing in truth, and in reality: Or *vain*, that is ineffectual; it doth not perform its office, it does not anſwer its end, their religion will do them no good, ſtand them in no ſtead; that faith, that hope, thoſe prayers which will conſiſt with the reigning evils of the tongue, are vain and ſelf-deceiving; that religion, which cannot drive the devil out of the tongue will never prove Chriſt to be in the heart; that religion which cannot tame the tongue, will never ſave the ſoul; though ſome evils of the tongue may conſiſt with grace, yet an unbridled tongue cannot conſiſt with it: Deceit in our lips is as bad as falſehood in our dealings, and virulence in our tongue as bad as violence in our hands; and if thy religion be vain, all is vain to thee; thy hopes are vain, thy comforts are vain. The ſum is, that an unbridled tongue, in a religious profeſſor, is enough to prove his religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.

Obſerve here, 1. That the apoſtle doth not ſet down the whole of religion, but an eminent part and inſtance of it only: *pure religion is this,* that is, this is the practice of religion, without which all religion is vain; this is an eminent fruit, which ſprings from the root of pure religion; if pure religion live in the heart, the fruits of pious charity will appear in the life. 2. That acts of charity, when they flow from a religious principle, do commence acts of *Θρησκεια, worſhip:* To viſit the widow and fatherleſs, conſidered in itſelf, may be only an act of indifferency and civil courteſy; but when it is performed as an act of duty, in obedience to the command of God, or as an act of mercy and pity, for the ſupply of their wants by our purſe, or for the comforting of their hearts by our counſel; being thus done out of conſcience, it is as acceptable to God as an act of worſhip. 3. How the apoſtle joins charity and purity together; a pretence to the one without the other, diſcovers the inſincerity of both; the relieving of the afflicted, and a life unſpotted, muſt go together, or God accepts of neither: *Pure religion is this, To viſit the widow, and keep himſelf unſpotted,* &c. that is, from the defilement and pollutions of the world by the luſts thereof; plainly intimating, 1. That the world is a filthy place, a dirty defiling thing. What company almoſt can you come into, generally ſpeaking, that is not ſooty and leprous? How hard is it to converſe with them, and not be polluted and infected by them? even as hard as it is to touch pitch, and not be defiled. 2. That it is our duty, and ought to be our daily endeavour, to keep ourſelves as untainted by, and unſpotted from the world as we can: And that we may eſcape the pollutions which are in the world through luſt, let us be inſtant in prayer, diligent in our watch, that if we cannot make the world better, that ſhall never make us worſe. 3. That we ſhould more and more grow weary of the world, and long for heaven, where there is nothing that defileth, where we ſhall have pure hearts, pure company, every thing agreeable, and this not for a few years, but for everlaſting ages. Lord! when ſhall we aſcend on high, to live with thee in purity?

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter admoniſhes againſt the ſin of reſpecting perſons in religious matters becauſe of wordly advantages; and cautions againſt that fatal opinion of the ſufficiency of a bare and naked faith, in order to ſalvation, without the preſence and teſtimony of works.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord
Jeſus Chriſt, *the Lord* of glory, with reſpect
of perſons. 2 For if there come unto your aſſem-
bly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and
there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment; 3
And ye have reſpect to him that weareth the gay
clothing, and ſay unto him, Sit thou here in a good
place: and ſay to the poor, Stand thou there, or
ſit here under my footſtool: 4 Are ye not then
partial in yourſelves, and are become judges of evil
thoughts?

For the better underſtanding of theſe words, let us conſider, 1. What the apoſtle doth not; 2. What he doth condemn. 1. What is here not condemned, namely, (1.) The paying of civil reſpect to all perſons, according to their character, and a different reſpect to perſons, according to their different qualities: Honour is to be given to whom honour is due, and the rich are entitled to reſpect; and that they receive it from us, is no ways diſpleaſing unto God. (2.) Much leſs does our apoſtle here ſpeak againſt honouring magiſtrates, or paying reſpect to our eccleſiaſtical or civil rulers and governors in their courts of judicature: Civility, yea, Chriſtianity, calls for outward reſpect and reverence to them that are above us, eſpecially if in authority over us. But poſitively, that which is here condemned, (1.) In general, is partiality in our reſpect to perſons in religious matters, for in the things of God all are equal; the rich and the poor ſtand upon the ſame terms of advantage; external relations and differences bear no weight at the goſpel-beam; therefore, to diſeſteem any of the poor members of Chriſt, as ſuch, is to diſeſteem and undervalue Chriſt himſelf. Holineſs is not leſs lovely to him becauſe clothed with rags, nor unholineſs leſs loathſome becauſe it goes in a gay coat with a gold ring. Wickedneſs is abominable to Chriſt, and ought to be ſo to us, though it ſits upon a throne, and holineſs ſhines in his eye (and may it in ours alſo) though it lies upon a dunghill. (2.) That which ſeems here to be condemned in particular, is the accepting of perſons in judgment, upon the account of outward advantages, proceeding not according to the merits of the cauſe, in their eccleſiaſtical and civil judicatures, but according to external reſpects. Our apoſtle would by no means have them pay a deference to a rich man in judgment becauſe of his riches, or gay attire; nor to paſs over the poor ſaints in their aſſemblies, for want of the gold ring, and goodly apparel, ſeeing their faith clothed them with a greater and more valuable glory, which renders them more honourable than any riches or gay clothing could do. And mark the apoſtle's vehement expoſtulation, which carries with it the force of a ſevere reprehenſion: *Are you not partial, and become judges of evil thoughts?* As if he had ſaid, "Are ye not condemned in yourſelves, and convinced in your own conſciences that you do evil? are you not become judges of evil thoughts; that is, do you not paſs judgment from your evil thoughts, in thinking the rich worthy of reſpect in judgment for his gorgeous attire, and outward greatneſs, and the poor fit to be deſpiſed for his outward meanneſs? Is not this an evil, a very evil thought in you, to think him the beſt man that weareth the beſt clothes, and him a vile perſon that is in vile apparel?" From the whole *learn,* 1. That men are very prone to honour worldly greatneſs in general, yea, to give too great a preference to it, even in matters of judgment. Man is very often ſwayed in judgment by the power, pomp, and ſplendour of men; we are apt to think that they that are worth moſt are moſt worthy: Thus men, good men, may miſ-judge of men; but thus to accept the perſons of men, either in ſpiritual or civil judgment is a provoking ſin.

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him?

To prevent the growing evil condemned in the foregoing verſe, of undervaluing thoſe that are rich in grace, becauſe poor in eſtate, the apoſtle in this verſe declares how God himſelf gives countenance to the contrary practice; he confers a threefold dignity upon them; they are choſen by him, they are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven now: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Are they fit to be deſpiſed by you, that are thus highly dignified and enriched by God?" And to ſtir up their attention to what he ſpeaks, he uſhers in his interrogation with this, *Hearken, my beloved brethren*, &c. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are poor in this world, and diſeſteemed of men, may yet be choſen of God, rich in grace, and heirs of glory. This he does, to demonſtrate the ſovereignty and freeneſs of his grace, and the glory of his wiſdom. The firſt choice that Chriſt made of perſons to be his followers were poor men; and ever ſince, generally ſpeaking, they are the poor that receive the goſpel: God has more rent, and better paid him, from a ſmoaky cottage than from many ſtately palaces, where men wallow in wealth, and forget God.

6 But ye have deſpiſed the poor. Do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you before the judgment-ſeats? 7 Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name by the which you are called?

Our apoſtle here charges them downright with that ſin which he had been before condemning, namely, an undue reſpect of perſons, deſpiſing the poor whom God himſelf had choſen and honoured: *But ye have deſpiſed the poor.* Deſpiſing the poor, is a ſin not only againſt the word, but againſt the works of God: it is againſt his word and expreſs command, backed with a ſevere threatening, *enter not into the vineyard of the poor*; that is, *oppreſs them not, for his avenger is mighty, and God will plead his cauſe for him.* It is alſo againſt his works and his end in the creation; for God never made any creature for contempt; he then that deſpiſeth the poor reproacheth his Maker, that is, condemneth the wiſdom of God; which is as much ſeen in making poor, as in making rich; in making vallies, as in making hills. *Obſerve* farther, The apoſtle ſhews them what little reaſon and cauſe they had as to vilify the poor, ſo to idolize and adore the rich; *do not rich men oppreſs you* by tyranny, *and draw you before the judgment-ſeat*, like the vileſt malefactors? Do not they blaſpheme the name of Chriſt? that worthy name from which you are called chriſtians, and ſpit in the very face of your holy religion? *Learn*, 1. That wicked rich men are oft-times oppreſſors, ſometimes perſecutors; they have frequently both will and power, both diſpoſition and occaſion to do both. 2. That oppreſſors and perſecutors are generally blaſphemers; they blaſpheme the name of Chriſt, that worthy name which whoſoever nameth ought to depart from all iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well: 9 But if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors.

Obſerve here, 1. The honourable title put upon the law of God, a *royal law:* Royal in its author, Jeſus Chriſt, Heb. xiii. 25. Chriſt's voice ſhook mount Sinai: Royal in its precepts, the duty it requires of us is noble and excellent, nothing but what is our intereſt as men, our honour and happineſs as chriſtians, and what tends to the perfecting and ennobling of our natures: Royal in its rewards: True, our work can deſerve no wages; however, our royal Maſter will not let us work for nothing. Satan, as a maſter, is bad, his work much worſe; but his wages worſt of all. Chriſt is a royal Maſter, obedience to his law is royal ſervice: And how royal is his reward, in making us kings and prieſts unto God on earth, and crowned kings and princes with God in heaven! *Obſerve*, 2. Our duty declared, with relation to this royal law, namely, to fulfil it: *If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcriptures*, that is, if ye pay a ſincere reſpect to the whole duty of the law, if you come up in your obedience to that univerſal love of God and your neighbour which the law requires, ye do well; where, by *neighbour*, we are to underſtand every one to whom we may be helpful; the command to love him as ourſelves, ſhews the manner, not the meaſure, of our love; the kind, not the degree; the parity and likeneſs, not the equality of proportion; we muſt mind the good of our neighbour as really and truly, though not ſo vehemently and earneſtly, as our own. 3. How the apoſtle convicts them for walking contrary to this law, in honouring the rich and deſpiſing the poor, and in judging according to men's outward quality and condition: *If ye have reſpect to perſons* in this manner, ye commit ſin, and are *convinced* of the law as tranſgreſſors. How does the law convince? Not only by reproving, but by proving: It ſhews us a rule, and ſaith, "There ye have departed from it; here is a line, and there ye have tranſgreſſed it; either gone over it, or gone beſide it." *Learn* hence, That the rule of the word diſcovers wickedneſs fully to the conſcience of the ſinner, who winks hard, and is loth to lie under the convictions of it.

10 For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Here the apoſtle doth ſuppoſe a caſe which ought to make every perſon very conſcientious in his obedience to the whole law of God, namely, that in caſe a man were careful to obſerve all the laws of God except one, his living in the breach of that one ſhall be ſo far from being connived at upon the account of his obedience to all the reſt, that he ſhall be liable to the puniſhment which is due to the tranſgreſſion of the whole law; to the ſame puniſhment for kind, I ſay, not for degree; becauſe the more and greater ſins men are guilty of, the greater and ſeverer ſhall be their puniſhment, which conſiſts in being for ever baniſhed from the preſence of God, and in being impriſoned with devils and damned ſpirits, which is called *eternal death.* *Learn* hence, That whoever allows himſelf in any one ſin, be it either of omiſſion or commiſſion, willingly, conſtantly, and with allowance from conſcience, and doth not convert and turn from it unto God, he is certainly in a ſtate of damnation, becauſe he affronts the ſovereignty, and contemns the authority of that God that made and enacted the whole law, and alſo ſtands in a prepared readineſs and diſpoſition to break any other, yea, all other laws, in the groſſeſt manner, whenſoever any forcible temptation may aſſault him. Add to this, that living in the breach of any one law, will make a perſon unmeet for the enjoyment of God, as well as living in the breach of all.

11 For he that ſaid, Do not commit adultery; ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law. 12 So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "He that threatened adultery with death, threatened alſo murder with death; it is the ſame lawgiver that forbids both, and his authority is as truly contemned in tranſgreſſing one as both theſe laws. Diſobedience to God, in any one law, is a virtual denying of his authority to preſcribe any law to us, and lays a foundation for univerſal diſobedience; for if Almighty God's ſovereignty be diſowned in any one inſtance, it may as well be ſo in all others; the ſame reaſon that leads to the obſervation or violation of one law, doth oblige us to keep or break all the reſt, and that is the authority of the lawgiver. The whole law hath an equal obligation upon the conſcience." From hence the apoſtle draws this inference, that perſons ſhould ſo ſpeak and ſo do, ſo order their ſpeeches and their actions, as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty. *Note* here, 1. That all we ſay and do, all our actions and expreſſions, do fall under the judgment and ſentence of the law of God. 2. That the law of God, in the hand of Chriſt, is the law of liberty; we are freed from it as a covenant, freed from its condemnatory curſe, from its rigorous exactions, bondage, and terrors. The law to a believer is a law of liberty, and to others a law of bondage and death. 3. That it will be a great help to us in our chriſtian courſe, to think often that all our words and actions muſt come into judgment; it is agreeable to the liberty of the goſpel to believe and remember, that all we ſay and do muſt be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment.

That is, He that whilſt he lived *ſhewed no mercy*, but had opportuuity and ability to ſhew it, *ſhall have judgment without mercy*; that is, ſhall be very ſeverely handled by God in the great day, and the ſentence that ſhall paſs upon him will be inſupportable: But *mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment*, or triumpheth over judgment; that is, mercy in ſome degree of exaltation; ſuch a mercy as has covetouſneſs, hard-heartedneſs, and penuriouſneſs, with all its enemies, under its feet; ſuch mercy qualifies, ſtrengthens, and enables the perſon in whom it is found, to be confidently ſecure that he ſhall receive no prejudice or hurt, by that judgment which God ſhall paſs upon the world at the great day. *Learn* from hence, That merciful men, whoſe hearts and hands are much exerciſed in doing good, and ſhewing mercy, by means of the conſciouſneſs of theſe God-like diſpoſitions in themſelves, are, or may be, full of a joyful and bleſſed ſecurity, that they ſhall ſtand in the great judgment of the world, and find favour and acceptance in the eyes of the judge; when all unmerciful, covetous, and hard-hearted perſons, ſhall fall under the ſentence, and be ground to powder by it.

14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works: Can faith ſave him? 15 If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food; 16 And one of you ſay unto them, Depar in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? 16 ¶ Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Our apoſtle here enters upon the ſecond part of his diſcourſe contained in this chapter, namely, to ſhew the vanity of a fruitleſs faith; that ſuch a faith as is not the parent and principle of obedience, and productive of good works, is altogether ineffectual and uprofitable. Faith of no kind, when it is alone, is juſtifying; as there can be no good works without faith; ſo where true faith is, it will be fruitful in good works, otherwiſe faith is no more faith; no believing without obedience will avail us; therefore St. Paul and St. James both agree to render to faith the things that are faith's, and not to take away from works the things that are works. *What doth it profit a man to ſay he hath faith*, &c. As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Let not any perſon think his faith ſufficient to juſtify and ſave him without the works of charity and mercy." Alas! a mere wordly profeſſion is a poor unprofitable thing! What will profeſſing chriſtianity, and ſaying we believe, avail to ſalvation, if we obey not Chriſt, and live not according to the goſpel? Will good works feed the hungry, or clothe the naked? Is it not like a mocking of them? Even ſo a notional knowledge, and a bare profeſſion of faith, if it brings not forth the fruits of holineſs and obedience towards God, of juſtice and righteouſneſs, of love and mercy towards our neighbour, it is an effectual dead thing; like a dead corpſe, without a quickening and enlivening ſoul; it is altogether dead as to our juſtification and ſalvation. *Learn* hence, 1. That a fruitleſs faith is certainly a dead faith. It is dead, becauſe it does not unite us to Chriſt; it is lifeleſs, becauſe there is no livelineſs in ſuch a perſon's performances; for though faith be not always alike lively, yet if ſincere, it is always living, and enables the chriſtian to live unto Chriſt, and to bear much fruit, John xv. 5. *He that abideth* (that is, *believeth*) *in me*, &c. *Obſerve*, 2. The compariſon which St. James here makes between faith and charity; from whence he draws this concluſion, "If charity towards the poor, profeſſed in words, but without works, be counterfeit, then faith in Chriſt, profeſſed in like manner, without obedience, is alſo counterfeit and falſe; but charity towards the poor in words, and not in deeds, is a counterfeit charity; accordingly faith in Chriſt, without obedience to his commands, is a falſe faith; a dead faith, in regard to the effect; becauſe it will never bring them, in whom it is, to life and ſalvation."

18 Yea, a man may ſay, Thou haſt faith, and I have works: ſhew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works.

St. James brings in theſe words by way of dialogue, between a ſincere believer that has true faith, and a falſe-hearted hypocrite that only pretends to it; thus, "Thou ſayeſt thou haſt true faith, though thou haſt no works to evidence its truth; I ſay, I have true faith, becauſe I have good works, which are the genuine effects and fruits of it. Come we now to the trial, and let it appear who ſaith true, thou or I; if thou that haſt no works ſayeſt true, prove thy faith to be true ſome other way. Works thou haſt none, ſhew thy faith then by ſomething elſe; but that is impoſſible, therefore thou vainly boaſteſt of that which thou haſt not; but, on the other ſide, ſays the ſincere believer, I can make good what I ſay, proving the truth of my faith by the fruits of it in my works; this is a real demonſtration that my faith is no vain oſtentation, as yours is." This way of arguing is very convincing; it gripes the conſcience of the hypocrite, and covers him with ſhame and confuſion of face. *Learn* hence, That good works are the evidences by which Chriſt will judge of our faith now, and according to which Chriſt will judge of us and our faith at the great day. Theſe two, faith and good works, ought to be as inſeparable as light and the ſun, as fire and heat. Obedience is the daughter of faith, and faith the parent and principle of obedience.

19 Thou believeſt that there is one God; thou doeſt well. The devils alſo believe and tremble.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Be thou either Jew or Chriſtian, thou believeſt that there is a God, and aſſenteſt to the articles of religion; herein thou doeſt well, but this is no more than what the devils do; for they alſo believe and tremble; and if thou haſt no better faith, and no better fruits of thy faith than they, thou haſt the ſame reaſon to tremble which they have." *Obſerve* here, 1. That a bare and naked aſſent to the truths of the goſpel, yea, to the fundamental truths and articles of religion, is not faith that will juſtify and ſave: The devils have it, yet have no hopes of ſalvation with it; they believe that there is a God, and a Chriſt that died for others, though not for them; ſo that an atheiſt, that does not believe a God, is worſe than a devil; for he believes that there is a God, whoſe being the atheiſt denies. 2. That horror is the fruit and effect of the devil's faith; the more they know of God, the more they dread him; the more they think of him, the more they tremble at him. O God! All knowledge of thee out of Chriſt is uncomfortable; thine attributes, which are in themſelves dreadful and terrible, being beheld by us in thy Son, do yield comfort and ſweetneſs to us.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the ſcripture was fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only.

Our apoſtle here goes on to prove, that a perſon is juſtified by works, that is, by a working faith, from the example of Abraham; and the argument lies thus: "If Abraham of old was juſtified by a working faith, then we cannot be juſtified without it at this day; but Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, was juſtified by a working faith, therefore faith without works will juſtify no man. As Abraham was juſtified, ſo muſt we and all others be juſtified; becauſe the means and method of juſtification were ever one and the ſame, and ever will be uniform and alike. But Abraham was juſtified by a working faith, his faith was full of life, efficacy, and power, in bringing forth obedience unto God; witneſs his ready compliance with that hard and difficult command, the offering up his ſon Iſaac. *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works?* that is, how his faith did both direct and aſſiſt him in that work. Heb. xi. *By faith Abraham offered up Iſaac, and by works was his faith made perfect*, that is, declared to be perfect; for Abraham was juſtified five and twenty years before he offered up his ſon, but his conquering the difficulties of that work, ſhewed the perfection of his faith: And as the goodneſs of the fruit declares the excellency of the tree, ſo the fruit of obedience evidenced the ſincerity of Abraham's faith." From hence then it may and muſt be concluded, that a barren and empty faith is a dead faith; dead, becauſe it may be found in and with a perſon dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; dead, becauſe it receives not the quickening influences of the Spirit of God; dead, becauſe it wants operation, which is the effect of life; dead, becauſe unavailable to eternal life. *Obſerve* farther, The honourable character, and noble teſtimony here given of Abraham, for and upon the account of his faith and obedience; *He was called the friend of God*. All true believers are God's friends, as friends they are reconciled to him; as friends they enjoy communion with him, and communications from him; as friends there is a conformity of wills and affections between them, they like and love, they will and chooſe the ſame things; as friends they deſire and long for the complete fruition and enjoyment of each other. Laſtly, The inference which St. James draws from this inſtance of Abraham, *Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith*. By *faith only*, he means faith that is alone, ſolitary, and by itſelf, without works. *Queſt.* But doth not St. James, by affirming, that *by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only*, concontradict St. Paul, who ſays, *By the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in God's ſight?* Rom. iii. 20. *Anſ.* Not at all, 1. Becauſe they do not ſpeak, *ad idem*, to the ſame thing; St. Paul ſpeaks of juſtification before God, St. James of juſtificatiou before men: St. Paul ſpeaks of the juſtification of our perſon, St. James of the juſtification of our faith. 2. They do not ſpeak *iiſdem*, to the ſame perſons: St. Paul had to do with falſe apoſtles, and judaizing chriſtians, who ſought to ſubſtitute the works of the law, and a righteouſneſs of their own, inſtead of, or ar leaſt in conjunction with, the grace of God; but St. James had to do with hypocritical profeſſors, who abuſed St. Paul's doctrine of free grace, and took encouragement to ſin, affirming, that if they believed, it was ſufficient, no matter how they lived; therefore St. James urges the neceſſity of good works, as evidences of the ſincerity of our faith. The ſum of the matter is this, what God has joined none muſt divide, and what God has divided none muſt join; he has ſeparated faith and works in the buſineſs of juſtification, according to St. Paul, and none muſt join them in it; and he has joined them in the lives of juſtified perſons as St. James ſpake, and there we muſt not ſeparate them. St. Paul aſſures us, That works have not a co-efficiency in juſtification itſelf; but St. James aſſures us, that they may and ought to have a co-exiſtency in them that are juſtified.

25 Likewiſe alſo, was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works, when ſhe had received the meſſengers, and had ſent them out another way?

Here the Apoſtle declares, that Rahab was juſtified by a working faith, as Abraham was before her, which appeared in her entertaining the ſpies, lodging them in her houſe, and diſmiſſing them with all poſſible privacy, which was a notable evidence of her faith in the God of Iſrael, her faith being accompanied with great ſelf-denial, and expoſing her to a mighty hazard. Indeed, Rahab's faith was mixed with great infirmity, ſhe told a lie; but that is overlooked by God, and her faith only recorded, not her failing divulged. Rahab's lie, Sarah's laughter, Job's impatience, are not mentioned: We diſcover corruption in the very exerciſe of our graces; but oh! how good a Maſter do we ſerve, that pardons our infirmities, and accepts our ſincerity! *Learn* hence, That the duties and ſervices of believers, though blemiſhed with many defects, do find acceptance with God, and ſhall not fail to be rewarded by him. Rahab's faith was ſeen in receiving the ſpies, her weakneſs and infirmity appeared in her lying; God pitied and pardoned the one, and accepted and rewarded the other.

26 For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.

In this verſe the apoſtle ſums up the whole matter, by comparing a dead faith to a dead corpſe; as that is imperfect, wanting its beſt and nobleſt part: So faith without works wants that which dignifies and completes it. Faith, without holineſs to enliven it, is a dead body, without the ſpirit to quicken it. Again, as a dead corpſe is uſeleſs as well as imperfect; though it has eyes, it ſees not; feet, it walks not; mouth, but ſpeaks not; thus it is with a dead faith, being unaccompanied with a good life; no believing, without obedience will avail us; for though there is no merit in our obedience that we ſhould be ſaved for it, yet is there ſuch a neceſſity of obedience, that we ſhall never be ſaved without it. Again, as a dead corpſe is noiſome to us, ſo is a profeſſion of faith without obedience loathſome to God: He ſays to all the workers of iniquity, *Depart from me, I know you not*, I approve you not. *As the body without the ſpirit is dead*, that is, as the body is known to be dead, if we perceive no vital actions flowing from the ſoul, ſo is faith dead, if we ſee it not demonſtrated by effectual operation; as it is neceſſary to the being of a living body that it be united to the ſoul, ſo it is neceſſary to the being of a living chriſtian's faith, that it brings forth works of obedience in the Chriſtian's life.

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle in this chapter ſhews the great neceſſity we lie under to watch over our words, and to avoid the ſins of the tongue, and this both as an argument of our ſincerity, and as an ornament to our profeſſion.

MY brethren, be not many maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation.

For the clearer underſtanding of theſe words, let us conſider, 1. What the apoſtle does not forbid, namely, private and brotherly admonition, which proceeds from chriſtian love one towards another, much leſs does he condemn public and authorized reproof: God has made it the duty of all to admoniſh and reprove each other charitably; he has made it the duty of others to admoniſh and cenſure evil-doers authoritatively; this therefore is not forbidden. 2. What it is that is here forbidden, namely, ſuch a reproving of others as is ſupercilious and maſterly, managed with ſharpneſs and ſeverity, raſhly and rigidly. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Be not magiſterial and cenſorious towards your brethren, as if every one of you had many maſters in him:" cenſuring of others is an arrogation of maſterſhip over others, and the aſſuming of a power over them which God never gave us, it is a bold uſurpation of God's authority; we may admoniſh, reprove, and warn; but it muſt not be in a lordly manner, in a maſterly way, which is reviling rather than reproving; we muſt conſider what may ſtand with charity, as well as what will conſiſt with truth; every evil muſt not be divulged, but ſome muſt be covered with a cloak of love; there may be, and oft-times is, a great deal of malice in reporting truth. *Obſerve* next, The remedy preſcribed againſt cenſuring others, namely, the conſidering ourſelves that we ſhall thereby *receive the greater damnation*; ſharp reprovers in judging others, pronounce a doom upon themſelves; ſuch as reprove either out of office, or out of charity, ought to look to themſelves, leſt in reproving others they condemn themſelves.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the ſame *is* a perfect man, *and* able alſo to bridle the whole body.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "We had need to be very candid in cenſuring others, for we all of us offend in many things ourſelves, eſpecially with and by our tongue, which is an engine of more miſchief, both to ourſelves and others, than any other member of the body; and accordingly he is called here, not a gracious man, but a perfect man, one that has attained to the fulleſt meaſures, and higheſt degrees of grace, that can bridle his tongue: To be able to bridle the tongue is an argument of conſiderable growth, and happy progreſs in grace; he that can bridle his tongue, can bridle his whole body, that is, governs all the other actions of his life; he is a very extraordinary chriſtian.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

As we rule the whole body of a horſe by a bridle in its mouth, ſo by bridling our tongues, we ſhall rule and govern all the actions of our lives. *Note*, That as hot and hard-mouthed horſes, ſo the tongue of man is apt to run out, unleſs well bridled; nor is any bridle ſtrong enough to hold it in, but the bridle of grace; nay, not that at all times. The grace of God is both ſpur and bridle to the tongue of man: Grace, like a ſpur, provokes to ſpeak for God, and for the good of others; and grace, like a bridle, ſtops us from ſpeaking what may grieve the Spirit of God, and juſtly offend others. None rule their tongues well without grace, and every one that has grace doth not rule them well; it is a great part of perfection not to offend in word.

4 Behold alſo the ſhips, which though *they be* ſo great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm witherſoever the governor liſteth. 5 ¶ Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature; and is ſet on fire of hell.

The deſign of our apoſtle, by this and the former ſmilitude, is to ſhew, that little things well governed can govern great bodies; as the rider by a ſmall bit can govern the horſe at pleaſure, and the pilot, by a ſmall rudder, can manage the ſhip with eaſe; ſo the government of that little member the tongue, is a ſpecial mean for governing the whole man. Next he compares the tongue to fire, in regard to the danger that attends it: Will a ſpark of fire ſet an houſe, a town, a city in a flame, and lay it in aſhes? In like manner will a fiery tongue inflame a family, a ſociety, a church, a kingdom: Yea, the whole world, by ſtrife and contention, putting all into combuſtion; ſuch a tongue being ſet on work by the devil, and kindled by that fire which came from hell; but verily, a tongue ſet on fire from hell, ſhall, without repentance, be ſet on fire in hell. *Learn* hence, That a wicked tongue is of an helliſh original, the fire of ſuch a tongue is blown up by the breath of hell; let us abhor contentions, revilings, and reproaches, as we would hell itſelf.

7 For every kind of beaſts, and of birds, and of ſerpents, and of things in the ſea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon.

Our apoſtle here goes on in ſhewing how difficult it is to govern the tongue; it is wilder than the wildeſt beaſts, they are more tractable, and may be ſooner tamed than a tongue be governed; it is an *unruly evil*, that will not be held in. Nature has ſet a double guard about the tongue, namely, the teeth and the lips, and grace has laid many reſtraints upon it, and yet it breaks out *full of deadly poiſon*; intimating, that the tongue is as deadly as a venomous beaſt. In the wild deſert there are lions, bears and tygers, but theſe aſſault us but now and then, and can only rend the ſkin, but a contentious tongue is always troubleſome to the ſoul and ſpirit; Man tameth the beaſts, and God tameth man: And the apoſtle's calling the tongue *an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon*, plainly imports that a wicked tongue is venomous and hurtful; a ſlanderous tongue is a deadly poiſon, nothing can ſecure againſt it but innocency and a good conſcience; if we fall by it, let this comfort us, that there will be a reſurrection of our names, as well as of our perſons; let us always then keep in the way of our duty, and commit our good name to God's care and keeping.

9 Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father; and therewith curſe we men, which are made after the ſimilitude of God. 10 Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing. My brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be. 11 Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet *water* and bitter? 12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? ſo *can* no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.

Obſerve here, 1. Our apoſtle informs us what is the proper uſe of the tongue; namely, to bleſs and praiſe God; ſpeech being the moſt excellent faculty, is to be conſecrated to divine uſes; it is both a good man's work and his recreation to bleſs and praiſe God. 2. The ſinful uſe which ſome men put the tongue unto, and that is, to curſe with it, to curſe men that have the natural image of God upon them, yea, holy and good men, that have the divine image of God inſtamped upon them; this is the abuſe of ſome men's tongues, their *mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs*. 3. The ſame tongue cannot, ſhould not bleſs God and curſe men; to pray and brawl with the ſame tongue, is ſhameful hypocriſy; to go from worſhipping to railing and reviling, to ſpeak to the God of heaven with a tongue ſet on fire of hell, is a monſtrous impiety. 4. How the apoſtle diſcovers the mighty abſurdity of bleſſing and curſing with one and the ſame tongue, and of putting the beſt member to the worſt uſe; the good aggravates the evil, and the evil diſparageth, yea, diſproveth the good; to ſuppoſe that the ſame tongue ſhould acceptably bleſs God, and at the ſame time ſinfully curſe men, is as irrational and abſurd, as to imagine that the ſame fountain ſhould ſend forth ſalt water and freſh, ſweet water and bitter; and, as if a fig-tree ſhould bring forth olives, or a vine bear figs: Our apoſtle argues and reaſons from what is impoſſible in nature, to what is abſurd in manners; contrary effects from the ſame cauſe is againſt the order of nature; in like manner grace is uniform, and always acts like itſelf; to bleſs and curſe, to pray and revile, is wholly inconſiſtent with grace: Nature abhors contradictions, and ſo does the grace of God: Though a chriſtian has a double principle in him, the *fleſh* and the *ſpirit*, yet he has not a double heart; his ſpirit is ſingle and ſincere in what he does, in all he does both for God and man.

13 ¶ Who *is* a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, “If any among you deſire to approve yourſelves more knowing than others, wiſer and better than others, as you would be thought when you cenſure and deſpiſe others, ſhew it to the world by a better converſation, by your abounding fruitfulneſs in good works, and by ſuch meekneſs of ſpirit as will be an evidence of true wiſdom.” Hence we *learn*, That the wiſe man is a meek and patient man; as pride and folly, ſo wiſdom and meekneſs, are companions; the more wiſdom a man has, the more he can check himſelf, and curb his paſſion: Moſes is renowned in ſcripture for his wiſdom, and for his meekneſs; we all affect the reputation of wiſdom, let us diſcover it by humility, in being lowly within ourſelves; and by our meekneſs in bearing with and forbearing one another; yet muſt our meekneſs be a wiſe meekneſs, it muſt be a meekneſs of wiſdom; our meekneſs muſt be oppoſite to fierceneſs, but not to zeal; Moſes was very meek in his own cauſe, but hot as fire in the cauſe of God; meekneſs and zeal are conſiſtent, let us then *ſhew out of a good converſation our works with meekneſs of wiſdom.*

14 But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth. 15 This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. 16 For where envying and ſtrife *is*, there *is* confuſion and every evil work.

Obſerve here, 1. How the apoſtle points at the root of all tongue-evils; we pretend zeal and juſtice, zeal for God, and doing right to ourſelves; but the true cauſe is *envy*, called *bitter envying*, as being bitter in its root, bitter in its fruit, bitter to others, bitter to ourſelves; this is a painful evil, an unprofitable evil, a fooliſh, ſinful evil; it makes another's good our grief. But why ſo? The good of another is no hurt to us; we have not the leſs becauſe another has more: Leah's fruitfulneſs was no cauſe of Rachael's barrenneſs; why then ſhould it be the occaſion of Rachael's envy? Thy portion is not impaired becauſe thy brother's is encreaſed. 2. How envy and ſtrife are here joined together; if you have *envying and ſtrife* in your hearts; when envy is found in the heart, ſtrife will ſoon be found in the tongue, for envy is the mother of ſtrife; natural corruption doth moſt of all bewray itſelf by envy; it has an early ſpring, and a late autumn; we have it as ſoon as we come into the world, and it is an hard matter to leave it before we go out of it again: Children ſuck it in with their milk, and the old man buries it in his coffin. 3. What are the bitter effects and fruits of envy and ſtrife, namely, *confuſion*, and *every evil work*, an envious ſpirit is an unquiet and wicked ſpirit; the devil worketh by no inſtruments more than by envious, diſcontented and malicious perſons: Pride and envy were the two firſt ſins that crept into the world; the firſt man was ruined by pride, the ſecond deſtroyed by envy, the whole world could not hold two brothers when the one was envied by the other: Cain's envy taſted blood, and verily the ſinner's envy thirſts after it; well therefore may the apoſtle ſay, *Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion, and every evil work*, &c.

17 But the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* eaſy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.

Our apoſtle here enters upon a compariſon between earthly wiſdom, and ſpiritual heavenly wiſdom; between wiſdom that is not, and wiſdom that is from above. *Obſerve*, 1. That wiſdom which is not from above characteriſed and deſcribed. (1.) It is *earthly*, it is ſuited to earthly minds, and it is employed about earthly things: Earthly wiſdom is mere folly, it is ſaid to be wiſe only for this world, and to have ſuch an unſavoury ſpirit as will reliſh nothing but what is earthly. (2.) *Senſual:* ſuch wiſdom as tendeth only to gratify the ſenſes, and is converſant about outward pleaſures, which are the pleaſures of the beaſt, and not of the man: Such ſenſual ſatisfactions do only pleaſe the ſenſitive appetite, which it is the higheſt rational pleaſure to mortify and ſubdue. (3.) *Deviliſh*: becauſe it is ſuch wiſdom as is found in the devil: he is only wiſe to do miſchief. As a man has a fleſhly part in common with the beaſt, ſo there are ſome ſins which the ſcripture calls fleſhly and beaſtly luſts, as uncleanneſs, riot, exceſs, and the like; but as man has ſomewhat in common with the angels, namely, his ſpirit and ſoul, ſo there are ſome ſins which are called Satan's luſts, John viii. 44. *His luſts he will do.* Thus envy, pride, wrath, revenge, malice, ſlander, theſe ſins make a man deviliſh, like unto Satan; hence is St. Paul's exhortation, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *To cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit.* Lord, pity the deplorable ruins of mankind, compaſſionate fallen man, who hath not only ſomewhat of the beaſt, but alſo ſomewhat of the devil, in him by nature! O deplorable degradation! And ſhould he ſacrifice himſelf, he could not ſave himſelf without a ſanctifier; he muſt be reſtored to the divine likeneſs here, or never enjoy his Maker hereafter. 2. He next deſcribes *ſpiritual wiſdom* to us, and that, firſt by its original, it is from above: All wiſdom is known by its deſcent; carnal wiſdom is of the earth, earthly; ſpiritual wiſdom is from above, and has an heavenly Author, and its original and deſcent is heavenly: *The wiſdom that is from above.* Secondly, He deſcribes ſpiritual wiſdom by its effects and fruits, by its properties and qualities, and reckons up eight of them. (1.) True wiſdom is *pure* and holy wiſdom, and ſinleſs craftineſs: The heart of ſuch a perſon is clean, though not wholly free from ſin, and his way is undefiled: This pure wiſdom will not brook the filthineſs either of error in judgment, or ſin in practice: Error is a blot as well as ſin, and is as damnable as ſin; the one is an open road, the other a ſecret path to hell and deſtruction; he that is wiſe, and has a due care of his ſoul's ſalvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous principles, as he is of debauched practices. (2.) *Peaceable:* True wiſdom teaches to avoid all ſtrife and contention: There is a ſweet connection between wiſdom and peace; the wiſeſt are the meekeſt men; they are peaceable and peace-makers; not ready to provoke others, nor eaſily provoked themſelves: Such as ſee moſt need of pardon from God, are moſt ready to pardon others, to live peaceably with all: Yet *note*, Though wiſdom be *pure* and *peaceable*, yet it is firſt pure, then peaceable; as God is the firſt and beſt of Beings, ſo purity is the firſt and beſt of bleſſings; the chief care then muſt be for purity and truth; but next to purity we muſt regard peace: Truth muſt be preferred, but peace muſt not be neglected; we muſt treat with God by prayer, and treat with man by condeſcenſion, as far as a good conſcience will ſuffer, for obtaining and preſerving peace. (3.) True wiſdom is *gentle*, in oppoſition to ſtrife and contention; the word alſo ſignifies moderate and patient, Phil. iv. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 3. Such a chriſtian is moderate in doubtful opinions, moderate in his judging of others, moderate and patient in his whole converſation, receding ſometimes from his own right for peace's ſake, (4.) *Eaſy to be entreated:* not inflexible, but perſuadable: He that has an inflexible will, had need have an infallible judgment. Indeed there may be a flexibility and eaſineſs to a fault; ſome good natures (as they are called) are eaſily drawn away to ſin by evil company, and wicked counſel; in ſuch a caſe, to turn a deaf ear to all entreaties is not obſtinacy, but religious reſolution. (5.) *Full of mercy:* this has a double object, ſuch as want, and ſuch as offend; and ſo there is mercy in giving and in forgiving it: It is the glory of a man to paſs by a tranſgreſſion, and the honour of a chriſtian to put on bowels of mercy; without this garment we ſhall appear naked at the bar of God. (6.) *Full of good works:* Religion is not a dry rod, but it bloſſoms and brings forth fruit; fruits of humanity and civil courteſy, as well as fruits of piety and pious charity: When we begin to be religious, we muſt not leave off to be kind and courteous: *Be pitiful, be courteous*, 1 Pet. iii. 8. (7.) *Without partiality:* that is, without making any difference between perſon and perſon, becauſe of outward reſpects, which is an high point of wiſdom; folly diſcovers itſelf in nothing more than by doting upon outward ſplendour. Fools, like children, account nothing good but what is gay; but wiſdom teaches us to value and put an eſtimate upon perſons and things, according to their intrinſic worth, and doth nothing by partiality. (8.) *Without hypocriſy:* In true wiſdom there is no prevailing guile, but a true ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity found with it, and this is the higheſt piece of wiſdom; the hypocrite is the greateſt fool; the ſincere chriſtian is the truly wiſe, and the only wiſe man.

18 And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.

Our apoſtle here concludes his diſcourſe, by ſhewing the happineſs of thoſe who are poſſeſſed of that wiſdom from above, which is *pure* and *peaceable*, &c. They ſow a ſeed which will yield them preſent fruit, and bring ſheaves of joy and comfort into their boſoms, and alſo entitle them to an everlaſting reward in that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs. *Learn* hence, 1. That all the actions of this life are as ſeed ſown for the life to come; and every one's harveſt hereafter will be according to his ſeed-time here; our rewards ſhall be according to our works. 2. That the rewards of righteouſneſs and peaceableneſs are reaped and received here initially, and ſhall be ere long enjoyed perfectly: *The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that love peace.* 3. That true lovers of righteouſneſs ought to be lovers of peace, and peaceable perſons lovers of righteouſneſs; mercy and truth muſt meet together, righteouſneſs and peace muſt kiſs each other: Peace without righteouſneſs is but a ſordid compliance; righteouſneſs without peace is but a rough auſterity; our duty is to couple a ſweet goodneſs with a ſevere righteouſneſs.

CHAP. IV.

Our apoſtle in this chapter diſcovers the root from whence all ſtrife and contention proceeds; namely, from men's carnal luſts and corrupt affections; accordingly thus he ſpeaks:

FROM whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your luſts that war in your members?

The Jews, to whom St. James directed this epiſtle, had at that time great wars and fightings, not only with their neighbours, but even among themſelves; in every city there were *wars and fightings among them.* Now, the apoſtle here puts it to their conſciences to tell and declare whence theſe animoſities and contentions, thoſe wars and fightings, did proceed: *come they not hence, even from your luſts?* Plainly intimating, that the caſe of all civil diſſentions are men's corruptions: War ſtirs firſt within, before it breaks forth without; were there not a fight in ourſelves there would be no fighting with others: Luſt within is the make-bait in all ſocieties and communities without: Pride and covetouſneſs, envy and ambition, make men injurious to one another; worldly and ſenſual luſts firſt war in ourſelves, before they diſturb the common peace.

2 Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not. 3 Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.

The Jews, at the writing of this epiſtle to them, did vehemently luſt after liberty, and freedom from the Roman yoke, and for dominion and government over other nations; believing that their Meſſiah was to be a temporal prince, who ſhould enable them to lord it over the heathen world; "Now, ſays our apoſtle, though you luſt for liberty and dominion, yet you have it not; and though in an eager purſuit after theſe things, ye kill and ſlay, yet you do but loſe your blood and labour, for ye cannot obtain what you thus inordinately ſeek, and irregularly covet; you ſhould go to God in prayer for what you deſire: But if at any time you do pray, it is not in a right manner, with a right intention, and for a right end. It is to conſume it upon your luſts; namely, that having the liberty you deſire, you may poſſeſs the good things of this world you luſt after, and may lord it over the heathen world." *Learn* hence, That we pray amiſs, when our aims and ends are not right in prayer. 2. That then our aims and ends are not right in prayer, when we aſk bleſſings for the uſe and encouragement of our luſts. 3. That prayers ſo framed are uſually ſucceſsleſs; what we aſk amiſs we are ſure to miſs, if the Almighty has any kindneſs for us. In prayer we muſt conſider three things, the object, the manner, and the end: We muſt not only guard our affections, but ſecure our intentions; for prayers that want a good aim, do alſo want a good iſſue: *Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs.*

4 ¶ Ye adulterers, and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? Whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

It is ſpiritual, not corporal adultery, which theſe words take notice of: the inordinate love of this world is called ſpiritual adultery; becauſe it draws away the love of the ſoul from God, and diſſolves the ſpiritual marriage between God and the ſoul: *Ye adulterers and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world*, which ſtands in competition with, and indiſpoſes you for the doing of God's will, *is enmity with God?* and that whoſoever will be thus a friend of the world, is the enemy of God? To love the world as God's competitor, is enmity to God, and he is God's enemy that loveth it predominantly. *Learn* we to love every creature with a creature-love; for God reckons we love him not at all, if we love him not above all.

5 ¶ Doth ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?

Some by the ſpirit here underſtand the holy Spirit of God, and make the words run in the form of an interogation, thus, "The Spirit, that dwelleth in us Chriſtians, luſteth he to envy as yours doth? Nay, rather is he not the Spirit of love and goodneſs?" Others underſtand our own ſpirit; our corrupt nature is mightily carried forth this way, even to envy the good of others: it is uſual in ſcripture to call the bent and propenſions of the ſoul, either to good or evil, by the name of a ſpirit. *Note* hence, That God's own people have much, too much, of a ſpirit of envy remaining in them, unmortified and unſubdued by them: *The ſpirit that is in us luſteth to envy.*

6 But he giveth more grace, wherefore he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

The ſin of envy being cenſured before, our apoſtle next condemns the ſin of pride; he uſes a military term when he tells us, that *God reſiſteth the proud*; it ſignifies, that he ſets himſelf as in battle-array againſt the proud, in a direct oppoſition to him; there are no ſort of ſinners whom God ſets himſelf ſo much againſt to puniſh and plague as proud ſinners: ſuch are wholly out of his favour; he beholdeth them afar off, and they are ſubjects of his high diſpleaſure; like naked men in an army, they ſtand expoſed to his wrath, they have no ſhelter, nothing to keep off the threatening from them: for there can be no ſhelter from divine wrath, but in divine love. There are two eminent works of divine providence in the world, the one is to lift up and exalt the humble, the other is to abaſe and pull down the proud; ſome pride themſelves in their natural parts, others in their acquired parts; ſome in their moral virtues and evangelical graces, others in their holy duties and ſpiritual performances; we ſeldom do well, but we think too well of ourſelves. *Learn* hence, That pride is a common ſin, and provoking; yea, a very provoking ſin, and ſo muſt needs be, becauſe it is an uſurpation of the place and power of God, and ſets itſelf againſt all the commands and threatenings of God: *God reſiſteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble: grace*, that is, 1. Favour; the humble ſhall have his favour, and the proud his frown. 2. God giveth grace, that is, more grace, farther meaſures of grace, to the humble; as we lay up our richeſt wines in the loweſt cellars, ſo does God lodge his choiceſt graces in humble and lowly hearts; he giveth not only grace, but more grace, to the humble; ſuch as are low in their own eyes, are under the ſpecial protection and direction of the Moſt High God.

7 Submit yourſelves therefore to God. Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you.

That is, "Submit to his government and authority, to his preceptive and commanding will, and to his providential and diſpoſing will: ſubmit yourſelves to the guidance of his word, to the direction of his Spirit, to the conduct of his providence; ſubmit your whole ſelves to the whole law and will of God; let all your thoughts, affections, words, and actions, be guided according to the ſtrict rules of the word of God; but *reſiſt the devil*, by no means do not ſubmit or yield an inch to him; the only way to overcome Satan is, not by yielding to him, but by reſiſting and oppoſing of him; Satan is both a conquered enemy and a cowardly enemy, though he has a bold face, yet a faint heart; *reſiſt him, and he will flee from you. Obſerve* here, 1. The devil's active enmity and continual hoſtility againſt man, implied and ſuppoſed: Satan is continually buſy with us, that is, the apoſtate ſpirit, and the ſpirit of apoſtaſy lodged in our natures: Where-ever we ſee malice, revenge, envy, hatred, pride, and ſelf-love, there is that evil ſpirit which is ſo inimical and injurious to us, that is, *Venenum ſerpentis diabolici*, "The ſting and poiſon, the very ſoul and ſpirit of the apoſtate nature." 2. The chriſtian's duty diſcovered, and that is, not to yield but reſiſt and oppoſe; we muſt either reſiſt him, or be taken captive by him; if we do not reſiſt him, we ſhall never get rid of him; if once we parly and treat with him, we muſt expect to be triumphed over, and trampled upon by him. 3. The certainty of ſucceſs declared, *he will flee from you*; every denial is a diſcouragement to Satan, the ſtrength of his temptations lies in our treachery and falſeneſs; we are falſe within ourſelves, otherwiſe all his power and malice could not hurt us; however, if we continue our reſiſtance, the holy Spirit will come in with his aſſiſtance, he will be our ſecond in the field, and we ſhall find, that ſtronger is he that is in us, than he that is is in the world; the God of peace will bruiſe Satan under our feet ſhortly.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you—

Obſerve here, 1. Man by nature, ſince his fall, is afar of from God, not barely by a natural diſtance as a creature, but alſo by a moral diſtance as a ſinner; God made man near him, but when man ſinned he departed from him; now we draw nigh to God by converſion, and in all the actings of repentance: there is a firſt and a ſecond converſion; a firſt converſion from a ſinful ſtate, a ſecond converſion from ſinful acts, by both we draw nigh to God; but the drawing nigh to God here principally intended, is by approaching to him in prayer, and in the uſe of every holy ordinance: and humbling of the ſoul before God, is a drawing nigh unto him; hence it is that good men delight ſo much in prayer, and other holy duties; they meet with God in them, and draw near to God by them; and they that meet with God, meet with all delights. 2. As the duty required, *draw nigh to God*, ſo the encouragement annexed, *he will draw nigh to you*: God will certainly draw nigh to that chriſtian, in a way of mercy, who prepareth his heart to approach and draw near to him in a way of duty: the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him; nigh to comfort, nigh to quicken, nigh to guide, nigh to ſupport.

—Cleanſe *your* hands ye ſinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double-minded.

Mark! to ſignify to us our deep pollution, and univerſal pollution; we are called upon both to cleanſe and to purify, and that both our hands and our hearts. *Queſt.* But why is cleanſing of the hands ſet before purifying the heart? muſt we ſweeten the ſtreams before the fountain? *Anſ.* It is not unuſual in ſcripture to put that firſt which is viſible firſt, as *calling* before *election*, 2 Pet. i. 10. And becauſe grace (having once entered into the heart) diſcovers itſelf by an immediate cleanſing of the hands; ſo that if we would have an holy life, we muſt get a clean heart. *Learn*, 1. That unclean perſons can have no communion with God. 2. That they who draw nigh to God, muſt cleanſe their hands; becauſe the ſins of our hands do keep us at a diſtance from God, and God at a diſtance from us. Commerce with God in an ordinance is one thing, and communion with him is another; a man may have a commerce or trade with an enemy for profit-ſake, whilſt he refuſes to hold communion with him in a way of friendſhip and intimacy of acquaintance. 3. That double-minded men have corrupt hearts: double-mindedneſs is a dividing of the heart between God and ſomething elſe; whereas God calls for the whole heart, the whole mind, the whole ſoul, the whole ſtrength. 4. That this double-mindedneſs hinders both our drawing nigh to God, and God's drawing nigh to us; an heart divided between God and the world, between conſcience and luſt, between religion and ſelf-intereſt, will hinder all intercourſe and ſweet communion betwixt God and us in the duty of prayer.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your
laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to
heavineſs. 10 Humble yourſelves in the ſight of
the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

The next duty we are exhorted to by the apoſtle, is a deep humiliation, and a voluntary afflicting of our ſouls before God for ſin, and upon the account of any calamity, either on ourſelves or others. *Learn* hence, That as the afflicting hand of God does increaſe upon a perſon, a family, or a people, ſo ought the humiliation and mourning of that perſon, family, or people, to increaſe; we ought not only to be humbled when God afflicts, but alſo to be humbled in proportion to what God inflicts; great afflictions call for great humiliations: woe to that perſon, that family, or that people, who will not be afflicted when God afflicts them, nor humble themſelves, when God humbles them; who, when God caſts them down, will hold up their heads in mirth and jollity: God loves to ſee us bear our croſs, but he cannot endure to ſee us make ſport with it, or ſlight of it: If God once perceives us driving away our ſorrow with harp and viol, or drowning it with wine, he can quickly turn our wine into water, and our laughter into the voice of weeping: Now is it not better to turn our mirth into mourning, than to have God turn it into mourning? They who turn their mirth into mourning, ſhall find comfort after their mourning; but they ſhall know nothing but mourning, whoſe mirth God turns into mourning: *be afflicted*, therefore, *and mourn and weep*. *Queſt.* But how comes the apoſtle to make uſe of ſo many words to one purpoſe, *be afflicted, mourn, weep, humble yourſelves*, &c.? *Anſ.* All theſe heaps of expreſſions do import and imply, 1. The neceſſity of the duty. 2. The difficulty of the duty. 3. The continuance of the duty, and accordingly much enforcement is neceſſary; fleſh and blood loves pleaſure, but declines ſorrow and heavineſs; nature loves no bitter draughts, though bitter things are ſometimes the beſt things; therefore the apoſtle's call to afflict our ſouls, and humble ourſelves in the ſight of God is repeated; and mark the encouragement given thus to do, *humble yourſelves in the ſight of God, and he ſhall lift you up*: Submiſſion and humility is the true way to exaltation and glory; the way to riſe is to fall: *He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted*, Luke xiv. 11. *He ſhall lift thee up in due time*, 1 Pet. v. 6. Wait God's leiſure, and the promiſe ſhall ſurely be fulfilled; the world looketh upon humility as the way to contempt, but God pronounces it the way to honour; *before honour is humility*.

11 ¶ Speak not evil one of another, brethren.
He that ſpeaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth *his*
brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the
law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer
of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver,
who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy. Who art thou
that judgeſt another?

Theſe words, as generally delivered by our apoſtle, are a diſſuaſive from the ſin of detraction, or ſpeaking evil of one another, either by ſecret whiſpering, or open backbiting; a very common but moſt unbecoming ſin amongſt

Chriſtians. What pleaſure do ſome perſons take in divulging the faults of others, in aggravating their faults, in defrauding them of their neceſſary excuſe and mitigation, though at the ſame time they are conſcious of it, by leſſening their good actions through the ſuppoſition of their falſe aims and ends! It is an injurious and unworthy jealouſy, when a perſon's actions are fair, to ſuſpect his intentions, by mentioning his failings, but ſuppreſſing his worth and excellencies: It becomes chriſtians neither to give way to this growing evil themſelves, nor give ear to it in others. But there ſeems to be ſomething ſpecial and particular in theſe words, which reſpects the Jews, to whom this epiſtle is directed; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Give over your reproach and cenſoriouſneſs againſt the Gentile chriſtians, who do not obſerve your ceremonial law, your feaſts, your ſabbath, your circumciſion; for both the law of Chriſt, and the law of Moſes, which you profeſs to own, do bind you to love your neighbour as yourſelf, and forbids ſuch uncharitable cenſures: So that by condemning your brethren, you condemn the law, and ſet yourſelves above it; and all this in contempt of the law, and the Lawgiver, who is one, and is able both to ſave and to deſtroy." There are ſome that are neither able to ſave nor to deſtroy; there are others ably to deſtroy, but cannot ſave. Satan is a deſtroyer, but he cannot ſave any, nor can he deſtroy all; if he could, none ſhould be ſaved. But there is a Lawgiver, who can ſave and deſtroy, who can give life, and take it away, and both as often as he will: He can ſave thoſe that obey his laws, and deſtroy all thoſe that tranſgreſs them: Therefore, ſeeing Chriſt, and none but Chriſt, has authority to give laws, it is not for you to impoſe ceremonial obſervances upon your brethren, and to cenſure and judge them for not obſerving them, when Chriſt has ſet them at liberty from the obſervation of them.

13 Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day, or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain. 14 Whereas ye know not what *ſhall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. 15 For that ye *ought* to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings. All ſuch rejoicing is evil.

For the clearer underſtanding of theſe words, conſider, 1. What is not here forbidden or condemned by our apoſtle; namely, prudential reſolutions for a right management of human affairs: It is lawful for men to take up a purpoſe to go to ſuch a place, and follow their trade there, to buy, and ſell, and get gain in an honeſt way; but no man muſt be peremptory in this, becauſe we know not what ſhall be on the morrow, ſuch determinations muſt be made with ſubmiſſion to divine providence: *If the Lord will, we ſhall do this, or that*, referring all to his pleaſure, who alone doth whatſoever pleaſeth him. 2. What is hereby intimated to us, and what is the duty incumbent upon us, namely, (1.) That we have no aſſurance of our lives, nor of any of the comforts of our lives, for one day, and therefore ought to refer all our actions, our enterpriſes, and undertakings to the will of God. *What is your life?* &c. (2.) That in regard of the great frailty of our lives, and the great uncertainty of iſſues and events, it is the height of preſumption to promiſe ourſelves great things, without the leave of God's providence; as our times are in God's hands, ſo are our actions alſo in God's power, both as to the performance of them, and as to the ſucceſs of them: *Say not then, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into ſuch a city*, &c.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is ſin.

Obſerve here, 1. That ſins of ignorance are ſins, and render men greatly culpable, though ignorance will in ſome degree leſſen their puniſhment. 2. That to ſin againſt light and knowledge is a very heinous aggravation of ſin; becauſe the knowledge of our duty lays us under the greateſt obligation to do it. 3. That the greater advantages and opportunities any man has of knowing his duty; and the more knowledge he ſins againſt in not doing of it, the greater is his ſin, and the more grievous will be his condemnation.

CHAP. V.

GO to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon *you*. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.

Theſe words may be conſidered either relatively or abſolutely. Conſider them, 1. With relation to the Jews, to whom they were written immediately, and they are a prediction or denunciation of that judgment which was coming upon the rich men of the Jewiſh nation; which prediction, Joſephus aſſures us, was fulfilled by the ſlaughter and ſpoiling of the rich Jews throughout Galilee and Judea, the zealots ſparing none but the poor and low: Thus did the vengeance of God, and does to this day purſue and follow that wicked people, who killed the Lord of life, and their own prophets, who brought judgment on themſelves to the uttermoſt. Conſider the words abſolutely in themſelves, and they are a ſevere and cutting reprehenſion to covetous rich men, for the ſordid ſparing of that wealth which God had given them for public ſervice. And the apoſtle gives us, (1.) A deſcription of their ſin. (2.) A declaration of their puniſhment. *Obſerve*, 1. A deſcription of the ſin of the covetous rich worldlings, they choſe rather to have their goods to be corrupted and ſpoiled, than to be employed to good uſes; their victuals might have refreſhed the bowels of the hungry, but they rather ſuffered them to putrify and ſtink; the garments which lay uſeleſs in their wardrobes, might have clothed the backs of their naked brethren, but they had rather let them be moth-eaten; their gold and ſilver might have been applied to many good uſes, but they had rather it ſhould be cankered, and ruſt in their cheſts. 2. The puniſhment denounced againſt them for this their ſin, the ruſt of their gold and ſilver *ſhall* *witneſs againſt them*; that is, their conſciences ſhall at once convince them of their baſe covetouſneſs, and torment them for it; and this corroding of their conſciences, ſhall have an impreſſion upon their bodies, it ſhall eat their fleſh as it were fire; and all that treaſure which, with wrong to others, and violation to their own conſciences, they had heaped together, was but heaped up for the ſpoiler, and the violence of the laſt days. *Learn*, 1. That it is hard to poſſeſs riches without ſin, an hard matter to have them, and not to be hindered from heaven by them. 2. That a covetous hoarding, and ſordid ſparing of wealth, which our ſuffering brethren want, brings a curſe both upon our perſons and eſtates. 3. That ſore miſeries, and dreadful judgments, ſhall come upon wicked rich men, which, if believingly apprehended, would cauſe them now to weep and howl. We do not hurt with our wealth, ſay ſome; aye, but what good do you do with it: Where are the poor members of Chriſt, whom ye have relieved with the ſuperfluities of your table? But can many ſay truly, They have done no harm with their eſtates? Lord! What careleſſneſs in religion; what contempt of God, what riot and exceſs, is found amongſt many that abound in wealth, who expend more upon a luſt in one day, than would maintain a poor family many years. 4. That in the day of judgment, not only our actions, but all the circumſtances of our actions, ſhall be brought forth, and produced as arguments of conviction; the ruſty iron, the cankered ſilver, the moth eaten clothes, ſhall be produced; the ſtones of the wall, built by oppreſſion, ſhall cry, "Lord, we were built by oppreſſion and violence; and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it, *True, Lord, even ſo it is*, Hab. ii. 11. The circumſtances of men's ſins at the great day will be ſo many memorials to put them in mind of guilt, and God in mind of vengeance.

4 Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

The next ſin which our apoſtle convicts the rich of, and condemns them for, is the ſin of oppreſſion, and of the worſt ſort, even of labourers and ſervants; their covetouſneſs was the cauſe of this oppreſſion. There is no ſin ſo heinous and baſe but covetouſneſs may be a mother or a nurſe to it; what more ſordid than for the rich maſter to detain the wages of the poor labourer? Yet, *Behold the hire of the labourers crieth:* though they did not, durſt not complain, yet their hire kept back did complain. *Learn* hence, That as all oppreſſion is very ſinful, ſo eſpecially the detaining of the labourers wages when their hire is delayed or denied, both are exceeding ſinful; and accordingly we find oppreſſors in ſcripture joined with the vileſt of ſinners, even with ſorcerers, adulterers, and falſe ſwearers. And to teſtify that God cannot want witneſſes againſt oppreſſors, he tells us, their hire ſhall cry as well as the poor themſelves: "The beam, and the ſtone out of the wall ſhall cry," Hab. ii. Remember we then that ſecret wrongs are known to God: the poor may not always know who wrongs them, but the Lord fully knows, and their wrongs and oppreſſions will cry againſt us, when they know not againſt whom to cry. And *note*, The perſon glorioully deſcribed who is the poor's avenger; he is the *Lord of Sabaoth*, or the Lord of hoſts, who has all power in his hand, and all creatures at his command. How bold and daring then is the oppreſſor to afflict the poor, who have the Lord of hoſts for their avenger?

5 Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nouriſhed your hearts as in a day of ſlaughter.

The next ſin he charges upon them, is ſenſuality, luxury, laſciviouſneſs, their eating and drinking to exceſs in their feaſts, pampering themſelves for the ſlaughter and the ſhambles. Theſe are ſins very natural to corrupt nature, but chiefly incident to the rich. Pride, idleneſs, fulneſs of bread, and living in pleaſure, are too frequently ſins that do abound in rich men's houſes; though their abundance is no excuſe, but rather an aggravation of their ſin. God allows us to uſe pleaſure, but not to live in pleaſures; and by calling it pleaſure upon earth, he intimates, 1. That ſenſual delights are only enjoyed here in this world: 2. That their deſires ran after theſe earthly pleaſures only: The pleaſures of the beaſt only pleaſed them; whereas the delights of ſenſe are ſo far from being the chief pleaſures for which God deſigned us, that on the contrary, he intended we ſhould take our chief pleaſure, not in gratifying, but in reſtraining our ſenſual appetite, in reducing that rebellious power under the government and dominion of reaſon and religion.

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the juſt; *and* he doth not reſiſt you.

By the *juſt*, may be underſtood *Jeſus Chriſt*, that *juſt One*, whom the nation of the Jews condemned and killed; and alſo ſuch of his members, orthodox chriſtians, whom the judaizing chriſtians perſecuted. By their *condemning the juſt*, underſtand how they proceeded againſt them under a pretence and colour of law; before they would actually kill, they pretended legally to condemn. *Learn* thence, That God takes notice not only of the open violence offered to his people, but alſo of all the injuries done unto them under the form of a legal procedure; it is a mighty provocation when public authority, which is the defence of innocency, is made the pretence of oppreſſion: It follows, *Ye have killed the juſt:* This is added to let us know that oppreſſion will proceed as far as death. Wickedneſs knoweth no bounds; good men are oft-times arraigned, condemned, and killed; they fall a ſacrifice to the rage of their perſecutors and oppreſſors. It is added, *He doth not reſiſt you*; which if applied to Chriſt, points at his meekneſs; he was ſlain without reſiſtance; he came to ſuffer, therefore would not reſiſt. If applied to ſufferings chriſtians, it points at their weakneſs and inability to make reſiſtance, as well as at their meekneſs and patience under ſufferings.

7 ¶ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter

rain. 8 Be ye alſo patient; eſtabliſh your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Obſerve here, 1. The duty exhorted to, *patience: Be patient, brethren.* Patience is a ſenſe of afflictions without murmuring, and of injuries without revenge. It is the duty of chriſtians to be patient under their ſufferings, though they be long and ſharp. 2. The argument to enforce this duty, *The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* This may be underſtood of Chriſt's particular coming to judge his murderers at Jeruſalem, which was then at hand, or of his general coming to judge the world at the laſt day. As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Have a little patience, and when your Lord cometh, he will put a period to all your afflictions; with deſire long for his coming, and yet with patience wait for it." 3. A pattern of patience, propounded in the huſbandman, he waiteth, and waiteth long for the time of harveſt; and in order thereunto, for the former and latter rain, to prepare the corn for the day of a joyful harveſt. Now, in imitation of the huſbandman, the patient chriſtian thus argues with himſelf: "If the huſbandman waits with patience for the coming of the harveſt, ſhall not I wait with perſeverance for the coming of my Lord? The approach of harveſt is precious to him, and ſhall not the appearance of Chriſt be ſo to me? Shall he endure ſo much for a little corn, and not I much more for an heavenly kingdom?" 4. The direction given in order to the obtaining of this patience and long-ſuffering, *eſtabliſh your arguments*; that is, in a firm expectation of Chriſt's coming, believe that he will come certainly, and may come ſuddenly, and ſooner perhaps than you may apprehend. *Learn* hence, That it is the duty of chriſtians, in and under their afflictions to ſtabliſh their hearts in a firm belief of the coming and appearance of Chriſt, to put a final period to all their ſufferings, and to reward their victorious faith and patience.

9 Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be condemned: behold, the judge ſtandeth before the door.

Obſerve here, 1. A prohibition, *Grudge not one againſt another*; that is, do not murmur or repine, groan or grieve, as impatient men uſe to do under their preſſure; complain not of God, becauſe the time of your deliverance is delayed: thirſt not after revenge againſt your perſecutors, and envy not thoſe who are excerciſed with fewer troubles than yourſelves: *grudge not.* 2. The enforcement of this prohibition from the danger of the fact, *leſt ye be condemned.* As if he had ſaid, "Impatience and diſcontent, envy and diſtruſt, will expoſe you to greater miſeries than you complain of: Your ſufferings here are but for your probation, but your grudging and repining will be your condemnation." 3. The anticipation or foreſtalling of an objection, which ſome might make? "What! muſt we ſuffer, and may we not complain? Muſt we, by tamely bearing many affronts, invite more, and revenge none?" Yes, ſays the apoſtle, be patient, and commit your cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly; for *behold the Judge ſtandeth before the door.* Where *note*, 1. A Judge, the ſupreme and univerſal Judge, Jeſus Chriſt, who was here judged by his creatures, but now is coming to judge his judges. 2. His poſture, *He ſtandeth*, which is the Judge's poſture when he executes judgment. St. Stephen ſaw Chriſt ſtanding, Acts vii. 55. at God's right hand; not as an advocate to plead his cauſe, (Chriſt is ſaid to ſit at God's right hand when he does that) but he ſtood now as a Judge, to take ſpeedy vengeance on St. Stephen's murderers for that bloody act. 3. The place where the Judge ſtandeth, *before the door*; that is, he is coming to judgment, and he is juſt at hand; he has put on his robes, and is aſcending his tribunal. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The note of attention, *Behold!* this uſhers in the whole, *Behold the Judge ſtandeth at the door.* *Learn* hence, That the conſideration of Chriſt's near approach to judgment ſhould awe the conſciences of men, and mould their converſations into a dutiful compliance with divine commands.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience.

Here the apoſtle exhorts ſuffering Chriſtians to patience, by the example of the Old Teſtament ſaints, who were exceeding dear to God, employed in ſpecial ſervices for God, yet exerciſed with long and ſharp afflictions from him. Now, their nature was as tender and as frail as ours, and we have the ſame bleſſed Spirit to comfort and aſſiſt us with them. *Note* thence, 1. That the examples of excellent perſons who have gone in the thorny path of affliction before us, and beaten it for us, are of excellent uſe to ſuppreſs our fears, to ſupport our ſpirits under all our conflicts, and to rouze our courage in all our encounters. 2. That it is our great duty to eye the encouraging examples of thoſe that have trod the path of ſufferings before us, and ſtrive to imitate and follow ſuch worthy patterns. The firſt ſufferers had the hardeſt taſk; ſtrange and untried torments are moſt terrible; they knew not the ſtrength of their enemy which they were to engage: but we fight with an enemy that has been often beaten and triumphed over by our brethren that went before us; certainly we that live in theſe laſt times have the beſt helps that ever any had to ſubdue our fears: *Take we* then *the prophets*, and primitive ſaints, *for an example*, both of grievous ſufferings, and of great patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure.---

That is, "All perſons do judge and pronounce thoſe that have ſuffered death, for righteouſneſs ſake, to be in a very happy condition; though they live perſecuted, yet they die ſainted. Living ſaints are an eye-ſore; by the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and the ſeverity of their reproofs, they torment a wicked world; but dead ſaints do not ſtand in the way of their luſts, they will therefore have a good word for the dead ſaints, whilſt they hate and perſecute the living.

—Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

That is, "Ye have heard how eminent Job was, both for his ſufferings and his patience, and you have ſeen (it is ſet before your eyes in his ſtory) what an end the Lord made with him, giving him double in this world for what he loſt; therefore, though you may be loſers for God, yet fear not that you ſhall be loſers by him." *Learn* hence, 1. That it is good and uſeful in our afflictions, to propound Job's pattern and example to our own imitation. He was famous for his ſufferings, and as famous for his patience: Do you ſuffer various kinds of affliction? Do you ſuffer in your body, in your ſpirit, in your neareſt relations, in your deareſt of earthly comforts? And under all theſe do you ſuffer the heavieſt cenſures for hypocriſy? It is but Job's portion, and if you compare notes, not half of his condition neither: ſo for his patience, let us propound that for our pattern too, and take this encouragement to do it, namely, that though Job diſcovered much impatience, curſing the day of his birth, &c. yet that is not here mentioned, but mercifully pitied, and pardoned, and graciouſly overlooked. Where the heart is upright with God, infirmities are not mentioned by him. 2. That our afflictions ought not ſo much to be conſidered in their nature and beginning, as in their iſſue and end: *You have ſeen the end of the Lord.* God gives always a gracious end, and a glorious end, to the afflictions of his people, and ſometimes a temporal end alſo. Job had all theſe: let us, under the rod, wait upon God with Job's patience, and he will give us Job's end. 3. What an affectionate regard God bears to his children, in and under all their heavy ſufferings; he is full of bowels, as the word ſignifies, truly compaſſionate, *very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* As he has pardon for their ſins, ſo he has pity for their afflictions; he is pitiful as well as merciful, yea, very pitiful, and of tender mercy. *Obſerve,* laſtly, That the book of Job is a real hiſtory, not a parable. There was ſuch a man as Job, how elſe could his patience be propounded as a pattern? And whence is it that we find him numbered with Noah and Daniel? Ezek. xiv. 14. As they were real perſons, and truly prevalent in prayer, ſo was he, Job. xlii. 10.

12 ¶ But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation.

Obſerve, That an oath here is not abſolutely forbidden, but reſtrained: *Above all things my brethren.* *Note,* With what vehemency and earneſtneſs the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Swear not,* that is, ſwear not vainly and raſhly, ſwear not lightly, and prophanely, ſwear not unduly by any of the creatures, (but by the Creator only) which was a ſin that the Jews were dreadfully guilty of: *But let your yea be yea; and your nay nay:* accuſtom yourſelves to a true ſimplicity and plainneſs of ſpeech, in affirming or denying, letting oaths alone, *leſt ye fall into condemnation*; that is, plainly, into the condemnation of hell. *Learn* hence, 1. That raſh and vain ſwearing or prophane oaths, are an high abuſe of the dreadful name of God, and a mighty provocation to him: verily there is no ſin that doth more weary the patience of God, becauſe there is no ſin that doth more baniſh the fear of God out of our hearts. 2. That the great end of ſpeech being to communicate the ſenſe of our minds to each other, we ought to uſe ſuch plainneſs and ſimplicity in ſpeaking, that we may believe one another without oaths, or more ſolemn religious aſſeverations. But yet, 3. To take an oath upon a ſolemn occaſion, when lawfully called thereunto, is a chriſtian and neceſſary duty.

13 ¶ Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.--

Here *obſerve,* 1. That affliction is a praying ſeaſon. Prayer is a duty never out of ſeaſon, but never more in ſeaſon than in and under affliction. 2. That though the time of affliction be a ſpecial time when a ſaint prayeth, yet it is not the only time, he prays at all times, becauſe he loves to pray; he prays then, becauſe he eſpecially ſtands then in need of prayer. A carnal heart has no mind to the duty; he viſits not God unleſs God viſits him; but a good man prays continually, prays without ceaſing, in health and ſickneſs, in poverty and want; when the candle of the Lord ſhines about his tabernacle, as well as when he walketh through darkneſs.

--- Is any merry? let him ſing pſalms.

He that prays, makes muſic in the ears of God: he that ſings pſalms, performs a duty ſuitable to his condition. Several conditions require ſeveral duties, and all duties are to be performed ſuitably to our ſeveral conditions. Singing is proper to a proſperous ſtate; both to ſing God's praiſes, and to ſing to his praiſe; prayer is proper to an afflicted condition; it is our beſt remedy, becauſe it leads us to God our beſt refuge: therefore, if any be afflicted, let him pray to God to alleviate and ſanctify his affliction. *Is any merry? let him ſing pſalms* of praiſe to that God who hath given him this cheerfulneſs of ſpirit.

14 Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him,---

Some *obſerve,* 1. That St. James doth not ſay, "Is any man ſick? let him pray;" but let him ſend for others to pray with him, and for him; plainly ſuppoſing that the ſick man is very unfit to pray himſelf, or to pray for himſelf; in other afflictions let him pray, but in ſickneſs let others pray for him, he having enough to do to grapple with his grief, and to conflict with his affliction: a diſeaſed body unfits the mind for holy duties. Yet, 2. It is one thing to want an heart in ſickneſs to pray for ourſelves, and another thing to want ability to pray for ourſelves. Many deſire the prayers of others in ſickneſs, who wanted hearts to pray for themſelves in health. This is a ſad ſymptom that the ſoul is as ſick, yea, more dangerouſly ſick than the body. Add to this, that the prayers of others are very rarely beneficial to us, unleſs we pray, or have a deſire to pray, for ourſelves. 3. The ſick man's duty, not only to deſire prayer, but to ſend to the elders of the church to pray for him, and with him, *Queſt.* But if the ſick neglect to ſend, may the miniſter neglect to go, if he knows of the ſickneſs? Doubtleſs we ought to go, if we know of it, whether they ſend or not, for they want our prayers and help moſt when they deſire it leaſt; and by refuſing to go, we may loſe the laſt, and perhaps the beſt opportunity of doing good unto them. If our people, through ſtupidity and inſenſibleneſs, omit their duty in ſending for us, God forbid, that, either through pride or ſluggiſhneſs, we ſhould neglect our duty in going to them; too, too often we never hear our people are ſick, till the bell tells us they are dead: if therefore by any means we gain the knowledge of their condition, let us apply ourſelves with all our might to their conſciences, leſt God be more angry with us for not going to them, than with them for not ſending for us, imitating our Lord, who was found of them that ſought him not. *Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him.*

---Anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord:

Some make this anointing with oil to be a medicinal practice among the Jews, and that they adminiſtered it phyſically: but why then muſt the elders adminiſter it? The phyſician might have done it as well as they. True, but the elders are ſent for, that they, applying this corporal remedy, might join with it ſpiritual phyſic, or prayer, good admonition and comfort. As if a ſick perſon ſhould ſend for the miniſter at his taking of phyſic, that he might then pray with him, counſel, and comfort him. Others make this anointing with oil a religious act. Chriſt empowered his apoſtles to work miracles, and, amongſt others, they had the gift of healing the ſick, whom they anointed in the name of the Lord, or by the authority of the Lord; but the goſpel being ſufficiently confirmed, this gift of healing is ceaſed, and therewith the rite of anointing; therefore the church of Rome keep up an idle ceremony in anointing the ſick, unleſs they had a miraculous power to heal the ſick: to keep up the rite, unleſs they could produce the effect; to pretend to the anointing, without the power of healing, is a mere piece of pageantry; beſides, they anoint thoſe that are given over for dead, and the apoſtle's anointing was for the benefit of the living, as appears by the following verſe.

15 And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up;---

Here our apoſtle ſhews the good effects of this anointing and praying: yet *note*, that he aſcribes the ſick man's recovery, not to the oil, but to the prayer: *the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick*. The moral means is taken notice of before the ritual and ceremonial: *the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick*. There was required to the miracle faith, both in the elder, and in the ſick perſon, to *ſave*, that is, to recover the ſick; yet mark, it is ſaid, *the Lord ſhall raiſe him up*, to note, that the efficacy of faith lies in the object of faith; it is not faith properly, but God called upon in faith that ſaveth the ſick; the efficacy of faith is not from its own merit, but from God's power and grace.

---And if he have committed ſins, they ſhall be forgiven him.

If he has committed ſins: why, is there any queſtion to be made of that? No; but if he has committed ſuch ſins as brought this ſickneſs upon him, they ſhall be forgiven him, upon this prayer of faith: if any ſpecial or particular ſin has drawn down this diſeaſe upon him, it ſhall be remitted, and the diſeaſe removed; where the ſickneſs is by way of chaſtiſement, the healing is a teſtimony of God's forgiveneſs. *Learn* hence, How abſurd is the popiſh ſacrament of *extreme unction*; how can they gather a perpetual ordinance from an action that was extraordinary and miraculous, and long ſince ceaſed? Or apply a ſacrament to dying perſons, from a rite uſed upon perſons who were not to die, but to be raiſed from ſickneſs? Or how can they promiſe to him forgiveneſs of ſins, to whom they cannot promiſe that recovery which was the token of it.

16 Confeſs *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.---

Note here, 1. That there is a time and ſeaſon when it is our duty to confeſs our ſins, not only to God, but to one another, to a pious and prudent miniſter, to an injured and wronged neighbour, to thoſe that have been tempted by us, and have conſented with us in ſinning. 2. How abſurdly the papiſts ground their practice of auricular confeſſion upon this text, here is not one word ſpoken of a prieſt, nor of our confeſſing to him; and if ſo, the text proves it the prieſt's duty to confeſs to the people, as much as the people's to confeſs to the prieſt, for the duty required is mutual, *confeſs one to another:* accordingly the words are generally underſtood of confeſſing private injuries one to another; that the ſick perſon muſt reconcile himſelf to his neighbour as well as to God, that he may recover; for ſo it follows, *pray for one another, that ye may be healed*; intimating, that it is the duty of chriſtians to confeſs their miſcarriages and private injuries one to another, and by their prayers to ſuccour, help, and relieve each other; it is the duty of the ſtrong to pray for the weak, and the ſtrong may be ſtrengthened by the prayers of the weak.

---The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Obſerve here, 1. The qualification of that prayer, which at that time was effectual for the recovery of the ſick perſon in a miraculous manner, it may be rendered an inſpired prayer; as they that were acted by the evil ſpirits, ſo ſuch as were moved by the impulſes of the Holy Spirit, were called Ενεργουμένοι, in a good ſenſe, the phraſe properly ſignifies a prayer inwardly wrought and excited, and implies the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit, and the force and vehemency of a chriſtian's ſpirit and affection exerted and put forth in the duty; in wrought prayer, or prayer that works in and upon our hearts, has a mighty prevalency with God. 2. The qualification of the perſon praying, *a righteous man*, not legally righteous, one in a ſtate of ſinleſs perfection, but a perſon juſtified by faith, and whoſe faith is fruitful in good works. 3. The prevalency and efficacy of ſuch a perſon's prayer; *it availeth much:* he doth not ſay how much, that is better experienced than expreſſed; it availeth much for ourſelves, ſometimes more for others than for ourſelves. *Note*, That the fervent prayers and interceſſions of the righteous have a mighty prevalency with God, both for themſelves and others.

17 Elias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Our apoſtle in theſe words proves the general propoſition he had laid down, that the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, by a particular inſtance, the example of Elias: who ſeemed to carry the keys of heaven at his girdle, to ſhut and open heaven at his pleaſure, 1 Kings xvii. 1. *As the Lord liveth, there ſhall not be dew nor rain, but according to my word:* The apoſtle here tells us what word this was, namely, a word of prayer, and not a word of command: *Elias prayed, and the heaven gave rain:* he *prayed in prayer,* ſo the original; that is, he prayed with faith and fervency, according to the will of God revealed to him; and though he was a man ſubject to the common infirmities of human nature with ourſelves, yet his paſſions did not hinder the prevalency of his prayers; nothing has wrought ſuch wonderful effects in the world as prayer; it made the ſun ſtand ſtill in heaven; it brought fire out of heaven, 2 Kings i. 10. and here it ſhut up the windows of heaven, that it rained not for the ſpace of three years and ſix months: It has a divine kind of omnipotency in it.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

Our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle with an exhortation to the duty of fraternal correption and chriſtian admonition: "If, ſays he, any one among you, who hath made an outward profeſſion of chriſtianity, ſhall, for fear of perſecution, or otherwiſe, turn aſide from the rule of the goſpel, whether in matters of faith or practice, ſuch a perſon, either miniſter or private chriſtian, as ſhall be inſtrumental, by prayer, reproof, or counſel, to recover him out of that wandering and backſliding condition, ſhall have the honour to *ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*; that is, he ſhall be a means of bringing him to a ſight of his ſins, and to ſeek pardon for them, which is the only true and happy way of hiding and of covering them. *Learn* hence, 1. It is not ſufficient that every one takes care of his own ſoul, but he muſt alſo watch over the ſouls of others; there is no brother ſo mean in the chriſtian church, but the care of his ſalvation belongeth to all in the chriſtian communion. *Learn*, 2. What great honour God puts upon the creature, in calling him a ſaviour to a reſtored and converted brother, he *ſhall ſave a ſoul from* death: but when God puts the glory of his own work upon the head of the creature, what cauſe has he to lay the crown of his excellency at the foot of God? When the honour of the ſupreme Cauſe is put upon the inſtrument, the inſtrument ought to aſcribe all the efficacy and efficiency to the firſt Cauſe, ſaying, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the praiſe.* Amen.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
ST. PETER.

The writer of this and the following epiſtle was St. Peter, who ſtiles himſelf an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, *not the Univerſal biſhop and head of the church; no where do we find this holy and humble apoſtle aſſuming, though we often find the apoſtate church of Rome giving him an uncontroulable monarchy, and ſovereign dominion, over the whole church of Chriſt, and over the apoſtles themſelves, and their ſucceſſors: and accordingly to interpret thoſe words of our Saviour to St. Peter, St.* John xxi. *Paſce oves,* Feed my ſheep, *in ſuch a rampant ſenſe as they have done, could never with any confidence have been offered to the reaſon of mankind, had not theſe men ſubdued their reaſon to their intereſt, and ſubjected both to an implicit faith and blind obedience. Saint Peter, being the apoſtle of the circumciſion, writes this epiſtle to the believing Jews, and proſelyted Gentiles, who were of the diſperſion, ſcattered abroad in divers countries, of whom he had an eſpecial charge, and of whoſe converſion he had been a principal inſtrument.*

The deſign of the epiſtle is to confirm them in the chriſtian religion, to encourage them to conſtancy under the ſharpeſt perſecutions and fiery trials for the ſame, and to excite them to the practice of particular duties incumbent upon them in every capacity and relation in which they ſtood, beautifying and adorning their holy profeſſion by an holy and becoming converſation. And accordingly thus he writes unto them;

CHAP. I.

PETER an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. Grace unto you and peace be multiplied.

Obſerve here, 1. The penman of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, *Peter*; by his office, *an apoſtle*; by the author of his office, *Jeſus Chriſt*. This name *Peter* was given him by our Saviour, and ſignifieth a ſtone, a rock, probably for his confeſſion and acknowledgment of Chriſt, the Rock upon whom the Chriſtian church was built; his call to the office, firſt of a diſciple, and then of an apoſtle, was from Chriſt himſelf. It is a ſingular ſupport to the miniſters of the goſpel of Chriſt, under all their diſcouragements, to conſider whoſe officers they are, and from whom they have both their miſſion and their meſſage, their authority and their abilities for the ſacred function: *Peter an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*. 2. The perſons to whom the epiſtle is directed, to the ſtrangers ſcattered abroad in Pontus, Galatia, &c. that is, to ſuch of the converted Jews and proſelyted Gentiles as were diſperſed into ſeveral countries, exiled and baniſhed from houſe and home, for the ſake of Chriſt and his holy religion, which they made a faithful profeſſion of. *Learn* hence, That a ſtate of exile and baniſhment from outward comforts and privileges, has been, and may be the lot and portion of a people that are exceeding dear to Almighty God. 3. How he comforts them in this their perſecuted condition, by declaring to them the great things which God had done for them in their *election*, *vocation*, and *ſanctification*; aſſuring them that God had choſen them out of the world according to his foreknowledge and unſearchable counſel, and effectually called them to the participation of his grace, ſanctifying them by his Spirit, that they ſhould obey the truth, and by faith be ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, and thereby be brought into a ſtate of perfect peace and reconciliation with God. *Learn* hence, 1. That God has certainly choſen ſome to eternal ſalvation. 2. That ſuch as are choſen to happineſs as the end, are alſo choſen to holineſs as the mean: *Elect through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience:* ſanctification is the fruit of our election, and obedience the end of our ſanctification. 3. That ſanctification and juſtification always accompany one another; here is ſanctification and ſprinkling with the blood of Chriſt joined together; where *note*, Chriſt, as mediator, has blood, his blood was ſhed, his blood that was ſhed muſt be ſprinkled, and by faith applied; and we can never diſcern our intereſt in the blood of Chriſt, till we are ſanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, and our hearts and lives wrought unto obedience. Juſtification and ſanctification, though diſtinct in their nature, yet are inſeparable in their ſubject. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The ſalutation here ſent to theſe diſperſed ſaints, *Grace and peace be multiplied*. Where *note*, 1. The connection, *grace and peace*. 2. The order, firſt grace, and then peace. 3. The option, *be multiplied*. The bleſſings prayed for, are the choiceſt, the ſweeteſt, and the beſt of bleſſings; *grace and peace:* together with the augmentation, and abundant increaſe of both, *Grace and peace be multiplied*. *Learn*, That there is nothing that the miniſters of Chriſt do more paſſionately deſire, and more earneſtly endeavour, than to ſee their people brought into, and preſerved in a ſtate of favour and peace with God, and enjoying a multiplied increaſe of all ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings from him.

3 Bleſſed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you.

Obſerve here, 1. How our apoſtle breaks forth into gratulation and thankfulneſs to God, for thoſe ſpecial bleſſings, which, by his miniſtry, were conferred upon theſe converted chriſtians, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Bleſſing and praiſe are due to God for the leaſt mercies received from God, becauſe we are leſs than the leaſt, much more for ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, which are the greateſt mercies that either God can give, or we receive. 2. The ſpecial mercy which he thus ſolemnly bleſſes, and gives thanks to God for, namely, their regeneration: For *begetting them to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Chriſt*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The benefit declared, they were begotten again to an hope of ſalvation; by means of ſin, all influences of grace were ſuſpended, and all hopes of ſalvation were cut off. Chriſt's interpoſure for us makes our condition hopeful, and the fallen angels hopeleſs. 2. The qualification of that hope which chriſtians are begotten to, it is a *lively hope*, in oppoſition to a dead hope, and to a languid and languiſhing hope; the chriſtian's hope is an effectual hope, which proceeds from faith, and promotes holineſs. A *lively hope* is an hope that makes us lively, joyful, and comfortable in our lives; an hope that puts life into us. 3. The means whereby we are begotten to this hope, and that is, *by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead*; not by the bare *act* of his reſurrection, but by the virtue and power of it, we are raiſed to a ſpiritual life by it, and our hopes of eternal life are thereby ſtrengthened and confirmed. The juſtification of our perſons, the regeneration of our natures, the reſurrection of our bodies, the glorification of our ſouls and bodies, are ſingular fruits and benefits of Chriſt's reſurrection. Well might the apoſtle then ſay, that *we are begotten to a lively hope by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead*. *Note*, 4. The moving and impulſive cauſe from which regeneration, and all other ſpiritual bleſſings, do proceed and flow; the mercy and goodneſs of God, *According to his abundant mercy he has begotten us again*. In the matters of ſalvation nothing is owing to our merit; for demerit cannot merit, but all is due to divine goodneſs, and undeſerved mercy; this is the fontal cauſe of all our favours. 5. The nature of that happineſs which believers are begotten to a lively hope and expectation of; it is here ſtyled *an inheritance*. Heaven is an inheritance, and as ſuch it is given to children, to all God's children, to none but his children; it is an inheritance,

ritance dearly purchaſed, yet freely given: Chriſt is the ſole purchaſer of it; no joint-purchaſers with him; the ſaints are called joint-heirs with Chriſt, but never joint-purchaſers: yet remember, that though we cannot purchaſe this inheritance in a way of merit, we may forfeit it by our demerit, and provoke our heavenly Father to diſinherit us. 6. The properties and excellencies of this inheritance which believers are raiſed by Chriſt to the expectation of; it is an inheritance *incorruptible*, an enduring poſſeſſion; not ſubject to decay, having nothing in it that can corrupt it, or corrupt us in the enjoyment of it. *Undefiled*, heaven is an holy habitation; the holineſs of heaven is the moſt conſiderable part of its happineſs: ſinners therefore that deſpiſe holineſs, deſpiſe the richeſt jewel in the crown of glory. *It fadeth not away*, it withereth not; glory is a flower which will eternally retain its freſhneſs and verdure. *Reſerved in the heavens* for us: heaven is the country where the ſaints inheritance lies: here it is reſerved or laid up ſafe, by the purpoſe and pleaſure of God, by the purchaſe, poſſeſſion, and interceſſion of Chriſt; and to be able to ſay [*for us*] and be particularly aſſured of heaven, is a ſpecial comfort.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, ready to be revealed in the laſt time.

Here our apoſtle ſeems to pre-occupate and prevent an objection. Some might ſay, "Though the ſaints inheritance be ſafe in heaven, yet they are in danger here on earth;" be it ſo, as if our apoſtle had ſaid, yet they are and ſhall be kept by God's power, and their own faith to eternal ſalvation. *Note* here, 1. *We are kept*: it implies we are in danger, in great danger of miſſing ſalvation, by reaſon of the number, power, and policy of our ſpiritual enemies, corruption and ſin within, the devil and the world without; but we are kept as in a garriſon; ſo the word ſignifies: ſaints are preſerved like beſieged cities; the general whom they fight under, and hold out for, preſerves them, by ſending in freſh recruits, ſupplies from the Holy Spirit, and by cutting off ſuch ſuccours, as our luſts and ſpiritual enemies would ſend forth againſt us, ſo that they ſtarve, and ſhall not vanquiſh us, but we them. *We are kept:* eternal thanks for ſuch a keeper! 2. What it is believers are kept and preſerved to, namely, *ſalvation:* he does not ſay they are or ſhall be kept from trouble and affliction; that their fingers ſhall not ake in this world; he has made no ſuch promiſe, and we muſt expect no ſuch preſervation, but the contrary; *in the world ye ſhall have tribulation*, ſays Chriſt the Captain of our ſalvation, John xvi. but ſafety and reſt, happineſs and eaſe, ſhall be our portion in the coming world. 3. The means by which we are thus kept unto ſalvation. (1.) On God's part, *almighty* power. If left one moment to ourſelves, we become a prey to every temptation. How did the devil bafflle and befool Adam in innocency, when he had his wits about him, by being left in the hand of his own counſels? Lord, in a worſe hand thou canſt not leave us than our own. (2.) On our part we are kept through faith. Our own endeavour muſt accompany God's power, in order to our preſervation. *We are kept by the power of God through faith*; by both jointly, by neither ſingly. God's power will not keep us without our care, neither can our care ſecure us without the help of his power. We and our faith muſt be kept by the power of God; what God does for us, he does by us; he requires the uſe of our faculties, and the concurrence of our own endeavours in order to our ſalvation. *Note*, 4. The time when the ſaints complete ſalvation ſhall be revealed to them, and they have the full and final fruition of that—*Ready to be revealed in the laſt time.* *Mark*, The ſaints ſalvation in heaven is a myſtery, an hidden myſtery, not yet revealed; revealed only to ſaints on earth by faith, to ſaints in heaven by ſight; but the full revelation is not to be expected and enjoyed by glorified ſaints before the day of judgment, called here, *the laſt time*. Our apoſtle told us, ver. 4. it was reſerved in heaven for us, kept ſafe for us, but kept cloſe in heaven, it is an ineſtimable rich treaſure; they that are heirs of it on earth, yea, they that are poſſeſſed of it in heaven, do not as yet fully underſtand and know the tranſcendency of it, but it ſhall be revealed to them at the laſt day.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon, (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice: that is, in the belief and expectation of which glorious and incorruptible inheritance in heaven, ye now joy and rejoice here on earth; plainly intimating, that a believer may be aſſured of his title to the glorious inheritance above, and both may and ought to rejoice in it abundantly below. *Obſerve* farther, By what way and method God brings his people to heaven, it is by *heavineſs*, by afflictions, yea, by *manifold* afflictions. As if he had ſaid, "You that are the preſent candidates for heaven, the heirs of ſalvation, muſt not think yourſelves paſt the rod and the ferula; and that you are to expect nothing but comfort, and to do nothing but rejoice in the hopes of your ſalvation. But I tell you, you may have need of heavineſs before you get to heaven, and of manifold temptations for the mortifying your corruptions, before you enter upon an inheritance incorruptible." *Obſerve*, 2. The ſuppoſition made concerning the neceſſity of a believer's afflictions, *If need be:* intimating, 1. That we ſhould never feel any affliction from the hand of God, never be in heavineſs, if there were not need. And, 2. That there is need that the holieſt in this world ſhould ſometimes be made heavy, and that heavineſs ſhould be upon them for a ſeaſon. We ſhould always have calms and fair weather, never any ſtorms or tempeſts from God, did not our needs call for it. As we need our daily bread, ſo verily do we need a daily rod; both the rod of God's mouth to admoniſh and his hand to chaſten and correct us: *Ye are in heavineſs for a ſeaſon*, &c. Hence learn, That the trials and afflictions which God exerciſes his children with, are many, yet they never feel them but when they need them, and then only for a ſeaſon. As the coldneſs of the winter kills the weeds in our grounds, ſo the cold blaſts of affliction (under the mortifying influences of the Holy Spirit) kill our corruptions in our ſouls. Perpetual ſhinings and fair ſeaſonings, are reſerved for heaven; cold blaſts, and nipping froſts, are needful and uſeful here on earth: *Ye are in heavineſs for a ſeaſon, if need be.* *Learn* farther, That as God doth not afflict us but when there is need, ſo he will not afflict us more than there is need. *Ye are in heavineſs for a ſeaſon*; we ſhall not be afflicted an hour longer, nor ſhall our croſs be a drachm or a grain heavier than God thinks needful. 3. The happy effect and fruit of the ſaints manifold temptations: they all work for their advantage; they receive good, and not hurt by them; no more hurt than the gold receives by the fire: *That the trial of your faith*; that is, that your tried faith, being more *precious than gold*. Faith is more precious than gold, becauſe more pure, more durable, eſpecially when purified in the furnace of affliction. A good man is no loſer, but a great gainer by being tried. He, who before had much droſs in him, comes out of the furnace as gold, without loſing any thing either of its weight or worth; nothing is conſumed but the droſs and rubbiſh of his corruptions. O happy conſumption! Grace is not only grace ſtill, but more gracious, yea, glorious after trial. *Obſerve* laſtly, That faith muſt be tried on earth, before it be crowned in heaven; and after it is tried, it ſhall certainly be crowned, *and found unto praiſe, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* *Learn* hence, That the trial of a chriſtian's faith in their manifold afflictions and temptations now, will bring abundance of honour and glory to God in the day of Chriſt; yea, not only to God, but to ourſelves.

8 Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom though now ye ſee *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory:

In theſe words our apoſtle commendeth the faith and love of thoſe Jews to whom he wrote; that although they had never ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, as others did, yet they did truly love him, and their faith cauſed them to triumph and rejoice in him. *Learn* hence, That it is the property and practice of a believer to love an unſeen Saviour, and to rejoice in him, and in the hopes of eternal life by him. *Inference*, If ſuch as never ſaw Chriſt but with a believing eye, do yet love him ſuperlatively, and rejoice in him unſpeakably, how will they love him, and rejoice in him, who ſhall ſee him with a glorified eye, and behold him face to face.

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the ſalvation of *your* ſouls. 10 ¶ Of which ſalvation the prophets have inquired and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace *that ſhould come* unto you: 11 Searching what or what manner of time the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the goſpel unto you, with the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven: which things the angels deſire to look into.

Obſerve here, 1. The *end*, that is, the reward of a chriſtian's faith, it is *the ſalvation of his ſoul*; of his ſoul eminently, but not excluſively of body and ſoul both. The complete ſalvation of ſoul and body both with Chriſt in heaven, ſhall be the end and reward of the believer's faith. 2. The diligent ſearch into, and inquiry after the nature of this ſalvation, which was made by the prophets of the Old Teſtament: *Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired, and ſearched diligently*: that is, by prayer, meditation, and ſtudy, they ſearched after the farther and clearer knowledge of this great ſalvation, and the kingdom of the Meſſiah, when ſhould be the time of his ſufferings and humiliation, which were to precede his glory and exaltation. 3. The ſucceſs of this their enquiry and ſearch, they were anſwered by God, and received this revelation from him, that they themſelves were not the men that ſhould ſee the Meſſiah, and his ſpecial kingdom; and that the things which they propheſied of, were not to be fulfilled in their own times, but in after-times; and accordingly the things foretold by the prophets he aſſures them, were clearly manifeſted to them by the apoſtles, which were endued with an extraordinary meaſure of the Holy Spirit, ſent down upon them at the day of Pentecoſt: *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves*, &c. *Obſerve* laſtly, The ſublimity, and tranſcendent excellency of thoſe goſpel-myſteries which are now revealed; they are ſo raviſhing and tranſporting, that the holy angels deſire to pry into them, *Which things the angels deſire to look into.* *Learn*, thence, That the glorious myſtery of man's redemption and ſalvation, by the incarnation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is an object worthy of the admiration and contemplation of the adoring angels. They admire the perſon of the Redeemer, they admire the author and contriver of the work of redemption, they admire the ſubjects redeemed, they admire the manner and method of our redemption, they admire the finally glorious ſtate which the redeemed are brought into, and poſſeſſed of, and they pry into theſe things, as the cherubims looked upon the ark, with a curious and accurate inſpection, with an earneſt and affectionate inſpection; they holily admire the wiſdom of this glorious contrivance, though even their raiſed and enlarged capacities can never be able fully to comprehend it.

13 ¶ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt;

Our apoſtle, having laid before them their high and glorious privileges in the foregoing verſes, comes now to excite them to the practice of ſeveral needful and important duties in this and the following verſes: the firſt of which is vigilance and watchfulneſs; preparation and readineſs of mind; *Gird up the loins of your mind*; an alluſion both to runners and waiters; to ſuch as run in a race, and to ſuch as wait upon their maſter; who both gird up their clothes (which in thoſe eaſtern countries they wore down to their heels) that they might not hinder or trouble them, either in running or waiting. Next, to be ſober, and keep up their hope ſtedfaſtly and perſeveringly to the end, for that grace and ſalvation, for that perfection in holineſs and glory, which God will certainly give us at the glorious appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. Here *note*, 1. The grace and duty which they are exhorted to be found in the exerciſe of, and that is, *hope*, to perſevere in hope unto the end: that is a divine grace, and neceſſary duty, whereby a believer for Chriſt's ſake expects and waits for all the great and good things which God has promiſed, but the chriſtian at preſent not received. 2. The direction given in order to the exerciſe of this grace and duty of hope, *Gird up the loins of your mind.* Habits of grace are altogether unprofitable to us, without they be excited by us, and ſtirred up in us. When we pray, when we hear, we muſt gird up our loins in praying and hearing: or, in the prophet's phraſe, *Stir up yourſelves to take hold on God.* A man upon his ſick-bed muſt gird up the loins of his mind to bear his affliction, elſe he will never profit by it, nor anſwer the end of God in it. No grace can be exerciſed, no duty can be performed by a ſoul ungirded: *Gird up the loins of your mind*, &c.

14 As obedient children, not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation; 16 Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

The next duty he exhorts them to, is to anſwer the engagements which their adoption laid them under: they were now the children of God, and as ſuch muſt, 1. *Be obedient* to their heavenly Father, walking in the path of his commandments, and no longer according to the former luſts, which they were captivated by, and enſlaved unto, in the time of their ignorance, when they knew not God. And, 2. They muſt imitate their heavenly Father in the love and practice of univerſal holineſs: *As he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy. Obſerve*, 1. Chriſtians muſt make God the pattern of their holineſs, and be holy as God is holy, though not as holy as God is; the command obliges to a conformity, not to an equality; as God is really holy, poſitively holy, ſtrictly and exactly holy, univerſally holy, unchangeably holy, ſo muſt we labour to be holy towards God and man, which is to be *holy in all manner of converſation.* 2. Chriſtians are here required not only to make God the pattern of their holineſs, but the motive of their holineſs, *be ye holy, for I am holy.* Seeing our God is an holy God, therefore we that are his people muſt be holy alſo. Our apoſtle here repreſents the holineſs of God both as a rule and as a motive of that holineſs which ſhould be acted by us. And whereas the apoſtle ſays, *It is written, be ye holy:* It plainly intimates, that God has in all former ages, obliged all perſons who pretend any relation to him as his children, to be holy as he is holy; though not as to equality, yet as to imitation; though not in meaſure and degree, yet in quality and kind. God is the original of all holineſs, and the firſt man he created was after his own likeneſs; and every one that is renewed, is ſaid to be *created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* What is godlineſs but God-likeneſs? And what is holineſs, but the conformity of our natures to the holy nature of God, and the conformity of our lives to the will of God?

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear:

If ye call on the Father: that is, if ye call God your Father, and call upon him by worſhipping and owning of him, who without any reſpect of perſons, or any regard had to nations, Jew or Gentile, judgeth of every man now, and will judge every man according to his works hereafter, ſee that you paſs the time of your pilgrimage and ſojourning in this world, in holy and obedient fear. *Learn*, 1. That ſuch as call God Father, ought to walk in obedience before him as his ſons. 2. That he whom we call Father, is and will be our Judge; not a ſhort-ſighted, but a ſharp-ſighted Judge; impartial in judgment, judging all perſons according to their works, and judging all works as they really are, and not as they outwardly appear to be. 3. That chriſtians here in this world are but ſtrangers, and their life upon earth a pilgrimage, which they are daily paſſing. 4. That the whole time of a chriſtian's pilgrimage ought to be paſſed in an holy, cautious, reverential, and obedient fear of God.

18 Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot. 20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you; 21 Who by him do believe in God that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

Still our apoſtle is preſſing chriſtians to the love and practice of holineſs, and a reverential fear of God, by freſh arguments and motives, particularly from their redemption; ſaying, that they could not but be ſenſible that they were redeemed with a very coſtly price, not with ſilver and gold, which yet would ranſom kings, but by the precious blood of Chriſt, whom the paſchal lamb typified, and who was from eternity fore-ordained to the office of a Mediator, though he was not manifeſted in the fleſh till theſe laſt days, for the good and benefit of thoſe who by him do believe in God that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and glorioſly exalted him at his right hand, upon which account their faith and hope may ſafely and comfortably reſt in God. *Note*, 1. The thraldom, bondage, and ſlavery of our ſinful ſtate before we were redeemed. 2. The impotency and inability of all outward things, be they never ſo rich, precious, and coſtly, to redeem and ranſom an enſlaved ſinner. All the gold and ſilver in the world was no ranſom for one ſoul, nay, the blood of all the creatures in the world offered up in ſacrifice to the juſtice of God, could have been no ſufficient compenſation. 3. That the redemption of every ſoul coſt no leſs than the precious blood of the Son of God, that ſpotleſs Lamb, who, by the ſacrifice of his death, atoned divine diſpleaſure. *Note*, 4. That God the Father fore-ordained Jeſus Chriſt his Son to this bleſſed office of a Redeemer before the foundation of the world, though he was not manifeſt in the fleſh till theſe laſt times. 5. That by Chriſt the Redeemer we are taught to know God, and to believe in him who raiſed Chriſt from the dead. Here *obſerve*, How the Socinians wreſt and miſapply this text, where we are ſaid by Chriſt to believe in God. Thus they argue, "He by whom we believe in God, is not that God in whom we believe, becauſe the means of faith can never be the object of faith; but Chriſt is he: the apoſtle ſays here by whom we believe in God, therefore Chriſt is not God." *Anſw.* Chriſt conſidered in his human nature, in which he died, and was raiſed for us, is he by whom we believe in God, that is, own him to be able to raiſe us from the dead; but this hinders not his being God according to his divine nature, by which he did actually raiſe himſelf from the dead, John x. 18.

22 Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; *ſee that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

The next duty which our apoſtle exhorts theſe chriſtians to, is the duty of brotherly love, to a gracious propenſity of heart which a chriſtian bears for Chriſt's ſake to his neighbour, whereby he wills, and to his power procures all good for him, a brotherly affection, which every true chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt for grace-ſake. This duty of brotherly love is often urged and enforced by Chriſt and his apoſtles. St. Peter here tells them, that ſeeing by the power of Chriſt's Spirit, and the obedience of the goſpel, they had purified themſelves in ſome meaſure from pride and ſelf-love, they ſhould now labour to grow in the fervency and ſincerity of their love one towards another. And the argument he uſes to perſuade them to love one another, is drawn from their relation to each other; they are all born again, and born alike; not brethren by corruptible generation only, but begotten of incorruptible ſeed, the word of God; therefore ſhould they live in love together, as children of the ſame Father. *Note* here, The commendation given to the word of God, not to any inward word infuſed, but to the outward word preached, it is ſtiled *incorruptible ſeed*; from whence it follows, that the miniſtry of the word is the ordinary mean of the new-birth, and the inſtrumental cauſe of our regeneration. *Note* farther, That ſuch as are born of this incorruptible ſeed, ought to bear an incorruptible love to each other, as an evidence of their incorruptible and gracious nature: *See that you love one another*, &c.

24 For all fleſh *is* as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

Our apoſtle cloſes the chapter, by ſetting before them the excellency of their ſpiritual regenerate ſtate, compared with all other excellencies and endowments whatſoever: *all fleſh*, that is, fleſh with all its glory, is a fading, dying, periſhing thing; it flags like the graſs, and fades like the flower. There are three excellencies in a flower; ſweetneſs, which affects the ſmell; beauty that affects the eye; ſoftneſs and ſmoothneſs, which affects the touch; all theſe our apoſtle paſſes over, and ſpeaks of the flower, not as flouriſhing, but as withering; not as ſpringing up, but as falling away. *Learn* hence, That man when moſt flouriſhing, with all the ornaments of wit and wealth, beauty and honour, is fading, and near to withering. Thus David deſcribes him, Pſal. ciii. 15, 16. *As for man his days are as graſs; as the flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth; the wind paſſes over it, and it is gone.* Though the flower be neither cut nor cropt, yet a breath of wind blaſts it, and blows away the beauty of it: *All fleſh is as graſs*, &c.

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.

That is, the word of God, the mind of Chriſt, contained in, and revealed by the goſpel, ſhall abide and laſt for ever, and never be abrogated; the word of God is everlaſting truth, it is ſo in its nature, and alſo in its effects upon the regenerate, it abideth for ever, and ſo doth their eſtate who are begotten again by it: The word of God is the incorruptible ſeed, or principle of regeneration: It is called *the word of eternal life*, becauſe it brings thoſe that love and obey it to eternal life, John vi. 68. *Obſerve* laſtly, That the ſame word of God is now preached unto us which was ſo highly commended by the prophets, apoſtles, and by Chriſt himſelf: *This is the word*, &c.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter, gives ſeveral directions for our profitable hearing and receiving of the word of God; *which having compared to milk, he ſhews how, and after what manner, it ſhould be deſired, taſted, and digeſted by us*, that we may grow thereby.

WHEREFORE laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and all evil-ſpeakings,

Here we are firſt directed what to lay aſide, in order to our fruitful and profitable entertainment of the word of God, namely, theſe five ſins, *malice*, *guile*, *hypocriſy*, *envy*, and *evil-ſpeaking*. Whence *note* in general, That any ſin, much more if many ſins be kept cloſe, and lie dormant within us, they will certainly hinder the efficacy of the word upon us. As the foulneſs of the ſtomach hinders the natural digeſtion, till it be purged out nothing can nouriſh within: In like manner, our apoſtle here adviſes to purge out theſe peſtilent luſts of malice and guile, of hypocriſy and envy, &c. before we hear the word of God, if ever we expect to be nouriſhed with it, and grow thereby. As ſin hinders good from coming to us, ſo it hinders the word from working good in us, particularly *malice*, or inveterate anger harboured in the heart; *guile*, or deceit in words or actions; *hypocriſy*, or an appearance of friendſhip, when the heart is otherwiſe affected; *envy*, or grieving at another's good; and *evil-ſpeaking* of all kinds, by lying, by ſlandering, by back-biting, by detracting, all which are contrary to the great command of love, and obſtructive of the word of truth, by which we are born again; but it is obſervable, particularly, concerning *malice*, and *guile*, and *evil-ſpeaking*, that our apoſtle puts the note of univerſality to them, *lay aſide all malice, and all guile, and all evil-ſpeaking*; importing, that though ſome other ſins will ſtick cloſe unto us, yet not a jot of malice or guile ſhould be found in us, at leaſt prevailing in us, of any kind, or in any degree or meaſure, for one drop of this deadly poiſon may deſtroy us: therefore lay aſide *all malice, and all guile*, &c.

2 As new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

St. Peter having directed us, in our preparation before we come to hear the word, and ſhewn the neceſſity of laying aſide an evil frame of ſpirit, he now directs us what we are to do when under the word, namely, that there be found with us a ſpiritual appetite to it, and that we have the ſame longing deſires after it that the child has after the breaſt: *As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk*, ſo deſire you the incorrupted word of God, *that you may grow thereby*. *Queſt.* How does the new-born infant deſire its natural nouriſhment, its mother's milk? *Anſw.* Theſe four ways: Firſt, It covets it with vehement and impatient deſire, nothing will ſo well ſatisfy and pleaſe it as the breaſt, this will quiet it when nothing elſe will; thus the new born chriſtian hungers after the word with a vehement deſire, nothing will content and ſatisfy him, neither gold nor ſilver, in the abſence of the word of God. Secondly, The new-born infant deſires the milk from a deep ſenſe of its inward wants, it is pinched with hunger, and parched with thirſt, and therefore cries for the breaſt; ſo is the chriſtian ſenſible of his wants, of his want of knowledge, want of grace; "It is little, ſays he, that I know of myſelf, leſs of God, leaſt of Jeſus Chriſt: Oh! that by converſing with his word, I might know him more, and ſerve him better." Thirdly, The infant deſires its mother's milk unmixed, as nature has prepared it without any artificial ſweetening of it. Some little regard the wholeſomeneſs of the food, but only admire the dexterity of the cook: They applaud the parts of the preacher, when the word flows from the golden mouth of a celebrated orator; but the new-born chriſtian deſires the ſincere milk of the word, without any compoſition of error and without any ſuch mixture of wit and eloquence as is inconſiſtent with the gravity and ſimplicity of the word they hear. Plain truths, without art or varniſh, may be conveyed with more warmth and vigour to the conſcience, than all the charms of human eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular tongue, yet always remembering, that though the miniſters of God muſt come in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of ſpeech. Fourthly, This deſire of the babe after the ſincere, unmixed, and uncompounded milk, is always accompanied with endeavour, it hunts for the breaſt, and is not ſatisfied that the breaſt is in its eye, but is impatient till it ſucks and draws, that nouriſhment may be conveyed, and it grow thereby: Thus active and operative are the deſires and endeavours of a ſincere chriſtian after the word of God; that which was ſeed to beget, they find food to ſtrengthen, they can never be ſatisfied without it, they cannot be ſatisfied with a little of it.

3 If ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord *is* gracious

In theſe words our apoſtle declares the condition whereon our profiting, growing, and thriving by the word doth depend, namely, upon our taſting and experiencing its power, as it is the great inſtrumental cauſe both of our ſpiritual birth and growth. This taſte is a ſpiritual ſenſe of the goodneſs, power, and efficacy of the word, in conveying the grace of God unto our ſouls; in a taſte there is ſweetneſs and refreſhment, but not fulneſs and ſatisfaction. *Learn* hence, 1. That God doth graciouſly ſweeten the word to ſuch a ſoul as doth deſire ſincerely to taſte the ſweetneſs of it. 2. That it is but a taſte of the ſweetneſs of God and his word, which a chriſtian partakes of in this life, ſatiety and ſatisfaction are reſerved for another ſtate.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, *and* precious, 5 Ye alſo, as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt. 6 Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-ſtone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded.

Obſerve here, 1. The denomination, or title given to Chriſt, he is ſtiled a *living ſtone*, and *the chief corner-ſtone*. 1. *A living-ſtone*, that is, a lively ſtone, no dead foundation, and a life-giving ſtone, having not only life in himſelf eſſentially, but communicatively, imparting ſpiritual life to the whole building. Chriſt is not only an Head of authority, but an Head of vital influence to all his members; becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo. 2. He is ſtiled alſo *the chief corner-ſtone*, both in regard of ſuſtentation; the corner-ſtone ſupports the whole building, the church's grace, the church's peace, the church's conſolation, the church's ſalvation, are all upheld and maintained by him: And in regard of union, the corner-ſtone unites, ties, and knits the other ſtones together, that they ſhould not drop out of the building. Chriſt alone unites the ſeveral ſtones of the ſpiritual building to himſelf, and one to another. And this corner-ſtone is of God's own immediate laying, *Behold, I lay in Sion a corner-ſtone*. Chriſt was firſt manifeſted and offered to the church of the Jews, and then to the reſt of the world. *Obſerve*, 2. The titles given to believers, (1.) They of lively ſtones are built a ſpiritual houſe. Believers are God's temple, dedicated to, and ſet apart for his ſpecial ſervice, and alſo enjoying his gracious and ſpecial preſence. "This is my reſt for ever, ſays God concerning the believer's heart; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." (2.) They are an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable through Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That every chriſtian in this life is a prieſt, and ought to offer up himſelf a ſpiritual ſacrifice or oblation unto God. In a ſacrifice, there was a ſeparation of the thing ſacrificed from common uſe; the beaſt was ſeparated from the reſt of the flock, ſo muſt the chriſtian be ſet apart from the reſt of the world. There was an addiction, or dedication, or ſolemn conſecration of the thing ſet apart to ſome holy and ſpecial uſe and purpoſe. Thus the chriſtian that preſents himſelf a living ſacrifice unto God, does not only ſeparate himſelf from ſin, the world, and the fleſh, but does addict and devote himſelf to God, to ſerve and pleaſe him, to honour and glorify him. 3. The application which believers make to Chriſt, in order to their being his ſpiritual temple, and a royal prieſthood. *To whom coming as unto a living ſtone*; the particle denotes a continual motion, by which the ſoul gains ground, and gets nearer and nearer to Chriſt, they are daily coming by faith to him and gradually advancing in the knowledge of him, and love unto him. Laſtly, The ſweet fruit and bleſſed effect of their faith, *whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not be confounded:* that is, not aſhamed, as a perſon who is diſappointed of his hopes and expectations, he ſhall not be aſhamed of his choice, he ſhall not be aſhamed of his profeſſion, he ſhall never be aſhamed of the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt, which he has eſpouſed, and at all times appeared for; nor of the work and ſervice of Chriſt, nor of the time and pains expended in that work and ſervice; nor ſhall he ever be aſhamed hereafter that he never was aſhamed here.

7 Unto you therefore which believe, *he is* precious:

To you belongs the honour of being built a ſpiritual houſe upon Chriſt, the chief corner-ſtone, which renders him deſervedly precious to you, and of a very high eſtimation with you; whatever mean, low, and undervaluing thoughts the wicked world have of Jeſus Chriſt, yet he is highly eſteemed by, and deſervedly precious to, every believing ſoul; he is precious in the ſeveral relations he ſtands in to them, precious in regard of the great things he has done for them, precious in the rich ſupplies of grace he beſtows upon them, and will be eternally precious to them, upon the account of thoſe manſions he has purchaſed and prepared for them.

—But unto them which be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner, 8 And a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient: whereunto alſo they were appointed.

Theſe words diſcover the great ſin and danger of thoſe who ſlight and neglect our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſtumble and take offence at him, either at the meanneſs of his perſon, or at the ignominy of his croſs, or at the holineſs and ſtrictneſs of his doctrine, or at the freeneſs of his grace; whatever the occaſion of their contempt may be, Chriſt will prove to them a burdenſome ſtone, a rock againſt which they will ſplit, to their utter confuſion; they will, in the cloſe, bring ruin upon themſelves, as a madman does that daſhes himſelf againſt a ſtone. *Obſerve* next, How this contempt of Chriſt, has prevailed in the world ever ſince his firſt coming into the world; how did the Jewiſh rulers, called here the builders, ſet him at nought; *the ſtone which the builders diſallowed and ſtumbled at*; that is, the high rulers, whoſe office and duty it was to build up the church, having power in their hand to do it, but inſtead of building upon this corner-ſtone, they ſtumbled and took offence at him, and accordingly Chriſt is called *a ſtone of ſtumbling*, and *a rock of offence*, yet this does not imply that Chriſt was the cauſe of their ſtumbling, but only the occaſion of it, the object at which they ſtumbled, without any cauſe but their own wickedneſs; for though it be ſaid in the next words, that they were *appointed thereunto*, the meaning is not, that God ordained them to diſobedience, for then their obedience had been impoſſible and their diſobedience had been no ſin; but God, in his juſt decree, appointed that deſtruction and eternal perdition ſhould be the puniſhment of ſuch obſtinate and diſobedient perſons. *Learn* hence, That chriſtians have no reaſon to be offended at the great number of unbelievers that are in the world, and at the ſight of Chriſt's being rejected by multitudes in the world, it having been long ago foretold in ſcripture that thus it would be, and conſequently it ought to be no occaſion of offence that thus it is, Matt. xxi. 42. *The ſtone which the builders rejected*, &c.

9 But ye *are* a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time paſt *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

In theſe words our apoſtle acquaints theſe believing Jews, who were built upon Chriſt the foundation-ſtone, that the ſame titles did now belong to them in a more excellent manner as chriſtians, which were formerly given to their anceſtors of the Jewiſh nation by God himſelf, Deut. vii. 6, 7. As the Jews of old were a choſen generation, a kingdom of prieſts, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that is, they were a people choſen by God before all other people whatſoever, to bear his name, and to bear witneſs to his truth; they were a people in covenant with him, and ſo inexpreſſibly dear unto him, that he that hurt them touched the apple of God's eye; in like manner theſe Jews, and proſelyted Gentiles of the diſperſion, who were converted to chriſtianity, have all the forecited titles belonging to them. *A choſen generation*, by effectual vocation ſeparated from the world to the ſervice of Chriſt, whoſe name they bear. *A royal prieſthood*, that is, kings and prieſts; kings to reign with him, and prieſts to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices to him. *An holy nation*; ſo are all the profeſſors of chriſtianity fœderally holy, and for that reaſon all the chriſtian churches called out of the world, and dedicated to the ſervice of Chriſt, are ſtiled *ſaints* in all St. Paul's epiſtles. *A peculiar people*, in covenant with God, purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt. Next, the apoſtle declares the end of all theſe diſtinguiſhed favours being granted to them; namely, *that they might ſhew forth the virtues*, that is, publiſh and proclaim the wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and mercy, the righteouſneſs and truth of God, who had called them out of the darkneſs of ſin, ignorance, and miſery, into the marvellous light of knowledge, faith, holineſs, and comfort. Laſtly, To enhance their thankfulneſs for all theſe diſtinguiſhing favours, he puts them in mind of what they were before their converſion to chriſtianity; in times paſt *they were not a people*, that is, not a people beloved of God, and in covenant with him; the Lord having given the Jews a bill of divorce, and ſaid to them, *Lo-ammi, ye are not my people,* Hoſ. i. 9. but now, upon their believing in Chriſt, they were reſtored to all their church-privileges, by the ſpecial mercy and grace of God. *Learn* hence, That till perſons ſubject themſelves to the government of Chriſt, and become obedient to the goſpel, they are in God's account no people; to live without Chriſt in the world is a life worſe than death. 2. That when a people are brought near to God by Jeſus Chriſt, and partake of all the rich and invaluable bleſſings and privileges of the goſpel, they are exceedingly indebted for all to the rich mercy and free grace of God. *Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

11 ¶ Dearly beloved, I beſeech *you* as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul;

Obſerve here, 1. A dehortation, *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts.* *Queſt.* What is here meant by *luſts?* *Anſw.* Luſt is either habitual or actual; habitual or original luſt is the corruption and depravation of the faculties of the ſoul, an averſion to every thing that is good, and a proneneſs to all evil; actual luſt is original ſin put in motion; by fleſhly luſts underſtand in particular thoſe luſts which are converſant about ſenſual and fleſhly objects. *Queſt.* But what is it to abſtain from fleſhly luſts? *Anſw.* It implies a total forbearance of all wilful ſins; and at all times there is great difference between temperance and abſtinence; the temperate man eats little, the abſtinent nothing at all; every one then that would be accounted a chriſtian, is to account it his great duty and intereſt to abſtain from all fleſhly luſts. 2. The arguments which our apoſtle here makes uſe of to perſuade chriſtians to abſtain from all fleſhly luſts: The firſt is implied or included in the compellation, *Dearly beloved,* not of the apoſtle only, or chiefly, but of God, Αγαπητοι, the ſame word that Almighty God makes uſe of in expreſſing his love to his dear Son: As if he had ſaid, "You that are ſo dearly beloved of God, look you to it that you abſtain from what you know will be diſpleaſing to him." The ſecond argument is drawn from their preſent ſtate and condition in the world; ye are *ſtrangers and pilgrims* in the world, and therefore ſhould act as ſtrangers, who are not wont to be overmuch affected with objects that they ſee abroad, in their travels, no more ſhould you. The third argument is taken from the peril and danger of theſe fleſhly luſts to our precious ſouls, they *war againſt the ſoul;* that is, they war againſt the purity of the ſoul; they war againſt the dignity of the ſoul; againſt the peace of the ſoul; againſt the liberty of the ſoul; yea, againſt the life of the ſoul.

12 Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles: that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation.

From the apoſtle's dehortation in the former verſe, he comes to an exhortation in this, and the duty exhorted to is ſtrict godlineſs, or holineſs in all manner of converſation, *Having your converſation honeſt;* it is not a ſingle action, but our general courſe and converſation, that denotes us either to be good or bad; and the word tranſlated *honeſt,* ſignifies fair and amiable, beautiful and adorning, the doing nothing that is unſeemly, or a blemiſh either to our perſon or profeſſion; chriſtians ſhould not only live free from evil, but as much as may be from the very ſuſpicion of evil. It is added, *among the Gentiles,* that is, amongſt the idolatrous nations and people, who had not received the chriſtian faith: Great care muſt be always taken by the profeſſors of chriſtianity, that they do nothing which may increaſe the prejudices of the wicked world againſt religion and the ways of godlineſs, but remember that they are our watchful obſervers and bold cenſurers, and accordingly, endeavour that by a regular piety, a ſtrict ſobriety, a diffuſive and extenſive charity, we may render religion venerable to the world, and ſtop the mouth of ſlander as much as in us lies, by cutting off the occaſion from them that ſeek occaſion. *Obſerve* farther, The apoſtle exhorts them to have their converſation *honeſt among the Gentiles;* he doth not ſay religious, though that be included, but outwardly ſquare, ſtrictly juſt and honeſt: This is that which the world judges us by; vain are all our pretenſions to piety, if we fail in honeſty; we muſt make conſcience of the duties of the ſecond table, as an argument of our ſincerity, and as an ornament to our profeſſion. *Obſerve* next, What was then, and is now the lot and portion of good men, namely, to be evil ſpoken of as evil-doers: *Whereas they ſpeak evil of you as evil-doers:* Chriſt himſelf did not eſcape the ſcourge of the tongue, he was charged with gluttony, blaſphemy, impoſture, with having a devil, and with working miracles by the power of the devil; and it is ſufficient for the diſciple to be as his maſter was; yet mark, they ſpeak evil of you, ſays the apoſtle, *as evil-doers:* To be an evil-doer is miſerable, but not to be ſpoken of as an evil-doer. *Nemo miſer ſenſu alieno,* no man is miſerable in another man's evil opinion of him; a bad report, much leſs a bad opinion, makes no body a bad man; if it be enough to cenſure and accuſe, who can be innocent? Again, The apoſtle exhorts theſe believing Jews to a conſpicuous fruitfulneſs in good works, *that they may by your good works, which they ſhall behold,* &c. implying that chriſtianity ſets men to work; (though we ſhall never be ſaved for our works, yet without working we can never be ſaved) and that good works may and ought to be ſo done, that men may behold them; though we muſt not do good works to be ſeen of men, yet we ought to do good works that may be ſeen of men, Matt. v. 16. how elſe can men be patterns of good works, as they are required, Tit. ii. 7. if their good works be not conſpicuous, and expoſed to the world? *Obſerve* laſtly, The bleſſed fruit and effect of good works, they cauſe ſuch as behold them to *glorify God in the day of viſitation.* This may be underſtood two ways, 1. With reſpect to believers, your good works will cauſe the wicked world to glorify God in the day of your viſitation, that is, in the day of your perſecution and affliction; though they afflict and perſecute you, yet they ſhall glorify God when they behold your faith, your patience, your conſtancy in and under ſufferings, in the day of your viſitation. 2. With reſpect to the wicked; and ſo the day of viſitation is the day of their converſion; and then the exhortation is to be ſo conſpicuous in good works, that their adverſaries may praiſe and glorify God, when he ſhall viſit them with his grace, and draw them by his goſpel, to believe in his Son: The day of ſaving converſion is a day of gracious viſitation.

13 ¶ Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king as ſupreme: 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. 15 For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men:

Our apoſtle having exhorted them in general to take care that their converſation be honeſt among the Gentiles, he now deſcends to particular duties, which he adviſes them to be very exemplary in the performance of. And the firſt is, in their ſubjection to governors and government; ſubmit yourſelves, ſays he, to every civil ruler, both ſupreme and ſubordinate. Where *obſerve*, 1. How the apoſtle calls magiſtracy and civil goverment, though originally of divine inſtitution, an *ordinance of man:* Firſt, As to the end of it, it being appointed and ordained for the good and benefit of man. Secondly, In reference to the kind of it, every nation having a liberty to chuſe what kind and form of government human prudence ſhall direct them to, as moſt agreeable to, and commodious for the people. 2. The quality of that obedience and ſubjection which is to be given unto magiſtrates, it muſt be *for the Lord's ſake*, that is, in obedience to the command of God, and with an eye at the honour and glory of God. Chriſtianity is no enemy to the civil rights of princes, it requires ſubjection for conſcience ſake, Prov. viii. 15. *by me*, ſays God, *kings reign*; ſome read it, *for me* kings reign; both are true: Princes then hold not their crowns either from the pope or from the people, to be kicked off by the one, or to be plucked off by the other, at their pleaſure: *Submit yourſelves*, ſays our apoſtle, *to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake.* 3. The reaſons aſſigned why magiſtrates ſhould be thus ſubjected and ſubmitted to; namely, 1. Becauſe *they are ſent by God for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and the praiſe of them that do well*: the magiſtrate's office is to puniſh evil-doers; the fear of the magiſtrate's ſword awes many men more than the fear of God's hand. If ſome men were not gods among men, many men would be devils among men; there would be no living among thoſe who fear not the inviſible God in heaven, if there were not ſome viſible gods on earth to fear. 2. Becauſe God will, by this their ſubjection given to magiſtrates and governors, ſilence, or, as the word ſignifies, put a muzzle upon the mouth of fooliſh and unreaſonable men, who rage againſt his people, as if they were enemies to order and government: By this kind of well doing in particular, namely, by ſubjection and obedience to rulers in the Lord, and for the Lord's ſake, we put to ſilence the fooliſhneſs of wicked men.

16 As free, and not uſing *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God.

Here our apoſtle anſwers an objection which he foreſaw the Chriſtian Jews were ready to make againſt this duty of ſubjection, namely, " that they were a free people, as Jews, and ought to preſerve their liberty, and own no governors that were not of their own nation; and as chriſtians they looked upon themſelves as Chriſt's freemen:" Whereas chriſtian liberty exempts no man from the duty of civil ſubjection; the liberty Chriſt has purchaſed for believers, is a freedom from ſin and Satan, from ſinful ſervitude: Chriſt makes all his ſubjects free, but it is with a freedom from ſpiritual bondage, and not from civil ſubjection; conſequently, to plead our chriſtian liberty in bar to that obedience which we owe our ſuperiors and governors, either civil or eccleſiaſtical, is to uſe our liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, and as a covering for that diſobedience which is hateful to God, and injurious to mankind, as being deſtructive of order and government, which is the beauty and the bond of human ſociety.

17 Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Here are four very important duties recommended to us in this ſhort verſe. 1. To *honour all men*; no man is to be deſpiſed by us, but every man truly reſpected, according to his place and ſtation. There is a common honour, and a tribute of civil reſpect, payable to every man, though ſome men forfeit it by acting below men; a vile perſon is contemptible, though great; bare greatneſs is no guard againſt contempt; but the rags of a good man cannot obſcure his worth, nor hinder him from true honour in the hearts, and from the tongues of wiſe men; honour all men, but eſpecially good men. 2. *Love the brotherhood*; as there is a general reſpect due to all men, ſo there is a ſpecial love due to the brethren; to all the ſaints, of what nation and country ſoever, of what eſtate and condition ſoever, high and low, rich and poor, of what judgment and opinion ſoever; therefore the apoſtle calls upon us to love the brotherhood, the whole fraternity and ſociety of chriſtians, by what unhappy names and characters of reproach ſoever diſtinguiſhed; there is no better evidence of the life of grace in ourſelves, than the love of grace in another. 3. *Fear God*; that is, live in a religious dread of his name, as a glorious God, and a gracious Father; and have a reverential awe and fear of his majeſty immoveably fixed and implanted in your ſouls; to the production of which a double apprehenſion is neceſſary, namely, the inconceivable majeſty of God, and the miſerable vileneſs of the ſinners. 4. *Honour the king*; this duty conſiſts in reverencing their perſons, in obeying their lawful commands, in a chearful payment of their dues, in praying affectionately for them, and in praiſing God for the bleſſing of their government. Nero, the worſt of kings, the perſecutor of chriſtians, was now on the throne, yet the command is expreſs to honour him: And if we conſider the words in their connection and conjunction one with one another, *Fear God, and honour the king*, we *learn*, That religion, and the fear of God, do beſt qualify perſons to be good ſubjects; this is the true and ſteady principle of loyalty, that obedience to governors that is laſting, is for conſcience ſake to the command of God; where there is no fear of God in the heart, there will be no regard to the command of God in the life. Laſtly, Theſe words may be conſidered, as in their conjunction, ſo in their order in which they ſtand; firſt, *Fear God*, and then, *Honour the king*; intimating, that the fear of God muſt be the rule and guide of our ſubjection unto governors; it is no diſparagement to our ſuperiors to be under God, and ſo to be looked upon by their ſubjects; let ſuch as pretend to fear God, ſhew it by being loyal ſubjects; and let ſuch as would be thought moſt loyal ſubjects, evidence it by their awful and religious fear of God.

18 ¶ Servants *be* ſubject to *your* maſters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward. 19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully. 20 ¶ For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and ſuffer *for it*, ye take it patiently; this *is* acceptable with God.

Obſerve here, 1. The order and method of our apoſtle in the exhortations given to chriſtians in this epiſtle; he firſt excites them to the general practice of their duty, and *to be holy in all manner of converſation*; and next binds upon them the performance of relative and particular duties. In the foregoing verſes he inſiſted upon the duties of ſubjects towards magiſtrates and governors; in this verſe he propounds the duty of ſervants towards their maſters. Thus let chriſtian ſervants be ſubject to their maſters, whether chriſtian or heathen, giving due reverence and reſpect, not only to ſuch as are kind and gentle, but to ſuch as are froward and wrathful. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are in the loweſt condition, being ſervants, yea, the meaneſt of ſervants, may glorify God in that condition. 2. That ſervants, to the end that they may glorify God in their ſervile condition, muſt be ſubject to their maſters with all fear; yea, even to wicked and froward maſters; becauſe the ground of their obedience is the will and command of God, which binds them to their duty to their maſters, though their maſters fail and fall ſhort in their duty to them. *Obſ.* 2. The ſeveral arguments made uſe of by St. Peter to enforce this duty upon ſervants. 1. This is highly acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God, and will procure a gracious reward. We ſhall certainly receive a glorious reward from God, for what we ſuffer wrongfully and unjuſtly from men. This is thank-worthy, and this is acceptable with God. 2. From the indecency of the contrary; becauſe it is no virtue, but a juſt puniſhment, for evil doers to ſuffer for their evil deeds: Though to ſuffer patiently when we ſuffer juſtly is praiſe-worthy, yet not comparable with the praiſe of ſuffering patiently when we ſuffer unjuſtly. To do well, and then to ſuffer patiently, as for ill-doing, will meet with a gracious, yea, with a glorious reward. *What glory*, &c.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.

Obſerve here, Two farther arguments to excite and move chriſtians to patience under unjuſt ſufferings. 1. *Hereunto*, ſays the apoſtle, *were ye called*; that is, by your profeſſion of chriſtianity; religion obliges you to ſuffer, and to ſuffer with patience; you muſt bear the croſs before you wear the crown: To this you are called, and with this you have been acquainted. 2. You ſhould not think much to ſuffer patiently, when you ſuffer unjuſtly, becauſe Chriſt, your Captain and Guide, did ſo before you; he was the moſt meek and patient endurer that ever was, of the greateſt and moſt wrongful ſufferings that ever were. *Note* here, That although the example of our Saviour be here propounded to us with a ſpecial regard to the particular virtue of patience under unjuſt ſufferings, yet it ought to be extended to all graces and duties, and improved as a pattern for the love and practice of univerſal holineſs; *Leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps:* the practice and example of the holy Jeſus, in all the ordinary acts of his obedience, ought to be propounded by all his diſciples and followers as the grand pattern of our imitation; it being a ſafe and unerring example, an eaſy and familiar example, a powerful and encouraging example, and the moſt inſtructive and univerſal example, that ever was given to the world, being a moſt abſolute and perfect pattern of holineſs.

22 Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed *himſelf* to him that judgeth righteouſly: 24 Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to ſin ſhould live unto righteouſneſs: by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed.

Our apoſtle proceeds to repreſent and recommend our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as a mirror and perfect pattern of patience under the ſharpeſt ſufferings; he acquaints us, 1. With his pure and ſpotleſs innocency; he did no ſin, therefore could not ſuffer for doing evil: *No guile was found in his mouth*, neither in his expreſſions, nor in his actions: he never did ill either in word or deed, but was a perfect pattern of unblameable holineſs. Next our apoſtle recommends to us his invincible patience under all his ſufferings, telling us, that although Chriſt was moſt ſhamefully *reviled*, having the dirt of a thouſand ſcandals, ſlanders, reproaches, and blaſphemies caſt upon him, yet *he reviled not again*, not giving them one ill word for all: And *when he ſuffered* all manner of injuries and indignities at once, being buffetted, ſpit upon, crowned with thorns, and crucified, though he had power ſufficient to look them into nothing, to frown them into hell, yet *he threatened* them *not* with the leaſt revenge, but prayed for his murderers, and committed his cauſe to a juſt and righteous God. Bleſſed Jeſus! help us to imitate thy patience under ſufferings and reproaches, and never let us be found rendering to any evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwiſe, bleſſing for curſing, courteſies for injuries, affability for affronts; let us at no time be overcome of evil, but labour at all times to overcome evil with good. *Note* laſtly, How our apoſtle takes notice, that the ſufferings of Chriſt were not only exemplary but ſatiſfactory; he did not only ſuffer patiently, but meritoriouſly: *He his own ſelf bare our ſins*, &c. *Note* here, 1. What was borne, *our ſin*, that is, the guilt and puniſhment of our ſin. 2. Who bare it, Chriſt *his own ſelf*. This imports, (1.) The ſingularity of his ſufferings, he had no partner or ſharer with him in what he bare; *he trode the* *wine-preſs alone.* (2.) The ſufficiency of his ſufferings, he *himſelf* bare our ſins; he who was God-man, the Lamb of God, and as ſuch took away the ſin of the world. (3.) How he bare it, *in his own body upon the tree*; that is, in his human nature upon the croſs: Chriſt ſuffered in his ſoul as well as in his body, and both were ſatisfactory to divine juſtice, but his bodily ſufferings are only mentioned, becauſe theſe were moſt viſible. (4.) The great ends of his ſufferings, namely, expiation of ſin, and mortification of ſin; our ſins were expiated on the tree by Chriſt's ſuffering for us in his own body, and by his death he alſo purchaſed virtue for mortifying ſin in us, and for quickening us unto holineſs of life, that, as he died for ſin, we ſhould die unto ſin, and as he roſe again and revived, never to die more, ſo ſhould we, being dead unto ſin, live no longer therein: *He himſelf bare our ſins in his own body*, &c. that is, by whoſe expiatory ſufferings *we are healed*; the wounds made in our ſouls by the guilt and power of ſin, are mercifully and meritoriouſly healed; the guilt of ſin is pardoned, the power of ſin ſubdued, and all the invaluable fruits and benefit of the Redeemer's death obtained. Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

25 For ye were as ſheep going aſtray; but are now returned unto the ſhepherd and biſhop of your ſouls.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſtate and condition in which both Jews and Gentiles were found before their converſion to chriſtianity, they were like ſheep going aſtray and loſt, wandering in the ways of ſin and unbelief, to their threatened ruin and deſtruction. 2. The tender care of Chriſt, that great and good Shepherd, in bringing home theſe loſt ſheep upon his ſhoulders, (Iſa. xl. 11.) into his fold the church; *But are now returned unto the ſhepherd*, to him that will feed you in green paſtures, and preſerve you to his heavenly kingdom: The ſhepherd gives life to his ſheep, and alſo lays down his life for his ſheep. 3. The additional title given to Chriſt, he is ſtiled the *biſhop of our ſouls*: he that with tenderneſs, care, and diligence, doth inſpect and viſit all his charge: he is the univerſal Biſhop, the Biſhop of biſhops, who has the charge of all the flocks, and of the ſhepherds too, and to whom all biſhops and ſhepherds muſt become accountable. God Almighty give them all ſuch grace to be faithful, ſuch wiſdom to be prudent, that love to himſelf, that zeal for Chriſt, that tenderneſs for ſouls, ſuch meekneſs and humility, ſuch patience and charity, ſuch mortification and ſelf-denial, as becomes perſons of their holy character and profeſſion; always remembering, that the ſalvation of one precious ſoul, for which the great Shepherd died, is infinitely worth the moſt indefatigable labours of their whole lives; that when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, they may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, *be* in ſubjection to your own huſbands; that if any obey not the word, they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives, 2 While they behold your chaſte converſation *coupled* with fear.

Our apoſtle having, in the foregoing chapter, entered upon an exhortation to the practice of relative duties, particularly of ſubjects towards their rulers, and of ſervants towards their maſters, he continues here his exhortation to huſbands and wives in the former part of this chapter, beginning firſt with the wives' duty (as did St. Paul, in all his epiſtles) becauſe their duty of ſubjection is the moſt hard and difficult duty: *Likewiſe, ye wives, be in ſubjection to your own huſbands. Obſerve* here, 1. The duty enjoined, *ſubjection*, that is, a loving and delightful obedience to the huſband, owning of, and ſubmitting to his authority, in compliance with the command of God. 2. The perſons from whom and to whom this ſubjection is due, from every *wife* to her *own huſband*, believer or unbeliever, chriſtian or infidel: it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, for the wife to caſt off this duty, which, by the law of her creation, and the expreſs command of God, is bound upon her. 3. One ſpecial reaſon aſſigned why ſuch wives as have unbelieving, wicked, and unconverted huſbands, ſhould take particular care to expreſs that fear and reverence toward God, ſubjection and obedience, that chaſtity and conjugal affection towards their huſbands, which the word of God calls for; namely, that ſuch huſbands as *obey not the word, may without the word* (preached) *be won* to the faith, by obſerving the efficacy and power of the word in the converſation of the wives. *Learn* hence, That the wives' holy and humble, pious and prudent, meek and patient, chaſte and unſuſpected converſation before God and the world, does recommend not only their perſons to the love and eſteem of their huſbands, but alſo their faith and holy religion (which produces ſuch good fruits) to their approbation and choice.

3 Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.

Our apoſtle's next advice here given to wives, is concerning their attire; this is laid down, firſt, negatively, what it ſhould not be, not an outward adorning, attended with great curioſity and exactneſs in dreſſing the body with plaited hair, gold chains, gay and gaudy apparel, and ſuch like. Where *note*, That plaited hair, gold chains, and coſtly attire, were then the attire of lewd women, whores only, or chiefly, were ſo decked and adorned, and therefore were abſolutely forbidden to the chriſtian women by our apoſtle; but, when ſuch attire ceaſes to be a mark of ſuch diſtinction, it may be worn by chriſtian women, provided it be done without pride, and without too great expence both of time and treaſure; always remembering that gravity in apparel, and wearing ſuch a dreſs as is ſoon put on, is moſt honourable, and beſt becoming chriſtian women. "I had rather, ſays one, go like the wild Indians, than have thoſe thouſands of hours to anſwer for, which ſome have ſpent between the glaſs and the comb." *Obſerve* here, That this text doth not abſolutely forbid the wearing of ornaments, or coſtly apparel, by ſuch perſons whoſe quality will anſwer it, but only forbids pride and vanity, affectation and oſtentation in the wearing of them; it is not only lawful to cover the body, but to adorn the body; Abraham had never ſent ear-rings and bracelets to Rebecca, had they been ſinful in their uſe; to wear ſuch things beyond our purſe and place, and to make ourſelves or others poor by making ourſelves fine, is very ſinful, but otherwiſe lawful. *Obſerve*, next, Our apoſtle's affirmative precept for the woman's adorning, with the reaſons of it, ver. 4. *But let it be the hidden man of the heart*, &c. Where *note*, 1. What muſt be apparalled and adorned, *the hidden man of the heart*, that is, the ſoul, which wants both covering and adorning as well as the body, ſin having made both naked to their ſhame. 2. With what the hidden man of the heart muſt be apparelled, not with fine clothes, they will not cover a naked ſoul, but with the ſanctifying graces of the Spirit of God, with humility and meekneſs, with piety and prudence, which ornaments will never wax old, nor grow out of faſhion, as others do, and are alſo of precious eſteem with God himſelf, they *are in the ſight of God of great price:* Theſe virtues are in themſelves, and render the poſſeſſors of them, truly valuable in the ſight and eſteem of God. Upon the whole then it evidently appears, that the negation here is not abſolute, but comparative: As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "God will have the hidden man of your heart adorned with grace, and delights more to ſee that, than your bodies adorned with precious jewels and coſtly apparel;" and accordingly, if women affect finery, and would appear beautiful, let them chooſe the beſt ornaments, thoſe of the mind and heart, which will attract the eye of God towards them, rather than thoſe external ones, which ſerve only to draw man's eye to an admiration of them.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women alſo who truſted in God adorning themſelves, being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands; 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whoſe daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Our apoſtle in theſe two verſes enforces the exhortation and advice given to women in the foregoing verſes, namely, to attire themſelves with outward modeſty, and inward meekneſs, by a twofold argument: (1.) From the example of holy women in general under the Old Teſtament, whoſe praiſe is in the ſcripture, nor for the external adorning of the body, but for their affiance and truſt in God, and their ſubjection paid to their own huſbands. Here *note*, 1. That holineſs, or the duties of the firſt table, are required of women as well as of men: And God accepts holineſs in them as well as in men, *The holy women*. 2. That all holy women of old did, and always ought to make conſcience of their duty to their huſbands, particularly of ſubjection, that ſo good example may be given by them, and taken from them, for others to do the like; the virtue of good example is laſting, it may do good many years after the example is given; the example of theſe holy women had a freſh power to do good many thouſand years after it was given, and will ſtill have to the world's end. (2.) Another argument is taken from the example of Sarah, who meekly obeyed Abraham, acknowledging him to be her lord; the daughters of whoſe faith, and the heirs of whoſe bleſſing, ſuch wives will appear and prove themſelves to be, who do as Sarah did, not ſuffering themſelves by any fears or terrors to be diverted from, nor by any fits of paſſion and grief, to be diſturbed in the performance of that duty which God requires, and the huſband expects: *Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. Obſerve* here, 1. That the faithful practice, and conſcientious diſcharge of domeſtic and relative duties is much taken notice of by God, and had in remembrance with him, particularly the wife's duty, faithfully diſcharged to the froward huſband, is and ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance with God. 2. That the ſame duty and reverence, the ſame ſubjection and obedience which Sarah gave to Abraham, is due and payable to every huſband, elſe the apoſtle's argument is of no force. Some might ſay, Abraham was a great man: *Anſ.* True, but Sarah obeyed him as her huſband, as all wives ought to do, becauſe the command of God requires honour and reverence to be given to all huſbands, as huſbands. Laſtly, With what great and wonderful goodneſs and clemency the Lord is pleaſed to overlook the failings and infirmities of his upright ſervants. We find in Sarah's ſtory, Gen. xviii. that ſhe ſpake very unhandſomely, and laughed indecently, when the angel came and told her ſhe ſhould have a ſon, but all that is paſſed by in ſilence, and that one good word ſhe gave her huſband, calling him *lord*, is mentioned here by St. Peter to her eternal honour: The Lord has a gracious reſpect to a little pure gold, though mingled with much droſs, and in a great heap of ſin: If he can eſpy, he will accept of, a little ſpark of true grace: O Lord! thou wilt not bring our infirmities and ſlips to account againſt us, nor rigidly reckon with us for the ſame, if our hearts be upright with thee; make us then ſound in thy ſtatutes, that we may not be aſhamed.

7 Likewiſe, ye huſbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Next our apoſtle proceeds to direct and exhort huſbands to the practice of their reſpective duties; the general and comprehenſive duty of the huſband here mentioned is cohabitation, under which all matrimonial duties are contained; *Dwell with your wives according to knowledge*, that is, as becomes wiſe and underſtanding men, that well underſtand their duty, and, as the rule of chriſtianity directs, giving juſt honour, and due reſpect unto them, and exerciſing great tenderneſs towards them. Next *obſerve*, The reaſons ſubjoined to enforce this duty upon huſbands: 1. Becauſe wives are the weaker veſſels, ſubject to infirmities, and more liable to contempt, therefore their huſbands ſhould contribute their wiſdom and authority to ſupport their honour, and preſerve them from being deſpiſed either by children or ſervants. 2. Becauſe wives are not only copartners with their huſbands in their temporal good things, but alſo coheirs of ſaving grace with them, *Heirs together of the grace* *of life*. 3. Becauſe otherwiſe their prayers one with, and one for another, would be obſtructed and diſturbed, *That your prayers be not hindered. Note* here, That all ſinful walking in general, but diſcord and diſcontent between huſband and wife in particular, doth exceedingly hinder prayer, it oft-times hinders from the very act of prayer, that the duty is laid aſide; it flats and deads our ſpirits, and ſtreightens our hearts in prayer, and it hinders the effect, fruit, and ſucceſs of our prayers; it makes perſons in that condition, that they have no heart to come before God, nor care to lift up their faces to him. From the whole *learn*, That it ought to be the mutual care of married couples ſo to order all their carriage towards each other, that in their houſes they hinder not any holy duties; to hinder the practice of religion is repugnant to the great ends of this relation; ſome hinder by their wickedneſs, others by their diſcontent and frowardneſs; take we care that neither the huſband's nor wife's heart be deadened, nor their heart damped to holy duties by either of their ſinful or froward behaviour; that family will be little in praying that is much in ſquabbling and contending one with another.

8 ¶ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compaſſion
one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be*
courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing
for railing: but contrariwiſe, bleſſing; knowing that
ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a
bleſſing. 10 For he that will love life, and ſee good
days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his
lips that they ſpeak no guile. 11 Let him eſchew
evil, and do good: let him ſeek peace, and enſue it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous,
and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face
of the Lord *is* againſt them that do evil. 13 And
who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of
that which is good?

Our apoſtle, having finiſhed his exhortation to relative duties, namely, of huſbands and wives, maſters and ſervants, magiſtrates and ſubjects, he now enters upon another ſubject, namely, that of ſufferings, ſhewing us a prudential way and manner how to avoid ſufferings, that they may not come upon us; and next, how to avoid impatience under ſufferings, if it be the will of God that they do come upon us. The former of theſe is ſpoken to in the verſes now before us, in which he exhorts us to practiſe all thoſe virtues which are apt to reconcile and gain the affections of men towards us, particularly he exhorts to unity and concord. *Be all of one mind*, to ſympathize one with another in and under ſufferings, and to bear with one another's infirmities, to be courteous towards all, ſweet and affable in our demeanour, provided our courteſy be neither a ſnare to ourſelves, nor an encouragement to others in their ſins, abſtaining from all injuries and provocations, from all revenge both in act and in deſire, not reviling them that rail at us, but giving good words for bad ones, *for we are hereunto called that we ſhould inherit a bleſſing*; that is, Chriſt by his goſpel hath called, and by his example encouraged us thus to do, that we may be bleſſed. Next *obſerve*, That to encourage us to the perpetual practice of theſe virtues, our apoſtle aſſures us, that thereby we ſhould moſt effectually conſult the ſafety and comfort of our lives: *For he that loveth life*, that is, quietneſs and peace, which is the comfort of life, the likelieſt way to obtain it is, to keep his tongue from ſpeaking evil of others, and his lips from uttering falſhood and deceit; plainly intimating, that it is men's unbridled tongues which bring moſt of their troubles upon them. He adviſes alſo to *eſchew evil*, to avoid and to abhor every thing that is vile and ſinful; and to *do good*, that is, all the good we can to all men: *to ſeek peace, and enſue it*, that is, to depart ſometimes from our own right to obtain peace, and to follow hard after it, though it flies before us. And farther, our apoſtle aſſures us, that this innocency of converſation is not only the way to gain the friendſhip of man, but to obtain the favour of God, and to engage his providence for our protection, *For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry:* as if he had ſaid, "The eye of God's ſpecial care will be continually watching over you for good, to ſave you from unreaſonable men, and he will hear your prayers in all your diſtreſſes; and *the face of the Lord*, his angry countenance, will be againſt them that wrong you, and do evil to you, to return it upon their own heads." So that the ſum of all is, that an innocent and harmleſs, a quiet, peaceable, and obliging deportment, doth naturally tend to preſerve us from evil, and from evil men; for *who is he* that can be ſo unnatural and ſo ungrateful as to *harm us, if we be followers of that which is good?* that is, if we be civil and obliging to them, they cannot find in their hearts to be injurious and unkind to us. *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* Here *note*, that the apoſtle doth not abſolutely ſay none will harm us, but he ſpeaks of it as ſo very unreaſonable and improbable a thing, that we may preſume it will not ordinarily and often happen: Not but that good men are obnoxious to *harm*; the moſt unblemiſhed and ſhining virtue will not at all times, and in all caſes be exempt from injury and ill-treatment; but the *following* of that which is *good* doth in its own nature tend to ſecure us from the malice and miſchief of men, and very frequently does it, and is the beſt and moſt effectual means in order to it; he muſt love miſchief for miſchief's ſake, that will be miſchievous to him who never offered him any occaſion, or gave him any provocation; therefore let us never be weary of well-doing, ſeeing doing good to men is ordinarily a ſecurity againſt injuries from men, by recommending us to the favour and protection of God, and to the eſteem and good-will of mankind; none ſhall *harm* them that do *good*, for all *harm* ſhall tend to their *good*.

14 ¶ But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake,
happy *are ye:* and be not afraid of their terror,
neither be troubled;

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Though following that which is good be, generally ſpeaking, a ſure and certain way to keep you from harm, yet ſhould it ſo happen, that notwithſtanding all your piety and prudence, you ſhould ſuffer for well-doing, ye are happy, and not miſerable; therefore be not afraid of their terrors, and threatenings, neither be ye troubled for what they can inflict upon you." *Note* hence, 1. That to ſuffer affliction and perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake, doth not hinder, but further our happineſs: *If ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye*, for ſo ſuffered your Saviour that went before you. 2. That when God calls us forth to ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, we muſt fortify ourſelves againſt all fear; no terrors muſt trouble us, no apprehended dangers or difficulties muſt diſmay us.

15 But ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts:—

This phraſe in ſcripture imports, 1. A firm belief of God's almighty power, that he can protect from ſufferings; and a full affiance in his goodneſs and providence, that he will do ſo if it be good for us. 2. It is from the heart to own and believe the truth of all that God delivers in his word by way of promiſe to his people, and by way of threatening to their enemies, that *his eyes are over the righteous, and his face againſt them that do evil.* 3. To ſanctify the Lord God in our hearts, is always to maintain upon our minds ſuch an holy fear, and awful reverence of God, as will effectually prevail upon us to dread more the diſpleaſure of God, than any thing we can ſuffer at the hand of man. *Learn* hence, 1. That when ſufferings are approaching, we ought to ſtrengthen our hearts againſt all fears of ſuffering, by putting our truſt in God. 2. That by this truſt and confidence in God in a ſuffering hour, we do eminently ſanctify the Lord God in our hearts, Iſa. viii. 13. *Sanctify the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear and your dread.*

—And *be* ready always to *give* an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you, with meekneſs and fear:

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If you be chriſtians indeed, you are not without hope, an hope of everlaſting bliſs and happineſs, which will infinitely recompence you hereafter for all the hard things which you ſuffer for the ſake of chriſtianity here; and foraſmuch as this your hope is not a vain and groundleſs expectation, but a rational hope, *Be always ready to render a reaſon of that hope*, &c. *Learn*, 1. That the chriſtian's hope is a rational hope, he has a reaſon to hope for what he hopes, his hope is well-grounded upon the promiſe of God, upon the purchaſe of Chriſt, and upon the operations of the Holy Spirit quickening him by its renovation, leading him by its manuduction, actuating him by its influence, animating him in devotions by its aſſiſtances, by being the author of all that grace that is in him, and of all that good that is done by him. 2. That it is a chriſtian's duty to be always ready to render a reaſon of this his hope, when the glory of God, the honour of religion, and the good of others, do require it. 3. That this muſt not be done with vanity and oſtentation, but with meekneſs and fear: *Be always ready to render a reaſon*, &c.

16 Having a good conſcience; that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt. 17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

Here our apoſtle adds his advice to chriſtians, that they ſilence and put to ſhame their adverſaries, by their works as well as by their words, by their holy converſation, together with their rational diſputations; he required them in the former verſe to be always ready to make a profeſſion of their faith, and to *render a reaſon of their hope*: Here he bids them confute gainſayers by a good converſation, and in order thereunto, to keep continually an innocent mind, and a clear conſcience, pure from guile, and clear of guilt; *having a good conſcience, that ſuch as ſpeak evil of you as evil-doers may be aſhamed.* *Note* here, 1. That let the ſervants of Chriſt be never ſo innocent in their lives, and circumſpect in their carriage, yet there are thoſe that will cenſure them as bad men, and ſlander them as evil-doers. 2. That a good conſcience accompanied with a good converſation, is the moſt effectual mean to ſtop the mouth of ſlander, and to put ſuch as accuſe us falſely to ſhame. 3. That when ſufferings and perſecutions do come, after all, the conſideration that we ſuffer not for evil but for well-doing, will be a ſufficient ſupport and conſolation to us. *It is better*, if God will have us ſuffer, *that it be for well-doing*; better for us, but worſe for our perſecutors; for now the body only ſuffers, while the ſoul is free.

18 For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Theſe words are brought in as a ſtrong argument, why chriſtians that ſuffer wrongfully ſhould bear it patiently; it was our Saviour's own caſe, he that had perfect innocency and unſpotted righteouſneſs, ſuffered in the ſevereſt manner, for us that were unrighteous, that he might reconcile us to God, being *put to death in the fleſh*, that is in our human nature, *but quickened by the Spirit*, or raiſed to life again by the power of his Godhead: it doth therefore well become all his followers cheerfully to undergo all manner of ſufferings for him, which they meet with in their duty to him. *Note* here, 1. Chriſt did not barely ſuffer for our good, but he ſuffered in our ſtead: He is not only ſaid to ſuffer for us, but to ſuffer for our ſins, that is, the puniſhment of our ſins; for no man was ever ſaid to ſuffer for ſin that did not undergo and endure the puniſhment of ſin. As the ſin-offering under the law is called an offering for ſin, becauſe it did expiate the guilt of ſin, by dying in the place and ſtead of the offender; in like manner, when the death of Chriſt is called an offering for ſin, what can it import, but that he ſuffered to make atonement for ſin in our place and ſtead? *The Juſt for the unjuſt*: If theſe words do not imply the ſubſtitution of Chriſt as our ſurety, and his ſuffering the puniſhment due to our ſins, what words can expreſs it? 2. That the great end of Chriſt's bitter death and bloody ſufferings, was, to bring all thoſe for whom he died unto God; now Chriſt's bringing us to God imports our apoſtaſy from him, our inability to return to him; that ſin unſatisfied for, which was the great bar to keep us from him, is mercifully removed by him, and that our chief happineſs conſiſts in the enjoyment of him.

19 ¶ By which alſo he went and preached unto

the ſpirits in priſon; 20 Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight ſouls were ſaved by water.

As if St. Peter had ſaid, “ Though Chriſt ſuffered for our ſins, and was put to death in his human nature, or fleſh, yet he was quickened and made alive by the Spirit, in which, or by which Spirit, *he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon*, which in the days of Noah were hardened in ſin and diſobedience, whilſt the long-ſuffering of God endured them, and waited for their repentance no leſs than an hundred and twenty years, while the ark was making and preparing, and Noah preaching to them; yet ſo impenitent were they to the very laſt, that only eight were ſaved in the ark.” *Note* here, 1. That the old world before the flood were in priſon whilſt here on earth, being in bondage and captivity to ſin and Satan, held in the chains of their luſts, and in the bonds of their iniquity; ſuch as are in bondage to ſin, are captives in Satan's priſon: The old world alſo was in priſon whilſt on earth, as having received from God the ſentence of deſtruction, and were reſerved, as in priſon, againſt the day of ſlaughter, if they repented not within one hundred and twenty years. 2. That Chriſt, by his Spirit did preach to the old world in the miniſtry of his prophets, Enoch and Noah; and his Spirit did chide with them and reprove them, in order to their bringing to repentance. 3. That thoſe refractory and hardened ſinners, for deſpiſing the offers of grace made to them, were for their diſobedience clapped up into the priſon of hell, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire; ſuch as were caſt into priſon in Noah's time, were all faſt in St. Peter's time: There is no picking the locks of hell-gates, no breaking through the walls of the fiery Tophet; hell has a door to take in, but none to let out. 4. That though Chriſt, by his Spirit, preached to the ſpirits in priſon, yet it was not when they were in priſon, I mean in the priſon of hell, but when here on earth; there are no ſermons in hell, no conditions of happineſs propoſed, no tenders of ſalvation propounded there: Chriſt preached to theſe priſoners to prevent their impriſonment; Chriſt preached to theſe men, who were now in priſon, that they might not have been impriſoned. Laſtly, That the obſtinate infidelity, and ſottiſh ſtupidity, of the old world, was amazing, that after one hundred and twenty years preaching, no more than eight perſons ſhould be perſuaded into the belief of the world's deſtruction. From the beginning we find, that the prophets of God had cauſe to complain, that *few have believed their report:* Do the miniſters of God now groan to God, that they run in vain, and labour in vain, and ſpend their ſtrength for nought? From the beginning it has been ſo. Lord! if thou honoureſt any of us with better ſucceſs, and giveſt us to ſee the fruit of our labours in the lives of our people, help us to ſet the crown of praiſe on the head of thine own grace, and ſay, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis,* &c. “ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.”

21 The like figure whereunto, *even* baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt:

Obſerve, 1. The type and the antitype, the ark and baptiſm; their ſalvation from the deluge, by the ark, prefigureth our ſalvation from God's wrath by baptiſm. As all that were without the ark periſhed, and all within the ark were ſaved; ſo all that are ingrafted into Chriſt by faith, whereof baptiſm is a ſeal, are ſaved, whilſt the unbelieving and unbaptized part of the world periſh. Baptiſm is ſuch a mean of ſpiritual ſalvation now, as the ark was of Noah's, and his family's, temporal ſalvation then; *the like figure whereunto baptiſm now ſaveth us.* 2. How our apoſtle expreſſes himſelf, and plainly declares what he means by that baptiſm which is ſaving; negatively, it is not the outward ceremony of ſprinkling the face, or waſhing the body with water, that is ſaving, or any ways pleaſing unto God, ſave only as it is an act and exerciſe of our obedience to his command and will; but poſitively, it is *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God,* that is, the faithful anſwer of a reſolved ſoul in the covenant of baptiſm, who gives up himſelf to the obedience of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and renounces the world, the fleſh, and the devil; this covenanting is the condition of ſalvation, and baptiſm but the ſign. *Learn* hence, That outward baptiſm alone ſaves none, but the inward only; and the ſign and ſingular effect of inward baptiſm, is *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God.* Yet we muſt not conclude, with the Anabaptiſts, from this text, that baptiſm can be of no ſaving advantage to infants, becauſe they cannot at preſent make this anſwer of a good conſcience: For in the ſame manner ſpeaks St. Paul of circumciſion, that the true circumciſion before God, is the inward circumciſion of the heart and ſpirit, and not the outward circumciſion of the fleſh. But who dare argue from thence, that the Jewiſh infants, for want of the inward circumciſion, muſt not be admitted to the outward? The argument is the very ſame: Will you ſay that the anſwer of a good conſcience is abſolutely neceſſary, and expreſly required, that baptiſm may be beneficial; therefore they only are to be baptized that can make this anſwer? The ſame may we ſay, that the inward circumciſion of the heart was required as the only acceptable circumciſion in the ſight of God; therefore they only are to be circumciſed, who have this inward circumciſion of the heart. But as the one *was* the will of God, ſo *is* the other. True indeed the Jews did not admit proſelytes to circumciſion then, no more will we admit adult perſons to baptiſm, *now,* without the anſwer of a good conſcience, or a ſolemn ſtipulation to be the Lord's for ever; but they admitted infants to circumciſion without it; in like manner, the chriſtian church now admits the children of chriſtian parents to baptiſm, without ſuch anſwer made by them, but for them only.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and power being made ſubject unto him.

Our apoſtle having, in the cloſe of the former verſe, ſpoken of the reſurrection of Chriſt, and of the benefits which we receive thereby, he makes mention in this verſe, 1. Of his going into heaven, there to diſpatch all that remained to be done for the completing the ſalvation of his people. 2. He is here affirmed to be at God's right hand. The right hand is the upper hand, the hand of honour; and the right hand is the hand of power; accordingly Chriſt ſitting at God's right hand, as an inthroned King, imports ſovereign honour and ſupreme power; and that God has exalted his Son Jeſus Chriſt with great triumph to his kingdom in heaven. 3. It is aſſerted, That angels, authorities, and powers, are made ſubject to him, that is, our Jeſus in whom we hope, believe, and truſt, is advanced in heaven to a pre-eminency above, and to a ſuperiority over, all angels and celeſtial powers, waiting and expecting until all his enemies on earth become his footſtool. For though his victory is yet incomplete and inconſummate, and we ſee not all things *yet* put under him, it may ſuffice at preſent that we ſee Jeſus crowned with glory and honour, and that is enough to ſhew that the power of his enemies is broken; and that though they make ſome oppoſition ſtill, yet it is to no purpoſe at all: For refuſing to ſubmit to his ſceptre, they will fall by the rod of his ſtrength. Angels and principalities in heaven, and all powers and potentates upon earth being made ſubject unto him.

CHAP. IV.

FORASMUCH then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm yourſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind: For he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin; 2 That he no longer ſhould live the reſt of *his* time in the fleſh to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.

Theſe words may be conſidered, 1. As an inference drawn from what the apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing chapter, namely, That Chriſt Jeſus ſuffered for our ſins, *the Juſt for the unjuſt*, ver. 18. Now, ſays the apoſtle, foraſmuch as Chriſt has thus ſuffered for us, firſt, As our Surety and Repreſentative, in a way of ſatisfaction. Secondly, As our pattern and example in order to our imitation; *let us arm ourſelves with the ſame mind* and reſolution, to be conformed to him in his death, dying to ſin as he died for ſin; for he that hath crucified the fleſh, and mortified his corrupt nature, in imitation of Chriſt's ſufferings in our fleſh and nature, that man hath ceaſed from ſin, that is, from living unto ſin, or ſerving ſin any longer, but ſpends the remainder of his life wholly according to God's will, not according to his own, or others luſtful deſires and inclination. 2. Theſe words may be conſidered as an argument to excite chriſtians to eſchew evil and to do good, which he had preſſed upon them in the former chapter, from the example of Chriſt. And the force of the argument lies thus: "All chriſtians ſhould be armed with the ſame mind and reſolution againſt ſin, and for holineſs, that Chriſt was. But Chriſt having ſuffered in the fleſh for ſin, and ceaſed from ſin, lived in the Spirit unto God: Therefore all chriſtians ſhould wholly endeavour all they can to ceaſe from ſin, and live no more *to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.*"

3 For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4 Wherein they think it ſtrange that ye run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of *you*: 5 Who ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Obſerve here, 1. That this epiſtle was written and directed not only to the Jewiſh natives, but to the Gentile proſelytes and converts; this is evident from the apoſtle's putting them in mind that there was a time, namely, before their converſion, *when they wrought the will of the Gentiles.* 2. The black and diſmal ſins which the Gentiles were guilty of, and wallowed in, before their converſion to chriſtianity, namely, all manner of ſenſuality, uncleanneſs, exceſs in drinking, revellings, banquetings, and idolatries, joined with the reſt of their abominations. Lord! how endearing are our obligations, *who were ſinners of the Gentiles*, for calling us out of this darkneſs (worſe than Egyptian) into marvellous light by the goſpel. 3. The argument uſed to excite them to quit and abandon the forementioned ſins now in their converted ſtate, which they had before indulged themſelves in the practice of in their heathen ſtate. The time paſt may ſuffice *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles:* as if he had ſaid, "Surely you have had enough, enough of ſin, and too much in your unregenerate ſtate; your luſts have taken up too much of your lives, and had too much of your love." *Learn* hence, That the true penitent, and ſincere convert, is one that has had enough of ſin, yea, more than enough; one moment's ſervice of ſin is more ſervice than we owe it: we can never ſerve Chriſt too long, and our luſt too ſhort a time. *Learn*, 2. That this conſideration how long ſome of us ſerved ſin before converſion, ſhould be a forcible argument to excite and quicken us unto greater meaſures and degrees of holineſs in our regenerate and converted ſtate. *Obſerve*, 4. What uſage ſuch chriſtians muſt expect from the men of the world, who come out from among them, and refuſe to run any longer into the ſame exceſs of riot with them. (1.) *They think it ſtrange:* they admire and wonder at them, as we do at ſtrangers that come out of another country. And, (2.) *They ſpeak evil of them*, becauſe they will not be as bad and as mad as themſelves. *They think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you.* *Learn* hence, 1. That wicked men are exceſſively riotous, or that there is an exceſs of riot and ſin, which wicked men upon all occaſions run into. 2. That ſuch men wonder, and think it very ſtrange, that good men are not as exceſſively riotous as themſelves. 3. That becauſe they will not ſo run, they ſpeak evil of them. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The impartiality and ſeverity of that account which the wicked men of the world muſt render to God, the univerſal Judge, for all their hard ſpeeches which they have uttered againſt the righteous: *Who ſhall give account to him*, &c. *Note* here, 1. There muſt and ſhall be a day of account: There muſt be one, becauſe there never was yet one: There ſhall be one, becauſe God has made an accountable creature; he can give, and therefore he ſhall give an account of his actions; for he has a principle of reaſon to know what he does, and a liberty of choice to govern himſelf, and a rule to direct him what to chooſe, and what to refuſe; and conſequently, the actions proceeding from him, muſt and ſhall be accounted for by him. 2. That this account muſt be given to Chriſt, the ſupreme and univerſal *Judge both of quick and dead*; partly as a fitting reward for his great humiliation and ſufferings, and partly that the world may ſee what a great and excellent perſon he was, who came to viſit them in great humility, and partly to give advantage to the future judgment, in that God has appointed *a man* for our Judge, who is fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone, one that is ſenſible of the follies, temptations, and infirmities of mankind, and pities them, and will make favourable allowances for them; nay, one that is God as well as man, from whom we may expect all the goodneſs of a God, and all the tender compaſſion of a man, in their utmoſt perfection; ſo that no man need fear ſuch a Judge, who has not out-ſinned the mercies of a God, and the tender compaſſions of a man; for if either God or man can help us, we are ſafe in that day, when we ſhall *give account to him that is ready to judge*, &c.

6 For, for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the ſpirit.

By the dead here, ſome underſtand the Gentile world, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, to whom the goſpel was preached when they were thus ſpiritually dead and buried in ſenſuality, that they might judge and condemn, oppoſe and ſtrive againſt, mortify and ſubdue, thoſe ſenſual deſires and carnal appetites, which they indulged, whilſt they lived as natural men, without the knowledge of God's will, and the aſſiſtance of his grace and Spirit; others do underſtand the words of ſuch as are naturally dead, that the goſpel was preached to them who were long ſince dead, even our forefathers, that lived and died before Chriſt's coming, and that they had the goſpel preached to them, while they were alive, that ſo they might mortify all their ſinful luſts and corrupt affections, and live new lives, according to the direction and command of God in his holy word. *Learn* hence, That the condition of men now living, and of thoſe that lived heretofore in all ages, is one and the ſame, having the ſame goſpel, for ſubſtance, preached to them, and accordingly, the ſame duties of mortification and holineſs required of them.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore ſober and watch unto prayer.

Theſe words are brought by our apoſtle as a freſh argument to perſuade Chriſtian Jews to the practice of ſincere holineſs; *the end of all things*, that is, of the Jewiſh ſtate and polity, their city, their temple, and worſhip, *is at hand*; the fatal deſtruction of Jeruſalem is now very near, therefore be ye ſober and temperate in all things; *watch*, that the day of viſitation overtake you not unawares, and pray for the averting of God's wrath, and that ye be not overwhelmed in it. *Learn* hence, That ſobriety, watchfulneſs, and prayer, are very requiſite and needful qualifications to prepare and fit perſons for every coming and appearance of Chriſt to judgment, be it his particular coming to ſome, or his univerſal coming to all at the end of the world.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves: for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins.

The next grace and virtue exhorted to, is that of charity, or mutual love amongſt themſelves: and obſerve with what ſpecial care and particular regard it is recommended to us, *above all things*; and note alſo, the intenſe degree of it, it muſt not barely be charity, but *fervent charity*; *above all things have fervent charity*. *Learn*, That we ought to take care, above all things, that our love to one another be ſincere and fervent. *Queſt.* But how may it be known to be ſuch? *Anſ.* If it be active and operative; if we love not in word or in tongue, but indeed and in truth, if it be not weakened by time, if it be not hindered by remoteneſs of place, if it be a ſympathiſing and compaſſionate love, a forbearing and forgiving love, then have we *fervent charity among ourſelves*. *Obſerve* next, The argument or reaſon to inforce the duty, *for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins*. This may be underſtood two ways: (1.) With reſpect to ourſelves. Charity, or true love to our brother, will cauſe us not ſtrictly to take notice of, but ſilently to overlook and paſs by the faults and failings of others towards and againſt ourſelves. (2.) It will cover the ſins of others from the eye of the world, and keep us from blazing abroad the infirmities of others, to their prejudice and diſgrace; it is both unwarrantable and unſafe to cover the ſins of others, either by flattery or falſehood; but to cover a ſin by charity, to conceal it from public notice, is a great piece of chriſtian duty, unleſs when the concealing of it will do apparent miſchief: Love looks upon great wrongs as ſmall, and ſmall wrongs as none at all; he muſt have no friends that will have a friend with no faults.

9 Uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging.

As a principal act, and eminent exerciſe of charity, the apoſtle adviſes to *uſe hoſpitality* to their poor brethren, *without grudging* or murmuring at the charge; hoſpitality is a neceſſary, a commendable, and a commanded duty; St. Paul requires, Rom. xii. 13. *that we be given to hoſpitality*. *Obſerve* farther, The apoſtle doth not barely ſay, *uſe hoſpitality*, but, uſe it *one to another*; it is a mutual duty; whence it appears, that though hoſpitality towards the poor be a commanded duty, yet hoſpitality among the rich is no ſin, but a duty likewiſe to give reciprocal entertainments; and though our Saviour ſays, Luke xiv. 12. *When thou makeſt a dinner, or a ſupper, call not thy friends and rich neighbours*; the prohibition is not abſolute; he doth not forbid the inviting of the rich, but chargeth us not to forget the poor; we may treat both, if we have enough for both; but if not, what we have to ſpare muſt be for them that have nothing, not for them that have enough already, for we muſt prefer works of pious charity, before acts of civil courteſy: *Uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging*.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even ſo* miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God.

His next exhortation is, That they endeavour rightly to employ, and wiſely to improve, their ſpiritual gifts, (as well as their temporal, mentioned in the foregoing verſe) which they had received for the good and benefit of others, in their reſpective places in the church, looking upon themſelves not as proprietors, but as ſtewards of the various gifts beſtowed upon them by the free favour of God, and of which they muſt give an impartial account. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſeveral men have their ſeveral gifts, as it pleaſeth the gift-giving Spirit to give unto them; *As every man has received the gift.* 2. That gifts are given for the benefit of others, we are *to miniſter one to another*, that is, to improve our gifts to the mutual edification of each other. 3. That ſuch as look upon themſelves as *ſtewards of the manifold gifts of God*, will wiſely improve them for his glory, and the good of others, the great ends for which he has conferred them.

11 If any man ſpeak, *let him ſpeak* as the oracles of God: if any man miniſter, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

If any man ſpeaks, that is, 1. As a public miniſter, or teacher, let him ſpeak as he is inſtructed from the oracles of God. Or, 2. If he ſpeaks as a private chriſtian, let his diſcourſe be grave and ſerious, for mutual edification, eſpecially when ye ſpeak of divine things; ſpeech is a noble and advantageous benefit to man, by which he excels the whole creation; our tongue is our glory, the inſtrument of our Creator's praiſe; and there is no ſubject ſo ſublime and honourable for the tongue of man to be employed about, as the word and oracles of God, but then we muſt never mention them but with reverence: Woe be to thoſe men that bring forth ſcripture in their diſcourſe, as the Philiſtines brought forth Samſon, only to make them ſport, rendering it the theme of their giddy mirth and prophane drollery; but theſe men ere long will find Almighty God in earneſt, though they be in jeſt; ſuch men forget this injunction of the apoſtle's, *If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the oracles of God.*——*If any man miniſter*, that is, To ſupply the neceſſities of others, either as a deacon, whoſe office it then was to take care of the poor, or as a private chriſtian, by charitable contribution, let him perform that duty readily and cheerfully, *according to the ability which God hath given him.* Where *obſerve*, That he that with his wealth miniſtereth to the neceſſities of others, if he doth it not according to the ability which God has given him, his charity is no acceptable charity in God's account; not acceptable to God, becauſe not proportionable to what he has received from God; the reaſon of this injunction is added in the next words,—*that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt:*—in whoſe ſtrength theſe gifts are rightly employed, and by whoſe merits and interceſſion, our intention to glorify God by them is accepted.—*To whom*, that is, to which Jeſus, as to God bleſſed for evermore, be all honour and dominion everlaſtingly aſcribed. *Amen.*

12 ¶ Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice inaſmuch as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.

Obſerve here, 1. The metaphor which the apoſtle uſes to ſet forth the chriſtian's afflictions and perſecutions by; he calls them *fiery trials*; burnings, becauſe very painful and afflictive, very grievous and burdenſome to ſenſe, and alſo becauſe men are tried by them as metals are by fire. 2. The warning given by the apoſtle to all chriſtians, not to think ſtrange concerning theſe *fiery trials*; that is, not to look upon them as unuſual things, but to expect them, and prepare for them; for unexpected trials fall upon the ſoul in their full weight, and ſuddenly overthrow it; what we fear, for that we prepare; but when trials come, and we never looked and prepared for them, they ſtrike us to the heart, becauſe not armed to receive the blow. 3. The gracious end that God has in the afflictions and perſecutions which fall upon his people, *they are to try them*, not to conſume them; to try their graces, and deſtroy their corruptions, to give them opportunity to make proof of the truth of their faith, ſincerity, and conſtancy. 4. The high honour which God puts upon his ſuffering ſaints and ſervants; they are ſaid to be *partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings*, becauſe they ſuffer for him, and he ſuffers with them, and in them; and alſo becauſe he ſuffered the ſame things before them, and much worſe things for them. Laſtly, The duty which God expects and requires from them who ſuffer theſe fiery perſecutions for the ſake of his Son, and that is to *rejoice, and be exceeding glad.* From the whole *learn*, 1. That no afflictions or perſecutions ſhould ſeem new or ſtrange things to ſincere chriſtians. 2. That the end and uſe of all afflictions is the trial and improvement of the chriſtian's graces. 3. That believers in ſuffering afflictions and perſecutions are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; he ſuffers in them, and they are made conformable to him by them. 4. That it is the will of God, that ſuch as ſuffer for him, ſhould not only be meek and patient, but be joyous and cheerful. 5. That at the great day when Chriſt's glory ſhall be revealed, then eſpecially will the ſuffering ſaints *rejoice, and be glad with exceeding joy*, when they ſhall ſee their dear Redeemer coming in the clouds, with an human body, ſhining brighter than ten thouſand ſuns; a body which ſtill retains the marks of his ſufferings, and the tokens of his love. O joyful day of Chriſt's appearing, when this royal Bridegroom ſhall take his ſuffering ſpouſe the church by the hand, and preſent her to his Father, own his in the preſence of men and angels, beſtow a kingdom upon them that they may be with him where he is, eternally to behold his glory, to feed upon an happineſs as large as their capacities, and as laſting as their beings; ſuch honour, have all his ſuffering ſaints, and therefore ought greatly to *rejoice, inaſmuch as* they *are made partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings, that when his glory ſhall be revealed*, &c.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy *are ye:* for the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you. On their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Another argument is here offered by our apoſtle for glorying in ſufferings and reproaches for Chriſt, taken from the happineſs of thoſe that are ſo reproached, *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye.* *Note* here, That the reproaches which the ſaints ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, are reckoned perſecutions, and yet at the ſame time are eſteemed a part, as well as a prognoſtic of their happineſs. *Note*, 2. The reaſon aſſigned why chriſtians under reproach for the ſake of Chriſt, are to be eſteemed thus happy, namely, becauſe the *Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon them*; that is, the glorious Spirit of God, which is both the mean and evidence of your happineſs, who is glorious in himſelf, and alſo a glory to you, upon whom he reſts, and in whom he dwells. Two things are implied by the Spirit's *reſting* upon a reproached chriſtian: (1.) *Complacency*, that he is well-pleaſed where he is; men do not reſt where they do not like. (2.) *Permanency*, he abides where he reſts, and dwells there with delight. Some take the expreſſion to be an alluſion to Noah's dove, that hovered about, but could not reſt till returned to the ark. Thus the Spirit of God, called here a *Spirit of glory*, from its effects and fruits, namely, from his cheering, ſealing, and reviving influences, which make chriſtians glory in tribulations; this *Spirit* flies from place to place, and from perſon to perſon, hither and thither, but reſts upon, and takes up his reſidence and abode with ſuch chriſtians as ſuffer for the name of Chriſt: *If ye be reproached*, &c. It follows: *On their part he is evil-ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified*; that is, by their reproaches caſt upon you, they blaſpheme the Holy Spirit, as the word ſignifies; but he is eminently glorified by your patience and conſtancy of mind under all your preſſures, which ſhews the power of the Spirit reſting upon you, and mightily working in you. *Learn* hence, That in thoſe reproaches which good men ſuffer for the ſake of Chriſt, the Spirit of God in a ſpecial manner is blaſphemed on the one ſide, and glorified on the other. O ſinner! know, that all reproaches which thou caſteſt upon religion and religious perſons, as ſuch, reach the Holy Spirit that reſts upon them, and reſides in them as his temples: But, O chriſtian, remember thou, that by thy patience and conſtancy under ſufferings, thou glorifieſt the Holy Spirit eminently, abundantly ſhewing, that by his help, afflictions are not only tolerable, but joyous.

15 But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or as a buſy-body in other men's matters. 16 Yet if *any man ſuffer* as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Obſerve here, 1. What it is that the apoſtle calls upon them to avoid and ſhun; it is ſin, not ſuffering: Evil-doing in general, murder and theft in particular, ſins that were then very much practiſed among the Jews; *Let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or a thief, or as an evil-doer*; by ſuffering as evil-doers, we loſe the comfort and reward of all our ſufferings. 2. What ſufferings he bids them not be aſhamed of, but glory in, namely, when they ſuffer as chriſtians, and purely as ſuch. *Queſt.* But what is it to ſuffer as a chriſtian? *Anſ.* 1. When we ſuffer for a good cauſe. 2. From a chriſtian principle. 3. In a chriſtian manner, with meekneſs, patience, and ſelf-denial. *Queſt.* What is it to glorify God on behalf of our ſufferings? *Anſ.* Afflictions and ſufferings, conſidered barely in themſelves, are far from being glorious; but conſider them in their cauſe, as ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake, and ſo they are glorious; and God honours as greatly, when he calls us forth to ſuffer, and furniſhes us with courage and reſolution for ſufferings, and it is our duty to give glory to him who enables us thus to do.

17 For the time is *come* that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God: and if *it* firſt *begin* at us, what ſhall the end *be* of them that obey not the goſpel of God?

Obſerve here, 1. The apoſtle does not ſay, If judgment begin at the temple of idols, but, *if it begin at the houſe of God*; God will not ſpare his own houſe, nor his own houſhold; he will not ſpare his children or ſervants when they ſin, he is no cockering Father to indulge his children to their ruin. Nay, *obſerve*, 2. Judgment *firſt* begins at the houſe of God; God will not bear ſo long with his own people ſinning as with ſtrangers: they ſhall be corrected *ſooner* and *ſorer* than others; the Lord will firſt puniſh them who have been forgetful of him, and trifled with him, who have been formal in their profeſſion, and vain in their converſation. 3. That when we ſee with ſorrow God contending with his own people for their ſins, we may with aſtoniſhment expect what will be the end of them that obey not the goſpel; when God brings ſuch troubles upon his own houſe, what troubles may they expect from God, who are but a den of thieves, and a cage of unclean birds? O what appearances ſhall they have of God! And how ſhall they appear before God! *Obſerve* then, What little cauſe wicked men have to rejoice at the church's ſufferings, when it preſages a far more heavy judgment coming upon themſelves; for *if judgment begin at the houſe of God*, &c.

18 And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?

As if he had ſaid, "When the day of viſitation comes, which is verily at hand, and God ſhall begin to puniſh the Jews, his own people, called his *houſe* in the foregoing verſe; if then the righteous among them eſcape the common calamity with great difficulty, and are ſcarcely preſerved, how ſhall the ungodly and ſinners think to eſcape unpuniſhed in the day of Jeruſalem's calamity; that day of vengeance, when Chriſt ſhall come to plead with them? If then the righteous be ſcarcely ſaved, that is, with great difficulty preſerved from that deſolating calamity, that fiery trial ſpoken of, ver. 12. *where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear?* And how ſhall they hope to eſcape in ſafety from that dreadful judgment now ready to come on the Jewiſh nation." There have been thoſe that have made uſe of this text to ſhew the difficulty of eternal ſalvation; and that the beſt and holieſt of ſaints, even thoſe that are moſt eminent in grace, are very difficultly ſaved; which, though a truth in itſelf, yet is ſcarcely deducible from this text, which certainly ſpeaks of temporal preſervation.

16 Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls *to him* in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Obſerve here, 1. A cautionary direction given, that in all our ſufferings, we take care that we *ſuffer according to the will of God:* that is, for what is according to God's will, either to be believed or practiſed by us, for aſſerting and maintaining the purity of the chriſtian doctrine and worſhip; and when our patience under ſuch ſufferings is as extenſive and intenſive as God requires, when our patience is as large and as laſting as our troubles, then may we be ſaid to *ſuffer according to the will of God.* 2. The ſpecial privilege allowed to ſuch *ſufferers as ſuffer according to the will of God*, they may *commit the keeping of their ſouls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Learn* hence, That when men ſuffer really and truly for well-doing, they may with confidence and great aſſurance commit their lives, and all that is dear unto them, to the ſpecial care of the divine providence; either God will keep us from, or ſupport us under, trials, when we thus commit ourſelves to him.

CHAP. V.

St. Peter cloſes his epiſtle with an exhortation to the ſpiritual guides and governors of the church, to diſcharge their duties faithfully, in feeding and ruling of the flock of God committed to them.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an elder, and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed:

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons exhorted, *The elders that are among you*, the guides and governors of the church; elders by age and office, who were both to rule well, and alſo to labour in the word and doctrine; and for doing both faithfully, were to be *accounted worthy of double honour.* 2. The perſon exhorting, *I exhort, who am alſo an elder. Mark*, he ſays, "Not I, who am the univerſal head of the church, Chriſt's vicar upon earth; but I, who am elder by age, and by apoſtleſhip, who have been long the miniſter of the circumciſion; I exhort, beſeech, and intreat you as my brethren, fellow-labourers in our Lord's vineyard." 3. The humble teſtimony which St. Peter gives of himſelf; he doth not ſay, "I command, who am the chief of the apoſtles, with whoſe confeſſion of faith Chriſt was ſo well pleaſed, that he ſaid, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church*;" but, "I exhort, *who am a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt*, an eye-witneſs of what our dear Lord and Maſter ſuffered in the faithful diſcharge of his office, both in his life, and at his death: And *alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed*, I was alſo an eye-witneſs of Chriſt's glory in his transfiguration here on earth, and hope to be partaker of that glory which ſhall hereafter be revealed in heaven." *Learn* hence, That ſuch exhortations to duty are likely to be moſt effectual and ſucceſsful, which are propounded in the humbleſt manner. St. Peter was placed in an high degree above theſe elders, being an apoſtle, a chief apoſtle; yet he gives himſelf no ſuch title, but ſays, *The elders I exhort, who am alſo an elder*; not an apoſtle, much leſs the head and chief of the apoſtles.

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight *thereof*, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being enſamples to the flock.

Obſerve here, 1. The title given to the church, it is the *flock* of God: Denominations are given in ſcripture to perſons and things proper to the ſtate of things and perſons: Thus here the church is called a *flock*, and ſometimes a little *flock*, in oppoſition to the herds and huge droves of the men of the world; yet the flock conſiſts not of a few abſolutely, but comparatively only; a flock contains a multitude. Again, As the church is called a flock for the number, ſo for their order; a flock is under inſpection and government continually; Chriſt Jeſus is the great Overſeer of this flock: And farther, it is a flock in reſpect of the unity and love that is amongſt them; though the church be ſcattered over the world, yet there is an holy combination, and ſweet communion of the members amongſt themſelves. 2. The duty exhorted to, and that is double, to feed the flock, and to be an example unto the flock. *Feed the flock, taking the over-ſight of it*; feed it with wholeſome doctrine, guide and govern it by ſtrict diſcipline, overlooking it continually, and watch over it with unwearied diligence; and that you may do ſo, be perpetually reſident, feed the flock that is among you. How can the flock be duly watched over, when the ſhepherd lives ſeveral miles from the fold, and is following his pleaſure, when he ſhould be feeding his ſheep? Feed the flock among you. 3. The manner directed to, how, and after which, the ſhepherds ſhould feed and watch over their flocks. (1.) *Not by conſtraint, but willingly*; that is, not as a burden, but a pleaſure, with a free and ready mind; what men do, out of compulſion, from baſe fear, they do with no ſatisfaction either to God or man. (2.) *Not for filthy lucre*; to feed the flock purely for the ſake of the fleece, and to take a living only to get a living, is an horrid impiety; to be driven into the miniſterial office by neceſſity is bad, but to be drawn by covetouſneſs is much worſe. (3.) *Not as being lords over God's heritage.* Where *note*, The title given to the church, they are God's heritage, his people, not our own, his lot and portion; he having a ſpecial and peculiar right unto them, and property in them; therefore they are not to be lorded over, not to treated with inſolence and imperiouſneſs, ruling them by the ſword, and outward force, which has made many hypocrites, but not one convert. Laſtly, He requires that they be enſamples to the flock; that is, in their daily converſation. Now, how can they be examples to them, if they live not amongſt them? They muſt be examples of ſuch meekneſs and humility, of ſuch patience and charity, of ſuch mortification and ſelf-denial, as becomes perſons of their holy character and profeſſion; and be patterns of thoſe virtues amongſt their people in converſation which they recommend to them from the pulpit. This duty of miniſterial exemplarineſs in converſation is bound upon us by innumerable arguments taken from the command of Chriſt, from the glory of God, from the preciouſneſs of the ſoul, from the dignity of our office, from the ſucceſs of our miniſtry, which depends more upon our practice than upon our preaching; from our own intereſt, with reſpect to our preſent comfort and future happineſs; from the influence it has upon our people, an encouraging and confirming influence.

4 And when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "It is poſſible you may miſs of your reward here from the hands of men, but when *Chriſt*, the great and good Shepherd, ſhall appear, when the owner, ruler, and lover of his church ſhall come to judgment, you ſhall have from him your full reward, a never-fading, ever-flouriſhing crown of glory, for faithfully diſcharging your duty to God and his people." *Learn* hence, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt, the chief Shepherd, will at length appear. 2. That, when he doth appear, he will call the under ſhepherds to account, how they have diſcharged every part of their miniſterial office, as well private inſpection, as public preaching. 3. That to all ſuch, and to only ſuch, as have been faithful to the intereſt of Chriſt and ſouls, ſhall the reward be aſſigned, even a crown of glory that fadeth not away: When the *chief Shepherd ſhall appear*, &c.

5 ¶ Likewiſe, ye younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder, yea, all *of you* be ſubject one to another,—

Having laid down the duties of paſtors in the former verſe, he points out the duties of the people in this, whom he calls the *younger*, either becauſe they were generally younger in years than their ſpiritual guides, or becauſe they ought to ſhew that reverence and obedience to them which is ſuitable in young ones towards their elders: Theſe young ones he exhorts to ſubmit themſelves to the guidance of their elders and teachers: *Likewiſe, ye younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder:* Inſtruction and juriſdiction belonged to the elder, ſubjection and obedience to the younger. *Note* here, That the duties of paſtor and people are mutual and reciprocal, not that their duties are alike, but becauſe there is a like reaſon for the performance of their reſpective duties, a like engagement and obligation upon both; the duty of the one is ſubjection; of the other miniſterial direction. He adds, *yea all of you be ſubject one to another:* Intimating thereby, that there is a duty of mutual ſubjection, which all chriſtians owe to one another in love; they ought to condeſcend to the meaneſt offices one towards another; to bear with the infirmities of each other.

—And be clothed with humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The original word, rendered *clothed*, ſignifies, firſt, an upper garment, a frock or a cloak, put over all the reſt of our clothes; and ſo imports, that we ſhould be wrapped up all over with this grace, that this ſhould be moſt viſible in our converſations, words, and actions, and conſpicuous beyond all other virtues. Secondly, It ſignifies a belt which girds about our garments, and ſo imports, that we ſhould tie it faſt unto us, and have thoſe conſiderations always fixed upon our ſpirits, which may keep us in an humble frame of ſoul. *Note* then, That humility is a ſpecial ornament, a beautiful robe, to be put on daily, which commends us greatly both to God and man. We are never to account ourſelves dreſſed, until we have this livery of our humble maſter Chriſt Jeſus put upon us: *Be clothed with humility. Obſerve* next, The argument to inforce this duty: *for God reſiſteth the proud*, ſets himſelf as in battle-array againſt them, but *giveth* freſh ſupplies of *grace* to the *humble*; becauſe more grace is promiſed to the humble, and the humble ſoul is more fitted, prepared, and diſpoſed, to receive farther meaſures of grace from God. God ſets himſelf againſt proud men to bring them down, but the humble he doth countenance and exalt.

6 Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

By the *hand* of God underſtand his judgments, his almighty power, which it is our duty to ſubmit unto, and to be humble under, in the day of our affliction; and this profound ſubmiſſion, and deep humiliation, is the way to glory and exaltation. He can exalt us, and will do it here, if it be good for us; but ſometimes God ſees abaſement better for his people; better, becauſe ſafer, and accordingly they ſhall have it. *Learn* hence, That the ſtrength and power of God ſhould oblige us very greatly to humble ourſelves before him, and ſubject ourſelves unto him: *Humble yourſelves under the mighty hand of God.* Secondly, That God will exalt the humble in due time, either here or hereafter; either in time or in eternity, as it ſhall moſt and beſt conduce to his own glory and their good.

7 Caſting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Obſerve here, 1. The nature of the duty injoined, to caſt our care upon God; it is not a providential and prudential care, but an anxious and vexatious care, that the ſcripture forbids; and the duty here required is this, that, after we have uſed all prudent care and diligence in ſubſerviency to the providence of God, we ſhould not be over-ſolicitous about the iſſue and event of things; which, when we have done all we can, will be out of our power. Caſting our care upon God implies, that we ſhould refer the iſſue and event of things to his wiſe providence, which is continually watching over us, and knows how to diſpoſe of all things for the beſt advantage to us; entirely confiding in his wiſdom and goodneſs, that he will order all things for the beſt, and, in that confidence, reſting ſatisfied with the diſpoſal of his providence, whatever they be. This is to caſt all our care upon God. 2. The argument here made uſe of to perſuade us to this duty: *God careth for us.* This implies two things: (1.) In general, that the providence of God governs the world, and concerns itſelf in the affairs of men, and diſpoſeth of all events that happen to us. (2.) More particularly, that this providence is more peculiarly concerned for good men, and that he takes a ſpecial care of them, and of their concerns; and the care that God takes of them is a ſpecial care, a tender care, a promiſed and engaged care, a care myſteriouſly exerciſed; he then takes moſt care of them when they think he takes leaſt, and the men of the world thinks he takes none at all. Caſt we then all our care upon him who careth for us; for anxious care is a painful evil, an unprofitable evil, a ſinful evil.

8 ¶ Be ſober, be vigilant: becauſe your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour. 9 ¶ Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.

Obſerve here, 1. A double duty exhorted to, ſobriety and vigilancy: *Be ſober, be vigilant*, be ſober and temperate in all things: Sober in your enjoyments; ſober in your employments; ſober in your recreations. Be neither drunk with wine, nor with worldly cares; the latter is the worſt of the two. A night's ſleep cures the former, but the worldling is drunk all the year long, never ſober night nor day. And to ſobriety we are exhorted to add vigilancy, a watchful care, and diligent circumſpection over all our thoughts, words, and actions, that we may not diſpleaſe God in any thing. 2. The reaſon or motive to inforce the duty, *becauſe your adverſary the devil goeth abroad*, &c. Where *note*, How every word contains a ſpecial motive to chriſtian watchfulneſs. He is your adverſary, who will do you all poſſible miſchief: He is the devil, an accuſer, and one that ſeeks all advantages againſt you: He is a cruel adverſary, *a lion*, yea, *a roaring lion*, which adds terror to his cruelty: He is a reſtleſs adverſary, *he goes about ſeeking whom he may devour:* What ſoul he may devour, for that is the bait he gapes for. It grieves the devils, thoſe apoſtate angels, to find the ſouls of men appointed to fill up thoſe vacant places in heaven, which they turned themſelves out of. It is a delight to them to plunge ſouls into the ſame condemnation and miſery with themſelves. 3. The duty of reſiſtance, urged upon us in order to our preſervation, with the weapon put in our hand for that purpoſe: *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith:* that is, be ſtedfaſt in the faith, that you may reſiſt him; and, by the help of your faith, you ſhall overcome him. *Learn* hence, 1. That the devil is the reſtleſs adverſary, and unwearied enemy of mankind. 2. That all the pains which Satan takes, is in order to the deſtruction of precious ſouls. 3. That the way to overcome him is by reſiſting of him, not by yielding to him: He is a cowardly enemy, and a conquered enemy; reſiſt him and he will run. 4. That faith is the weapon, by which the chriſtian is enabled to reſiſt the the tempter, and to repel the force of his fiery temptations. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith*, &c. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Reſiſt Satan's temptations, occaſioned by your ſufferings, remembering that it is not your caſe alone, but others alſo ſuffer with you, even all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus. *Learn* hence, That chriſtians ſhould not deſire, and cannot reaſonably expect a better condition in the world, with reſpect to freedom from ſufferings, than the reſt of their brethren, who have all a ſhare of affliction to ſuffer, and a meaſure of hardſhip to endure as well as ourſelves.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jeſus Chriſt, after that ye have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle *you*. 11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle concludes and cloſes his epiſtle with an affectionate prayer for theſe afflicted chriſtians and ſuffering ſaints, beſeeching Almighty God, who is the author of all grace, and who hath called them by his goſpel to the participation of that grace, which will entitle them to eternal glory, that after they have ſuffered a while in the world, he would perfect the work of grace begun in them, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle them in the truth of the goſpel; and to this infinitely gracious God, he deſires glory and dominion ſhould be for ever aſcribed. *Obſerve* here, 1. That God is the God of all grace, ſeed, growth and perfection, all from him, reſtraining grace, renewing grace, ſanctifying grace, all from the fountain of all grace. 2. That ſerious chriſtians are called by God to eternal glory and happineſs, they are called to the hope and expectation of this glory, upon the account of the promiſe of it which God made to Chriſt, Tit. i. 2. and they are brought into a ſtate of preparation for it: God hath by his word and Spirit wrought them for this ſame thing. 3. They are called to eternal glory through Chriſt Jeſus, he reveals it to them, he purchaſes it for them, he works that faith and repentance in them which qualifies them for, and entitles them unto, this heavenly glory. 4. That ſome afflictions muſt be expected and endured by all chriſtians, how dear to God ſoever they are or may be. Was there any patriarch, prophet, apoſtle, primitive or modern chriſtian, that did not ſuffer a while? Saints muſt ſuffer a while from the remains of ſin, from the temptations of Satan from the enemies of religion, from the friends of religion, yea, from God himſelf, their beſt friend. 5. That after ſerious chriſtians have ſuffered a while, they ſhall enter into glory, their title is ſure by the promiſe of God, by the purchaſe of Chriſt, by the inhabitation of the Spirit. 6. That the perfecting, ſtabliſhing, ſtrengthening of the chriſtian in grace and comfort is from God, to whom all glory and dominion is and ought for ever to be aſcribed.

12 By Sylvanus, a faithful brother unto you, (as I ſuppoſe), I have written briefly, exhorting and teſtifying, that is the true grace of God wherein ye ſtand.

Obſerve here, That our apoſtle, to encourage theſe ſuffering chriſtians to a reſolved perſeverance in the chriſtian religion, aſſures them, that it was undoubtedly from God, the unqueſtionable truth of God, and therefore neither ſeducers on the one hand, nor perſecutors on the other, ſhould be able to ſhake them, or cauſe them to fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs; a firm belief of the certainty and excellency of chriſtianity conduces much to the eſtabliſhment of thoſe that have newly embraced it; if we be once aſſured that it is the true grace of God wherein we ſtand, it will cauſe us to ſtand ſtedfaſt.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, ſaluteth you: and *ſo doth* Marcus my ſon. 14 Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

At the foot of his epiſtle he ſends them ſalutations from the chriſtians at Babylon, who were choſen out of the world, to partake in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel. Some, by Babylon, figuratively underſtand Rome, but others underſtand it of Babylon in Aſſyria, where many Jews did tarry, and continue after the expiration of the ſeventy years captivity, whom St. Peter, being a miniſter of the circumciſion, went to viſit, having probably planted a church there. Whereſoever they were, God had called them to the knowledge of his goſpel, and they ſend ſalutations to all their brethren and fellow-members in Chriſt, whereſoever diſperſed, or howſoever diſtreſſed. As alſo doth Mark, whom St. Peter calls his ſon, becauſe inſtructed by him in the goſpel, and begotten by him to chriſtianity. Laſtly, He exhorts them to expreſs their fervent affection to each other by a kiſs of charity uſed in the primitive times as a token of love amongſt chriſtians; but afterwards, for juſt reaſons, laid aſide; and ſo wiſhing peace, that is, all manner of proſperity to all in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, to all profeſſing faith in Chriſt Jeſus, he ſhuts up his epiſtle.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
ST. PETER.

The Second Epiſtle of St. Peter was written by him a little before his death, he having received a revelation, probably of his approaching departure out of this life; he writes this ſecond letter to the Jews of the diſperſion ſcattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, to warn them of the fiery trial, that ſharp and bitter perſecution which was coming upon them, and to fortify them againſt that apoſtacy from the faith, that falling from their own ſtedfaſtneſs, that departing from the holy commandment, which theſe newly-converted Jews were very prone unto: He ſends therefore this epiſtle to eſtabliſh and ſettle them, to ſtrengthen and confirm them: and this is the laſt mention which we find in ſcripture of this great and glorious apoſtle.

CHAP. I.

SIMON Peter, a ſervant and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs of God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt:

Obſerve here, 1. The author and penman of this epiſtle deſcribed by his name, *Simon Peter*, the former given at his circumciſion, the latter by Chriſt, upon the occaſion of his confeſſion, Matt. xvi. 18. by his condition, *a ſervant*; by his office, an *apoſtle*; by the Author of his office, *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Note*, That Chriſt only has an authoritative power to make apoſtles, miniſters and diſpenſers of his word; a derivative power from Chriſt the governors of the church have; but ſuch as have not now their call from Chriſt immediately (which it is preſumption to expect, and if any pretend to it, let them ſhew it by their miracles) or mediately from the officers of his church, are uſurpers of the ſacred office, and they cannot pray in faith themſelves for a bleſſing upon what they do, nor can the people expect it, Jer. xxiii. 32. *I never ſent them* (ſays God) *therefore they ſhall not profit this people at all. Obſerve*, 2. The perſons deſcribed to whom this epiſtle is directed, *to them that have obtained like precious faith with us*. To ſuch as had obtained faith, precious faith, like precious faith, with the apoſtle of Chriſt; like for its nature and quality, though not for its meaſure and degree; and alike precious in regard of its object, Chriſt; in regard of its ſubject, the heart; in regard of its act, which is acceptance and conſent to the terms of the goſpel-covenant; in regard of its effects and precious fruits, peace with God, peace with conſcience, victory over the world, and the like. We ſee then that the faith of the pooreſt believer is as precious as the richeſt, and that the weakeſt believer has the ſame precious faith with the ſtrongeſt: and if it be alike precious, it ſhall be alike permanent and perſevering. 3. The meritorious cauſe of this their precious faith, the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt: *Through the righteouſneſs of God*, even *our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. All grace is derived to us through Chriſt, for the ſake of his righteouſneſs, ſufferings and ſatisfaction; and as all grace is derived from him, and for his ſake conferred, ſo all our good, that little ſervice we do for God, is accepted through him, and owned for his ſake. And if ſo, then Jeſus Chriſt is really God; for the righteouſneſs of a creature cannot juſtify me in the ſight of God; there is no appearing before God for any creature in a creature-righteouſneſs. And farther, if ſo, then it is not faith that juſtifies and ſaves, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, upon which faith is grounded, Epheſ. ii. 8. *By grace are ye ſaved* effectually, *through faith* inſtrumentally. The brazen ſerpent healed not the eye that looked on it; yet without looking upon it, no help from it, no healing by it.

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord.

The perſon ſaluting and the parties ſaluted, were mentioned in the former verſe; here we have the ſalutation itſelf, 1. The matter of it, *Grace and peace*; grace to free us from God's wrath and reinſtate us in his favour; peace to quiet our own conſciences, and reconcile us to ourſelves. 2. The meaſure of it, grace and peace be *multiplied*; they had both grace and peace already, yet the apoſtle prays for the farther increaſe of them; there is no complete perfection in grace attainable in this life. The beſt of ſaints muſt be multiplying and increaſing their ſtores; for they are but imperfectly perfect, when at the beſt. 3. The means for multiplying grace and peace, *through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Learn*, That the knowledge of God, in, by, and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is the ſpecial mean of multiplying grace and peace in our hearts; and indeed there is no comfortable knowledge of God, but in and through Chriſt, John xvii. 3. *This is life*, &c. Out of Chriſt God is a revenger, in Chriſt a reconciled Father.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godlineſs through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

In theſe words our apoſtle ſhews, what reaſon they had to believe and hope, that *grace* and *peace* ſhould be multiplied unto them, namely, becauſe Almighty God had already given them all things which conduced to make them holy in this life, and happy in the next, by the knowledge of Chriſt. Others, by *life* and *godlineſs*, underſtand all things conducing to the preſervation of natural life, likewiſe of grace here, and glory hereafter; and whereas it is ſaid they were *called to glory and virtue*, by glory underſtand the honour of being chriſtians; by *virtue*, the good life that becomes chriſtians. To both theſe they were called with a glorious calling, as being attended with the glorious effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt. If by *glory* and *virtue* be underſtood grace here, and glory hereafter, it ſhews our privilege, that we have both at preſent in a way of inchoation, and ſhall ere long enjoy both in a way of conſummation; and points outs alſo to us our duty, we muſt have virtue, if we would have glory; if we be not like Chriſt, we can never love him, nor may we ever expect to live with him.

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.

Whereby, or *by whom*, that is, through the knowledge of Chriſt in the goſpel, God has given to us all things conducing to our preſent or future happineſs; and, amongſt the reſt, the precious promiſes of the goſpel, which ſo directly tend to make men partakers of the divine nature. *Note* here, That the promiſes of the goſpel are the chriſtian's great and precious treaſure; greatneſs and goodneſs are then moſt ſhining, when they meet in the ſame ſubject, but ſuch a glorious conjunction is rarely found, either in perſons or things; rarely are great men good, or good men great; pebbles are great, but not precious; pearls are precious, but not great: But the promiſes are both for quality exceeding precious, and that in reſpect of the author of them, *God*; the foundation of them, the *blood of Chriſt*; the manner of their diſpenſation, they are freely *given*; the means whereby they are apprehended and applied, *precious faith*; and *exceeding precious* the promiſes are in regard of the end of them, which is to make us partakers of the divine nature, not of the eſſence, but qualities of the divine nature, which enable us in ſome meaſure to reſemble God; as the ſeal doth communicate its ſignature, but not its ſubſtance; ſo in the work of regeneration God doth not impart his eſſence, but infuſe holy principles and gracious habits into the ſoul, whereby the chriſtian reſembles him. *Learn* hence, That the great end and effect of the promiſes, and the proper influence and efficacy which they ought to have upon the hearts and lives of men, is this, to make them partakers of the divine nature, and to render them daily more like unto God; *Having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.* Here *note*, 1. That the world is full, very full, of corruption, ſin, and temptation; by reaſon of the luſt of men, they rub their leproſy upon each other, and by the contagion of a bad example, infect and poiſon one another. 2. That by being made partakers of the divine nature, through the influence of the promiſes, we eſcape the pollution of fleſhly luſts, which the world is defiled with, and would defile us by.

5 And beſides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; 6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; 7 And to godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs; and to brotherly kindneſs, charity.

The apoſtle ſpends the former part of the chapter in comforting, this in exhorting; he told us before what God had done for us; he tells us now, what we muſt do for ourſelves; it is not fit that Heaven ſhould take all the pains, and we none; we muſt give diligence, all diligence. *Beſides this*, that is, beſides what God has given us, and done for us, let us take care to be daily adding to our ſtock and ſtore. Adding to our faith, *virtue*; that is, all good works in general, without which faith is dead, or dying; and fortitude, or holy courage, in doing our duty in particular. To virtue, *knowledge*; that is, a more exact knowledge of your duty, and a farther increaſe in it; for knowledge is the light, without which the chriſtian cannot ſee to do his work. And to knowledge muſt be added, *temperance*, which ſubdues the violence of our unruly paſſions and appetites, and does reduce thoſe rebellious powers under the government and dominion of reaſon and religion. And to temperance, *patience* under all wrongs and ſufferings whatſoever; an impatient man under affliction is like a bedlamite in chains, raving againſt God and man. To patience, *godlineſs*, a conſcientious regard to all the duties of the firſt table; let the fear of God reſtrain you from ſin, the love of God conſtrain you to duty. And to godlineſs, *brotherly kindneſs*, or a fervent love to all chriſtians, as being our brethren and fellow-members in Chriſt, and this for grace ſake. And to brotherly kindneſs, *charity*; that is, to all mankind, as proceeding from the ſame ſtock, having the ſame nature, and ſubject to the ſame neceſſities with ourſelves; let there be found with you a deſire and endeavour to do all the poſſible good you can to every one. *Learn and obſerve from the whole*, That there is a concatenation both of graces and duties, they muſt not be ſeparated, they will not live ſingle; where there is one grace in ſincerity, there is a conſtant care to ſecure all the reſt; and where a chriſtian, for conſcience ſake, performs one duty, he will make conſcience of all the reſt; the duties of both tables are religiouſly obſerved, both as an argument of his ſincerity, and as an ornament to his holy profeſſion.

8 For if theſe things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye ſhall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9 But he that lacketh theſe things, is blind, and cannot ſee afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins.

To encourage chriſtians to grow and improve in the forementioned virtues and graces, our apoſtle here lays before us, (1.) The great advantage of ſuch a proficiency and growth; *If theſe things be in you and abound*, that is, the forementioned graces, they will both cauſe you, and evidence you not to be barren and unfruitful in your profeſſion of chriſtianity and faith in Chriſt: The exerciſes of divine graces are the beſt evidences of our being made partakers of the divine nature. (2.) The miſerable eſtate of thoſe whoſe faith is not fruitful in good works; *He that lacketh theſe things*, that is, who doth not live in the exerciſe of the aforementioned graces, is ſpiritually blind, and really deſtitute of that knowledge which he pretends to, blinded by his paſſions and luſts, and ſenſual affections, and ſees not the great end and deſign of chriſtianity, forgetting that in baptiſm he ſolemnly vowed all this, and that he was ſacramentally waſhed from his old ſins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure: for if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall:

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "See that in the diligent exerciſe of the afore-named graces, and in the daily practice of the afore-mentioned duties, you make your calling and election, which are ſure in themſelves, ſure to you; for ſo doing, you ſhall never fall or miſcarry eternally." Here *note*, That it is their own calling and election which chriſtians are called upon to make ſure, not another's; we muſt leave their caſe and ſtate to God that ſearches the heart; we cannot know the hearts of others, it is well if we know our own. *Learn*, 1. A chriſtian may be aſſured of his own ſalvation. 2. Aſſurance of ſalvation requires all diligence. 3. That aſſurance of ſalvation deſerves all diligence. 4. That the way to make our election ſure, is firſt to make our calling ſure.

11 For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

There are four ſorts of perſons ſpoken of in Scripture: 1. Some are ſaid to be far from the kingdom of God, afar off from God, as heathens and infidels, who know not God. 2. Others are ſaid not to be far from the kingdom of God, Mark xii. 34. who yet will never come there. 3. Others are ſcarcely ſaved, ſaved with great difficulty, ſo as by fire, with much droſs of error in judgment, and corruption in life. 4. Others are ſaid to have an abundant entrance adminiſtered to them into the everlaſting kingdom, and theſe are the fruitful chriſtians, who are daily adding to their graces, and going from ſtrength to ſtrength: Theſe ſhoot the gulph of death in the holy triumph of their grace; they enter the harbour of heaven with a plerophory, a full ſail, with a full aſſurance of faith and hope: Thus will the fruitful chriſtian have both a more comfortable paſſage to, and alſo a more ample reward in heaven.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of theſe things, though ye know them, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth. 13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to ſtir you up, by putting *you* in remembrance: 14 Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me. 15 Moreover I will endeavour that you may be able, after my deceaſe, to have theſe things alway in remembrance.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons to whom the apoſtle gave the foregoing exhortation to progreſſiveneſs and proficiency in holineſs, they were knowing perſons, yea eſtabliſhed perſons, they were both informed and confirmed in the truth; but were they knowing, yet they wanted farther information; were they eſtabliſhed, yet might they want farther confirmation. It is a very dangerous notion that ſome have taken up, that a chriſtian in this life may live above ordinances, and outgrow counſels and exhortations, as if he need not hear, or pray, or the like. St. Peter thought otherwiſe; theſe were grown chriſtians to whom he writes, yet he tells them three ſeveral times together here, in four verſes, that he would not be negligent to put them in *remembrance*, even of thoſe things which they knew already. 2. The exemplary diligence and induſtry of the apoſtle in his miniſterial work, together with his conſtancy therein, *as long as I am in this tabernacle*; that is, as long as I live in this world, I will endeavour to keep the heavenly flame of love and zeal burning very lively upon the altar of your hearts. 3. The motive or conſideration provoking him to this diligence, and that is, the certainty of his approaching diſſolution, *I muſt ſhortly put off this tabernacle*, &c. Where *note*, 1. He calls his body a tabernacle in regard of its moveableneſs and frailty, and in oppoſition to that houſe made without hands, eternal in the heavens. 2. How familiarly our apoſtle ſpeaks of death, *I muſt put off this tabernacle*; he makes no more of putting off his body by death, than a man does of putting off his clothes at night. 3. The neceſſity of putting off the body, *I muſt*, I may, and *I muſt ſhortly*; intimating, that how ſtrong ſoever the affections and inclinations of ſouls are to the fleſhly tabernacles they now live in, yet they muſt put them off, and that ſpeedily. 4. How the conſideration of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of St. Peter's removal by death did excite and provoke him to the utmoſt induſtry and diligence in his miniſterial work, while he lived; the apprehenſions of approaching death muſt quicken to utmoſt diligence. *Note* laſtly, That miniſters muſt never give over preſſing known truths as long as they live, that their people may have them in remembrance after their deceaſe.

16 For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Our apoſtle comes now to exhort them to conſtancy in the faith of the goſpel, aſſuring them that himſelf and his fellow-apoſtles, had not followed artfully deviſed fables, when they made known to them the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, and that he was truly, and in very deed, the promiſed Meſſias, for that he himſelf, with James and John, were with Chriſt upon mount Tabor, as eye-witneſſes of his transfiguration, where and when he received in his human nature a communicated ſplendour, and God the Father from heaven, the ſeat of the magnificent glory, pronounced him to be his well-beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleaſed. *Learn* hence, 1. That God the Father's teſtimony from heaven, concerning his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* did effectually bring honour and glory unto Chriſt, and is a great obligation upon us to faith and obedience to him; *He received from God the Father honour and glory*, atteſting him to be his well-beloved Son. 2. That there was as much aſſurance given of the certainty of Chriſt's being the promiſed *Meſſias*, and of the truth of the evangelical doctrine, as the world could reaſonably deſire. Men can humanly be certain of nothing more than what they perceive by their ſenſes, which are the proper judges of all ſenſible objects; now no ſatisfaction of this kind was wanting to the world concerning our bleſſed Saviour and his miracles: The apoſtles atteſting what they had heard, what they had ſeen with their eyes, and their hands had handled of the word of life, 1 John i. 1.

19 We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts:

Obſerve here, That the Scriptures, or written word of God, are a more ſure word to us than any voice from heaven, or revelation whatſoever; not that there was any uncertainty in the Lord's voice uttered from heaven at Chriſt's transfiguration, but becauſe that tranſient voice was only heard by three, and might be miſtaken or forgotten; whereas the Holy Scriptures are a ſtanding and authentic record, and a moſt ſure ground for faith to build upon; and accordingly our apoſtle tells them, they ſhould do well to attend unto the written word, that is, the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, as unto a light that ſhined in that dark time, until, by conſidering thoſe ancient prophecies, and comparing them with what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, they might find the day dawning upon them, and the morning-ſtar, the Holy Spirit, ariſing in their hearts, ſo enlightening and convincing them, that no more doubts or ſcruples ſhould be left in them, concerning this great truth, atteſted by a voice from heaven, and confirmed by the writings of the prophets, namely, that *Jeſus* is the true and promiſed *Meſſias*, and really the Son of God. *Learn* hence, That the written word of God, is a ſurer word, more to be depended and relied upon than any voice from heaven, though atteſted by the greateſt and moſt eminent apoſtle, and conſequently to be more heeded and regarded by us; nay, farther, the ſanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit in and upon the hearts and lives of ſincere and ſerious chriſtians is a more certain and indubitable evidence of their ſalvation than if an angel ſhould come from heaven on purpoſe to tell them that they ſhould certainly come thither; for the teſtimony of an angel, at the higheſt, is but the teſtimony of a creature; but the teſtimony of the ſanctifying Spirit is the teſtimony of God himſelf; it is therefore the *ſure word*, that we are to attend unto; and that revelation of God's will, being final, is and ought to be attended to, before any pretended or real revelations whatſoever.

20 Knowing this firſt, that no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

Theſe words are underſtood variouſly. (1.) Some interpret thus: That no part of holy ſcripture was written by any private impulſe, incitation, or motion, by no ſuggeſtion of men's own private ſpirits, but they gave out to us what the Holy Ghoſt gave in to them; nor did they propheſy according to the *will of man*, that is, when they would, or what they would, but they ſpake by the inſtinct and impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt. The words ſhew what authority the penman of the holy ſcriptures had to write what they did, and why we ſhould be ſo careful to take heed to what they wrote. *Learn* hence, That it is a very great principle, yea, one of the firſt principles of our faith, that the ſcriptures are the very word and will of God, written not by any private ſpirit, but dictated by the Spirit of God, and conſequently are no part of them of human invention, but all of divine inſpiration, for which reaſon great reſpect is due to them, and *we ſhall do well to take heed to them*. (2.) Others underſtand the words thus: That no prophecy of ſcripture is to be expounded as ſpeaking only of thoſe perſons whom the ſpeaker firſt intended and meant, according to the ſpeaker's proper private thought, for the holy men of God were moved by God's Spirit to ſpeak thoſe words which ſignified more than they deſigned, or always meant and underſtood themſelves; as for inſtance, David often ſpeaks in the Pſalms words true of himſelf and Solomon, but the Holy Ghoſt pointed at Chriſt, who was typified by thoſe perſons; and whether David meant more than himſelf and Solomon, it is certain the Holy Ghoſt meant more; ſo if Joſiah be meant in Iſa. liii. as ſome would have it, it is evident that he was but typical, and that the Holy Ghoſt meant Chriſt and his ſufferings ultimately; ſo that it is plain that the ſcripture prophecy receives its full ſenſe from the Spirit, and not from the ſpeaker; and muſt not be appropriated narrowly to thoſe private men, by whom, or of whom they were proximately meant by the ſpeaker. 3. Others underſtand the words after this manner, namely, that no private perſon muſt take upon him the interpretation of holy ſcriptures, but refer all to the church: Hence Eſtius infers, "That the reformed and their paſtors muſt not interpret the ſcriptures, but the catholic church only." To which we reply, that as no private perſons, ſo likewiſe no church, may preſume to interpret ſcripture according to their own mind, nor make their private ſenſe to be the ſenſe of ſcripture, but to ſeek underſtanding from God, who ſhews the meaning of the word by the word (comparing ſcripture with ſcripture) and by his Spirit leads good men into the knowledge and underſtanding of it; *knowing this, that no prophecy of the ſcripture is of private interpretation*, &c.

CHAP. II.

Our apoſtle in this chapter declares the coming in of falſe prophets and teachers, that would pervert the truth of doctrine by bringing in damnable hereſies.

BUT there were falſe prophets alſo among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.

Obſerve here, 1. How the apoſtle foretels the coming of falſe teachers into the goſpel church, as there had been falſe prophets in the Jewiſh church; no age of the church ever was or will be free of them; but the run of the laſt times is moſt likely to have moſt of theſe four dregs. *There ſhall be falſe teachers among you*, falſe teachers then may find a ſcripture-prophecy for their being in the church, but they will hardly find a ſcripture-warrant for their being there. *Obſerve*, 2. The doctrines which they will teach; and they are *damnable hereſies.* Where *note*, That almighty God never intended a certain remedy againſt hereſy, any more than he did againſt ſin and vice: It is certain, that there is no certain and effectual remedy againſt either of them: God does what he ſees beſt and fitteſt, not what we think to be ſo. *Note* alſo, That infallibility itſelf is no effectual remedy againſt hereſy; the apoſtles were certainly infallible, and yet they could neither prevent nor extinguiſh hereſy, which never more abounded than in the apoſtles' times: St. Paul ſays, *there muſt be hereſies*, 1 Cor. i. 19. St. Peter here ſays, that *there ſhall be falſe teachers:* Now, if there muſt be hereſies and falſe teachers, either the church is not infallible, or infallibility is no effectual remedy againſt hereſy. *Obſerve*, 3. That Chriſt is here called the Lord that bought theſe men who brought deſtruction upon themſelves, *denying the Lord that bought them*; becauſe none ſhould periſh for want of a ſufficient ſacrifice for ſin: Chriſt by his blood purchaſed for them pardon and life, to be theirs, upon condition of believing acceptance. Laſtly, As the *ſeeds-men*, *falſe teachers*, and the *ſeed* they ſow, *damnable hereſies*, ſo the crop they ſhall reap, and that is *ſwift deſtruction*; as *damnable hereſies* are brought in privily, ſo the blaſphemous heretic, the ſeducing heretic, the ſeditious heretic, brings upon himſelf ſwift deſtruction; ſometimes temporal deſtruction in this world, certainly eternal, without repentance, in the next.

2 And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Notwithſtanding heretics bring ſuch fatal deſtruction upon themſelves, yet many that profeſs chriſtianity ſhall be ſeduced by them, and follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the enemies of religion will ſpeak evil of it, and the profeſſors of it. Here *obſerve*, 1. The thriving and growth of hereſies, *many ſhall follow their pernicious ways.* Where *note*, The nature of error, it is pernicious and deſtructive; and the efficacy of error, not a few, but *many* are in danger of being perverted by it. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſad ſequel or truth of this *by reaſon of whom the way of truth is evil-ſpoken of. Note* here, 1. The title given to the chriſtian religion, it is the way of truth, ſo ſtyled from its parentage and original, the *God of truth*; in regard of its efficacy, it *works* truth in the inward parts, and becauſe it brings thoſe that embrace and practiſe it, to the enjoyment of him who is the God of truth. 2. The coarſe uſage which religion meets with from many in the world, it is blaſphemed or evil-ſpoken of by perſons following ſeducers, *by reaſon of whom the way of truth is evil-ſpoken of.* It is no new or unuſual thing for religion, and the ſincere profeſſors of it, to be traduced and ſlandered by heretical ſeducers and falſe teachers.

3 And through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you: whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not.

Obſerve here, 1. What is the root of all hereſy; it is *covetouſneſs*, which the apoſtle calls the root of all evil; they are covetous, worldly-minded men generally, who hope ſome way or other to make an advantage of their opinions, who broach errors and falſe doctrines. 2. The miſerable condition of the ſeduced, they are ſold by heretics like beaſts; *they make merchandiſe of you*: The buſineſs of heretics is to ſell their own and others ſouls, as Judas did Chriſt, for ſome outward benefit. 3. The arts which heretics and ſeducers uſe to circumvent and deceive, and that is feigned words, artificially compoſed to ſeduce, drawing into error with a deceitful eloquence. 4. The dreadful puniſhment which attends their ſin, *ſwift deſtruction*; *their damnation ſlumbereth not*, &c. *Learn*, That the righteous judgment of God brings damnation upon the wicked, and their damnation will come ſwiftly, very ſwiftly upon them.

4 For if God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment: 5 And ſpared not the old world, but ſaved Noah the eighth *perſon*, a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into aſhes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly:

Our apoſtle having aſſerted in the foregoing verſe, that the judgment of the wicked in general lingereth not, and that the damnation of ſeducers in particular ſlumbereth not; he comes here in theſe verſes to make his aſſertion good by a threefold inſtance, namely, the *angels*, the *old world*, and the people of Sodom and Gomorrha; from whence he would have them conclude, that, if God ſpared not theſe, he would not long ſpare falſe prophets and their followers. *Obſerve*, 1. The example of God's ſeverity on the fallen angels; they ſinned, and kept not their firſt ſtate, they fell from that ſtate of holineſs in which they were originally created; and their puniſhment followed, they were caſt down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkneſs, reſerved unto judgment. But are they not judged and puniſhed already? Yes, no doubt, but the full wrath of God will not be poured out upon them until the day of judgment; if they are now as full of ſin as they can be, it is certain they are not ſo full of miſery and torment as they ſhall be. *Learn* hence, 1. That the angels, though created in an holy, yet are they not in an immutable ſtate. 2. The freedom of their own wills, was the cauſe of their ſin, and their ſin the cauſe of their miſery. 3. That for ſin they were caſt down to hell, where their miſery is much but they expect more. *Obſerve*, 2. The example of the old world, upon whoſe ſinning God brought a flood, drowning them all, except eight perſons. Where *note*, That the greateſt multitude and number of ſinners does not hinder God's juſtice from executing judgment upon them for their ſins; a whole world ſinning are as eaſily deſtroyed by God as a ſingle ſinner. 3. He inſtances in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, who were conſumed by fire from heaven, and rendered by the Almighty a dreadful ſpectacle to all that ſhould live ungodlily. Sin lays the foundation of ruin in the moſt flouriſhing cities and kingdoms; the ſtrongeſt walls cannot keep judgments out, when ſin enters in; Sodom's plenty and power could not ſecure her inhabitants, when ſin had once expoſed them to the wrath of God. *Note* alſo, The intention, end and deſign of God, in puniſhing ſome ſinners; it is to make them examples unto others.

7 And delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds.)

Obſerve here, 1. As bad as Sodom was, it had a good man in it; God leaves not himſelf without witneſs, in the vileſt and worſt of places God has ſome that profeſs his name, and bear witneſs to his truth. 2. The character given of him, *juſt Lot*; the denomination was taken from the habitual frame of his heart, and the general tenor of his life. 3. How this good man laid to heart the wickedneſs of Sodom; he was grieved for their wicked and filthy converſation before God, more than for their unkind and cruel behaviour towards him; the ſpirit of a child of God is a ſympathizing ſpirit, it ſadly lays to heart both the ſins and the ſufferings of others. 4. The care that God took for this good man's preſervation, *he delivered juſt Lot*; he delivered him from the company and converſation of the wicked, which was a continual vexation to him; and alſo delivered him from the judgments which were righteouſly brought upon the wicked.

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed:

From the particular example of Lot, and his gracious preſervation in Sodom's deſtruction, the apoſtle draws this general concluſion, "That Almighty God knows how to preſerve his own faithful ſervants from the evil of temptations and trials, which they here meet with, in the world, and from the world, and can and will reſerve the wicked to the day of judgment to be puniſhed." *Note* here, 1. That the Lord has a perfect and exact knowledge both of the righteous and the wicked, and of their ſeveral ways and doings. 2. That God knoweth many ways how to deliver the righteous (but conſidering the tenor of his revealed will) he knoweth no way how to deliver the wicked, they having refuſed all ways of his appointment for their own deliverance. 3. That although the wicked ſometimes eſcape trouble, yet they are never delivered from it; all their preſervations from evil are but reſervations for future and farther evil; the wicked are not ſo much preſerved from, as reſerved unto future wrath: Thus we ſee how Almighty God very well knows how to perform all thoſe things which he has promiſed to the godly, and threatened to the wicked.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs, and deſpiſe government: preſumptuous *are they*, ſelf-willed, they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Though God reſerves all wicked men to puniſhment, yet eſpecially heretics and ſeducers, who ſecond their corrupt doctrine with a wicked converſation, ſuch as *walk after the fleſh in the luſt of uncleanneſs*." *Note*, That heretics are frequently unclean perſons, monſtrous opinions, and vile affections accompany one another; ſuch as oppoſe the faith are fleſh-defilers. Farther, Seducers are oppoſers of civil government and dominion, *they deſpiſe government*, &c. Some think the dignities here intended were the angels, others the apoſtles, but moſt underſtand it of civil rulers: it is a very heinous ſin in the ſight of God to deſpiſe government, and oppoſe rulers.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord.

That is, "Whereas the bleſſed angels, who have more power than men, when they plead againſt devils themſelves, do it not by railing accuſation." *Note*, 1. That angels are far ſuperior to men in dignity and power. 2. That purity of affection does accompany angelical illumination; as the angels are above us, ſo are they the patterns of holineſs to us. 3. They are eminently ſo with reſpect to the government of their paſſions; when they contend with devils themſelves, it is without diſturbance, without railing accuſations. It is our duty to learn this angelical leſſon, of forbearing railing accuſations; not to return evil for evil, but being defamed, to entreat; we are to be as juſt to another's reputation as our own; they that handle the names of others rudely, muſt expect their own will be, at one time or other, handled as roughly; nothing is more juſt with God, than to ſuffer others to open their mouths againſt thoſe who will open their own mouths againſt others.

12 But theſe, as natural brute beaſts made to be taken and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not, and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption:

Obſerve here, What our apoſtle compares theſe heretical ſeducers to, and ſets them forth by, brute beaſts. 1. Becauſe their minds run after ſenſual objects violently and impetuouſly, and they know no meaſure in the uſing of them; like ſwine, they wallow over head and ears in the mud of their ſenſual luſts: And, 2. They were alſo as ſecure as the brute beaſts; they mock at the denunciation of God's judgments, ſaying, *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* Seducers are perfect ſenſualiſts; it is a righteous thing with God to leave them to be governed by ſenſe, who will not be guided by grace; they would not be ſaints, and at length they ceaſe to be men; but, like brutes, fall into the ditch of beaſtly ſenſuality. O chriſtian! beg of God that thy grace may be true and ſupernatural; for if it be only in appearance, and doth not ariſe to true ſanctity, it may ſoon degenerate and ſink down into ſenſual beaſtiality. In a word, 3. They are to periſh, and to be deſtroyed like brute beaſts; all ſeek to deſtroy them for their hurtfulneſs, but theſe moral beaſts deſtroy themſelves; ſenſual ſeducers *periſh in their own corruptions*; in their natural corruptions, by their luxury and intemperance, bringing diſeaſes and death upon their bodies; in their civil corruptions, overthrowing their families, by ſwallowing down their eſtates; yea, they corrupt themſelves eternally, deſtroying body and ſoul by their exceſs. Lord! how will the fatted glutton (without repentance) fry in hell; how diſmal a recompence will a ſea of brimſtone be for a river of wine! They who are drowned in profuſeneſs, ſhall certainly be drowned in perdition.

13 And ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, *as* they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time: ſpots *they are* and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, while they feaſt with you: 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin; beguiling unſtable ſouls: an art they have exerciſed with covetous practices: curſed children:

Here we have many ſad and dreadful inſtances given of the height of ſenſuality and brutiſhneſs which theſe ſeducers were arrived at, and had attained unto. Lord! how do fleſhly luſts, and ſenſual affections, obſcure the light of conſcience, and corrupt its judgment? There is ſuch an intimate communion between the ſoul and the body, that they interchangeably corrupt one another. To what a deſperate degree of hardneſs and inſenſibility, had the flames of luſt ſeared the conſciences of theſe men! They had loſt all the ingenuous baſhfulneſs of human nature, and pleaſed themſelves in their licentious principles and practices, not declining to do that at noon-day which heathens would have bluſhed to be found doing at midnight. *Obſerve* particularly, how luxury and uncleanneſs accompany each other; they took pleaſure in rioting and ſporting themſelves in their feaſts, and their eyes were full of adultery. They feaſted and fed immeaſurably, impurely, and luſtfully, making their plenty fodder and fuel for their luſts; for, having fed to the full, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife, and putting out the candles after ſupper, they gave way promiſcuouſly to the ravings of unbridled luſt, turning the temple of the Holy Ghoſt into an hog-ſtye: But know, O unclean ſinner! that God will return flames for flames, and revenge this fire in thy heart with the fire of hell. How nearly does it concern thee, who has burnt in theſe impure luſts of uncleanneſs, and kindled the flames of God's wrath, to labour to cool and quench them with the blood of Chriſt, and the tears of repentance, which alone can allay the heats of ſin in thee, and of wrath in God? Let unclean ſinners improve examples, leſt they be made examples.

15 Which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam, *the ſon* of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb aſs ſpeaking with man's voice, forbad the madneſs of the prophet.

Our apoſtle, having charged theſe men with inſatiable luſt in the former verſe, proceeds next to tax them with inſatiable covetouſneſs in this verſe, declaring that this ſin had diverted them from the right way of truth and godlineſs, and cauſed them to imitate Balaam of old, whoſe love of honour and wealth ſo blinded his eyes, that the aſs he rode upon could ſee beyond him, whoſe mouth God miraculouſly opened to rebuke the madneſs of the prophet. *Note* here, 1. How the wicked in after ages do in their courſes and practices imitate ſuch wicked perſons as lived before them in former ages: Theſe men followed the way of Balaam, imitate his covetouſneſs and inſatiable deſire of wealth. 2. That as it is the nature of all ſin to carry men out of the way, ſo covetouſneſs in particular will carry a man aſtray, and put him upon the practice of any wickedneſs: It neither fears nor forbears any ſinful courſe to attain its end; they that will be rich meet with many entice-ments unto ſin, and they will not fear to embrace any enticement. Nay, verily, a thirſt after gain will make a man thirſt after blood, to get gain. Witneſs Balaam and Judas, who were both covetous and bloody. Covetouſneſs is ofttimes the cauſe of uncleanneſs. How many, for the ſake of money, have violated their matrimonial faith, allured more with the adulterer's purſe than by his perſon. Let no perſon hope to eſcape any ſin that embraces this one ſin. 3. What a mighty ſtruggle there ſometimes is in a natural man's conſcience concerning ſin. The light of Balaam's conſcience made him refuſe the wages of unrighteouſneſs, and ſpeak honourably: *If Balak would give me his houſe full of ſilver and gold, I cannot,* &c. but at the ſame time luſt in his heart led him forth ſtrongly to deſire it. *He loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*; loved it, yet durſt not touch it. 4. How extremely, yea, brutiſhly mad, ſuch men are upon their luſts, who will not be rebuked or ſtopped in their progreſs of impiety without a miracle. Balaam's running was ſo greedy, and his march ſo furious, that he had curſed the people, had not the angel ſtopped him, and the aſs ſpoken to him. Little thanks to a reſolute ſinner that he does not ruſh on, when the arm of omnipotency pulls him back. O let the heart-changing power of the grace of God influence us to good, as well as his almighty arm reſtrain us from evil, or we are miſerable.

17 Theſe are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempeſt, to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever.

Still our apoſtle proceeds in characteriſing and deſcribing theſe ſeducers, which were then amongſt them. He deſcribing them before by their luxury and licentiouſneſs, by their incontinency and uncleanneſs, by their inſatiableneſs and covetouſneſs, now he proceeds to diſcover their vanity and emptineſs. They pretended indeed to be deep fountains of ſaving knowledge, but they were like wells without water; and to be clouds, containing abundance of rain, for the watering of the church; whereas they were like clouds carried about with the tempeſt of pride and ambition, from one vicious doctrine and practice to another, darkening the church; for whom, by the juſt judgment of God, is reſerved the *blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*. *Note* here, 1. The miniſters of the goſpel ought to be as wells, for depth of knowledge, for purity of doctrine, for reſidency and fixedneſs of abode; every one knows where the town-well ſtands; though miniſters are wells of clay, yet ſhould they be always full of the water of life, and always at hand for the people to have recourſe unto. 2. The miniſters of Chriſt muſt be full and watery clouds, able and apt to teach, able to open ſcriptures, able to convince gainſayers, continually dropping down the heavenly dew; but not as clouds without water, without the water of true knowledge, without the water of holineſs, ſanctity both of heart and life, nor without the water of conſolation and refreſhment. The higheſt commendation of a miniſter is induſtry for, and uſefulneſs to the ſouls of others; clouds conſume themſelves by watering others. 3. That although ſeducers are wont to make great ſhews and appearances of worth in themſelves, yet it is a great and inexcuſable ſin to make ſhew of that goodneſs of which we are wholly void, and to which we are alſo oppoſite; to be *wells without water*, and *clouds without rain*, big and black, accompanied with emptineſs and dryneſs. Appearing goodneſs ſets men at the fartheſt diſtance from real goodneſs; they that ſatisfy themſelves in appearances, will never labour after holineſs in reality.

18 For when they ſpeak great ſwelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them who live in error.

The next ſin charged upon theſe ſeducers is pride and oſtentation, they ſpeak big, *great ſwelling words of vanity*; with a lofty and affected ſtyle they propound their falſe doctrines to amuſe the ſimple. It is the uſual practice of ſeducers to ſpeak in an high-flown ſtrain of words, that, being not underſtood, they may be the more admired. Next they allure to their party ſuch novice chriſtians who had left the heatheniſh beaſtiality, and made an outward profeſſion of the chriſtian religion. The word rendered *to allure*, is a metaphor taken from fiſhers or fowlers, who produce the bait or ſhrape, but hide the net or ſnare. Seducers bait their hook with ſuch baits as are proper to the fiſh they would catch, elſe they are no good anglers. But *obſerve*, what the bait is here before us, it is liberty, it is licentiouſneſs, they allure through the *luſts of the fleſh?* no bait like this. *Learn* hence, That the true reaſon why ſeducers have ſo many followers is this, becauſe their doctrine is libertiniſm, and moſt agreeable to the carnal luſts and corrupt affections of men. This is the true reaſon why popery has had ſo many proſelytes; *they allure through the luſts of the fleſh*. Never was a religion better calculated for gratifying men's beaſtly luſts than popery; it indulges a liberty to all abominable luſts and unchriſtian practices, yet after all will blanch over wilful violations of God's laws with the favourable title of venial crimes. Let my ſoul, at the great day, be rather found among the ſober heathen philoſophers, than among ſenſual and brutiſh chriſtians.

19 While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage.

Obſerve here, 1. How the old pretence for the moſt unbounded licentiouſneſs has been *liberty*; *they promiſe you liberty*; a liberty to do any thing without fear: But this is not liberty properly, but licentiouſneſs, which in reality is the greateſt ſlavery. Accordingly it follows, *they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption*; that is, ſuch as promiſe you a ſinful liberty, are the greateſt ſlaves to ſin and corruption themſelves. All ſin is ſervitude and ſlavery; and, when ſin and ſinners flatter men with the great opinion of liberty, it makes them the moſt miſerable vaſſals, and the worſt of ſlaves; for ſo many luſts, ſo many lords, ſo many vices, ſo many tyrants has a ſinner over him. As when the conqueror brings the vanquiſhed into captivity, he makes them ſlaves, and impoſes on them vile and ſervile offices; in like manner, thoſe luſts, by which ſinners have been conquered and brought in bondage, they muſt needs be ſlaves unto. Is this liberty to obey every luſt as a petty ſlave? Call you this freedom, when a man cannot chooſe but ſin? If to ſin be the only liberty, they have no liberty in heaven; no, this is the ſervice of corruption; a thraldom, not a freedom.

20 For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein, and overcome: the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning.

By eſcaping the pollutions of the world, underſtand their renouncing of them in baptiſm; their converſion from heatheniſm to the profeſſion of chriſtianity, by the knowledge of the goſpel. Now, if afterwards they return to it again, and are intangled in their idolatry, and other groſs ſins, their latter end is worſe than their beginning, their chriſtian heatheniſm worſe than their old heatheniſm. *Learn* hence, That a perſon may forſake many groſs and ſcandalous ſins, and have a viſible change and reformation wrought in his life; but, not being a thorough and prevailing change, he is ſtill in an unſafe ſtate; his latter end may be worſe than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, The ſin and miſery of theſe men had been far leſs, if they had never known the way of righteouſneſs revealed by the goſpel of Chriſt, than after they have known it, to forſake the practice of holineſs, which by their baptiſmal profeſſion they had obliged themſelves unto. *Learn* hence, That to ſin againſt light and knowledge received in and by the goſpel is a very heinous aggravation of ſin. The condition of perſons ſimply ignorant is not ſo bad by far as theirs, who have been enlightened, and yet afterwards have apoſtatiſed. A relapſe is ever more dangerous than the firſt ſickneſs, more ſoon incurred, more hardly cured. Wo to thoſe that relapſe from God to the world, from truth to error, from grace to vice; the latter end will be worſe than their beginning, if they recover not themſelves again by timely repentance.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.

Obſerve here, The odious character given of apoſtates; the apoſtle compares them to dogs and ſwine, who, though waſhed in the water of baptiſm externally, yet their natures were never internally renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, as Chriſt's ſheep are. All the outward reformation of life which is found in unrenewed perſons, is but like the waſhing of a ſwine, which you may make clean, but can never make cleanly; upon occaſion it will again to the mire; make the ſwine a ſheep, change its nature, and it will never delight in filth more; but, whilſt it retains its filthy nature, it will delight in filthineſs. Dogs that have diſgorged their ſtomachs, are dogs ſtill; and ſwine waſhed are ſwine ſtill. No wonder then if temptation draw them to return to their vomit, and mire again. O our God! as thou haſt outwardly waſhed us in baptiſm, do thou inwardly renew us, and thoroughly ſanctify us by the Holy Spirit; as we are the workmanſhip of thine hands, make us alſo the ſheep of thy paſture, that our love to purity may daily more and more increaſe: That when apoſtatiſing ſinners return to their vomit with the dog, and to the mire with the ſwine, and ſo draw back into perdition, we may be of the number of thoſe that perſevere to the ſalvation of our ſouls. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

Our apoſtle in this chapter exhorts chriſtians to the love and practice of univerſal holineſs, as the beſt preparative for the day of judgment.

THIS ſecond epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour:

Obſerve here, 1. The deſign of both St. Peter's epiſtles was one and the ſame, even to put them in remembrance of, and to call to their minds what they had formely heard and underſtood, but poſſibly not retained, nor duly conſidered. *Note*, The office of miniſters is to be remembrancers. *The Lord's remembrancers*, by putting him in mind of the people's wants; their *people's remembrancers*, by putting them frequently in mind of their duty to God. There is then a conſtant neceſſity of a conſcientious miniſtry; none are weary of it but ſuch as love not to be remembered of their duty by it. Nay, farther, St. Peter tells them, he would ſtir up their *pure minds* by way of remembrance; implying, that the memories of the beſt chriſtians ſtand in need of refreſhing, and the affections of the holieſt want a a freſh exciting. The freeſt chriſtians ſometimes want a ſpur: We are ſlow to learn what we ſhould do, and more ſlow to do what we have learnt. Great then is the ſin of thoſe who contemn repeated truths. Curſed is that curioſity that deſpiſes a wholeſome truth, becauſe it is common. If we have ſuch nice ſtomachs that will not endure to eat twice of the ſame diſh, if wholeſome; it is juſt with God, that want ſhould overtake our wantonneſs. *Obſerve*, 2. What it is that he would have them remember and be mindful of; it is the word of prophecy in the Old Teſtament, and the doctrine of the goſpel in and under the New, *That ye be mindful of the words ſpoken before by the holy prophets*, namely, *Enoch* and *Daniel*, who propheſied of the general judgment of the laſt day, and of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, then at hand. *Obſerve*, 3. How St. Peter here joins the prophets and apoſtles together, as concurring harmoniouſly in their doctrine; what was foretold by the prophets was confirmed by the apoſtles; hence they are ſaid to have but one mouth, St. Luke i. As he ſpake by the mouth of all his prophets, not by the mouths; for, though the prophets and apoſtles were many, yet had they all but one mouth, ſpeaking all the ſame things.

3 Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, 4 And ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons foretold, or what ſort of men ſhould be found in theſe laſt days; namely, *ſcoffers.* Theſe are the dregs of mankind, found in the dregs of time; they ſcoff ſometimes at the word of God, ſometimes at religion and the ways of good men; ſometimes at ſin, and the follies of thoſe that are bad. The ſcoffing ſpirit, is a vile ſpirit; it is better to be a fool than a flouter; better to have a dull ſpirit, than a deriding ſpirit; to deride God and religion is the height of impiety. Such as are in the chair of the ſcorner are in the higheſt form in the devil's ſchool. 2. What it was that theſe men ſcoffed at; namely, at the prediction of our Saviour's coming to judge the world; they ſay, *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* becauſe Chriſt did not come when ſome looked for him, they concluded he would not come at all, but that all things ſhould go on in a conſtant courſe, as they had done from the beginning of the creation. 3. The character of the perſons who are called ſcoffers; they are ſaid to *walk after their own luſts*, men of ſenſual ſpirits, and licentious lives. No wonder, that they who give themſelves up to all manner of ſenſuality, do deny a judgment to come; for, as it is expedient for them that there ſhould be none, ſo they endeavour to perſuade themſelves that there ſhall be none, and are glad to find arguments to fortify themſelves in that perſuaſion. But ſurely God ſcorneth the ſcorners, he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their deſolation cometh. Lord! what a black and horrid ingratitude is this, to ſcoff at the Author of our beings, and the Patron of our lives; to live in defiance of him in whom we live? Is it not time for God to come and judge the world, when men begin to doubt whether ever he made it?

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water and in the water. 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The ſeſcoffers had declared in the former verſe, that the world was the ſame it was from the beginning; that nature always had, and therefore ever would keep its courſe. But, ſays the apoſtle here, theſe ſcoffers know better; if they be ignorant, they are willingly ignorant what a change God made in the world ſince the creation of it, and that he can as eaſily deſtroy it, as he did at firſt create it. To evidence this, the apoſtle ſhews how God by water drowned the old world, and therefore all things had not continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; and that this preſent world ſhall, when God's time is come, be ruined by fire, as the old world was by water. The ſame omnipotent power of God which created the world, upholds it and preſerves it, and will at laſt deſtroy it, namely, at the final judgment, when all wicked perſons, eſpecially prophane ſcoffers at, and deriders of Chriſt's coming, ſhall be condemned and periſh. Hence *learn*, That thoſe great and awful works of God, the creation, preſervation, and final deſtruction of the world, firſt by water, and next by fire, none ought to be ignorant of, but all ought to meditate frequently upon, and be continually prepared for. 2. That the day of judgment will be a day of perdition to ungodly men, they ſhall then be utterly and eternally deſtroyed. The wicked are called in ſcripture ſons of perdition, they are ſo actively, they make it their work to deſtroy others, and they are ſo paſſively, they ſhall be deſtroyed at that day, when they and their works ſhall be burnt up.

8 But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe (as ſome men count ſlackneſs) but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.

Our apoſtle here anſwers the cavil and objection of the fore-mentioned ſcoffers, namely, That if Chriſt intends to come to judgment, why does he ſo long defer his coming? To this our apoſtle replies, 1. By aſſuring them that this delay ought not to be judged according to our ſenſe and apprehenſion of things, for God does not meaſure time as we do, but a thouſand years, which ſeem ſo long to us, are but a day, yea, but a moment to him who is eternal, and inhabiteth eternity. To the eternity of God no finite duration bears any proportion; to eternity all time is equally ſhort; God does not meaſure time by our pole, nor caſt up years by our arithmetic. 2. He aſſures them farther, that God's delay of judgment did not proceed from ſlackneſs, but from divine patience and goodneſs. He delays his coming on purpoſe to give men time to repent, and by repentance to prevent their eternal ruin. *Learn* hence, 1. That God's delay of judgment is no ground for ſinners to conclude that he will not come to judgment, for our Saviour has no where fixed and determined the time of it. We can neither be ſure when our Lord will come, nor certain when he will not come. 2. That the true reaſon why God defers judgment, is to give ſinners opportunity for repentance, if this be not complied with, he reſerves thoſe who are incorrigibly bad, to a more remarkable ruin, condemning them that will not be ſaved, but obſtinately deſtroy themſelves.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

Our apoſtle having aſſerted, that this ſolemn day of judging the Jews, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem firſt, and then of all mankind at the end of the world, will certainly come; he next ſhews the manner how, and that though this great day of the Lord comes ſlowly, yet it will come unexpectedly, like a thief of the night, ſurpriſing the ſecure and unprepared part of the world. The thief cometh without warning and without noiſe, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of man be. Rev. xvi. 15. *Behold I come as a thief, bleſſed are they that watch. Obſerve* next, The apoſtle declares what a great change there will be when Chriſt comes to judgment, namely, a total diſſolution of the whole frame of nature, *The heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, the elements ſhall melt, and the earth be burnt up:* that is, ſay ſome, totally conſumed and utterly aboliſhed; for when there is no more need of ſun and ſtars, of earth and water, why ſhould they be any more? And when the ſaints ſee God face to face, what need of the glaſs of the creatures to behold the face of God in? Others conceive that the heavens and the earth ſhall not be annihilated, but bettered and improved, their ſubſtance continued, but their qualities changed; that out of this conflagration God will bring forth a new edition of heaven and earth, and of what is contained in them, to be the everlaſting monuments of his own power and goodneſs, and the delightful object of his ſaints contemplation.

11 *Seeing* then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in *all* holy converſation and godlineſs.

Theſe words are St. Peter's practical improvement of the foregoing doctrine, concerning the certain, ſudden, and terrible judgment of Chriſt to come. If the whole frame of heaven and earth ſhall be ſo wonderfully changed, and a new world made, how holy ſhould they be, and how great a degree of purity ſhould they labour to attain unto, who expect to live in this new world. *Learn* hence, That the firm belief of Chriſt's coming to judgment, and the diſſolution of this ſinful world by fire, ſhould convince all chriſtians of the neceſſity of, and engage them in their purſuits and endeavours after, a life of univerſal holineſs, and that with the utmoſt care and poſſible diligence. Heaven is an holy place, has holy company, holy employments, holy enjoyments; we muſt be qualified for it, before we can be admitted into it, and begin that life of holineſs upon earth which will never end in heaven; without a preſent meetneſs for heaven, we muſt never expect to be admitted into it, Col. i. 12.

12 Looking for and haſting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?

Having exhorted perſons by holineſs to prepare for Chriſt's coming to judgment in the foregoing verſe, he now directs them to expect and look for it, to deſire and long after it, *looking for and haſting unto the coming of the day of God*, that joyful day of our perfect deliverance and ſalvation, when the lower heavens and earth ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat. *Learn* hence, That there is, or ought to be in all believers, a vehement deſire after, and a fervent longing for, the coming and appearance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O chriſtian! long intenſely for Chriſt's company, for know aſſuredly he longs for thine.

13 Nevertheleſs we (according to his promiſe) look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs. 14 Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.

Obſerve here, 1. What is the ſubject-matter of the chriſtian's expectation, he looks for new *heavens*, and a new *earth* in which *dwelleth righteouſneſs*, that is, only righteous perſons, and perfectly righteous perſons, where ſin ſhall no more prevail. 2. What is the ground and foundation of this hope in the chriſtians, it is the promiſe of God, *we (according to his promiſe) look for new heavens*, &c. To hope for any thing that God has not promiſed, is preſumption. Hope is the expectation of ſome future good which God has promiſed, and faith believed. 3. How chriſtians ſhould qualify and fit, make ready and prepare themſelves for this joyful hour, this deſirable place and ſtate. *Be diligent*, &c. Give all diligence that ye may be found at that day in a ſtate of peace and reconciliation with God by juſtification, and without ſpot, and blameleſs, without any allowed ſpot or blame, by preſſing now after the higheſt meaſures of ſanctification, that ſo an entrance may both joyfully and abundantly be adminiſtered to you into that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.

15 And account *that* the long-ſuffering of our Lord *is* ſalvation, even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you; 16 As alſo in all *his* epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things: in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as *they do* alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction.

In theſe words St. Peter adviſes them to make an holy and wiſe conſtruction of the forbearance of God in his delaying to come to judgment, not to think that God neglects them under ſufferings, or is well-pleaſed with the perverſeneſs of the world in ſinning; but his patience and long-ſuffering towards them is hereby diſplayed, in order to the bringing of them to repentance, and by repentance to ſalvation. *Account that the long-ſuffering of God*, that is, the deſign of God in his long-ſuffering, is the ſinner's ſalvation. Here *note*, That patience and long-ſuffering in God is an ability or power in him, not only to delay the execution of his wrath for a time, by a temporary ſuſpenſion of it towards them that periſh, and ſhall feel it at laſt; but to delay the execution of it towards others, in order to their eternal ſalvation, that they may never feel it. *Obſerve*, How this apoſtle, to add to the ſtrength and authority of what he had ſpoken concerning the certainty of Chriſt's coming, and their duty to be in ready preparation for it, doth make mention of St. Paul as bearing witneſs, in ſeveral places of his epiſtles, thereunto: *Even as our beloved brother Paul*, &c. As the prophets had all one mouth, ſo had the apoſtles alſo, ſpeaking all the ſame thing. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The teſtimony given by St. Peter to St. Paul's epiſtles. He acknowledges, That there were *ſome things in them hard* *to be underſtood. Mark*, He doth not ſay many things, much leſs that all things in St. Paul were *hard to be underſtood*, but ſome things only. How vainly then doth the church of Rome produce this text, to prove the obſcurity of the whole ſcripture? whereas the great and neceſſary things to our ſalvation are ſo plainly revealed in ſcripture, that even babes in Chriſt do apprehend and underſtand them. And though there be difficulties in other points, more remote from ſalvation, yet they are ſo for our exerciſe and trial, to excite our moſt intenſe ſtudy and diligence. *Note* farther, Who the perſons are to whom the ſcriptures are hard to be underſtood, to the unlearned and unſtable, who wreſt and pervert them to their own deſtruction. The original word rendered to *wreſt*, is a metaphor taken from torturers, who put a man upon the rack, they torment him ſo long till they make him ſpeak what he never meant to ſpeak; ſo theſe wreſt a ſenſe out of ſcripture which the Holy Ghoſt never intended. *Scripturæ obſcuritas non novæ regulæ neceſſitatem, ſed ſpiritus illuminantis et miniſterii exponentis neceſſitatem oſtendit.* Biſhop Davenant.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know *theſe things* before, beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſteadfaſtneſs. 18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle with an exhortation to watch againſt the errors and falſe doctrines of ſeducers, leſt we, being led away thereby, do fall from our own ſteadfaſtneſs in the faith of the goſpel. It ought to be our care not only to be found in the faith, but ſteadfaſt in the faith; and, that we may be ſo, we are here directed, 1. To grow in grace, in all grace, in faith, hope, and love; for grace eſtabliſhes the heart, and accordingly, ſteadfaſtneſs and increaſe of grace are here joined together. 2. To grow in knowledge; the way to be kept ſteadfaſt is to grow in grace; and the beſt way to grow in grace, is to grow in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, to know him in his perſon, in his offices, in his undertaking, in his doctrine, in his example; ſuch a knowledge as this is of Jeſus Chriſt, is fundamental to all graces. They all begin in knowledge, and are increaſed by knowledge. *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*; behold how theſe two keep equal pace in the ſoul of a chriſtian, namely, grace and knowledge; in what degree one increaſes, the other increaſes proportionably. To the author and finiſher of which grace, to the fountain and foundation of which knowledge, be aſcribed all honour and glory both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

THE
FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
ST. JOHN.

As touching the author and penman of this epiſtle, the church of God has in all ages concluded it to be St. John the apoſtle, the ſame perſon that wrote the goſpel, though we do not find his name prefixed to either, which is looked upon as an evidence of his great humility: he that was ſo high in Chriſt's favour as to be called, The diſciple whom Jeſus loved, *how little and how low was he in his own ſight!*

The time when he wrote this epiſtle is concluded to have been a little before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, becauſe he ſpeaks of the laſt hour now at hand, *which is generally underſtood to be the laſt times of the Jewiſh ſtate; and becauſe of the many* Antichriſts *and* falſe prophets, *which were then among them, ſuch as Chriſt tells us,* Matt. xvi. 24. *were to be the immediate forerunners of that deſtruction.*

The occaſion of writing it ſeems to be twofold, partly to arm the Jewiſh converts againſt thoſe looſe doctrines, that faith without works, believing without doing righteouſneſs, was ſufficient to ſalvation; that men might be children of the light and yet walk in darkneſs, the favourites of God without obedience to his laws, or love to his children or ſervants; and partly to fortify them againſt the impious doctrine of the Gnoſtics, who ſprang from Simon Magus, and pretended to extraordinary meaſures of knowledge and divine illumination, from whence they had their name; but notwithſtanding all theſe glittering appearances, they allowed themſelves in all manner of impious and vicious practices.

Now that St. John particularly aims at theſe men, is evident from the frequent and plain alluſions throughout this epiſtle, to thoſe names and titles which this ſect aſſumed to themſelves; thus, chap. ii. 4. He that ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. *This ſect alſo pretended that, whatever they did, they could not ſin. Hence is that of the apoſtle,* chap. i. 8. If we ſay that we have no ſin, the truth is not in us. *In a word, theſe men not only held it lawful to renounce chriſtianity, that they might avoid perſecution, but alſo joined with the heathens in perſecuting the chriſtians; for which reaſon the apoſtle taxes them with hatred of their* brethren, *and calls them* murderers; *therefore to ſhew the inconſiſtency of theſe principles and practices with chriſtianity, the apoſtle writes this excellent epiſtle now before us, aſſerting, that nothing is more eſſential to a true chriſtian than the love and practice of univerſal holineſs; and let men pretend to what knowledge and faith they pleaſe, wickedneſs is a plain mark and character of the children of the devil. This is the general ſcope and deſign of St. John's epiſtle.*

CHAP. I.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life;

It is firſt *obſervable*, that whereas St. John began his goſpel with a deſcription of Chriſt's divinity, as God, he begins his epiſtle with a demonſtration of the truth of his human nature as man; for the certainty of which he appeals to the judgment of ſenſe, becauſe the ſenſes, when rightly circumſtantiated, are the proper judges of all ſenſible objects: Accordingly St. John here, to ſhew the certainty of Chriſt's incarnation, and manifeſtation in the fleſh, brings in three of the five ſenſes, to wit, *hearing*, *ſeeing*, *feeling*, to bear witneſs to it, the latter ſtill carrying a ſtronger teſtimony than the former; to ſee is more than to hear; to feel is more than to ſee. *Obſerve* farther, That to make the teſtimony yet more ſtrong, St. John adds two words more, by way of confirmation, 1. That *which we have looked upon*; now this is more than to ſee; to ſee may be but a tranſient ſudden act, but to *look upon* is a fixed and deliberate act, and uſually a pleaſing and delightful act; we looked upon him as the rareſt object, as the deſire and the delight of our eyes. 2. It is added, as the ſureſt ground of certainty, that their hands had handled the Word of life; as they daily converſed with Chriſt, ſo they handled and touched him, both before his reſurrection and after it; ſo that from hence we may remark, that God has given us the higheſt and fulleſt aſſurances, that can be deſired, of his Son's manifeſtation in our fleſh, and appearing in our nature; he was heard and ſeen, looked upon, and handled, by thoſe that converſed with him, which are evident demonſtrations of the truth of the human nature aſſumed by him. Laſtly, Our apoſtle takes notice of Chriſt's divine nature, as well as aſſerts the reality of his human nature; he ſtyles him *the Word*: *the Word of life*, and *the Word which was from the beginning*; in the beginning, when all things received their being, then the Word was, and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all eternity. *Learn* hence, That Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal Word, not only antecedent to his incarnation, but even before all time, and the beginning of all things, had an actual being and ſubſiſtance. Prov. viii. 23. *I was ſet up from everlaſtiug, then was I by him as one brought up with him*; thus was this Jeſus in whom we truſt, both God and man, having two diſtinct natures in one perſon.

2 (For the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "*Chriſt Jeſus*, that eternal life which was with the Father from eternity, as being his eternal Son, was in the fulneſs of time manifeſted in the fleſh, and we his apoſtles ſaw him in his aſſumed human nature, and do now teſtify, publiſh, and declare him unto you, he was pleaſed to ſubject himſelf to the notice of our ſenſes, and what we have heard, ſeen, and felt, and has been manifeſted unto us, that we do, with all integrity declare and manifeſt unto others." *Note* here, 1. The title given to Chriſt, he is *life*, *eternal life*, he is ſo in himſelf, and he is the fountain of life to us; we now live by him a life of juſtification, we derive from him a life of holineſs and ſanctification, and we hope to live with him a life of glorification. 2. This eternal life was from all eternity with the Father, and diſtinct from him; he was with the Father, not as an inſtrument, but as an agent, in making of the world, Heb. i. 2, 3. And as his Father's delight, Prov. viii. 31. *Note*, 3. This eternal life, which from the beginning was with the Father, in the fulneſs of time was manifeſted to the ſons of men; manifeſted, not as he was to the prophets by faith, ſo they rejoiced to ſee him, John viii. nor in the ſimilitude and likeneſs of fleſh, ſo he ſometimes manifeſted himſelf to the patriarchs, Gen. xviii. but manifeſted in the fleſh to his apoſtles, who eat and drank, diſcourſed and converſed with him. 4. That what the apoſtles ſaw of Chriſt they made manifeſt to others; they had themſelves ſufficient ſatisfaction of the verity of Chriſt's human nature, and of the certainty of his doctrine, and therefore with mighty aſſurances they declare it unto others, and the reaſon of that declaration follows in the next verſe.

3 That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

As if he had ſaid, "We declare unto you that of Chriſt which we ourſelves have ſeen and heard, and what we had by ſight and hearing you are to receive from our teſtimony; and our deſign and end herein is ſincerely this, that you may have fellowſhip, and be of one communion with us, and not with falſe teachers, and by virtue of your communion with us may partake of the ſame faith and grace, and all ſpiritual benefits and privileges which Chriſt has purchaſed for us; and you will have no cauſe to repent of your coming into our communion and fellowſhip; for verily we, and all that have ſincerely embraced the doctrine of the goſpel with us, have fellowſhip with the Father, and with his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, and with each other. *Learn* hence, That believers have communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and one with another. *Queſt.* What doth this communion include? *Anſw.* 1. Real union; believers are united to God and Chriſt morally, conjugally, myſtically. 2. Reciprocal community; a community of enjoyments; the Lord is theirs, and they are his; a community of affection; there is mutual love, mutual delight, mutual deſires, and mutual hatred; a community of intereſts; they have the ſame deſigns and ends, the ſame enemies and friends; a community of privileges; the Lord viſits them, and they viſit him; the Lord walks with them, and they with him; the Lord obſerves them, and they obſerve him; they impart the ſecret of their hearts to him, and he imparts the ſecrets of his word and of his providence to them, *Gen.* xviii. 17. *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* *Queſt.* 2. What are the benefits and advantages of this communion? *Anſw.* It affords the higheſt honour, the ſweeteſt pleaſure, and the chiefeſt happineſs; it is heaven on this ſide heaven; our happineſs aud theirs differs only in degree, not eſſentially, but gradually. Bleſſed privilege!

4 And theſe things write we unto you that your joy may be full.

Obſerve here, The great end for which the Apoſtle penned and wrote the doctrine of the goſpel, namely, that their joy may be full who do believe it and obey it. The joy which good men experience in the word of God is a ſolid joy, a ſubſtantial joy, a full joy, a laſting joy. Worldly joy is nauſeating, but not ſatisfying; glutting, but not filling: But that joy that is found in the holy Scriptures, in the word and promiſe of God, is better experienced than expreſſed. Chriſtianity doth not extirpate our joy, but regulate and refine it; it ſhews us the proper object of our joy, what to rejoice in, and the manner how, that we may not ſin in rejoicing.

5 ¶ This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.

That is, "This is the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel of Chriſt's doctrine, and our meſſage, to teach us to know what God is, namely, *light*, that is, a being of infinite knowledge, wiſdom, and purity; and that there is *no darkneſs in him*, no darkneſs of error, no darkneſs of ignorance, impurity, and ſin, found with him, or can be pleaſing to him. *Note*, here, 1. The goſpel is a meſſage, a ſpecial and gracious meſſage, ſent by God to a loſt world. The miniſters of the goſpel are meſſengers ſent of God, to make known this meſſage; and if ſo, then they muſt receive their miſſion from God, then their meſſage depends not upon their own, but God's authority; then their people are to receive it, not as the meſſage and word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God. 2. The metaphor which St. John makes choice of, to ſet forth the nature of God by. He deſcribes him, 1. Affirmatively, *God is light*, his nature and attributes are (though darkly and imperfectly) reſembled by it; the light, as it was the firſt of all creatures, ſhadows forth the eternity of God's being, who is the Firſt and the Laſt; light, of all bodies, is the moſt immaterial and uncompounded, denoting the ſpirituality and ſimplicity of God's nature. Is the light diffuſive, and cannot but impart itſelf for the benefit of others? ſo is God communicative of his goodneſs to all perſons, ſhining upon the juſt and upon the unjuſt. But according to the apoſtle's intendment here, light is of a pure and undefiled nature, it is a bright and ſpotleſs ſplendor; though it ſhines upon a dunghill, it contracts no pollutions; this repreſents the perfect purity and unſpotted holineſs of God. 2. Negatively, *In him is no darkneſs at all*; that is, God is ſo pure, that not the leaſt impurity can cleave unto him; ſo holy, that no ſin can be found in him, and conſequently no darkneſs of ſin or impurity can proceed from him. *Learn* we then, always to entertain high and holy thoughts of God, and to conceive of him as a being that hates ſin, and all the works and workers of darkneſs, Pſal. v. 4. *Thou art not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with thee*, &c.

6 If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth.
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another,—

Obſerve here, 1. What great plainneſs of ſpeech St John uſes with and towards ſuch perſons as call themſelves chriſtians, and pretend to fellowſhip with God, but yet hold communion with ſin, he ſays, *they lie.* O how well does fervour, vehemency, and impartiality, become the miniſters of Chriſt in reproving ſin! Health is found in thoſe ſmart wounds which miniſterial reproof makes. 2. St John ſpeaks in the firſt, not in the ſecond perſon plural; *if we ſay*, not *if you*; if we apoſtles and miniſters, as well as if you diſciples and members of Chriſt, be guilty of this hypocriſy, *we lie, and do not the truth*; he does not ſay, and ſpeak not the truth; but do it not; there is a twofold lie, the lie of the lip, and the lie of life, and the latter is the louder of the two; they lie, becauſe they do not the truth. The ſum is, that a profeſſion of piety and religion, accompanied with ſin and unſuitable walking, is odious hypocriſy abhorred by God and man. 3. The practice of the ſincere and ſerious chriſtian, he *walks in the light*; that is, in the clear knowledge of the goſpel, and in the exemplary and exact performance of his duty. Walking implies motion, it is a voluntary motion, an uniform and even motion. To talk of religion is eaſy, but to walk wiſely before God and man in the practice of our whole duty, requires diligence and circumſpection. 4. The pattern after which the chriſtian walks, and that is God; he walks in the light, *as he is in the light*; God is in the light, that is, all his actions are exactly pure and holy, and our walking muſt, for the quality of it, be holy, though for equality it cannot be ſo holy as God is holy. 5. A double privilege ſecured to ſuch as walk in communion with God, we have *fellowſhip one with another*; juſtification by Chriſt, the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin. *Note* 1. Such as walk in the light have a certain fellowſhip and communion with God and Chriſt, and the holy Spirit, and they with him, and likewiſe an intimate fellowſhip and communion one with another. Oh! How great is our dignity! How gracious Chriſt's dignation! How high are we exalted! How low is he abaſed! The ſecond privilege follows:

—And the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.

Note, here, 1. The pollution and uncleanneſs of ſin implied and ſuppoſed in the word *cleanſing*; ſin is the great pollution and defilement of the ſoul, an univerſal pollution, an abiding pollution, a mortal pollution, and yet an inſenſible pollution. 2. The remedy which the wiſdom of God has provided againſt this malady, the ſoul's pollution by ſin, and that is the blood of his Son; this cleanſeth meritoriouſly, called therefore *the blood of God*, as being the blood of him that is truly and really God. 3. The extent of the efficacy and virtue of this blood. 1. In regard of the univerſality of the diſeaſe, it cleanſeth from all ſin. 2. In regard of the permanency of the remedy, which is expreſſed in the preſent tenſe, it *cleanſeth*; implying, that this blood doth never loſe its efficacy; it cleanſes ſtill no leſs than it did the firſt moment it was ſhed; nay, it cleanſeth virtually before it was ſhed; all the patriarchs and prophets were juſtified, and ſaved by faith in his blood, who was the Lamb ſlain from the beginning of the world, in the decree and purpoſe of God. Eternal thanks to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, whoſe blood cleanſeth from the guilt and filth of all ſin.

8 If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us.

If we ſay; we apoſtles, *we* cannot ſay we are free from ſin; much leſs can the proud Gnoſtics ſay ſo, who ſuppoſe and aſſert themſelves to be in a ſtate of perfection; and obſerve, he doth not ſay, If we *ſay* we had no ſin, we deceive ourſelves; but that if now we ſay we *have* none; intimating, that chriſtians, as well after as before converſion, continue ſinful perſons; a perfect freedom from all ſin being altogether unattainable in this life, not only by ordinary chriſtians, but by the moſt eminent ſaints. The church of Rome will have it that this is *magis humiliter quam veraciter dictum*, rather ſpoken humbly than truly; but the Apoſtle doth not ſay, humility is not in us; but, the truth is not in us; he ſaith not, we extol ourſelves, and there is no lowlineſs in us; but, we deceive ourſelves, and there is no truth in us; no truth of knowledge in our underſtandings, no real holineſs in our hearts. Who can ſay, he has made his heart clean? We can neither aſcribe what purity we have to ourſelves, nor yet attribute perfection to our purity; and if ſo, how ſhould we long for the day of redemption, when no ſin ſhall affect us, no ſorrow afflict us; when we ſhall be clothed with unſpotted purity, perfect felicity, and that to all eternity.

9 If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.

Behold here, 1. A double bleſſing promiſed and inſured, namely, juſtification and ſanctification, forgiveneſs of ſin, and cleanſing from it, yea, from all iniquity; when God pardons ſin, no ſin is left unpardoned; the ſea can as eaſily drown a thouſand men as a ſingle man; God's act of pardoning grace is free and full. 2. The certainty of the mercy promiſed, God *is faithful, and juſt to forgive*; not merciful and gracious, though ſo he is in himſelf, but faithful with reſpect to his promiſe to us, and juſt with reſpect to the ſatisfaction given by Chriſt for us. Almighty God in pardoning ſin performs an act of ſtrict juſtice with reſpect to Chriſt, as well as an act of grace and mercy, in regard of us; he is faithful and juſt, as well as gracious and merciful. 3. The indiſpenſible duty required on our part, and that is confeſſion of ſin, *If we confeſs*. Now, confeſſion of ſin is a penitent ſinner's voluntary accuſing himſelf to God, and condemning himſelf before God, with hatred of, ſhame and ſorrow for, and a full reſolution againſt his ſin, together with an earneſt deſire of, and ſome good hope in divine mercy. 4. What relation confeſſion ſtands in to remiſſion, not as a meritorious cauſe; ſatisfaction, not confeſſion, merits pardon, but it is an excluſive condition, there is no remiſſion without confeſſion; God will not pardon without it: And it is an incluſive condition; God will, certainly will, forgive them that confeſs: There is not only a poſſibility or probability, but an infallible certainty of obtaining remiſſion upon confeſſion.

10 If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Note here, The impiety and blaſphemy of thoſe who affirm themſelves to be in a ſtate of ſinleſs perfection; they do not only lie themſelves, but interpretatively, and as much as in them is, they make God a liar, by contradicting what he has aſſerted in his word, that all are ſinners: So that upon the whole it appears, that to affirm we have no ſin, is the higheſt pride, the greateſt deceit, the loudeſt lie, the prophaneſt blaſphemy; it is to make the God of truth a liar, and to turn the truth of God into a lie, which evidences that is word is not in us.

CHAP. II.

MY little children, theſe things write I unto you that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our ſins: and not for ours only, but alſo for *the ſins of* the whole world.

Obſerve here, the compellation. Firſt, *My little children*. The Apoſtle calls the chriſtians to whom he wrote, *children*, *little children*; *his* little children. He calls them *children*, becauſe converted to chriſtianity; *little children*, becauſe young and tender chriſtians, of a low ſtature in religion, and far ſhort of manly perfections: and *his little children*, to denote that ſpiritual relation which was between him and them, and that endeared affection which he bare towards them. St John, by a loving compellation, makes way for a faithful admonition, which follows in the next words: *Theſe things I write, that ye ſin not.* This muſt be underſtood in a qualified ſenſe, thus: 1. *Sin not*, that is, as the wicked ſin; take heed of ſcandalous enormities, though you cannot ſhake off daily infirmities. 2. *Sin not*, as in the ſame kind that others ſin, ſo abſtain either in the ſame manner that you yourſelves before ſinned; ſin not with that fulneſs of deliberation, with that freedom of conſent; ſin not with that ſtrength of reſolution, with that frequency of action, with which you ſinned before you were called to chriſtianity. 3. *Sin not*; that is, as far as human nature will admit, abſtain from all ſin; let it be your care, prayer, ſtudy, endeavour, to keep yourſelves from every evil thing. Thus Zachary and Eliſabeth were blameleſs, *Luke* i. 6. that is, they lived in no ſin known to the world, or known to themſelves; ſo it is ſaid of Job, chap. i. ult. *he ſinned not*; that is, had no ſin prevailing in him; no ſin indulged by him. *Obſerve*, 2. As the cautionary direction, *ſin not*; ſo the comfortable concluſion, *but if any man ſin*, that is, through infirmity and weakneſs, through the policy of the tempter, or by the ſurprize of a temptation, *we have an advocate*, a mediator and an interceſſor in heaven, who is abſolutely ſinleſs, even *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.* It is a metaphor, taken from courts of judicature, where are the guilty perſon, the accuſer, the judge, and the advocate: Thus here heaven is the court, man is the guilty perſon, Satan the accuſer, God the judge, Chriſt the advocate. The proper office of an advocate is, not to deny the fact, or diſown the guilt, but to offer ſomething to the judge, whereby the law may be ſatisfied, and upon which the judge may, without any unrighteouſneſs, diſcharge the accuſed. 3. An invaluable privilege here diſcovered, that Chriſt our advocate became a propitiation for us, and for the whole race of mankind, for all that lived before us, or ſhall live after us, for Jews and Gentiles; there is a virtual ſufficiency in the death of Chriſt for all perſons, and an actual efficacy as to all believers. *Learn* hence, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſuffering death upon the croſs for our redemption, did by that one oblation of himſelf once offered, make a full, perfect, and ſufficient ſacrifice, oblation, and ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world. The original word *propitiation*, ſignifies a propitiatory covering, an alluſion to the mercy ſeat that covered the ark in which the law was: In alluſion to which, Chriſt is here called our *propitiatory covering*, becauſe he hides our ſins, the tranſgreſſions of the law, from his Father's ſight.

3 ¶ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Obſerve here, 1. That a chriſtian may be aſſured of his ſalvation; to know that we know, is to be aſſured that we know; not only to have the vital, but the fiducial act of faith. Some chriſtians can ſay, "We know that we know him". 2. The nature of true chriſtian knowledge diſcovered: It is an obedient knowledge: It is not ſufficient to profeſs that we know Chriſt, except we yield ſincere obedience to him: For this is a certain mark and proof that we know Chriſt effectually, if we love him, and keep his commandments. The true knowledge of God conſiſts in keeping of the word of God, the whole word of God, and becauſe it is his. 3. That to ſay we know God, when we do not keep his commandments, and to ſay we keep his commandments, when we do not know him, is a lie. Sad will their condition be who periſh for want of the knowledge of God, but much ſadder theirs, who periſh in the neglect or abuſe of that knowledge. 4. That a conſcientious care, and conſtant endeavour to obſerve the word, and keep the law of God, is a certain mark and evidence that he that doth it has the love of God perfected in him, and towards him: *Whoſoever keepeth his word, &c.*

6 He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked.

Obſerve here, 1. An high and honourable privilege ſuppoſed to be claimed, and that is union with Chriſt, and abiding in him; *he that ſaith he abideth in him.* The abiding in Chriſt is a great privilege, and the true and real chriſtian, doth truly and really abide in Chriſt. 2. A great and important duty belonging to all thoſe that do abide in Chriſt, and that is to walk as Chriſt walked; to ſet his example daily before them, and to be continually correcting and reforming of their lives by that glorious pattern. Every chriſtian is bound to an imitation of Chriſt, under penalty of forfeiting his claim to Chriſt; for no claim to Chriſt is or can be valid without a careful imitation of him. The temper of our minds, and the actions of our lives, muſt be a lively tranſcript of the mind and life of the holy and innocent Jeſus; we muſt be like him, or we can never love him, nor hope another day to live with him.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth.

Our Apoſtle here exhorts chriſtians to the great duty of brotherly love, aſſuring them, that it was no new commandment which he enjoined them, but that which they were taught, not only in and by the Old Teſtament, but at the firſt preaching of the goſpel amongſt them; and in theſe reſpects the command of love might be called *an old commandment*, it being a branch of the law of nature, and a known precept of the Jewiſh religion; although in other reſpects it might be called *a new commandment*, becauſe urged from a new motive, and enforced by a new example.

Learn hence, 1. That the doctrine of chriſtian love is a divine commandment, that which chriſtians are not only allowed but enjoined to practiſe; and it is called *the commandment*, in the ſingular number, to intimate, that in this one commandment all the reſt were contained, ſo that in keeping this we keep all. What are all the commandments indeed but love enlarged? And what is love but the commandments contracted? 2. That the commandment of love is an old commandment; it is as old as Moſes, yea, as old as Adam, being a part of the law of nature written in Adam's heart. The evangelical command of love was from the beginning of the law, and nothing new enjoined by Chriſt, which was not before by Moſes. 3. That yet this command of love may, in ſome reſpect, be called *a new commandment*; not ſubſtantially, but circumſtantially: Not in the eſſence of the doctrine, but in the manner of the diſcovery; not in the reſpect of the truth delivered, but in the way of delivering. *New*, not in regard of inſtitution, but reſtitution, becauſe purged from the old corrupt gloſſes of the Phariſees, who had limited this duty of love, and confined it to their own countrymen; whereas Chriſt obliges his diſciples to love all mankind, even our very enemies. In a word, it may be called *a new commandment*, becauſe it was never to wax old, but to be always freſh in the memory and practice of Chriſt's diſciples to the end of the world. *Obſerve* next, The arguments to enforce the obſervation of this new commandment: (1.) In thoſe words, *which thing is true in him and in you:* that is, as there was in Chriſt a true and ſincere love towards you, ſo look that there be a true and ſincere love in you towards him, and one towards another. (2.) *Becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth:* that is, the darkneſs of ignorance in general, and the darkneſs of the Moſaic ſtate in particular, is now paſt, and the true light of the goſpel now clearly ſhineth.

9 He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkneſs, and walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes.

Two things are here to be conſidered, namely, the grace and duty propoſed and enforced, and the ſin or vice ſpecified and oppoſed. *Obſerve*, 1. The grace propoſed, or the duty recommended, namely, the love of our brother: *He that loveth his brother*, &c. Where *note*, 1. The nature of brotherly love; it is a gracious propenſity of heart, which a chriſtian bears, for Chriſt's ſake, to his neighbour, whereby he wills, and to his power, procures all good for him; or it is that brotherly affection which every true chriſtian chiefly bears to all his fellow-members in Chriſt, for grace ſake. 2. The benefits attending the practice of this grace and duty. (1.) His condition is happy, *he abideth in the light*; that is, he is in the ſtate of grace. Charity is an evident demonſtration of ſanctity; and accordingly St. Paul, Gal. v. reckoning up the fruits of the Spirit, placeth love in the front of them. (2.) His converſation is holy, *there is no occaſion of ſtumbling in him*:: that is, he walketh inoffenſively in a ſtate of grace, and neither ſtumbleth himſelf, neither is there occaſion given by him that others ſhould ſtumble, or be drawn into any ſin. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſin ſpecified, and the vice oppoſed, namely, hating of our brother: *He that hateth his brother*, &c. Where *note*, 1. It is not only hurting, but hating our brother, that is forbidden, and that this hatred is not only forbidden whilſt he is our friend, but when he becomes our enemy. To hate a friend is inhuman; to hate an enemy is unchriſtian. And further, it muſt be noted, that whatever falls ſhort of the duty of *loving*, cometh within the compaſs of hating our brother: For every departure from love is a degree of hatred. 2. The diſmal character given of thoſe perſons who hate their brother; they are deſcribed by their wicked diſpoſition; they are *in darkneſs:* By their vicious converſation; they *walk in darkneſs:* By their miſerable condition; they *know not whither they go, becauſe that darkneſs has blinded their eyes.* From the whole *learn*, That we muſt love all, in the various kinds and manners, in the various meaſures and degree, according to which God appeareth in them: That is, we muſt love all men, as men, above the brutes; and we muſt love all profeſſed chriſtians, above all other men; and we muſt love real chriſtians, eſpecially ſuch of them as are eminent for wiſdom, goodneſs, and uſefulneſs, above all other chriſtians. The light of knowledge and the heat of love muſt be inſeparable.

12 I write unto you, little children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, becauſe ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him *that* is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Obſerve here, 1. The care which God has taken, not only to have his word preached, but written; *I write unto you*, partly to ſupply his miniſters abſence, that their writings might be inſtead of vocal inſtructions, partly to perpetuate truth unto poſterity, and to tranſmit divine revelations to future ages. 2. The ſubject or perſons whom our apoſtle writes to; *fathers, young men, and children*; where, in general, the great wiſdom of the apoſtle is to be obſerved and taken notice of, that he contents not himſelf with generals, but directs his diſcourſe particularly to old and young; plainly intimating, that none are too young to receive inſtruction, none are old enough to reject it. And if St. John wrote to perſons of all ages and conditions, then the ſacred writings are to be read to, and read by, perſons of every age and condition ſoever. And if the ſcriptures be perverted by ſome, that is not a natural effect, but only an accidental conſequence of reading the ſcriptures. Now, as evil muſt not be done that good may come of it, ſo good muſt not be left undone, though evil come of it. 3. The duty which all ſorts of chriſtians ought to be exhorted and excited to, and that is *love*; love to God, accompanied with obedience; and love to all chriſtians, in obedience to the command of God. It belongs to all ſorts of chriſtians, weak and ſtrong; to all ages of men, young and old, children and fathers, to expel the poiſon of anger and hatred out of their boſoms, and mutually to embrace one another. 4. The reaſons of our Apoſtle's writing to all chriſtians in general, and to each age in particular. *Note*, 1. The reaſon aſſigned for writing to children, ver. 12. *Becauſe your ſins are forgiven you*, &c. therefore ought you mutually to forgive, and cordially to love one another. 2. The reaſon aſſigned for writing to fathers; *Becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning*; that is Jeſus Chriſt, who, in reſpect of his divine nature, had a ſubſiſtance from the beginning; that is, from all eternity: And if ſo, then our bleſſed Saviour had a being antecedent to his conception, and before he was born of the virgin Mary; he then began to be a man, but he did not then begin to be; for before Abraham was he was; and he prays to his Father, *John* xvii. 5. to glorify him with the glory which *he had* with him before the world was. Mark, It is not ſaid, with the glory which thou *preparedſt* for me in thy decree and purpoſe before the world was, as the Socinians would have it, but the glory which *I had* with thee. He that gave being to all things, muſt have a being before all things. 3. The reaſons aſſigned for writing to young men, *Becauſe ye are ſtrong, and have overcome the wicked one*, &c. Here we have obſervable, 1. The enemy deſcribed, Satan, called the *wicked one:* Not that he was ſo by creation, but by his apoſtaſy and defection. Becauſe the firſt in wickedneſs, becauſe moſt induſtriouſly wicked, and becauſe moſt obſtinate and perſevering in wickedneſs. 2. The conqueſt ingeminated; *Ye have overcome the wicked one*. Mark, he doth not ſay, You have made a league with him, but overcome him; there is no way to accommodate or compound matters with Satan, no way to deal with him, but by victory; we are ſaid to overcome him, becauſe we are ſure to overcome him; reſiſt him, and he will flee; and becauſe we have overcome him in God's account, and becauſe we have begun to overcome him. Yield to him, and you will find him an imperious tyrant; reſiſt him, and you will find him a timorous coward. 3. The combatants, *young men*. Youth is the warlike age; young men are fit for action, old men for advice; young ones ſhould begin this ſpiritual war betimes, poſſibly they may never live to be old; or if ſo, victory will be the more difficult, by how much the longer it is delayed; and God may deny thee that grace which now thou denieſt thyſelf. The proverb ſays, "*A young ſaint*, "*but an old devil*;" but it is very hard for a young devil to become an old ſaint; whereas a young chriſtian ſoldier is moſt amiable in God's eye, and moſt terrible in the devil's. 4. The aid, helps, and aſſiſtants, by which this victory is attained, *ye are ſtrong*, that is, made partakers of divine ſtrength; ye have your ſecond in the field, the Holy Spirit, you are ſtrong in the Lord, *And the word of God abideth in you*. By the ſtrength of God, and the abiding of his word and grace in us, we overcome the wicked one, and prevail againſt him. God's word is the richeſt treaſury to ſupply our wants, and the ſtrongeſt armoury to oppoſe our enemies.

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that*
are in the world. If any man love the world, the
love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is*
in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of
the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,
but is of the world. 17 And the world paſſeth
away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doth the
will of God abideth for ever.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Apoſtle doth not, as he did before, direct his advice to any one particular ſort or rank of chriſtians in ſpecial, but unto all in general; *Love not the world*, &c. 2. That the prohibition here is not abſolute, but comparatively only. It is not an *ordinata charitas*, but *inordinata cupiditas*, that is here forbidden; we may look upon the world, and deſire it, delight in it, and in the enjoyment of it, provided we do not chuſe it for our portion, delight in it as our chief good. 3. St John doth not ſay, *Leave* the world, but *Love* not the world; he doth not ſay, Uſe not the world, but Love it not; that is, ſeek not after the world inordinately, and delight not in it immoderately: Seek it we may, but not in an undue manner; delight in it we may, but not in an undue meaſure. 4. The arguments which our Apoſtle makes uſe of, to enforce his dehortation. 1. The contrariety of the love of the world to the love of God; *If any man love the world* (in an undue manner and meaſure) *the love of the Father is not in him*: that is, the worldly lover has no intereſt in the Father's love; the world's darlings are none of God's friends, and the world's lover has no love of the Father in him; there is no poſitive love of God in him in whom there is a ſuperlative love of the world. Lord, how deſperate and dangerous a ſin then is *worldly love!* If the love of the Father be not in him, the hatred of the Father is towards him, James iv. 4. A ſecond argument to diſſuade from worldly love is contained in the 16th verſe; *For all that is in the world*; that is, all that is in eſteem and vogue with the men of the world, is either *the luſt of the fleſh*, that is, all ſenſual delights and enjoyments, which occaſion intemperance; or *the luſt of the eye*, the deſire of gold, ſilver, ſtately houſes, rich gardens, which tend to gratify the eye: and *the pride of life*, or the deſires of honours and dignities, high titles, and places of advancement, which tend to gratify our pride, all theſe *are not of the Father*; that is, they are not deſires excited by him, nor are they pleaſing to him, but are the deſires of the men of the world, and proceed from that corruption which is in them. The third argument is taken from the world itſelf, and its ſhort continuance, in the 17th verſe, *the world paſſeth away*, that is, all the things of the world, which the men of the world doat upon, and are in love with, are of a fading tranſitory nature, in themſelves, and they paſs away from their poſſeſſors and owners. *And the luſts thereof*; that is, the pleaſure which they had in gratifying their luſts paſſeth away, but the ſting remaineth, and the torment abideth. It is added, *But he that doth the will of God abideth for ever*. Behold here the permanent felicity, not of the knowing, but obedient chriſtian. He abideth for ever, not in this, but in the other world, in a ſtate of endleſs happineſs. Although eternity, in its moſt comprehenſive notion, be peculiar to a Deity, and incommunicable to a creature, yet it is that which God has made rational creatures capable of; and as he abideth for ever, ſo will he grant to them that do his will to abide with him for ever alſo.

18 ¶ Little children, it is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that antichriſt ſhall come, even now are there many antichriſts; whereby we know that it is the laſt time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but *they went out*, that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us.

Our Apoſtle having warned them againſt the danger of covetouſneſs in the foregoing verſes, he cautions them againſt the danger of deceit in theſe; he tells them, that this is the laſt time of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and that the deſtruction of their city, temple, and polity, was now at hand; and as they had heard that Antichriſt ſhould come, accordingly now there were many antichriſts come; that is, oppoſers of Chriſt, and deniers of him to be the Chriſt; and by the ſwarming of theſe ſeducers and falſe teachers now, according to our Saviour's prediction, *Matth.* xxiv. they might well conclude it was the laſt time. *Obſerve* next, Theſe antichriſts are deſcribed by the communion which they once were of, to wit, the chriſtian communion; *They went out from us*, from us Apoſtles, and from us chriſtians, being falſe brethren, and unſound chriſtians; for if they had been of us, as members of the ſame body, and had joined with us Apoſtles, in planting and propagating the ſame chriſtian faith, *They would no doubt have continued with us*, profeſſing the ſame faith, and preaching the ſame doctrine, which we do; but they left us, that it might be made manifeſt *that they were not all of us*. Here *note*, That theſe antichriſtian impoſtors had been in the boſom of the church, and made a profeſſion of the chriſtian faith; ſo did the falſe apoſtles, the judaizing teachers, mentioned *Acts* xv. ſo did Simon Magus, Nicolas, and Cerinthus. The church's ſeeming members prove her worſt friends, the foxes within do more miſchief than the wild boar without. *Queſt.* But is it not then lawful to depart from the communion of a church whereof we have been formerly members? *Anſ.* Yes, if ſhe departs from herſelf; if ſhe degenerates and grows ſo corrupt a body, and be ſo far infected, that we cannot communicate with her without ſin, which was the caſe between us and the church of Rome, her doctrines were erroneous, her worſhip idolatrous; we went out from them, becauſe they went out from the ancient apoſtolical church. *Non fugimus*; *ſed fugamur:* Not we, but they made the ſeparation, and conſequently the ſchiſm lies at their door.

20 ¶ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, "Although there are many antichriſts and ſeducers abroad in the world, yet the moſt holy God hath anointed you with his holy Spirit, which will preſerve you from pernicious error, and lead you into all neceſſary truth, if you obey and follow him." *Obſerve* here, 1. A privilege enjoyed: *Ye have an unction from the Holy One*. By which underſtand the Holy Spirit in its ſanctifying gifts and graces, which conſecrates believers as kings and prieſts unto God. 2. The advantage of that privilege declared, *Ye know all things*; not abſolutely, but with reſtriction and limitation: *All things*: that is, all divine things, all divine things revealed, and all things revealed that are neceſſary to ſalvation: *All things* needful to be known, and as far as needful for you to know: all things relating to God, Chriſt, the Holy Spirit, ourſelves, ſin, Satan, the law, the goſpel, grace, and glory; ye know all theſe things by virtue of your unction.

21 I have not written unto you becauſe ye know not the truth: but becauſe ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt? He is antichriſt, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father alſo.*

Obſerve here, 1. The character given of the goſpel; it is *the truth*, the word of truth, the way of truth, confirmed by real miracles. It is divine truth, univerſal truth, effectual truth, and no lie; for Almighty God would never have ſet the ſeal of his omnipotency to a lie, and have confirmed it by ſigns and wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, had it been falſe. *Obſerve*, 2. The character given of the heretics in St John's days, and in our days alſo, they denied that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and therein deny the Father and the Son: *For whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father*; that is, he denieth the Father as well as the Son; for not having the Father, and denying the Father, is the ſame thing, ver. 22. *He is antichriſt that denieth the Father and the Son.* This is a text in which every Socinian may ſee himſelf an Atheiſt; he that denies the divinity of the Son, denies the Deity of the Father; for ſuch is the nature of the Godhead, that one of theſe cannot be alone; the Father is not without the Son, nor can be; nor can the Son be without the Father; this coherence is inſeparable and inviolable; therefore he that denies the eternal Son, denies the eternal Father; and if it be Atheiſm to deny the divinity of the Father, it is no leſs to deny the Deity of the Son; for he that denieth the Son, denieth the Father alſo. There is ſuch a connection between theſe two, the Father and the Son, they being co-eſſential and co-eternal, that if you deny the divinity of the one, you deny *that* of the other; therefore they are Atheiſts that deny the divinity of Chriſt, as well as they that deny the being of God.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you, ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son and in the Father.

Theſe words are an exhortation to hold faſt, and not to forſake the doctrine of chriſtianity, which from the beginning they had received, and not to turn to novelties. *Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning*; that is, from the firſt preaching of the goſpel. *Note* here, What is truth and true doctrine, namely, that which was delivered from the beginning. Truth is error's elder, though error is not much truth's younger. 2. By what means they received the evangelical doctrine, namely, by *hearing*; let that which you have heard abide in you. No ſenſe more needful than that of hearing, for the benefit and advantage of man; both as he is by nature a reaſonable creature, by converſe a ſociable creature, and may be by grace a new creature: Faith cometh by hearing. 3. The duty required with reference to what they had heard; *let that which ye have heard abide in you*, namely, by a careful remembrance of it, and by reſolute adherence to it. The ſum of this exhortation is, that we retain and maintain the ancient catholic and apoſtolic faith; and verily when we conſider how tenacious heretics are of their novel errors, it may bring a bluſh into our faces to conſider how ready we are to be withdrawn from primitive truths. *Obſerve* next, The motive with which our Apoſtle doth enforce and back his exhortation—*If that which ye have heard remain in you, you ſhall continue in the Son, and in the Father*; that is, in the love and favour of the Son, and of the Father, and in communion with both. *Queſt.* But why is the Son put before the Father here? Partly to inſinuate, that the Son is no leſs in eſſence and dignity than the Father, but equal in both; accordingly, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the apoſtolical benediction, is mentioned before the love of God the Father: And partly, becauſe no man cometh to, or continueth in the Father, but by the Son; *He is the way, the truth, and the life.* The doctrine of the goſpel comes from Chriſt; it leads to Chriſt, and by him unto the Father. See *John* xiv. 23.

25 And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, *even* eternal life.

Obſerve here, 1. How gracious Almighty God is to enforce his commands with promiſes of reward; he required of us adherence to the truth, and perſeverance in it, in the former verſe; here he promiſes eternal life by way of encouragement, in this verſe. 2. The benefit promiſed, *life, eternal life*; the greatneſs of this life is immeaſurable, the worth of this life is ineſtimable; the joys of this life innumerable, the duration of it is interminable. 3. The certainty of the conveyance; this is the *promiſe promiſed*. *Mark*, He doth not ſay purpoſed, but promiſed. A purpoſe is a ſecret and a hidden intention of the mind, but a promiſe is a revelation of that intention; yea, it is more than a declaration. A promiſe makes ſure, as well as makes manifeſt; eſpecially God's promiſe, which has his oath for the confirmation of it, *Heb.* vi. 17. 4. The peculiarity of the perſons to whom the promiſe is made, he hath promiſed *us*; not to us as Apoſtles only, but to us as chriſtians; all that are born of God are begotten to a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: Again, he has promiſed *us*, not promiſed *all*, eternal life, but us, who are thus and thus qualified, who keep his commandments, and walk as he walked. 5. The eminency of the author by whom this promiſe is made, in the relative *he*; *This is the promiſe which he hath promiſed us.* Here *note*, That eternal life was promiſed by God to good men under the Old Teſtament; *Heb.* xi. 16. tells us, that the Old-Teſtament ſaints deſired a better country, to wit, an heavenly; now how could they have deſired it, if they had not known it? And could they have known it, if God had not revealed it? And Chriſt bad the Jews ſearch the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; intimating, that in the writings of Moſes, eternal life was made known typically and darkly, not ſo clearly and fully as by the goſpel, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. He is holy, and cannot lie; righteous, and cannot deceive; immutable, and cannot repent.

26 Theſe things have I written unto you concerning them that ſeduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the ſame anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.

Obſerve here the pious care which St John expreſſes for their preſervation from heretics and ſeducers, *Theſe things have I written to you concerning them that ſeduce you.* That is, to arm them againſt the ſeducers then amongſt them; intimating, that men are naturally prone to error, yea, to fundamental errors. 2. That to be ſeduced by, and led into ſuch errors, is dangerous and deſtructive. 3. That it is the ſpecial duty, and ought to be the ſingular care, of the miniſters of Chriſt, to warn their people of, and arm them againſt, errors, and erroneous perſons, againſt ſeducers and ſeduction; *Theſe things I write concerning them that ſeduce you*; that is, thoſe who endeavour to ſeduce you. *Obſerve* next, The encouragement which St John gives them againſt theſe ſeducers, and their ſeduction, the anointing which ye have received from Chriſt; that is, from the ſpecial illumination of his Spirit, this *abideth* in you, *teaching you all things* neceſſary for you to know, ſo that you need not any man to teach you; that is, any new doctrine, any new fundamental principles of faith. *Note* here, That chriſtians ſavingly enlightened by the Spirit of God need no new goſpel or doctrine to be inſtructed in; but they need farther teaching ſtill, in order to their better improvement in what they know; vain therefore are the Quakers, and other ſectaries arguments drawn from hence, againſt all miniſterial teaching! becauſe the Spirit teaches, man muſt not teach: Whereas the Spirit teaches mediately by man, and not immediately by itſelf. When theſe ſeducers can ſhow that they have ſuch an immediate and extraordinary *afflatus* of the Holy Spirit, as was vouchſafed to the primitive chriſtians, then let them cry down the neceſſity of miniſterial teaching, not before.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he ſhall appear, we may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.

Still our Apoſtle reinforces his foregoing exhortation to abide fixedly in Chriſt; that is, in the doctrine of Chriſt, in true chriſtianity; *and now, little children, abide in him:* And the argument which he makes uſe of, is very forcible and cogent, namely, *That when Chriſt ſhall appear, we may have confidence*, &c. Here *note*, 1. Something ſuppoſed, namely, the coming and appearance of Chriſt: he ſhall appear. 2. Something implied, namely, our appearance before Chriſt in the day of his appearance. 3. Something expreſſed, namely, the confident appearing before Chriſt, of all thoſe who abide in him: *That we may have confidence*, &c. Whence *learn*, That the perſevering chriſtian ſhall have confidence before Chriſt at his coming; ſhall lift up his head without ſhame or bluſhing, from the teſtimony which conſcience bears of his ſincerity, and from the intereſt he has in the Judge: But, on the other hand, they that do not perſevere and abide in Chriſt ſhall be aſhamed before him at his coming; aſhamed of their groſs hypocriſy, of their vile unfaithfulneſs, of their manifeſt folly.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteouſneſs, is born of him.

Our apoſtle concludes the chapter with an exhortation to holineſs and righteouſneſs; aſſuring them, that if they be ſenſible (as they muſt neceſſarily be) that God is righteous, eſſentially and infinitely holy and righteous; they may and ought to know alſo, that whoſoever is born of him, and doth receive a new nature from him, doth certainly endeavour to live unto him, and to walk before him as his child in a way of obedience, and to expect favour and protection from him as from a Father. *Learn* hence, That all that ſincerely live a righteous life towards God and man, are certainly born of God; and ſuch as are born of God do certainly live that righteous life; then, and only then, may we know that we are indeed God's children, when the image of our heavenly Father is inſtamped upon us, and the diſpoſition of his children wrought in us; when there is a happy conformity in our natures to the holineſs of God's nature, and in our lives to the righteouſneſs of his law; when he beholds his own face in the glaſs of our ſouls, and loves us for his own image inſtamped and impreſſed upon us.

CHAP. III.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God!—

Our apoſtle begins this chapter with wonder and admiration at the aſtoniſhing goodneſs and condeſcenſion of Almighty God towards believers, in taking them into his family, and adopting them into the number of his children: that ſtrangers and enemies ſhould be dignified with the honourable and amiable title of his ſons: it is the ſame relation that Chriſt has, *I aſcend to my Father and your Father*; there is indeed a diverſity in the foundation of it: Chriſt is a Son by nature, we by favour: he by generation, we by adoption: However, not only crowns and ſceptres are beneath this dignity, but the honour of our innocent ſtate was not equal with it: well might the apoſtle then break out with an heavenly aſtoniſhment, and ſay, *Behold, what manner of love is this, that we ſhould be called*, accounted and acknowledged, for the *children of God!* Here *note*, 1. That it is the high and honourable privilege of all true believers, that they are now the ſons of God. They are ſo, (1.) By regeneration; they are made partakers of the divine nature: not in the eſſence of it, but in the gracious qualities of it, which enables them in ſome meaſure to reſemble God their Father; they receive a principle of ſpiritual life from God, which enables them to live unto God, and this principle received in regeneration: it is an inward principle, an univerſal principle, a God exalting principle, and an abiding principle. 2. They are children by adoption alſo: adoption is the acceptance of a ſtranger into the relation and privileges of a ſon: it was a rare condeſcenſion in Pharaoh's daughter to reſcue Moſes, an innocent and forſaken ſtranger, from periſhing by the waters, and adopt him for her ſon; but O! how much greater kindneſs was it for Almighty God to ſave guilty and wretched man from eternal flames, and to take a rebel into his family! This privilege of being the ſons of God by regeneration and adoption, is a choice and gracious privilege, an high and honourable privilege, a free and undeſerved privilege, a laſting and abiding privilege. 2. As the privilege itſelf, ſo the fontal cauſe of it, the fountain from whence it doth proceed and flow, namely, from the gratuitous love, and free favour of God; what manner of love has the Father beſtowed upon us? He cannot ſay what, nor how great it was: He admires it, but cannot declare it; yet though adoption was the effect of God's free love, it was the fruit of Chriſt's rich purchaſe; he of a Son became a ſervant, that we of ſlaves might become ſons. 3. In the word *Behold!* a note of attention and admiration both: God expects, the goſpel requires, and the privilege of adoption deſerves, that it be beheld with love and wonder, taken notice of with joy and thankfulneſs, and improved for growth in grace and advancement in holineſs.

—Therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.

Note here, 1. That the believer's dignity, though real and great, is altogether unknown to the unbelieving world; they are ſo far from acknowledging them to be God's children, that they mock and ſcoff, jeer and deride them, for pretending ſo to be; and as they little know them, ſo do they leſs affect and love them, but hate and perſecute them. 2. The reaſon aſſigned why the world knows not the children of God, *Becauſe it knew not him:* God once made himſelf manifeſt to the world in and by his Son: Chriſt, in whom dwelt the fulneſs of the Godhead, came and dwelt among us, but the *world knew him not*, received him not; and if they ſaw no beauty in him, who had ſtrength of grace, and no corruption in him, is it any wonder that they ſee no excellency in them in whom is much weakneſs in grace, and too great ſtrength of corruption!

2 Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Although the world knows us not, affects us not, eſteems us not, becauſe of the weakneſs of our grace, and the ſtrength of our corruptions, yet notwithſtanding both theſe, we are now the ſons of God;

be, we are not what we ſhould be, we are not what we ſhall be; but bleſſed be God we are what we are; now are we the ſons of God." *Obſerve*, 2. As the honour and dignity of the chriſtians' privilege in this life aſſerted, *we are now the ſons of God*, ſo their happineſs and glory in the next life deſcribed, 1. By way of negation, *It doth not yet appear what they ſhall be*; the glory which God has prepared for all his adopted children and people, is an hidden glory, a glory that doth not yet appear; what the ſaints ſhall be in their perfect ſtate of glory doth not yet appear to them in this their perfect ſtate of grace. 2. By way of poſitive aſſeveration, *But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*, &c. Here *note*, 1. The certainty of Chriſt's appearance declared, *He ſhall appear.* 2. A double benefit which believers may expect at his appearing. 1. *They ſhall be like him*, as well in holineſs, as in happineſs, as well in purity as in immortality; like him in a perfect freedom from ſin, like him in the ardour and intenſe fervency of their love; like him in the perfection of grace, and the unſpotted purity of his holy nature. 2. *They ſhall ſee him:* That is, his glory, with a clear and immediate ſight, with a full and comprehenſive ſight, with an aſſimilating and transforming ſight, with an appropriating and poſſeſſive ſight, with a ſatisfying and everlaſting ſight.

3 ¶ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.

Every one that hath this hope, that is, the hope of ſeeing and enjoying Chriſt in glory, he now endeavours to purify himſelf, according to the pattern and copy which Chriſt hath ſet before him, labouring to imitate it, though he cannot reach it. *Obſerve* here, 1. The character of a chriſtian by this hope, *every man that hath this hope in him.* *Learn*, That a chriſtian is a perſon of high hopes, and raiſed expectations, as to future bleſſedneſs; the author of this hope is God; the object of this hope is ſome future good promiſed and expected; the grounds of this hope are the promiſe and oath of God, the purchaſe and undertaking of Chriſt, and the ſanctifying work of the Spirit, in and upon his ſoul. *Obſerve*, 2. A deſcription of this hope by its inſeparable effect, it *purifies* the chriſtian; he that has this hope *purifies himſelf*; where it is implied, 1. That ſin is a pollution which we muſt be purified from. 2. That the holieſt of ſaints here on earth, are not perfectly purified from this pollution, but are daily endeavouring to purify themſelves more and more. *Obſerve*, 3. The pattern after which the ſincere chriſtian doth conform in this work of purification, and that is Chriſt; he purifies himſelf, even as he is pure; intimating, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was a perfect pattern of purity; and that it is the chriſtian's duty to eye this pattern, and to endeavour to conform himſelf thereunto, by purifying himſelf, even as Chriſt is pure.

4. Whoſoever committeth ſin tranſgreſſeth alſo the law: for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſin: and in him is no ſin.

Whoſoever committeth ſin, that is, whoſoever lives in the allowed commiſſion of it, lives in rebellion againſt, and in a flat oppoſition to, the law of God, ſin being a tranſgreſſion of God's law; and ſuch a perſon as thus commits ſin, not only violates the law of God, but alſo fruſtrates the death of Chriſt; for Chriſt, in whom there was no ſin, was manifeſted in the fleſh to take away ſin, the guilt of it by his blood, the power of it by his Spirit, and conſequently we muſt purify ourſelves from it, if we hope to ſee him as he is. *Learn* hence, That nothing can be more unreaſonable and abſurd, than to expect ſalvation with God in heaven by a ſinleſs Saviour, if we allow ourſelves in a courſe of ſin; nothing being more contrary than this to the deſign of Chriſt's death, which was not only to deliver us from the danger, but from the dominion of our ſins; not only to expiate our ſins, but to make us ſinleſs like himſelf.

6 Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not: whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him.

That is, "Whoever lives in ſin, and goes on in a courſe and trade of ſinning, is the ſervant and ſlave of ſin; and although his reaſon condemns him, his conſcience boggles at it, and his will is ſomething averſe to it, yet if he yields his members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, he is the ſervant of ſin; and whatever his pretence may be, he has no right knowledge of Chriſt, nor any true faith in him; for whoſoever abideth in him *thus*, ſinneth not." *Learn* hence, That the ſincere Chriſtian, ſo far as he is in Chriſt, and by faith united to him, and is taught and ruled by him, ſinneth not; that is, he makes it is conſtant care and continual endeavour to ſhun and avoid all ſin. 2. That ſuch perſons as go on in a courſe of ſin, let their pretences to Chriſtianity be what they will, they never had any experimental knowledge of Chriſt, no fellowſhip or communion with him; nor can ever hope to be happy in the fruition and enjoyment of him.

7 Little children let no man deceive you. He that doth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, "Let no man deceive you by making you believe that a right faith may conſiſt with an unrighteous life, for only *he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous*. *Note* here, 1. That there is a twofold doing righteouſneſs. 1. In a legal ſenſe, which ſtands in an exact obeying and fulfilling the law; and thus there is none righteous, no not one. 2. In an evangelical ſenſe, a walking uprightly, according to the rule of the goſpel, conſcientiouſly avoiding all known ſin, and performing every commanded duty; it is not a ſingle action, but a conſtant courſe of holy actions, that denominates a perſon holy; a righteous man makes righteouſneſs the buſineſs of his life; his daily care is how to pleaſe God in all he does. *Note*, 2. That it is the duty of every chriſtian, that would not be deceived, as to his ſpiritual ſtate and condition, to try himſelf by this infallible mark and rule of trial. Chriſtian, enquire not ſo much what thy affections are, as what thy deſires are, what thy joys and comforts are, as what thy actions are; not what thy peace is, but what thy paths are: For God doth not meaſure men's ſincerity by the tides of their affections, but by the conſtant bent of their reſolutions, and the general courſe and tenor of their converſations.

8 He that committeth ſin is of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning.—

That is, " So far as a man ſinneth, ſo far he is of the devil, and like unto him, in whom ſin is predominant; he having been an old ſinner, ſoon after the beginning of the creation, and a bold tempter to ſin all his days." *Learn* 1. That Satan has kept in a conſtant and continued courſe of ſinning againſt God from the beginning of his apoſtacy, and firſt moment of his revolt from God; *the devil ſinneth from the beginning*. 2. That ſuch as make ſin their work, do make themſelves the devil's children; they are his children by imitation: St. John viii. 44.

—For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.

As if he had ſaid, " The Son of God came purpoſely into the world to deſtroy ſin, the work of the devil, in all that he will ſave." *Note*, 1. The odious character wherewith ſin is branded, it is *the work of the devil*; that work which he is always doing himſelf; and which he is continually tempting and ſoliciting others to do, that they may be as miſerable as himſelf. 2. Our Saviour's manifeſtation in the fleſh aſſerted; the Son of God was manifeſted, namely, to the world, and in the world; he appeared in our nature, and was ſeen in our fleſh; it was a real exhibition, and not an imaginary manifeſtation of him. 3. The great end of this gracious manifeſtation of the Son of God in our nature, it was *to deſtroy the works of the devil*, to looſe and diſſolve; ſo the original: This ſuppoſes mankind to have been in bonds and fetters; we were in durance and captivity, ſhut and locked up in the priſon-houſe; we were under the dominion of ſin, and power of Satan, but the Son of God came to reſcue us, to knock off our fetters, and to ſet us at liberty: By the works of the devil underſtand all ſin in general. 2. Thoſe ſins in particular, which have moſt of the devil's image upon them, and render perſons moſt like unto him, ſuch are malice and envy, rejoicing at the calamities, and delighting in the evils, that befal others, rage and paſſion, bitter ſtrife and contention, ſchiſm and faction, lying and falſehood, craft and treachery; but eſpecially pride and haughtineſs, which was the ſin that turned Satan out of heaven, and made him a devil in hell. 3. By the works of the devil here are meant in particular, idolatry, and all idolatrous worſhip, even to the worſhipping of the devil himſelf; this, and all other kinds of idolatry, had ſtrangely prevailed and over-run the world before the coming of Chriſt, who came on purpoſe to deliver mankind from this ſlavery, and to put down the kingdoms of Satan, and beat him out of thoſe ſtrong holds which he thought had been impregnable.

9 Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin: for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The character of a true chriſtian, *he is born of God*; he has in the work of regeneration paſſed under a bleſſed change by the operation of the Holy Spirit, renewing his nature, and reforming his life; yet this denotes not the ſingle tranſient act of regeneration, but rather a continued courſe and permament ſtate; one that is born of God is the ſame with him that leads a pious and godly life, and continues ſo to do. 2. What is here aſſerted concerning him that is born of God, namely, that he doth *not commit ſin*; and that he *cannot ſin*. 1. *He doth not commit ſin*, he is no evil-doer, no worker of iniquity, no habitual or cuſtomary ſinner; he goes not on in any way or courſe of ſin, as the wicked does, who makes a trade of it; yea, he doth not tolerate or allow himſelf in any ſingle act of ſin; not that he is abſolutely free from all ſin. 2. It is ſaid, he *cannot ſin*; but how? And why? How can he not ſin? Has he not a natural power to ſin? Has he not corruptions within, and temptations without, inclining and diſpoſing him to ſin, as well as other men! and has he not opportunity to ſin; the ſame expectations of advantages by ſin with other men? Yes, no doubt; but he has not a will bent for ſin, or a heart and mind ſet upon ſin, as the wicked have; nay, he has a heart and will oppoſite to ſin, and ſet againſt all ſin. A gracious perſon then, though he hath not a natural impoſſibility, yet he has a moral impoſſibility to ſin. He that is born of God hath a power to do that evil which he hath not a will to do; he hath always a natural power, and ſometimes a civil power, as being in authority; but his blood and pedigree are ſo high, being born of God, that he diſdains to meddle with, or to trade in ſo baſe a thing as ſin is. *Note*, That a child of God has a bleſſed impotency in the unregenerate part, that he cannot ſin ſtrongly, though as yet he has not that ability in the regenerate part, as not to ſin at all. *Obſerve*, 3. The reaſons aſſigned why a regenerate perſon cannot ſin as the wicked ſin, becauſe *his ſeed remaineth in him, and becauſe he is born of God*; that is, he has an inward principle inclining and diſpoſing him to hate and oppoſe all ſin, to wit, the ſanctifying grace of God; and he has that mortifying Spirit, which cauſes him daily more and more to die unto ſin, and enables him to mortify the deeds of the body. *Learn* hence, That although ſin remaineth in him that is born of God, yet he that is born of God doth not remain in ſin, either as to a ſinful ſtate, or a ſinful converſation; God's word and Spirit, by which he was regenerate, ſtill remain in him; and ſo far as he is under the ruling power and governing influences of them, he cannot ſin, much leſs live in wilful ſin.

10 In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil: whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Our Apoſtle in theſe words gives us the diſtinguiſhing character of a good and bad man; thoſe who in their diſpoſitions and actions, in the temper of their minds, and in the actions of their lives, do imitate God, are his children; and thoſe who addict themſelves to ſin and impiety are of another race and deſcent, they are the children of the devil; they reſemble him, and belong unto him. By doing righteouſneſs is meant the practice of univerſal goodneſs, and a thorough conformity to the law of God in oppoſition to ſin, which is the tranſgreſſion of the law. *Learn* hence, 1. That every man may come to the certain knowledge of his own condition, whether he be a good or bad man; *By this the children of God are manifeſted*; that is, hereby good and bad men are really diſtinguiſhed; the ſcripture has laid down real marks of difference between them. 2. That the love and practice of univerſal righteouſneſs, and nothing ſhort of it, will denominate a perſon a child of God, and evidence to his own conſcience, that he is brought into a ſtate of grace and favour with him.—*Neither he that loveth not his brother:*

This diſcovers a farther difference between the children of God and the children of Satan, namely, *Brotherly love*; he doth not ſay, he that *hateth* his brother is a child of the devil, but *he that loveth not his brother*; intimating, that not only hatred and malice againſt, but want of brotherly love towards each other, is the mark and ſign not of a child of God, but of the devil. He that doth not unfeignedly love men as men, and all chriſtians as chriſtians, is no child of God, no lover of God; for he that loveth not God's image, loveth not God himſelf.

11 ¶ For this is the meſſage that ye heard from the beginning, that we ſhould love one another. 12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother. And wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

Our Apoſtle comes now to enforce his exhortation unto brotherly love, by many weighty arguments: 1. He aſſures them, that this precept concerning brotherly love was given them by Chriſt and his apoſtles, from the beginning of the preaching of the goſpel. *Note* here, 1. That the word of God is a meſſage ſent from God unto us, a meſſage for our information and inſtruction, a meſſage for our guide and direction. 2. That the duty of brotherly love is an ancient meſſage that God has ſent and has continued to ſend us, *from the beginning*; God help us to learn this leſſon, ſo anciently taught us, and ſo long preſſed upon us by God himſelf. A ſecond argument to excite brotherly love is drawn from the evil of hating our brother, which appears in the perſon and practice of Cain, whom our Apoſtle deſcribes, 1. By his pedigree, *He was of that wicked one*; that is, the devil, of his diabolical diſpoſition, of his envious and malicious inclination, and, as ſuch, was not ſo much Adam's ſon as the devil's ſon. 2. By his practice, he *ſlew his brother:* He firſt hated him, and then ſlew him. His hatred was cauſeleſs and unjuſt, implacable and deadly, and ended in his brother's death and his own deſtruction. 3. The reaſon is aſſigned why he ſlew him, *Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*; not for any harm he had done, or for any evil he had deſerved, but becauſe Cain was bad himſelf, and his works bad; to hate godlineſs, and to perſecute the godly, is the very nature and diſpoſition of a wicked man. *Obſerve* laſtly, The inference drawn by the Apoſtle from this example of Cain's hating his holy and innocent brother; *Marvel not, my brethren,* ſays he, *if the world hate you*; intimating, that the world always did, and ever will, hate God's children; and that the children of God are not to marvel or wonder at it, but to prepare for it; it is no new thing, but what has been from the beginning: Though Cain be dead, the ſpirit of Cain is alive; the perſecutor goes about with Cain's club in his hand, redded with blood; *marvel not* then *if the world hate you.*

14 We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Apoſtle's deſcription of a carnal unregenerate ſtate; it is a ſtate of ſpiritual death. 2. Of a chriſtian's renewed ſtate by the Spirit of Chriſt, it is a ſtate of ſpiritual life; *we are paſſed from death to life.* 3. Here is the mark and token by which this tranſlation from death to life may be known, namely, by *love*; for love being the great work of God's renewing Spirit on the ſoul, it is by the production of that, we come to the knowledge that we are changed from a Cainiſh corrupt ſtate of death, into a ſtate of holy life: Whatever grace men pretend unto, if they want this grace of love, they are yet dead in ſin. 4. The characteriſtical note of that love which will be an undubitable evidence of this our tranſlation from death to life, it muſt be a love of the *brethren*; that is, of all chriſtians, as ſuch; particularly it muſt be an extenſive and univerſal love, that reacheth all the children of God, all good men, of what judgment and opinion ſoever, otherwiſe it is the love of a party only, and a love for opinion-ſake, not for grace-ſake, Coloſ. i. 4. *We give thanks ſince we heard of your love to all the ſaints*; that is, to all of what nation and kingdom ſoever, of what eſtate and condition ſoever, of what judgment and opinion ſoever, though differing from you in ſome leſſer things. It muſt alſo be an holy love that will evidence our chriſtianity; though all men muſt be loved as men, yet the brethren muſt be loved for the likeneſs of God in them; we muſt love God's holineſs in holy perſons; it is one thing to love the brethren, and another to love them as brethren, and becauſe they are brethren; a gracious perſon may be loved only for carnal reſpects, and ſiniſter ends; again, it muſt be active and operative, a coſtly and expenſive love; that cheap love of ſome men, which will wiſh a poor chriſtian well, but will be at no pains, no coſt, or expence, to help and ſuccour him, becauſe they love their money better than they do their brother, is the hypocrite's love, not the ſaint's; ſee James ii. 15. From the whole *learn*, that the love of grace in another, is a good evidence of the life of grace in ourſelves; unfeigned love to the children of God as ſuch, is an undoubted evidence of our regeneration and adoption.

15 Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Obſerve here, 1. The nature of the ſin condemned, it is a ſecret ſin of the heart, not an open ſin of the life; he that *hateth his brother*, that is, in his heart, *is a murderer*, though he doth not ſmite him with his tongue, or with his hand. *Learn* thence, That ſins of the heart are damning, as well as ſins of the life; a man may be an adulterer in the ſight of God, and yet never touch a woman, Matth. v. 28. an idolater, and yet never bow his knee to an image, Eph. v. 5. a murderer, and yet never hurt his brother; if he hates him in his heart, it is recorded murder in God's account. What need have we to put up David's prayer, Pſal. xix. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret ſins?* *Obſerve*, 2. The ſad and deplorable condition of ſuch as are guilty of this ſin, namely, of murdering their brother by hatred in their hearts: *He that hateth his brother, abideth in death*, ver. 14. *and hath not eternal life abiding in him*, ver. 15. that is, he hath no ſpiritual life, nothing of the life of grace abiding in him, which is the ſeed and principle, the original and beginning of eternal life. *Note* thence, That the life of grace in the heart of a regenerate perſon, is the beginning and firſt principle of a life of glory, whereof they cannot but be deſtitute who hate their brother in their hearts. So much hatred in a man, ſo much death; and ſo much want of love, ſo much want of life.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Here our apoſtle preſſes brotherly love from another argument, namely, from the example of Jeſus Chriſt, who being God, as well as man, laid down his life, *as man*, for us. Where *note*, That the intimate union betwixt the divine and human nature in Chriſt, gives ground for the calling Chriſt's life, as man, the life of God; as his blood is ſaid, Acts xx. 28. to be God's own blood: *Hereby perceive we the love of God*; that is, of Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer, *in that he laid down his life for us.* Thence *learn*, That the death of Chriſt for us is a ſpecial manifeſtation of his ſingular love unto us. *Obſerve* farther, The inference which our Apoſtle draws from Chriſt's love in laying down his life for us, namely, that we therefore ought to lay down our lives for the brethren: That is, in a time of perſecution, when the glory of God, the edification of the church, and the eternal ſalvation of our brethren, do require it, and ſtand in need of it: We muſt never ſtick at laying down our lives when God calls us to it, as needful for better ends than our lives. It is not needful that we live, but needful and neceſſary that we glorify God, both in life and death.

17 But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels *of compaſſion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Our Apoſtle here draws an argument from the greater to the leſs, after this manner: "If, ſays he, we ought to be ready in ſome caſes to part with our lives for the brethren, ſurely we much more ought to impart and communicate our worldly goods to them in the time of their neceſſity, and he that refuſes ſo to do, can never think there is any thing of that love in him, which God requires of him towards his children." *Learn* hence, That there certainly dwells no love of God in that man's heart, who having this world's goods, ſtretcheth not out his hands to help the neceſſities of his brother. Here *note*, 1. The fountain from which all charitable diſtributions are to proceed and flow, namely, from the compaſſion of the heart. 2. That the compaſſion of the heart muſt draw forth the help of the hand: He that is a chriſtian indeed will open both heart and hand to the diſtreſſed, and they ſhall partake of his purſe as well as of his pity. 3. It is not ſaid, He that has abundance of this world's goods, let him of his great ſuperfluity give; but he that *hath this world's goods*; that is, in any meaſure, yea, though he has no more than he works for, yet is he required, Eph. iv. 28. that worketh with his hands, to give to him that needeth. The world is greatly deceived who thinks charity and almſgiving a duty that only concerns the rich; indeed it concerns them eminently, but not excluſive. And oh! the dreadful account that ſome rich men have to give, who expend more upon a luſt in one day, than they give to the poor in a whole year. But yet, after all, every one that hath this world's goods, though he has but what he labours and ſweats for, yet muſt he in proportion to what he has, give to him that needeth. *Note*, 4. The object of this our compaſſion and charity; a *brother*, a brother in *need*, and *every* brother in need; not only ſuch as are caſt down, but ſuch as are falling, are the proper objects of our pity and help. 5. The circumſtances of time when we muſt give, namely, when we *ſee* our brother in *need*. What a vanity is it to leave our alms till after our death, to be beholden to the juſtice of others for their diſtribution! Let us ſee our charity beſtowed with our own eyes, and given out with our own hands, when the tongues of the poor will bleſs us, but their prayers will do us no good when we are dead. *Whoſo ſeeth his brother have need*, &c. From the whole *learn*, That when we are in a capacity, and enjoy an opportunity of expreſſing our charitable benevolence towards our poor and indigent brethren, the omiſſion of it is a certain evidence that there is nothing of the love of God reſiding in us.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.

Having laid down ſeveral motives to brotherly love before, by way of excitation, as an help to their affections, he comes now to propound ſome directions to them as an help to their endeavours. And the firſt is this, to take ſpecial care that their love be ſincere, and not hypocritical. *Let us not love in word*, that is, in word only, *but in deed, and in truth.* As if he had ſaid, "Let our deeds ſpeak the truth of our love; ſincere love is fruitful; true affection will put forth itſelf into action; it doth not reſt at the tongue's end, but will be ſeen at the finger's end, rendering us laborious in works and offices of friendſhip; as faith, ſo love without works is dead; and as faith is juſtified by works, ſo is our love alſo." *Obſerve* next, The encouragement which our Apoſtle gives to the exerciſe of true love, hereby *we ſhall know that we are of the truth*, &c. That is, "By ſuch efficacy and real fruits of our love we ſhall know that we are true chriſtians, who live by, and walk according to the rule of the goſpel, which is emphatically ſtyled *the truth*, and ſhall have the aſſured teſtimony of our conſciences, that we are ſincere in the ſight of God." *Learn* 1. That the love of chriſtians one to another ought not to be verbal, or in word only, but in deed, and in truth. 2. That the ſincerity of our love to our brethren is the ſecurity of our conſciences and eſtates before God. A chriſtian may be aſſured of his good eſtate, and may build his aſſurance upon the ſincerity of his love to God and chriſtians.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have *we* confidence towards God.

By *heart* here is undoubtedly meant *conſcience*; and it is as much as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "If our conſciences tell us that our love is barren and fruitleſs, and ſo condemn us for hypocriſy, God is greater than our conſciences, both in holineſs to condemn, and in knowledge to perceive the evil of them, for *he knoweth all things*: whereas if we have the witneſs of our conſciences touching the ſincerity of our love by the fruits of it; if, after a moſt ſtrict examination of our conſciences, and an exact comparing of our lives and actions with the law of God, we are not condemned of inſincerity in our obedience to God, and love to our neighbour, then have we an humble confidence with God in all our addreſſes to him." *Learn* hence, 1. That the conſciences of men have a ſelf-condemning and a ſelf-abſolving power. 2. That the conſciences of men are much better known to God, than they either are or can be known unto themſelves. 3. That if our hearts or conſciences do condemn us, it is an evidence of greater condemnation from the heart-ſearching God. 4. That if our conſciences do abſolve us, it is an argument of our acceptance with God, and a ground of confidence in all our addreſſes to him. 5. That according to the verdict or teſtimony of men's conſciences rightly informed, and truly teſtifying, God will either acquit or abſolve them at the great day.

22 And whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight.

Obſerve, 1. An extraordinary favour and privilege inſured, *Whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him*; that is, whatſoever we aſk according to his will, we are ſure to receive, either in kind, or in equivalency. It ſhall either be given in mercy, or denied in love; for verily God is as kind in denying ſome or our requeſts, as in anſwering others; we often cry for that which it would be cruelty for God to give; we know not what is beſt to beg, but an infinitely wiſe God knoweth what is fitteſt to give. *Dat pro jucundis aptiſſima.* 2. The qualification of the perſons to whom this precious privilege does belong. *They keep God's commandments*, and do the things that pleaſe him. According to our hearing God's commandments, ſo he hears and anſwers our prayers; with what meaſure we mete to God, God will meaſure to us again. If God's commands be trode under our feet, no wonder that all our prayers fall to the ground. God hears not us, if we hear not him.

23 And this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Obſerve, 1. What is the ſum of the chriſtian's duty, *faith* and *love*, to believe on the name of Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to rely upon him as our Redeemer, our Teacher, our King, our Interceſſor, and to obey his great command of loving one another with a pure heart fervently. 2. What a mighty encouragement it is to faith, that believing on Chriſt is conſtituted a duty by a plain goſpel-precept. *This is his commandment*, for this command cuts off that vain pretence and plea of preſumption. What! ſuch a vile wretch as thou preſume to believe on Chriſt? ſays Satan. Yes, ſays the chriſtian, here is a command to me ſo to do, yea, a command from the higheſt ſovereignty, the contempt whereof I muſt anſwer at my utmoſt peril. 3. How the command of faith, and the command of love, are linked and knit together, as if the weight of our ſalvation hung equally and alike upon both; as without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, ſo without love it is impoſſible to pleaſe him alſo. Will no duty profit without faith? In like manner can we neither profit ourſelves nor others without love: As whatever is not of faith is ſin, ſo whatever we perform towards our brother, if we do it not out of love, we miſs our reward. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Lord! can we ever think this command of love ſmall and inconſiderable, when thou haſt joined the love of thine image with faith in thy dear Son?

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Obſerve here, The benefit of obedience to God's command. God dwelleth in us, and we in him. God's dwelling in us implies, 1. Right and property; what a man dwells in is his own. 2. Command and authority; the maſter and owner is the commander and diſpoſer of the houſe. It alſo, 3. Implies reſidence and continuance, ſettlement and fixedneſs of abode; there a man dwells where he conſtantly reſides. And our dwelling in God imports, 1. Reconciliation with God. Can two dwell together except they be agreed? 2. Affiance and truſt in him. 3. An upholding conſtant communion with him; it is one thing to run to God for refuge in a ſtorm, and another thing to make him our dwelling place at all times, and in all conditions; he that keepeth God's commandments thus dwelleth in God, and God in him; it follows, *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* *Learn*, That the Spirit of God, beſtowed upon us in his ſanctifying gifts and ſaving graces, is an evident ſign of God's dwelling in us, and we in him.

CHAP. IV.

BELOVED, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world.

Our apoſtle having in the laſt verſe of the foregoing chapter, mentioned the abiding of the Spirit of God in the ſouls of believers, leſt the chriſtians to whom he wrote ſhould be deceived by ſuch as might pretend to be acted by the Spirit, when indeed they were not; he comes in this chapter to caution and counſel all Chriſtians to take heed of being ſeduced by ſuch as ſhould pretend to be inſpired by the Holy Spirit of God, ſaying, *Believe not every ſpirit*; that is, every teacher who pretends to be inſpired, and every doctrine that lays claim to the doctrine of divine revelation: *But try the ſpirits*; that is, examine their doctrines by the rule of the word of God, and try from whom they come, whether from the Spirit of God, or Satan; for *many falſe prophets*, or impoſtors, and deceivers, are gone abroad into the world. *Learn* hence, 1. That men from the beginning of chriſtianity have, and ſtill do, falſely pretend to divine inſpiration. 2. That chriſtians ought not to believe every one that thus pretends to be divinely inſpired; for every one that has but enough of confidence, and little enough of conſcience, may pretend to come from God. 3. That neither are we to reject all that pretend to come from God; for when the Apoſtle bids us not believe every ſpirit, he ſuppoſes that we are to believe ſome; and when he bids us try the ſpirits whether they be of God, he ſuppoſes ſome to be of God, and that ſuch as are ſo, ought to be believed by us. 4. That there is ſome way to diſcern mere pretenders to inſpiration from thoſe who are truly and divinely inſpired; it were in vain to make the trial, if there were no way to diſcern the truth. 5. That it is the duty of all Chriſtians to examine the doctrines propounded to them, by the word of God; they having a judgment of diſcretion, though not a judgment of deciſion; a power to judge for themſelves, not to impoſe upon others; nor does this allowed liberty of every one judging for himſelf take away the neceſſity and uſe of our ſpiritual guides and teachers, or exempt us from a due ſubmiſſion and obedience thereunto, but, in concurrence with them, *we are to try the ſpirits whether they be of God.*

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is of God: 3 And every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is not of God. And this is that *ſpirit* of antichriſt, whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it in the world.

In theſe words our Apoſtle lays down a plain mark and rule of trial, how they might know a teacher that was acted and inſpired by the Spirit of God, from one that was not: ſuch a one as durſt truly and openly in the face of danger own and profeſs, teach and preach, Jeſus Chriſt in his perſon, nature, and offices, as the incarnate word, or Son of God, ſent from heaven, aſcribing virtue and efficacy to the ſacrifice of his death, and attributing to him alone the whole glory of a perfect Saviour; this doctrine is of the Spirit, and this Spirit is of God. But, ſuch teachers as will not hazard themſelves, but for fear of ſufferings and perſecution will deny either the Godhood or manhood of Chriſt, and diſown either his incarnation, death, or reſurrection; ſuch teachers, and ſuch doctrines, are not of God, but are the very ſpirit of antichriſt, which, ſays he, you have been foretold, ſhould come, and is now already in the world. *Learn* hence, That ſuch a teacher as diſowns either of the natures of Chriſt, or denies any of the offices of Chriſt, that either denies the divinity of his perſon, or the meritoriouſneſs of his ſatisfaction, is not of God, he is antichriſt, againſt Chriſt, and ſhall find Chriſt againſt him in the day that he appears before him.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Obſerve here, 1. A character and deſcription given of theſe Chriſtians to whom our Apoſtle writes. He tells them they were of a nobler deſcent, of a more excellent pedigree, and higher offſpring, than their falſe teachers; *Ye are of God*, regenerated by the Spirit of God, quickened by his renovation, led by his manuduction, acted by his influences, animated by his aſſiſtances: *Little children, ye are of God.* 2. What is affirmed of theſe Chriſtians, *Ye have overcome them*; that is, you have reſiſted their temptations, withſtood their ſeductions, and all their arts and endeavours to miſlead you, when others have been perverted by them. *Learn* hence, That by ſtedfaſtneſs in the doctrine of Chriſt, Chriſtians do overcome impoſtors and ſeducers, when unſtable ſouls are overcome by them. *Obſerve*, 3. The reaſon aſſigned why, and the means declared by which they overcome, namely, *becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*; that is, Chriſt, who by his Spirit and doctrine dwells in you, is greater, and more powerfully efficacious, than the ſpirit of error, which influences theſe vile impoſtors and ſeducers that are abroad in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.

Here we have, 1. The character given of theſe ſeducers and falſe teachers, *They are of the world*; that is, men of worldly minds and intereſts, *They ſpeak of the world*; that is, they preach a doctrine ſuitable to the luſts and inclinations of worldly men, who greedily hear them, and eaſily believe them; ordinarily our words are ſuch as we are; they who are of the world muſt needs ſpeak of the world, for they have nothing elſe to ſpeak of. The covetous man ſpeaks covetouſly, and the proud man proudly. 2. The character which the Apoſtle gives of himſelf and his fellow-apoſtles, *we are of God*; that is, taught and inſtructed by God. We have our miſſion and our meſſage from God, and he has given us his atteſtation, by opening the ears and hearts of thoſe that attend upon our miniſtry, to receive and embrace our doctrine; but ſuch as are not taught of God, reject both it and us. 3. The inference and concluſion which our Apoſtle draws from hence, namely, that by the doctrine and writings of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, the truth or falſehood of doctrines may and muſt be judged; for, ſays he, *Hereby we know the ſpirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.*

7 ¶ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is

of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love.

Our apoſtle here reſumes his exhortation to brotherly love, and urges and reinforces it with freſh arguments. 1. He aſſures us, that *love is of God*; that is, the fruit of his good Spirit in us; common love is his common gift, and holy love is his ſpecial grace. 2. It is an evidence that we have a right knowledge of God, both of his nature and will, and that we underſtand both what he is, and what he requires; he that has not the grace of love in his heart, has not the right knowledge of God in his head, whatever he may think of himſelf, or pretend to others. 3. The apoſtle aſſures us, That love is not only commanded, but exemplified by God himſelf: *God is love*. He had ſaid before, *love is of God*, as a quality; here he ſays, *God is love*; not as a mere quality, but his eſſence. *God is love*: 1. Eſſentially; love in the creature is an accidental quality, in God an eſſential property. 2. *God is love*, caſually, the efficient cauſe of whatever is loving or lovely in us: All our love to him, and one another, is but a reflection of his love to us. 3. *God is love*, objectively; he is, or ought to be, the ſupreme object of our love; and we muſt love him above all, or he accounts we love him not at all. 4. *God is love*, declaratively; all his works, as well as his word, are a declaration of his love to us, and ought to engage us to ſtedfaſtneſs in our love to him.

9 In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Obſerve, 1. That God doth not only beſtow love upon his people, but it is his good pleaſure to manifeſt that love. *Queſt.* Wherein has God manifeſted his love towards us? *Anſ.* 1. In our creation, making us out of nothing in ſuch a wonderful manner; our bodies curiouſly wrought as with a needle, our ſouls beautified with underſtanding, will, and judgment. 2. In our apoſtacy and degeneration, when no eye pitied us, and when we had no hearts to pity ourſelves, then were his bowels of love and compaſſion yearning towards us; then he ſaid unto us, *Live*, when he might have ſaid, *Die, and be damned*. 3. In our redemption, recovery and reſtitution, in ſending *his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*. *Obſerve*, 2. A threefold evidence of God's love to mankind in the work of redemption, that great and glorious work. 1. It was a wonderful inſtance of the love of God, that he ſhould be pleaſed to take our caſe into conſideration, and to concern himſelf for our happineſs; as nothing is more obliging to human nature than love, ſo no love obliges more than that which is exerciſed with great condeſcenſion after a provocation; ſuch was God's love to offending man. 2. That he ſhould deſign ſo great a benefit to us, as is here expreſſed, even life, *That we might live through him*. 3. That God was pleaſed to uſe ſuch a mean for the obtaining and procuring of this benefit for us. He ſent his own Son into the world, that we might live through him. Where *note*, 1. The perſon ſent, his own Son, and only begotten Son. 2. The perſons ſent to, the men of the world, who are ſpiritually dead, and judicially dead. 3. The manner of his being ſent, voluntarily and freely, not conſtrained by neceſſity, not prevailed upon by importunity, not obliged by benefit or kindneſs from us; but out of his mere pity and goodneſs towards us, he ſent him into a wicked world, and into an ungrateful world, that we might live through him. From the whole *learn*, That God's beſtowing his Son upon a loſt world, was a manifeſt evidence of his great and wonderful love unto them.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our ſins.

Herein is love: that is, the cleareſt, the fulleſt, the higheſt expreſſion of free and undeſerved love that ever the world was acquainted with. *Obſerve*, That the wiſdom and power of God did not act to the utmoſt of their efficacy in the work of creation; he could have framed a more glorious world had it pleaſed him; but the love of God in our redemption by Chriſt could not be expreſſed, or ſet forth, in an higher degree: When Almighty God would give the moſt excellent teſtimony of his favour to mankind, he gave them his eternal Son, the Son of his love: And verily the giving of heaven itſelf, with all its joys and glory, is not ſo full and perfect a demonſtration of the love of God, as the giving of his Son to die for us. *Obſerve* next, The priority of God's love to mankind; he loved us, not we him; he loved us antecedently to our loving him, and he loved us, that we might love him, when there was nothing in us either to deſerve, or to engage his love. *Obſerve* laſtly, The great intent and gracious deſign of God in ſending his Son; namely, *To be a propitiation for our ſins*; that is, to die as a ſacrifice for our ſins, and thereby atone divine diſpleaſure. *Herein is love*; that is, the triumph, the riches, and glory of divine love, that God gave Chriſt to die for us. "But is there love in nothing elſe but this?" Yes ſure, to have a being among rational creatures, therein is love; to have our life carried ſo many years in the hand of providence, like a burning taper, in the midſt of winds and ſtorms, and not burnt out, this is love; to have food and raiment convenient for us, relations and friends to comfort us, in all theſe is love, great love; but comparatively none at all to the love expreſſed in giving Chriſt to die for us; Herein was love, the flower of love.

11 Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another. 12 No man hath ſeen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.

Obſerve, 1. The genuine inference which our apoſtle draws from the doctrine laid down concerning the greatneſs of God's love to us; namely, "that ſeeing God ſo loved us, we ſhould love one another, and be like him according to our meaſure, and in our degree." 2. The apoſtle's argument to provoke us hereunto; he tells us, That God himſelf is to be loved by us for his aſtoniſhing love unto us: But as God is not to be ſeen in his eſſence, but in man his image, ſo muſt we love God in man, his creature, made after his own image and likeneſs: And if we love the holy image of God in each other, it is an evidence that God dwelleth in us, and we in him; namely, by the inhabitation of his holy Spirit, which being a Spirit of love in us, draws forth our love towards himſelf, and one towards another. And further he aſſures us, That this will be a ſign *that love is perfect in us*; namely, that this grace is, in its vigour and perfection, in our ſouls, ſincere and entire, having all its eſſential parts, though it be not abſolutely perfect in all degrees. *Note*, That perfection here is not oppoſed to imperfection, but to inſincerity. Our love is then ſaid to be perfected, when it is conſiderably heightened and improved. Bleſſed be God! the hour is coming when this, and all other graces, ſhall be perfected, when this ſpark of love ſhall be blown up into a ſeraphic flame. Laſtly, The rule which our apoſtle lays down, whereby we may know aſſuredly, that God dwelleth in us, and we in him; namely, *If he has given us his Spirit*, which is a ſpirit of holy love. *Learn* thence, That the holy Spirit, (not in its extraordinary gifts, which are long ſince ceaſed) but in its ſanctifying operations and gracious fruits (of which ſincere love is the firſt and chief) is an undoubted evidence of God's dwelling in us by a ſpecial inhabitation, and of our dwelling in him; that is, reſting in his love and favour, and under his protection and care.

14 And we have ſeen and do teſtify that the Father ſent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15 Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "Though no man hath ſeen God at any time, yet we apoſtles, who preach the doctrine of faith unto you, and preſs the duty of love upon you, have ſeen with our bodily eyes the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and do teſtify, that God the Father glorified his love, by ſending his Son to be the Saviour of a periſhing world; not of Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo. And we further declare, That whoſoever believing this our teſtimony ſhall confeſs with his mouth, and believe in his heart, that this Jeſus, whom we preach, is the Son of God, and ſhall evidence the truth of his faith by the ſincerity of his love, and other good fruits, it is certain that God dwelleth in him by his Spirit and he dwelleth in God by repeated acts of love. And finally, we apoſtles well knowing, and firmly believing the love, the wonderful great love, which God hath manifeſted towards us, in and through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, we again affirm and conclude, that *God is love.* Love originally, the fountain from whence all love flows. Love efficiently, the producing cauſe of all love in the hearts of our people. Love ſubjectively, a God full of love and mercy, of goodneſs and pity towards his creatures. Love objectively, he is deſervedly the firſt and chief object of our love, as he is the firſt and chief good. Love declaratively, both his word and works declare the purpoſes of his love unto us, and give demonſtrations of innumerable inſtances of his beneficence towards us. But eſpecially God is love eſſentially. Love in us is an adventitious and accidental quality; in God it is an eſſential property, it is his very eſſence and nature, inſeparable from his being; he can as ſoon ceaſe to *be*, as ceaſe to *love*. And as *God is love*, ſo we again affirm that he that *dwelleth* in *love*, that is, he who has love, as the prevailing habit in his heart, and as the governing principle of his life, *dwelleth*, by communion, *in God*, as the eye dwells in the light, and as one friend by love dwells in another; *and God*, by his Spirit of love, *dwelleth in him*.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment: becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love caſteth out fear: becauſe fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Still our apoſtle proceeds by way of argument to enforce upon us the obligation of our duty to love one another; he aſſures us here, that if our love *be made perfect*, that is, heightened and improved by an exact correſponding with the divine pattern and precept; if we love one another in obedience to God's command, and in conformity to Chriſt's example, it will give us boldneſs in the day of judgment, and we may think and ſpeak of, we may expect and look for, the approach of that day without fear and conſternation of mind; the reaſon is added, becauſe *as Chriſt was, ſo are we in the world:* that is, as he was full of holineſs and purity, of love and charity, ſo have we endeavoured to be in imitation of his example, according to our meaſure, in ſome proportion and degree. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſuch as are ſincerely gracious, and do excel in the grace of love, are in the world in ſome ſort as Chriſt was in the world; ſuch as walk in love, walk as Chriſt walked. 2. That ſuch as are in the world, as Chriſt was in the world, ſhall have boldneſs when Chriſt comes to judgment, and need not fear the condemnation of that dreadful day; the reaſon of this freedom from the fear of wrath is added, verſe 18, *There is no fear in love*; that is, no ſlaviſh or diſtruſtful fear, whereby we queſtion the favour of God; but only a filial and reverential fear, whereby we ſtand in awe of offending him as a Father: *But perfect love caſteth out fear*; that is, either the actings of our perfect love to God, or the apprehenſions of God's perfect love towards us, do caſt out all that fear which has torment in it. Yet *note*, That although perfect love caſteth out tormenting fear, it calls in obeying fear, Eccl. xii. 13. *Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man*; an awful fear of God is all duty, and every grace. *Note* alſo, The true reaſon of our diſquieting and tormenting fear is the imperfection and weakneſs of our love; fear may ſtand with faith and love, but not with perfect faith, nor perfect love: *He that feareth is not made perfect in love*, and becauſe he is not made perfect in love, therefore he feareth. Bleſſed be God, as there will be no torment, ſo no fear, in heaven; that is, no tormenting fear; yet there is a fear of reverence, which will undoubtedly remain with glorified ſaints in heaven; they ſhall have an everlaſting awe of the majeſty and holineſs of God eternally fixed upon their hearts and ſpirits, even in the kingdom of glory in heaven, as well as in the kingdom of grace here on earth; the ſaints *ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*; Lord, haſten the perfecting of thy grace in us, particularly the perfection of our love, that perfect love may caſt out tormenting fear, and cheriſh ſuch a reverential fear as will both prepare us for heaven, and accompany us in heaven, to all eternity.

19 We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.

There is a double reading of theſe words according to the original: 1. They may be read, let us love him becauſe he firſt loved us, by way of motive, denoting, that believers have great reaſon to love God with their choiceſt and higheſt affections, for as much as he has loved them, and firſt loved them. 2. They are here read by way of cauſalty, we do love him, becauſe he firſt loved us; intimating, that God's love to us is the root and ſpring of our love to him, and to one another; all our love to ſaints is the effect of his preventing love to us, and but a reflection of thoſe beams of love which God has firſt caſt upon us; if God's love to us had been a mere dependent conſequence of our love to him, how uncertain ſhould we be of its continuance? But his love to us was the antecedent cauſe of our love to him; we therefore love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.

20 If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?

Our Apoſtle in theſe words prevents an objection. Some might be ready to ſay, "Who is it that doth not love God? is there any that live who doth not love him?" The Apoſtle replies, That whoſoever ſays he loves God, and yet hateth his brother, is plainly a liar; for it is impoſſible truly to love God, and not to do what God commands; and if we do not exerciſe love to our brethren, whom we daily ſee and converſe with, how can it be imagined that we love God, whom we never ſaw? *Learn* hence, firſt, That as God is infinitely above us, ſo he needeth not our love, but it is wonderful condeſcenſion in God to give us leave to love him, and to ſuffer himſelf to be embraced by thoſe arms which have embraced ſin and luſt before him. 2. That though God needs not us, or our love, yet we need him, and ſtand in need of one another, and for that reaſon muſt and ought to love each other. 3. That if we love not God's viſible image, it is certain we never loved the inviſible God; if when we have our chriſtian brethren in our daily view, and the objects of our ſenſes are their miſeries and wants, and yet we ſhut up the bowels of compaſſion from them, can we, or dare we, pretend at the ſame time to love God whom we have not ſeen, and who is only preſent to our minds by raiſed expectations; as the ſight of our brother is a ſtrong inducement to love him, ſo the not loving him at ſight, is a ſtrong argument that we love not God himſelf.

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother alſo.

This commandment; this great and chief commandment above the reſt, this ſummary and comprehenſive commandment, including all the reſt, namely, to love God above all for his own ſake, and to love our brother as ourſelves, for God's ſake; this command, ſo full of wiſdom, ſo agreeable to right reaſon, and ſo much our duty and intereſt to comply with, have we received from God; and it is moſt certain that we love him not, if we keep it not; *This commandment have we from God, that he who loveth God, loveth his brother alſo. Learn* thence, 1. That the great God, by his gracious command, requires that we love him, and place the ſupremacy of our love upon him. 2. That as God requires us to love him above ourſelves, ſo does he oblige us, by virtue of his command, to love our brother as ourſelves; as ſincerely, though not ſo intenſely, as ourſelves. 3. That the ſame commandment that requires us to love God, requires love to our brethren alſo; God interprets the neglect of our duty to our brother, as a neglect of our obligation to ourſelf.

CHAP. V.

WHoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him.

Obſerve here, 1. The grand propoſition laid down as the object of our faith, namely, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*; that is, that Jeſus of Nazareth, who was born with, and lived amongſt the Jews, was the Saviour of the world, the perſon whom Moſes and the prophets foretold to be the Meſſiah. 2. The duty required of us, namely to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt; that is, not hiſtorically only, to aſſent that Jeſus is the predicted and promiſed Meſſiah, but to expreſs the truth of that faith in a ſuitable converſation. 3. How evidential ſuch a faith is of our regeneration; whoſoever thus believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God; faith in Chriſt Jeſus, as the great King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his church, accompanied with an holy life, is a ſure mark and undoubted evidence of our new birth. 4. The affection which every perſon that is born of God bears unto God, *He loveth him that begat*; this is the ingratiating and endearing quality; it is this that commends both our perſons and performances to God's acceptation; the ſervice of love is therefore moſt acceptable, becauſe moſt honourable to God, and moſt durable and laſting from us; the obedience of love will be laſting. 5. What is the genuine effect, and natural product of this love to God, namely, a ſincere affection to all the children of God: every chriſtian that ſincerely loves God, certainly loves the image of God in his ſaints and children; he that loves the father for his own ſake, cannot but love the child for the father's ſake, if like him; and the more like him, the more he loves him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

Obſerve here, That the ſincerity of our love to the children of God is beſt diſcovered by our love to God, and obedience to his commands. *Queſt.* 1. What kind of love is required towards the children of God? *Anſ.* A love of eſteem, a love of deſire, a love of delight, and a love of ſervice and beneficence. *Queſt.* 2. What kind of obedience towards God is that which ſprings from love? *Anſ.* It is uniform and univerſal; love regardeth the whole law in all its injunctions and prohibitions, and ſtudieth to pleaſe the lawgiver; it is pleaſant and delightful, not a melancholy taſk, but a pleaſing exerciſe; it is accurate and exact, it produces a ſevere circumſpection over our ways, that nothing be done or allowed by us that is diſpleaſing to the divine eye; and it is conſtant and perſevering; that motion which is cauſed by outward poiſes will ceaſe when the weights are down, but that which proceeds from an inward principle, or life, is continual; and ſuch a principle is the love of God planted in the chriſtian's breaſt.

3 ¶ For this is the love of God, that we keep his cammandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Our apoſtle in theſe words gives a threefold deſcription of a ſincere chriſtian. He deſcribes him, 1. By his inward affection to God and Chriſt, and that is love; this is ſhed abroad in his heart. 2. By the action which flows from this affection, namely, obedience to God in keeping his commandments. 3. By the diſpoſition and inclination from which that obedience doth proceed and flow, namely, a delight and cheerfulneſs in the doing of our duty. *His commandments are not grievous*; that is, they have nothing in them heavy or burdenſome, but every thing that may render them at once both our duty and delight. *Learn* hence, 1. That obedience is the moſt natural and neceſſary product of love; where love is the governing principle, it rules all the inclinations of the heart and actions of the life. 2. That love makes our obedience to God cheerful and conſtant, delightful and laſting. Love is ſeated in the will, and that obedience which proceeds from it is out of choice, and purely voluntary. No commandment is grievous that is performed from love, and it makes obedience alſo conſtant. That which is forced from impreſſions of fear is unſtedfaſt, but that which flows from delight is laſting. *Learn* hence, That the ſervice of Chriſt is a very gracious, a moſt deſirable and delightful ſervice, not to ſinners, whoſe minds the god of this world has blinded, whoſe conſciences are cauterized, who have not only grieved, but quenched the Holy Spirit of God. But, 1. It is not grievous in itſelf. 2. Nor is it grievous to a regenerate perſon; a ſound eye never complains of light, but a ſore eye is uneaſy under it. The commands of Chriſt cannot be grievous, becauſe they exact things of us which are agreeable to our reaſon, ſuitable to our natures, conſonant to our rational deſires. We cannot give an inſtance of any one of the commands of Chriſt which is in itſelf grievous; that command of his, To do to others as we would have others do by us, is a dictate of nature as well as the law of Chriſt.

4 For whatſoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

Two things are here obſervable, namely, a propoſition, and the explication of that propoſition. *Obſerve*, 1. The propoſition, *Whoſoever is born of God overcometh the world*. Every regenerate chriſtian is a victorious chriſtian, he is a conqueror, yea, the greateſt of conquerors, he conquers the whole world. 2. The expoſition of this propoſition, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*. It is a ſpiritual conqueſt, and ſpiritually obtained, even by faith. *Note* here, 1. That the world is a chriſtian's grand enemy. A conqueſt ſuppoſes a combat, and a combat ſuppoſes an enemy. 2. That every regenerate chriſtian is a victorious conqueror over this enemy. The chriſtian is a ſoldier as ſoon as he is a believer, and he is a conqueror as ſoon as he is a ſoldier. *This is the victory*; he hath his enemy under his feet, even whilſt he is in the fight. 3. That the ſpecial weapon by which the chriſtian conquers the world, and his ſpiritual enemies, is his faith. Many warriors have done great things in conquering kingdoms, but this is a greater conqueſt than all theirs; their conqueſt was but poor and partial, only of ſome ſmall parts of earth, but the chriſtian's conqueſt is univerſal; thoſe conquerors whilſt they prevailed abroad were ſlaves at home; whilſt they were lords of nations, they were vaſſals to their own luſts; but theſe conquerors, which the text ſpeaks of, begin their victories at home, and enlarge their triumphs over all enemies abroad.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God? 6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.

Our apoſtle having ſpoken of the uſefulneſs of faith in the former verſe, *that it overcometh the world*, next diſcovers the object of this faith, which is this propoſition, that *Jeſus is the Son of God*. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* That faith which overcomes the world, is faith in the divinity and ſonſhip of Jeſus Chriſt. We overcome the world by believing in him that overcame it, even Jeſus Chriſt, who hath purchaſed, promiſed, and prepared a better world than what we do ſee, or can ſee, with our bodily eyes, and has made us heirs of eternal glory. *Obſerve* next, The argument by which the apoſtle proves that Jeſus is the Son of God, the true Meſſias and the Saviour of mankind, namely, becauſe he *came by water and blood*; that is, ſay ſome, by the teſtimony given him when he was in the water, at his baptiſm, both by John the Baptiſt, and the voice from heaven; he came by his Spirit, ſay others, *as by water*, to ſanctify thoſe that believe in him; and by his blood to make a full atonement for them; an admirable ſymbol of both, which was the flowing of water and blood both out of Chriſt's ſide, when he hung upon the croſs. It is a ſweet meditation that Chriſt comes by water as well as blood, by way of ſanctification as well as by way of juſtification; his death not only diſcharges from guilt, but cleanſes alſo from pollution and filth; bleſſed be God there is a fountain opened in the ſide of our Saviour for ſin, and for uncleanneſs, to waſh in, and to be purged from. Sanctification is as great, and in ſome reſpects a greater privilege than juſtification; for juſtification frees us only from miſery and puniſhment, but ſanctification frees us from ſin, which is worſe than puniſhment. Again, real perfections are above relative perfections; now juſtification by Chriſt's blood is only a relative perfection, it makes us ſtand in a new relation to the law, by which before we ſtood guilty and condemned; but ſanctification by the Spirit of Chriſt, ſignified here, and ſet forth elſewhere frequently, by water, is a real moral perfection, it changes the heart and nature, and makes us like unto God, yea, like unto him in his higheſt perfection, which is that of holineſs. Come then, O bleſſed Redeemer, by water and blood into our ſouls, with thy renewing grace and ſanctifying Spirit, to purge our conſciences from dead works, and to deliver us not only from the danger, but from the dominion of our ſins. *And it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.* Some by the Spirit's bearing witneſs underſtand the teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gave to Chriſt here upon earth, as touching the truth of his doctrine, the reality of his miracles, and the certainty of his miſſion; others underſtand by it the Spirit's teſtimony in the holy Scriptures, and in the conſciences of believers, that Jeſus Chriſt is a divine perſon, and came by water and blood, both to ſave us at once from the wrath of God, and the rage of our luſts. *Learn* thence, That the holy Spirit of God ſpeaking in the Scriptures, and breathing in the conſciences of believers, bears witneſs to their ſoul, that Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave them by the water of ſanctification, as well as with and by the blood of redemption; and that the Spirit thus witneſſing is a Spirit of truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one.

That is, "There are three in heaven which do bear record to this truth here upon earth, namely, that Jeſus *is the Chriſt*; that is to ſay, the three perſons in the holy Trinity, *the Father*, *the Word*, *and the Holy Ghoſt*; the Father bore witneſs both at Chriſt's baptiſm and transfiguration alſo, when with an audible voice he declared, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* The word bore record of himſelf, affirming frequently, plainly, and directly, that he was the Son of God, and making it manifeſt, by his doctrine and miracles, that he came from the Father; the Spirit bore witneſs to this, partly by deſcending on Chriſt at his baptiſm in the ſhape of a dove, and partly by deſcending on his apoſtles in the feaſt of Pentecoſt in the figure of fiery tongues." Acts ii. *Learn* hence, 1. That it was no eaſy matter to believe the truth of our Saviour's miſſion and miracles, and that Jeſus Chriſt was the eſſential and natural Son of God. Though by the mouth of two or three witneſſes every truth is eſtabliſhed, yet in this and the next verſe we have no leſs than ſix witneſſes produced to prove our Jeſus to be the Son of God, three heavenly, and three earthly witneſſes. It is added, *theſe three are one*, one in teſtimony, ſay the adverſaries of the Trinity, but not one in eſſence. One in both, ſay we, as one in teſtimony, ſo one in eſſence. But ſuppoſe that we ſhould grant that the oneneſs ſpoken of in the text is to be expounded of conſent in teſtimony, agreement, and will, principally, yet will it prove the Godhead of Chriſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt; for in free agents, where there is the ſame will, there is the ſame nature: With men it is the ſame ſpecifical nature; but with God, becauſe there is but one only God, therefore it muſt be the ſame numerical nature. 2. That there are three perſons, yet but one God, that do bear witneſs to the divinity of Chriſt, and of the plenteous redemption wrought by him.

8 And there are three that bear witneſs in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and theſe three agree in one.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "As there are three in heaven who have given us their teſtimony to the divinity of Chriſt and his doctrine here on earth, ſo there are three witneſſes here below, teſtifying the ſame thing, namely, *the Spirit*, in the preaching of the goſpel, and in the ſouls of believers; *the water*, or ſacrament of baptiſm, wherein we are baptiſed in the name of the Son, as well as of the Father; *and the blood*, that is, the death of Chriſt, and the ſufferings of thoſe who have ſealed this truth with their blood; all theſe do give teſtimony on earth to Chriſt's divinity from heaven." *Note* here, That though much of theſe two verſes be left out in many ancient copies of the Bible, as the learned Dr Hammond takes notice, yet in copies more ancient they are found, and we have more reaſon to believe that the Arians left them out, than that the orthodox put them in, other texts that aſſert the truth being ſo abuſed. It has been the common courſe of heretics to diſown the authority of ſuch texts as do gall and pinch them. *Note* farther, That the doctrine of the bleſſed Trinity ſtands built upon holy Scripture, as a firm baſis, and impregnable rock, and the doctrine of the Anti-Trinitarians falls to the ground like Dagon before the ark. Lord, let our underſtandings evermore ſtoop and yield to this divine revelation, though it contain ſuch a doctrine as doth exceed the comprehenſion of human reaſon.

9 ¶ If we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater: for this is the witneſs of God which he hath teſtified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Our apoſtle's argument in theſe words is taken from the leſs to the greater, thus: "If, ſays he, for the believing of any thing, it be ordinarily thought ſufficient to have the teſtimony of two or three credible men, then ſurely the teſtimony of the faithful and infallible God, given from heaven, is much more worthy of belief; but the teſtimony given concerning Chriſt, that he is verily the Son of God, is evidently the teſtimony of the faithful God that cannot lie; therefore he that, after all the aſſurance which God has given of his Son's being a true and real Saviour, ſhall yet reject and diſown him as ſuch, does in effect accuſe God of falſhood, and make him a liar, becauſe he believes not the record which God has given of his Son; whereas the perſon that believes on Chriſt as the Son of God, and the true Meſſiah, is ſafe, having the teſtimony of God the Father without him, and the teſtimony of the Holy Spirit within him, as the Spirit of holineſs, wiſdom, and power;" *Learn* hence, 1. That every teſtimony which God gives us is infallibly true. 2. That the teſtimony which God has given us concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt being the true and promiſed Meſſiah, has had its confirmation abundantly above and beyond other teſtimonies. 3. Therefore ſuch as do not believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as the Saviour of the world, they diſbelieve the moſt undoubted and infallible teſtimony of God, and in his account make him a liar. Lord! what a bold, preſumptuous, and daring ſin is unbelief? It gives God the lie, and makes the God of truth a liar.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to
us eternal life: and this life is in his Son. 12 He
that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the
Son of God hath not life.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "The ſum of God's teſtimony recorded in the goſpel is this, concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt, namely, that God for his ſake has made a free deed of gift of pardon and ſalvation to the world, aſſuring them of grace here, and eternal life hereafter, upon condition of their believing acceptance, that is, of faith and obedience; and accordingly he that thus has Chriſt, he that accepts the merit of his blood, and ſubmits to the authority of his law, *hath eternal life*; that is, he has an undoubted right unto it, and aſſurance of it, yea, he has it already initially, and in the firſt-fruits; but he that, either by unbelief or diſobedience, refuſes Chriſt, *ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* *Learn* hence, 1. That eternal life is the gift of God. 2. That this gift of eternal life is laid up for us in his Son. 3. That upon our having or not having union with and intereſt in the Son, depends our having or not having eternal life.

13 Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Our apoſtle entering now upon the concluſion of his excellent epiſtle, acquaints them with his deſign and end in the writing of it, namely, 1. That they might know they had eternal life, that is, both a right and title to eternal life, and might alſo attain to the knowledge and aſſurance of it. *Learn* thence, That believers may in this life, without the help of extraordinary revelation, attain to a knowledge and well-grounded aſſurance of life eternal. There is a threefold knowledge; *notional*, which is barely the work of the underſtanding; *experimental*, which is ſeated in the heart, and viſible in the life: *fiducial*, when a perſon is aſcertained and aſſured of what he knows: Thus here, *theſe things I write*, that ye may know that ye know, that is, be aſſured that ye know; a chriſtian may believe, and yet not be aſſured that he does believe; many have a vital act which have not a fiducial act of faith; many have a faith of adherence that want a faith of evidence: Faith and aſſurance in a ſaint; differ as much as reaſon and learning in a man; every man has reaſon, but every man that has reaſon has not learning, which is the improvement of reaſon; thus every good man has faith, but every one that has faith has not aſſurance, which is the ſpecial fruit of faith. This therefore was the firſt deſign and end of St John's writing, that they might know they did believe; the ſecond follows, that thoſe *that did believe, might believe on the name of the Son of God*; the meaning is, that they might more firmly believe, be more rooted, grounded, ſettled, and confirmed in the faith, ſo as to remain unſhaken by all the ſtorms of perſecution that might fall upon them; this ſeems to be the ſenſe of the apoſtle when he exhorts *believers to believe*. The ſtrongeſt believers may be exhorted to ſtrengthen their faith, and to perſevere in the faith, which they are ſtrengthened and eſtabliſhed in.

14 ¶ And this is the confidence that we have in
him, that if we aſk any thing according to his will,
he heareth us. 5 And if we know that he hear us,
whatſoever we aſk, we know that we have the peti-
tions that we deſired of him.

To enforce the foregoing exhortation to believers, namely, to be confirmed and conſtant in the faith, he ſhews them here what a ſpecial advantage believers have above other perſons, namely, confidence in all their approaches to God; and a full aſſurance, 1. In general, that whatever they aſk in faith according to his will, they ſhall obtain. 2. In particular, that our ſeveral petitions which we preſent unto God, ſhall in his own time, in his own way, and after his own manner, be granted by him, provided our perſons and our prayers be qualified according to the goſpel for the receiving of his promiſe. *Learn*, 1. That through our intereſt in Chriſt, and for the ſake of his meritorious ſatisfaction and prevailing interceſſion, our prayers are certainly heard by God, and we ſhall aſſuredly have what God has promiſed to give, and we are fit to receive. God indeed does not always, nay, not often, come with an anſwer of prayer at our time, but he never ſtays a moment beyond his own time. 2. That in all the prayers we preſent and put up to God, a ſpecial eye and regard muſt be had to the will of God, if we expect to be heard and anſwered. The will of God is the rule, not only of things to be done by us, but alſo of thoſe things which we crave of God to do for us. The will of God under a threefold revelation is the rule and matter of prayer. 1. The will of God in his commands; whatever God hath required us to do, we may pray for power that we may do. 2. The will of God in his promiſes; what God hath ſaid he will give, we may pray that we may receive. 3. The will of God in propheſies; what God hath foretold ſhall come to paſs, we may and ought to pray that it may come to paſs. The prayer of man gives birth to the prophecies of God, yea, and to the promiſes of God too. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *I will be enquired of, to do it for them.* Though God be a ſure paymaſter, yet he expects that we ſhould put his bond in ſuit before he pays. *Learn*, 3. That a prayer made according to God's will, ſhall certainly be granted according to our will. When we pray for any thing in obedience to God's will, and with ſubmiſſion to his will, *we know that we have the petitions that we aſk of him.*

16 If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin *which is*
not unto death, he ſhall aſk, and he ſhall give him
life for them that ſin not unto death. There is a ſin
unto death: I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it.
17 All unrighteouſneſs is ſin: and there is a ſin not
unto death.

Our apoſtle informed us in the foregoing verſe of the comfort which believers have in their prayers for themſelves, all that is requeſted by them is granted by God; now in the verſe before us he relates the benefit which others receive by their prayers as well as themſelves, aſſuring them, that if any did pray for an offending brother, they ſhould be heard in what they deſired, unleſs the perſon they prayed for had ſinned the unpardonable ſin, the *ſin unto death*, by which we are to underſtand apoſtacy from the chriſtian religion unto idolatry, as appears from the following words, *Keep yourſelves from idols*, which caution has no manner of dependence upon what went before, unleſs we underſtand the *ſin unto death* in this ſenſe; or if (with others) we call it *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, it comes to the ſame; for what is that ſin but a renouncing of chriſtianity, denying the truth of the chriſtian faith, after illumination and conviction by the Holy Ghoſt, and maliciouſly perſecuting the ſincere profeſſors of it? Here *note*, 1. That a believer is not to hide his eyes from obſerving, but may and ought to take notice of the ſins and miſcarriages of his brethren: *If a man ſee his brother ſin*, which he cannot do if he neglect to obſerve him. 2. That a believer diſcerning and obſerving the ſin of his brother, may and ought to pray for him. *Let him aſk*, that is, importune God on his behalf. 3. That a believer's prayers may prevail with God for us, when our own prayers will not prevail for ourſelves. *Let him aſk, and he ſhall give him life*, temporal life at leaſt, and upon his repentance and faith eternal life alſo. 4. That the ſtate of ſome wicked men may be ſuch, that were it certainly known, it might be a chriſtian's duty to ceaſe praying for them. *There is a ſin unto death*, that is, which doth not only deſerve death, as all ſin doth, and beſpeak a perſon in a ſtate of death, but a ſin that argues a perſon to be twice dead, dead in reſpect of unregeneracy, and dead in reſpect of wilful and ſinful apoſtacy. *I do not ſay, that he ſhall pray for it*, that is, for the perſon guilty of it, ſeeing God never intends to forgive it. Lord! how deplorable is the condition of thoſe whoſe ſins are paſt prayers, who give over praying for themſelves, and others are ſtopt from praying for them! How ſad is it, when the Lord ſhuts up the hearts of any of his from praying for us! It ſhews the ſin of that man to be apprehended as being the ſin unto death, when the faithful ceaſe praying for him. Yet, 5. The apoſtle doth not here explicitly and ſimply forbid praying for ſuch wretched perſons, but only ſays, *I do not ſay that ye ſhall pray for them*; that is, I cannot give you any encouragement to pray for ſuch, nor dare I promiſe you any good ſucceſs in praying for them who have ſinned unto death. *I do not ſay*; that is, I give you no warrant, I lay you under no command, I can give you no promiſe, that your prayers for ſuch ſhall be heard and anſwered.

18 We know that whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

That is, we are well aſſured that ſincere chriſtians, who are begotten and born of God, do not commit this ſin unto death, namely, apoſtacy from chriſtianity to the heathen idolatry: *But he keepeth himſelf, and the wicked one toucheth him not*; that is, he preſerveth himſelf from the contagion of idolatry, into which the devil was ſo buſy to ſeduce a great part of mankind. It may be further added, that *he that is born of God*, ſo far as he partaketh of the divine nature, *ſinneth not*; that is, ſuffers not any ſin to have dominion over him, but takes care to preſerve himſelf, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace, from Satan's deadly wound. *He toucheth him not*; that is, doth not touch him ſo as to leave an impreſſion of his deviliſh ſpirit upon him. *Non tangit tactu qualitativo, vel tactu lethali et mortifero*; "He ſhall not mortally touch them, to make them ſin unto death."

19 *And* we know that we are of God,—

That is, do belong to the true God, and are worſhippers of him; we are guided by his Spirit, we are obedient to his laws, we pleaſe him on earth, and do hope to enjoy him in heaven.

—And the whole world lieth in wickedneſs.

That is, the far greater part of the world are under the dominion of that wicked one being ſunk into idolatry, and become worſhippers of the devil, continuing in the midſt of their impurity and malignity, and wholly ſet upon miſchief and wickedneſs. See here the darkneſs and horror of an unregenerate and unconverted ſtate. Perſons in it are under the dominion of Satan, that wicked one. But behold the bleſſed change that chriſtianity makes, not in the profeſſion, but in the practice of it, it delivers from the power of darkneſs, and from the power of Satan, the prince of darkneſs, and tranſlates us into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding that we may know him that is true. And we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children keep yourſelves from idols. Amen.

As if the apoſtle had ſaid, "We chriſtians are better taught by our religion, to acknowledge and worſhip the only true God by his Son Jeſus Chriſt our only Mediator, and therefore exhort you to keep from idols;" intimating hereby, that the worſhipping of any other beſides this only true God, and by any other mediator, beſides Jeſus Chriſt, is idolatry. Or the words may be ſenſed thus: "We are ſure that the Son of God is come, and that Chriſt is he, who by his doctrine and Spirit hath enlightened us to know the true and living God, whilſt the greateſt part of the world worſhip falſe gods, yea, adore the devil himſelf." And farther, *We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, we are by faith implanted into Jeſus Chriſt, who is the author, purchaſer, and diſpoſer of eternal life, and therefore is the true God. This text, which proves undeniably the divinity of Chriſt, the Socinians pervert by applying theſe words, *this is the the true God*, not to Chriſt, but to God the Father. But this makes the apoſtle guilty of a grand tautology, by ſaying, "The true God is the true God." Beſides, it is here ſaid of the ſame perſon that he is the true God, and eternal life. Now, eternal life is thrice in this very chapter attributed to Jeſus Chriſt, as the author and diſpenſer of it, ver. 11, 12, 13. If then Chriſt be meant by *eternal life*, he muſt be alſo meant by *the true God*, for they are ſpoken of together when the apoſtle ſays, *This is the true God and eternal life.* Laſtly, our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle, with this cautionary direction, *Little children keep yourſelves from idols.* As if he had ſaid, "My advice to you is as that of a father to his own children, having received by the goſpel the knowledge of the true God, keep yourſelves from idols, or falſe gods of the heathen, among whom ye live; abandon all idolatry, ſuperſtition, ſacrificing to idols, frequenting idol-feaſts, and all idolatrous communion, theſe things being inconſiſtent with the worſhip of the true God, and real chriſtianity. *Little children, keep yourſelves from idols. Amen.*

THE
SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
St. JOHN.

That St. John, the apoſtle and diſciple of our Saviour who wrote the firſt, did alſo write this ſecond epiſtle, ſeems very evident from the exact agreement of ſeveral paſſages in this with the former epiſtle, even word for word, and accordingly it has been agreed, that the ſame perſon was the author of both epiſtles.

But as touching the perſon to whom it was wrote, there have been different opinions: Some think that it was a church whom he directs it to under the title of the Elect Lady; *and that ſome Jewiſh church, and particularly the church of Jeruſalem, the mother of all, and from whence came forth the word to all other churches; the reaſon upon which this conjecture is grounded, is, becauſe the reſt of the epiſtles, called catholic, were written to the Jews (excepting that to Gaius) and therefore probably this was written to ſome Jewiſh church; and becauſe all the Jewiſh churches received their ſpiritual things from the church of Jeruſalem, ſhe may therefore (ſay ſome) be fitly ſtyled the* Lady, *as ſhe was the mother of all other churches. Others conceive this epiſtle to be wrote to a particular perſon, ſome eminent and religious matron, of a great eſtate, and a great reliever and ſupporter of the members of the church in her days. Which opinion of theſe two has the greater probability, is a matter of no great importance: Let us rather attend to the ſubject-matter of this divine epiſtle, which ſpeaks thus:*

THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth; 2 For the truth's ſake which dwelleth in us, and ſhall be with us for ever. 3 Grace *be* with you, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon writing and directing this epiſtle, St. John, ſtyling him *the elder*, partly with reſpect to his age, he being, as it is thought, the only perſon at that time living upon the earth, who bore the name of *an apoſtle*; and partly with reſpect to his office in the church; the word *elder* being a name of honour and dignity, we find both St. Peter elſewhere, and St. John here, making uſe of it. 2. The perſon to whom this epiſtle is directed, *The elect lady, and her children*; either ſome particular church, with its religious members, according to ſome; or ſome honourable perſon of eminent piety and uſefulneſs in the church, according to others; *and to her children*, who had been religiouſly educated by her. 3. The ſolemn profeſſion which he makes of the ſincerity of his love to herſelf and her children, together with the ground and attractive cauſe of that his cordial affection to her and hers, *Whom I love in the truth, and for the truth's ſake. Mark*, St. John here loved the lady for the truth's ſake, but how many in our days love the truth for the lady's ſake? I mean for ſiniſter ends, and bye reſpects. It is a bleſſed thing when a religion, and the grace of God ſhining in the lives of chriſtians, is the ſpecial loadſtone of our love and affection towards them: *The elder to the elect lady, whom I love in the truth.* She had embraced the truth of the goſpel, and he was confidently perſuaded that ſhe would continue in the profeſſion and practice of it for ever. *Obſerve*, 4. The ſalutation ſent to her and her children; namely, increaſe of grace, and an abundance of mercy and peace from God the Father, and Chriſt the Redeemer; earneſtly wiſhing, that they may continue ſtedfaſt in the profeſſion of the truth, and in the exerciſe of love one to another, *Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of the Father,* &c.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children

walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſon rejoicing, St. John the apoſtle and miniſter of Chriſt Jeſus, *I rejoiced greatly.* 2. The mercy rejoiced in, their *walking in the truth.* It was not their ſpeculative knowledge of the truth, and their taking upon them a bare profeſſion of chriſtianity, that he rejoiced in, but their *walking in the truth*, and framing their converſation according to the commandment which they had received from the Father. Chriſtianity is not a ſpeculative ſcience, but a practical art of holy living; and the moſt exalted knowledge is inſufficient to ſalvation, without a ſuitable and correſpondent practice; therefore ſays St. John here, *I rejoiced greatly* to find of thy children, not barely *profeſſing of the truth*, but *walking in the truth.* 3. The perſons rejoiced for, or in behalf of, the youth in that church or family, to which he now wrote, *I rejoiced to find thy children walking in the truth:* the hopes which the holy apoſtle had of a ſucceſſion of ſaints, and that the children in his time would walk in their religious parents footſteps, was matter of ſingular joy and rejoicing to the bleſſed apoſtle. Yet, 4. With what caution, reſtriction, and limitation, our apoſtle ſpeaks. *I rejoiced greatly to find of thy children*; that is, ſome of them, perhaps many of them, it is to be feared not all of them; to have ſeen all was no doubt the apoſtle's deſire, but to find any was queſtionleſs matter of exceeding joy, *I rejoiced greatly*, &c. *Learn* hence, That there is no greater joy to the miniſters of Chriſt, than to ſee the youth, or riſing generation in their day, walking in the paths of holineſs and religion, and treading in their religious parents footſteps.

5 And now I beſeech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

Obſerve here, The duty required, together with the profeſſion of the goſpel, namely, to live in unity and peace, in amity and concord, one with another. This he calls a *commandment*, in the ſingular number, to intimate, that in this one commandment all the reſt are contained, and in keeping this we keep all: And he tells them it is no new commandment, but an old one, from the beginning; it is as old as Moſes, yea, as old as Adam, being a part of the law of nature written in Adam's heart; yet in ſome reſpects love may be called *a new commandment*, becauſe urged from new motives, and enforced by a new example; and becauſe it is never to wax old, but to be always freſh in the memories, and found in the practice of Chriſt's diſciples to the end of the world.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "By this we ſhall make it evidently appear that there is the true love of God in us, if we endeavour to frame our lives according to his commandments;" and this, he aſſures them, was the great commandment, which they heard from the beginning, when the goſpel was firſt preached unto them, namely, that they ſhould believe in Chriſt, and love one another, and conſtantly perſevere in the practice of theſe duties. *Learn* hence, That as obedience is the natural effect, and neceſſary product of love, ſo is it the beſt evidence, the ſureſt mark and ſign of it, *This is the love of God:* that is, the ſureſt evidence that we love him, if we keep his commandments. 2. That it is not ſufficient that we profeſs love to God and our neighbour, but we muſt walk in love, and be found in the exerciſe, yea, in the perſevering exerciſe, of that grace and duty.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. This is a deceiver and an antichriſt.

Having exhorted them to perſeverance in the faith, before he ſubjoins a reaſon for that exhortation now, becauſe *many deceivers are entered into the world*, &c. Many impoſtors were gone forth abroad, who denied, ſome the divinity, others the humanity of Chriſt, and ſo razed the very foundations of chriſtianity, and thus diſcovered themſelves to be antichriſts, or perſons that ſet themſelves to oppoſe Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That even from the beginning our Lord Jeſus has had thoſe who have diſowned his natures, and denied his offices, the divinity of his perſon, the meritoriouſneſs of his ſatisfaction; theſe are antichriſts, perſons maliciouſly ſet againſt Chriſt, and they ſhall find him righteouſly ſet againſt them in the day when they ſhall be ſummoned by him ſolemnly to appear before him.

8 ¶ Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Here our apoſtle reſumes his exhortation to them to conſtancy and perſeverance in the faith and obededience of the goſpel, from this argument, leſt they ſhould loſe the fruit of their faith profeſſed, the profit of their afflictions, which for the ſake of chriſtianity they had ſuffered, and their works of piety and charity which they have performed, but continuing faithful to the death, might receive a full reward, even a crown of life. *Learn* hence, That it is both lawful and needful, even for the beſt of ſaints, in what they do in the ſervice of God, to have an eye to the promiſed reward, by way of encouragement to them in the courſe of their obedience. We may with Moſes have reſpect to the recompence of reward, but not only, or chiefly, yet as a ſpur to provoke us to duty. Perſeverance in goodneſs has its reward belonging to it; that reward has a fulneſs belonging to it, a fulneſs of compenſation, and a fulneſs of ſatisfaction, and that it is both lawful and a laudable to have an eye in our working to this full recompence of reward.

9 Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Obſerve here, 1. The character given of the goſpel, it is *the doctrine of Chriſt*; that is, the doctrine relating to Chriſt, and the doctrine taught by Chriſt. 2. What is affirmed of thoſe that apoſtatize from, and abide not in the doctrine of Chriſt, *they have not God*; that is, ſay ſome, they have not God to be their Father, nor the Spirit to be their guide and ſanctifier; they have, ſay others, no knowledge of God, no intereſt in God, no influences of grace and holineſs derived from God. 3. The happy condition of thoſe that abide in the doctrine of Chriſt, *they have both the Father and the Son*; he that has one, hath both; and he that hath not both, has neither; and this *having* may admit a threefold interpretation, thus; *he has the Father and the Son* by way of abode and inhabitation; he dwelleth in God, and God in him; they have the Father and the Son with them by way of ſociety and communion. Laſtly, They have the Father and the Son, by the way of aſſiſtance and approbation; they have God to aſſiſt them, to accept them, to reward them.

10 ¶ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed. 11 For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

In theſe words our apoſtle directs them how to carry themſelves towards thoſe wicked apoſtates and heretical ſeducers, that deny the goſpel, or any eſſential part of chriſtianity, by no means to give any countenance or encouragement to them, or to hold any familiarity or communion with them, nor to entertain them, nor ſo much as courteouſly to ſalute them, but by ſhewing them diſreſpect, manifeſt a diſlike and diſproving of their errors. This form of interdict, *Bid him not God ſpeed*, ſeems to be an imitation of the Jewiſh practice towards excommunicated perſons, who were not only excluded from all commerce, but alſo from all kind of common civilities, and ordinary ſalutation. *Learn* hence, That even civil courteſy, and common reſpect, is not, ought not to be, paid to thoſe that ſeduce others, or attempt to ſeduce us, from the chriſtian faith.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face, that our joy may be full. 13 The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee. Amen.

Here our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle with an apology for the brevity of it, declaring, that he hoped to come ſhortly to them, and ſee them. And though he had many things to write, yet all things were not fit to be written; but, beſides, a lively voice affects more than a written letter; and he hoped that they ſhould be filled with mutual joy at the ſight of, and converſe with, each other. Preſence of friends, and familiar converſe with each other, is preferable to all writing to each other. By *the children of the elect ſiſter*, ſome again underſtand the members of another church, who now ſent ſalutations to them. The concluding word *Amen*, imports his ſincerity in what he had written to them, and his hearty wiſhes for the happineſs and welfare of them.

THE
THIRD EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
ST. JOHN.

THE elder, unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Obſerve here, 1. The penman and writer of this epiſtle, St. John, who wrote the two former, as appears by the agreement of them in words and phraſes, which are peculiar to this apoſtle, he ſtyles himſelf not an apoſtle, though he was ſo, but an *elder*; that word being a name of honour and dignity belonging to the chief of their tribes, agrees very well with the office of the apoſtles, ſet over the twelve tribes of the houſe of Iſrael. 2. The perſon to whom this epiſtle is directed, Gaius; we find three perſons of this name in the New Teſtament, to wit, Gaius of Macedonia, Acts xix. Gaius of Derbe, Acts xx. and Gaius of Corinth, Rom. xvi. whom St. Paul calls his hoſt, and of the whole church, who being eminent for his hoſpitality, eſpecially to the miniſters who went out to preach the goſpel among the Gentiles, taking nothing of them; this man ſeems to be the perſon who had the honour of an epiſtle ſent to him from the pen of an eminent apoſtle; ſuch as do excel in their kindneſs to the faithful miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, having oft-times in this life ſome ſpecial marks of honour and reſpect put upon them by God, as a token of his gracious acceptance of them. 3. The intereſt which Gaius had in St. John's affections, he ſtyles him *the well-beloved Gaius*, and ſhews alſo what was the motive and attractive of that his love, namely, *the truth*, that is, the goſpel of Chriſt, called eminently *the truth*; he loved Gaius in the truth, that is, in great ſincerity, and for the truth; for his ſincere profeſſing and practiſing the doctrine of the goſpel. Such as love the truth are, and ought to be, the ſpecial objects of our love.

2 Beloved, I wiſh above all things that thou mayeſt proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.

Obſerve here, 1. This holy man, Gaius, who was ſo hoſpitable an hoſt to the miniſters and members of Chriſt, had but a weak and ſickly body, he wanted health; ſtrength of grace, and dearneſs of reſpect, even from God himſelf, cannot prevail againſt diſeaſes; ſuch as are moſt holy are ſometimes moſt weak and ſickly. 2. That though Gaius had but a weak and conſumptive body, yet had he a very thriving and vigorous ſoul; it is a very common, yet a very ſad and true obſervation, that men of ſtrong, healthy, and active bodies have weak, lame, ſickly, and ſinful ſouls. Ah wretched ſinner! when under obligations to ſerve thy God beſt, thou forgetteſt him moſt, and proſtituteſt thy health to the ſervice of thy luſts; how does the health and eaſe of one day deſerve the ſervice and thankfulneſs of thy whole life! But alas! inſtead of that thou makeſt him to ſerve with thy ſins, and layeſt the firſt-fruits of thy time and ſtrength upon the devil's altar. 3. Our apoſtle's wiſh on the behalf of Gaius, namely, that his body were as healthful as his ſoul was holy, that he had as much health in one, as he had grace in the other. Behold here, ſuch an improved and well-grown chriſtian was this holy man Gaius, that our apoſtle makes the proſperous ſtate of his ſoul the meaſure of all that proſperity which the one could wiſh, or the other deſire; as thy ſoul proſpereth, ſo may thy bodily health, for the ſervice of God and of thy ſoul.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.

Obſerve here, 1. The commendable teſtimony which the brethren that came from Gaius gave to St. John concerning his holy and unblameable converſation, according to the direction of the goſpel, *the brethren teſtified of thee that thou walkeſt in the truth*; good reports of our brethren, without detracting any thing from their worth, is a manifeſt duty. 2. With what joy and rejoicing St. John received the notices of Gaius's adherence to the truth, and of his anſwerable walking thereunto; he did not envy the grace of God ſo largely conferred on Gaius, but rejoiced in it, and no doubt bleſſed God exceedingly for it; ſoul-mercies are the greateſt mercies, and matters of the greateſt joy to gracious ſouls. 3. That additional joy which St. John expreſſes to hear that *his children*, that is, thoſe perſons whom he had converted to chriſtianity, and begotten to Chriſt through the goſpel, did *walk in the truth*, that is, in the ſincere practice as well as in the outward profeſſion of religion; the faithful miniſters of Chriſt rejoice more in the welfare of their people's ſouls, than in all their worldly wealth or honour.

5 Beloved, thou doeſt faithfully whatſoever thou doeſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers; 6 Which have born witneſs of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly ſort, thou ſhalt do well: 7 Becauſe that for his name's ſake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive ſuch, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

Obſerve here, How our apoſtle at once commends the great charity of Gaius, and at the ſame time excites him to the farther practice of it. Where *note*, 1. How charity towards chriſtians is here ſtyled fidelity to Chriſt, becauſe ſhewn to them upon Chriſt's account. Acts of charity are acts of righteouſneſs and fidelity; he that is uncharitable is unjuſt. 2. The extenſive nature of Gaius's charity, it was to *brethren*, yet not only to *brethren*, but to *ſtrangers*; that is, not only to the brethren of the church with him, but to ſtrangers in their travels to and fro, as they came near him; more particularly to ſuch faithful miniſters as came out of foreign parts to preach the goſpel, whom Gaius had hoſpitably and charitably entertained. 3. How he exhorts Gaius farther to furniſh and help theſe miniſters in their travels with all things neceſſary for their journey; becauſe, 1. They preached the goſpel freely, taking nothing of the Gentile chriſtians for their pains. 2. Becauſe it was for Chriſt's name ſake they went abroad; to preach the goſpel, ſay ſome; to avoid perſecution, ſay others. 3. Becauſe to entertain ſuch is to farther, as much as in us lies, the propagation of the goſpel of Chriſt; ſuch as contribute towards the maintenance and ſupport of the miniſters of Chriſt for his ſake, ſhall have the preſent comfort and future reward, of co-operating and contributing their parts towards the propagating and ſpreading of the goſpel of Chriſt.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating againſt us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and caſteth *them* out of the church.

Obſerve here, The pious care which St. John took for the relief and ſuccour of ſuch faithful chriſtians as now travelled amongſt them, both to avoid perſecution, and to preach the goſpel; he wrote to the church on their behalf, deſiring their reception, and adviſing their relief; *I wrote to the church*; that is, I wrote for them, and ſent my teſtimonial to the church on their behalf; every one has a pen to plead for himſelf, happy he that has both tongue and pen to intercede for others. 2. The oppoſition which St. John met with in ſo good a work; Diotrephes, a proud man, regarded not his letters, acknowledged not his authority, yea, ſlighted the apoſtle, *prating againſt him with malicious words*; the holieſt men may meet with oppoſition in the holieſt and beſt of actions, wherein the glory of God and the public good are moſt concerned. 3. The holy apoſtle's reſentment of this indignity, and wiſe reſolution thereupon; *when I come, I will remember his deeds*; that is, I will ſharply rebuke him, and uſe that ſeverity towards him which his crime deſerves, according to the authority which God has given me. *Learn* hence, That though private offences againſt Chriſt's miniſter's muſt be forgiven and forgotten by them; yet when an offence is prejudicial to the church, it muſt be oppoſed, and openly cenſured.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good is of God: but he that doth evil hath not ſeen God.

Here St. John adviſeth his beloved Gaius, and thoſe with him, not to imitate and follow this evil example of

Diotrephes, (who not only refuſed charity towards the chriſtian Jews, that wanted it himſelf, but would not permit the Gentile chriſtians to receive them or relieve them) but to follow the example of God, who is good to all; and accordingly, he that is merciful is born of God, but he that is malicious hath no true knowledge of God, but is a mere ſtranger to him. Behold here the eulogy and high commendation which the Spirit of God gives to a charitable and good man: *He that doth good is of God*, he is allied to heaven, born of God, and his offspring; but the uncharitable evil man is a compoſition of ſpite, envy, and malice, born from beneath, and the devil's offspring.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itſelf: yea, and we *alſo* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

Having propounded the example of God in the former verſe, he propounds in this the example of Demetrius, as a pattern to them for their imitation in works of piety and charity; not only common report, and the apoſtle's teſtimony, but his own good works, did juſtly recommend him as an extraordinary pattern to their imitation. *Note*, That the commendations, which our own good works do give us before the world, are more valuable than all the praiſes and applauſe which can be given us by men, yea, by the beſt of men.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee, and we ſhall ſpeak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. Our friends ſalute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Thus our apoſtle concludes his epiſtle with an apology for the brevity of it, hoping in a ſhort time to ſee him, and to ſpeak face to face unto him; he concludes with his apoſtolical valediction, *Peace be to thee*; unto which adding the brethren's ſalutations, it teaches us, that kind remembrances and greetings are ſuitable to chriſtian friendſhip.

THE
EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
ST. JUDE.

The deſign and ſcope of this epiſtle appears to be much the ſame with that of the ſecond of St Peter, and was written probably about the ſame time; the intent of both is this, namely, to fortify the Chriſtian Jews againſt the errors and corruptions of thoſe ſeducers, who, by their wicked lives and worſe doctrines, attempted to ſeduce perſons from the plainneſs and ſimplicity of the goſpel, and to bring upon them the ſame condemnation and judgment with themſelves.

JUDE the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and brother of James, to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, *and* called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.

Here we have *obſervable*, the perſon ſaluting, the perſon ſaluted, and the ſalutation itſelf. *Obſerve*, 1. The perſon ſaluting deſcribed three ways. 1. By his name, *Jude*, called Thaddeus and Lebbeus, to diſtinguiſh him from Judas Iſcariot; behold an holy apoſtle and a perfidious traitor, bearing the ſame name, Judas an apoſtle, and Judas an apoſtate; it is not an holy name, but an holy nature, that commends us unto God. 2. By his office, a *ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*; he might have ſtiled himſelf a near kinſman of Jeſus Chriſt, or a brother of the Lord; but he mentions not his natural, but his ſpiritual relation to Chriſt; alliance in faith, or a ſpiritual relation to Chriſt, is much dearer and nearer than alliance in fleſh; there is a peculiar honour and excellency in the title of Chriſt's ſervant above that of Chriſt's kinſman. 3. By his kindred and alliance, *brother of James*, this is added to diſtinguiſh him from Judas Iſcariot; it is the duty of the ſervants, but eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, to prevent all ſcandalous exceptions againſt their perſons, and to be of untainted reputations. *Obſerve*, 2. The perſons ſaluted, theſe alſo are three ways deſcribed. 1. *They are ſanctified by God the Father*; the apoſtle judges of them by their profeſſion, and by their obligation: they had, by aſſuming the chriſtian name, obliged themſelves to be ſaints, or holy perſons; and by their profeſſion did own and declare themſelves ſo to be; and no doubt many of them were inwardly ſanctified, as well as outwardly holy. 2. *They are preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, in the faith of Chriſt Jeſus, when many, for fear of perſecution, have apoſtatized from it; he that will approve himſelf a true chriſtian, muſt ſhew himſelf a ſtedfaſt chriſtian; inſtability is an argument of inſincerity; again, *preſerved*

in

and holineſs, by Chriſt Jeſus, by the merit of his death and paſſion, by the prevalency of his interceſſion, and by the Holy Spirit's efficacy and operation. 3. *They are called* all of them externally by the miniſtry of the word; internally, many of them by the effectual operation of the Spirit, renewing the nature, and reforming the life; theſe are the perſons ſaluted, *Them that are ſanctified by God the Father, preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus, and called. Obſerve*, 3. The ſalutation itſelf, *Mercy*, *peace*, and *love be multiplied unto you:* Mercy from God, the Father of mercies; peace from Jeſus Chriſt, who is our peace; and love from the Holy Ghoſt, by whom it is ſhed abroad in our hearts: and his praying that theſe graces may not be barely given and granted, but be multiplied and increaſed, intimates to us our duty, which is not barely to ſeek grace at the hands of God, but the multiplication and augmentation of it; to labour after grace in growth, as well as grace in truth: *Mercy*, *peace*, *and love be multiplied:* thankful we may and ought to be for the leaſt meaſures of grace received, but not ſatisfied with the greateſt meaſures, ſhort of our heavenly perfection; he was never truly good that does not deſire daily to grow better.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common ſalvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints.

Obſerve here, 1. A courteous and loving compellation, *Beloved*; people ſhould ſtudy to render themſelves fit objects of their paſtor's love. 2. How his love towards them put him upon writing to them with all diligence: Love muſt be the ſpring and fountain of all our miniſterial performances; all ſervices without love, are as ſacrifices without fire. Chriſt firſt enquired after Peter's love, before he urged him to labour; God will reward no ſervices to our people, but what have been done in love. 3. The excellency and weightineſs of the ſubject about which he was to write, it was concerning the *common ſalvation*; ſo called, not as if it were a ſalvation common to all perſons, good and bad: but becauſe common to all believers who have a joint title to it, and a common intereſt in it: The ſalvation which the goſpel reveals, is a common ſalvation; it is in common in regard of the purchaſer of it, Chriſt our common Saviour; in regard of the price paid for it, the precious blood of Chriſt; in regard to the way and means by which it is obtained and ſecured, and that is *faith:* and in regard of the earneſt of it, and longings after it, the Holy Spirit of God is common to all believers, and gives them a pledge and earneſt of, and ſets them a breathing after, and longing for this ſalvation. 4. The exhortation itſelf, *Earneſtly to contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints*; that is, for the ſincere doctrine of the goſpel delivered by Chriſt: *once delivered*; that is, once for all, ſo as never to be changed or altered more: no new rule of faith is ever more to be expected; and therefore the articles of faith added to the apoſtles creed by the council of Trent, can be no articles of chriſtian faith, becauſe never delivered by Chriſt, or his apoſtles, and never known to many chriſtians long after their deceaſe. *Learn*, That it is the duty of chriſtians at all times, but eſpecially in times of error and ſeduction, to contend earneſtly for that pure and uncorrupted faith which is contained in the goſpel.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into laſciviouneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Here we have a reaſon of the foregoing exhortation aſſigned, why we ſhould contend ſo earneſtly for the chriſtian faith once delivered by Chriſt to his apoſtles, becauſe there were crept, by little and little, ſuch ſeducers into the church, as would endeavour to adulterate and corrupt it. *Note* here, That corrupters and corruptions creep ſecretly and gradually into the church; and heretics do not broach all their errors and falſe doctrines at once: Vain then and frivolous is the queſtion which the church of Rome aſks us, *When* did their innovations and falſe doctrines come firſt into the church? They crept in, and that unawares; it is enough for us that we find them there, though we aſſign not the time when, nor the manner how they did come in. *Obſerve* next, The character and deſcription which our apoſtle gives of theſe ſeducers crept in amongſt them. 1. He tells us they were men fore-ordained to condemnation; mark, not fore-ordained to ſeduction to ſin, but to condemnation for ſin; the word rendered *fore-ordained*, ſignifies before written, or before propheſied of, by Enoch and others, that they would, by their great ſins and impieties, fall into that condemnation which God hath ordained as a juſt reward to their tranſgreſſions; God never ordaineth nor decreeth any man's ſin, but he decreeth and foretelleth their condemnation for ſin. 2. He ſtyles them *wicked*, *ungodly men*, *turning the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*; pointing at the Nicolaitans, Gnoſtics, and other impure heretics, that ſprang from Simon Magus, who made the doctrine of the free grace of God, diſcovered in the goſpel, a cloke for their looſeneſs and laſciviouſneſs. Errors in doctrine are uſually accompanied with corruption in manners, as being moſt ſuitable to man's corrupt vile nature, and will be ſure never to want followers. 3. He charges them with *denying*, the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: That is, Jeſus Chriſt our only maſter, God, and Lord, called by St. Peter, *the Lord that bought them*; leſſening the dignity of his perſon, and invalidating what they could, the merit of his death and ſufferings. *Learn* hence, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt, the maſter of the world, the Lord of his church, is truly God; he is called the great God, and the mighty God, to ſhew that he is not a God inferior to, but equal to the Father; and that by nature, not by office. 2. That it is an horrid impiety, to deny our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to deny him in either of his natures, or in any of his offices; to deny him either in opinion, or in practice, is a ſin that carries a prodigious appearance with it.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards deſtroyed them that believed not.

In this, and the following verſes, our apoſtle, to deter them from following the pernicious ways of theſe ſeducers, ſets before them the ſeveral examples of God's judgments inflicted in former times upon perſons guilty of ſuch crimes, as theſe ſeducers were ſtigmatized for, and guilty of; he begins with the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, as they periſhed through unbelief, after they were brought out of Egypt, ſo ſhall revolters periſh, notwithſtanding their baptiſm, and fair beginnings. *Learn* hence, 1. That God's judgments inflicted on ſome, are, and ought to be, warnings unto all. 2. That God's ancient judgments were ordained to be our warnings and examples; his holineſs is the ſame as ever, his juſtice the ſame, his hatred of ſin the ſame, and his power to revenge it the ſame as ever; his judgments now may be more ſpiritual, but they are not leſs terrible. 3. That unbelief will as certainly bring deſtruction upon chriſtians now, as it did upon the Iſraelites of old. Did God deſtroy them that believed not his power then? No leſs will he deſtroy them that believe not his promiſe now.

6 And the angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day.

The next example ſet before them, is that of the apoſtate angels, who for their rebellion againſt God were thrown down from heaven, and are reſerved as ſo many priſoners in chains of darkneſs, to the judgment of the great day, when their condition will be more miſerable than now it is. Now, if God did not ſpare apoſtatizing angels, ſurely he will not ſpare apoſtatizing ſeducers. *Note*, 1. The ſin of the angels; they left their firſt ſtate, namely, their ſtate of holineſs. 2. Their puniſhment; they left their own habitation, they departed from that place of happineſs and glory which before they enjoyed; when they changed their nature, they changed their place; the preſence of an holy God is no place for unholy perſons. 3. That the angels are kept in chains, and thoſe chains are everlaſting; the chain of God's eternal decree holds them; the chain of their own guilt holds them; the chain of utter deſpair eternally holds them. 4. That the day of judgment will be a great day; and at that day, the puniſhment of fallen angels will be far greater than now it is: When heaven's joys are full, then hell's torments will be full, but not before.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themſelves over to fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Another example of God's ſeverity againſt ſin and ſinners, is Sodom and Gomorrah, Adma and Zeboim, who giving themſelves up to the luſts of uncleanneſs, were in an extraordinary manner deſtroyed by fire from heaven, which was a forerunner of that eternal fire of hell, which they are to ſuffer to all eternity, and ſo may and ought to be a terrifying example, and timely warning to all perſons, that they fall not into the like ſins. *Learn*, 1. That the ſin of uncleanneſs doth exceedingly diſpleaſe and provoke God to puniſh above other ſins, becauſe it defiles both ſoul and body; it makes a ſtye of a temple; and becauſe it is a ſin uſually accompanied with final impenitency; none that go unto her return, that is, very few: Whoredom is a deep ditch, the abhorred of God do fall into it. 2. That the ſin of uncleanneſs is remarkably followed with vengeance, even with eternal vengeance: God returns flames for flames, and revenges the fire of luſt with the fire of hell.

8 Likewiſe alſo all theſe filthy dreamers, defile the fleſh, deſpiſe dominion, and ſpeak evil of dignities.

As if our apoſtle had ſaid, "Notwithſtanding theſe forementioned examples of God's vengeance upon the unclean Sodomites, and others, yet theſe heretical ſeducers, whom he calls dreamers, becauſe they vented their own dreams and phantaſies inſtead of God's truth, did defile themſelves with their filthy practices, teaching that by their chriſtian liberty they were freed from all civil ſubjection, ſpeaking evil of thoſe who were ſet in authority over them." *Obſerve*, 1. That the doctrines which ſeducers bring, are not the truths of Chriſt, but their own dreams. Dreams they are in point of opinion, and dreams they will be found in point of expectation; they promiſe much, but perform nothing. 2. That dreams of error, or heretical principles, do diſpoſe towards filthy and unclean practices. Avoid error in judgment, if you would eſcape filthineſs in converſation. 3. That luſt loves not reſtraint, libertines deſpiſe dominion, ſenſuality makes men unruly; ſuch are ſons of Belial, they caſt off the yoke. 4. That ſuch as deſpiſe government, ſpeak evil of governors; dignities lie open to the laſh of the tongue; neither power nor innocence can protect from calumny and imputations, from ſlander and falſe accuſation.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he diſputed about the body of Moſes, durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation, but ſaid, The Lord rebuke thee.

Our apoſtle in the preceding verſe having charged ſeducers with contemptuous ſpeaking againſt governors and government: in this verſe he aggravates the imprudence and impiety of it, by the carriage of Michael the archangel towards the devil. The argument is taken from the greater to the leſs, and lies thus: If Michael, an archangel, ſo excellent in nature, ſo high in office, contending with Satan, an impure ſpirit, yet uſed great modeſty, without the leaſt indecency of expreſſion towards him, who and what are theſe that deſpiſe dominions, and dare ſpeak evil of dignities? *Obſerve*, That it is our duty to learn this angelical leſſon, namely, not to give railing or reviling language to the worſt adverſary in the beſt cauſe, becauſe it proceeds from pride or paſſion, and becauſe ſo contrary to the temper and deſign of chriſtianity; much more is it our duty to watch againſt the ſins of the tongue, with reſpect to our governors and ſuperiors.

10 But theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not: but what they know naturally as brute beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.

A double crime is here charged upon theſe ſeducers by our apoſtle, namely, pride, in ſpeaking evil of things they know not; and wickedneſs, in abuſing the knowledge they had. 1.

Their ſin was great, in ſpeaking evil of what they did not know, (they reviled dignities and magiſtrates, the uſefulneſs of whom they knew not) and poſſibly condemned the myſteries of the chriſtian faith which they underſtood not, notwithſtanding they called themſelves Gnoſtics, and pretended to higher degrees, and larger meaſures of knowledge than other men. *Learn*, That truth is uſually ſlandered by ignorant and conceited men; becauſe men do not underſtand the things of God, therefore they do condemn them. 2. Their wickedneſs was great in abuſing the knowledge that they had, and in acting contrary to it. What they knew naturally, or by the law of nature, to be ſinful, in thoſe things, as brute beaſts, did they corrupt and defile themſelves. *Note*, 1. That where ſin reigneth, it turneth man into a brute beaſt, Pſal. xlix. 12. Hence they are compared to dogs for filthineſs, to ſwine for uncleanneſs, to wolves for cruelty; of the two it is worſe to be like a beaſt, than to be a beaſt; the beaſt is what God has made it; but he that is like a beaſt, is what ſin and the devil has made him. 2. That it is a ſign of a man turned to a beaſt, to follow the luſts and paſſions of corrupt nature. It is juſt with God to leave them to be led by ſenſe, who will not be guided by grace, and to ſuffer them to fall into the ditch of beaſtly ſenſuality, who forget that they are men.

11 Wo unto them: for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and periſhed in the gainſaying of Core.

Our apoſtle goes on in charging theſe ſeducers with ſeveral crimes; particularly with the malice and envy of Cain, with the ſordid covetouſneſs of Balaam, with the ſedition and gainſaying of Core; they hate their brethren, and ſo are murderers, like Cain; they have adulterated the truth for baſe gain, and ſo have followed the example of Balaam, *who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs:* and as Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, roſe up againſt Moſes and Aaron, ſo have they ſeditiouſly oppoſed both magiſtracy and miniſtry. *Learn*, 1. That the practice of wicked men now, and from the beginning is ſtill the ſame. 2. That Satan entices his ſlaves to divers ſins, to the malice of Cain, to the covetouſneſs of Balaam, to the ſedition of Core. 3. That ſuch as ſin now may read their deſtruction in the deſtruction of thoſe that ſinned before them.

12 Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 Raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandering ſtars, to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

Our apoſtle having ſet forth theſe ſeducers in the foregoing verſes, by ſundry examples, he now comes to ſet them forth by ſeveral ſimilitudes and reſemblances. 1. He calls them ſpots in their love-feaſts (the infamy of their lives being a blemiſh and ſcandal to their chriſtian aſſemblies) feeding without fear of offending either God or man. 2. He calls them clouds without water, promiſing rain, but yielding none; making a ſhew of knowledge, but indeed having none, and they are driven (as clouds by the wind) from one vanity to another. 3. Trees they are, but like them in autumn, which have neither leaves nor fruit; nay, trees twice dead, in ſin, before converſion, and in reſpect of their apoſtacy, after their converſion, and ſo ſhall be plucked up by the roots. 4. They are like raging waves of the ſea, turbulent and tumultuous, foaming out at their mouths the filthineſs and impurity that boileth in their hearts. 5. Wandering ſtars, or teachers unſtable, departing from the true faith once delivered to them; but for theſe illuminated and knowing teachers, is *reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*.

14 And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *ſpeeches* which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.

The apoſtle having deſcribed the ſin of the ſeducers in the former verſes, declares the certainty of their deſtruction in the verſes now before us; aſſuring us, that Enoch of old, by the Spirit of prophecy, did foretel the ſins of ſuch perſons, and their condemnation alſo at the general judgment, when Chriſt ſhall come gloriouſly attended to execute judgment upon the ungodly in general, and on ſuch as ſpeak contumeliouſly of him and his in particular. Here *note* 1. That the doctrine of the day of judgment is very antient, foretold by the prophets from the beginning. Man was made an accountable creature, capable of rendering an account of his actions; and the ſentence of death, denounced in paradiſe againſt him for his ſin, did neceſſarily imply it; the drowning of the world, and burning of Sodom, were both types and forerunners of it; though there are Atheiſts upon earth that do not believe a future judgment to come, there are none in hell; feeling and experience muſt teach ſome men that which the Spirit, ſcripture, reaſon, and conſcience, could never learn them. 2. How Enoch here prefixeth a note of incitement to his prophecy, *Behold, the Lord cometh to judgment*; implying, that great is our natural backwardneſs to believe and mind the coming of Chriſt to judgment; and intimating, that we ſhould always realize the day of the Lord to ourſelves, and repreſent it to our thoughts as certain, and near at hand. 3. How royally attended Chriſt will come to judgment; *Behold, he cometh with ten thouſands of his ſaints.* Chriſt will be attended only with holy ones at the laſt day; ſuch as meet him now in purity, ſhall meet him then in peace. How cheerfully then may ſaints think of the laſt judgment, and obſerve the number of his attendants? Not a few ſaints, but ten thouſand of them, Rev. v. 11. They are called a number which no man can number. This is a comfort againſt the paucity and ſmall number of thoſe that are now upright with God; in heaven we ſhall have company enough; God's family, when it comes together, will be very numerous, or rather innumerable, Heb. xii. 23. *Obſerve* 4. The work of Chriſt at the day of judgment, namely, to convince and judge. Conſcience ſhall then have an exact view of all that ſinners did and ſaid: Sin will find them out, and teſtify againſt them at Chriſt's tribunal; and when conſcience has convinced, Chriſt will condemn. and whom he has condemned, he will execute. 5. The perſons whom Chriſt will convince and judge, *the ungodly*. The proceſs of the laſt day lies chiefly, though not only, againſt the ungodly; theſe ſhall not ſtand in the judgment, becauſe ungodlineſs doth chiefly provoke; not but that unrighteouſneſs will then be condemned alſo, Rom. i. 18. and ſinners ſent to hell for neglecting the duties of the ſecond table, no leſs than the firſt. 6. That not only the deeds of ungodly men, but their words, eſpecially their *hard ſpeeches* againſt God and his children, ſhall be brought into judgment. A wicked tongue is a rugged tongue; it ſpeaks words ſharper than ſwords; pray we for wiſdom to make as good an uſe of the reproaching tongue of an enemy, as of the reproving tongue of a friend; that the ſword of the tongue may let out the corruption that is in our hearts, and do us good againſt the will, and contrary to the intention, of our enemy.

16 Theſe are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own luſts; and their mouths ſpeaketh great ſwelling *words*, having men's perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage.

Our apoſtle having aſſerted in the former verſe, that Chriſt will at the great day convince and judge all the ungodly; in this verſe he declares that theſe ſeducers were of the number of the ungodly, whom Chriſt will certainly judge, becauſe they were *murmurers*, *complainers*, diſcontented with, and always complaining of their lot, and preſent condition; becauſe they had not as much as they deſired, they murmured againſt God, as if they had nothing; *walking after their own luſts*, contrary to the reſtraint of nature, and the laws of God; *their mouths ſpeaking great ſwelling words*. It has been the conſtant courſe of heretics to ſpeak high, and talk big, like mountebanks, hoping thereby to ſet off, and put off the better their counterfeited and falſe ware; but he is no wiſe man, whom great ſwelling words will ſeduce from the ways of wiſdom. Not the words of the ſpeaker, but the weight of what is ſpoken, is to be minded; yet though they talk theſe ſwelling words to their inferiors, at the ſame time they could flatteringly admire the perſons and actions of others, from whom they expected any benefit or advantage. Now from the whole of this large character, which St Jude here gives of theſe heretical ſeducers and falſe teachers, we *learn*, That miſerable and moſt deplorable is the condition of the miſled followers of ſeducing teachers; the ſeducer follows his luſt, and the follower is led by the ſeducer. Here the blind leads the blind; God pity them both! When teachers offer themſelves to us, we ſhould conſider who leads them, who are ſo officious to lead us, and follow them only as they follow Chriſt; no wiſe man will ſet his watch by the clock, but by the ſun.

17 But beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; 18 *How* that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts. 19 Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the Spirit.

Having largely deſcribed thoſe ſeducers, our apoſtle now comes to exhort thoſe to whom he wrote, to *beware* of them, aſſuring them, that the apoſtles of Chriſt, St Paul, and particularly St. Peter, had expreſsly foretold of thoſe wicked ſcoffers which would ariſe in the church in the laſt times; which mockers and ſcoffers he ſhows were ſuch as without any juſt cauſe ſeparated themſelves from the church's communion, pretending greatly to ſanctity, but addicted to ſenſuality, and deſtitute of the Holy Spirit. *Note* here, 1. That the Scripture ſpeaks much of the ſin and ſinners that ſhould be found in the latter times; we ought not therefore to be troubled at what is foretold, nor be unarmed when we are ſo often forewarned. It is a ſhame for them, who have oft heard and known the doctrines of the apoſtles, to be ſurprized by ſeducers. St Jude expects that theſe chriſtians, who know what the apoſtles had delivered, ſhould vigorouſly oppoſe all ſeducers and ſeduction. 2. That a cauſeleſs ſeparation from a church, of which we are members, is culpable and ſinful; a ſeparation from corruptions, and a ſeparation from them that are corrupt, are two diſtinct things; the former is always a duty, the latter not ſo. 3. That thoſe that ſeparate from the aſſemblies of the faithful, are uſually *ſenſual, and have not the Spirit*; they have not the Spirit either to guide them, or to quicken them, or to comfort them.

20 ¶ But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves on your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, 21 Keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

Our apoſtle having, in the former part of the chapter, warned the chriſtians of the danger of ſeducers, he cloſes his epiſtle with directions and advice how they may be preſerved from ſeduction, and what means they ſhould uſe for their perſeverance and eſtabliſhment in the doctrine of Chriſt. Firſt, he directs them to *build up themſelves in their moſt holy faith*; that is, in the doctrine of faith contained in the goſpel. Where *note*, 1. That the faith of chriſtians is a moſt holy faith; holy in its principles, holy in its pattern, holy in its encouragements and rewards. 2. That it is the duty, and ought to be the endeavours of every chriſtian to build up himſelf, and others alſo, in the faith of the goſpel; the beſt way for chriſtians not to be loſers of what they have, is to be labourers for what they want; progreſs in chriſtianity is the beſt means to preſerve us from apoſtacy. Secondly, He exhorts to prayer, *praying in the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, with holy reverence, with humble confidence, with fervent importunity, with thoſe holy affections and deſires which the Spirit of God exciteth in us: The concurrence of the Holy Spirit is neceſſary both to aſſiſtance and acceptance in prayer; it enables us to pray in faith and love, with ſincerity and importunity; without the Spirit there is no acceptable praying, and without prayer vain is the pretence to the Spirit. Breathing is the firſt evidence of life. St Paul was no ſooner converted, but behold he prayed. Thirdly, He directs that they *keep themſelves in the love of God*; no ſuch way to keep ourſelves from error, as to preſerve ourſelves in that love which God bears to us, and in that love we bear to him; take we care that there be no intermiſſion of the acts of love, and no remiſſion of the degrees of love, but that we be rooted and grounded in love, and then we are proof againſt ſeducers and falſe teachers. Fourthly, He directs them to look up to heaven, if they would be ſteady and ſtedfaſt in the faith here on earth. *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* Here *obſerve*, That heaven, or eternal life, is the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Mercy it is called, becauſe beſtowed on the miſerable, that could never merit or deſerve it, and becauſe it is the effect and fruit of free and ſpecial mercy, and becauſe beſtowed on the veſſels of mercy, and becauſe it is the perfection and conſummation of all mercy; and it is the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe he purchaſed it, he prepared it, he exhibits and gives it. *Obſerve* farther, That chriſtians are to look for eternal life, as the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to believe it, to meditate upon it, to have ardent deſires after it, and patiently to wait for it.

22 And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference. 23 And others ſave with fear pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.

In theſe words our apoſtle directs them how to carry and behave themſelves towards thoſe who were ſeduced, in order to their recovery, namely, after a different manner. 1. He adviſes to chriſtian lenity and gentleneſs, to compaſſion and tenderneſs towards ſome; *Of ſome have compaſſion. Learn* thence, That though reproofs are to be given to backſliders, yet muſt they be given in compaſſion, and with holy grief. Our words muſt have bowels in them, and proceed not from paſſion, but from pity. 2. For thoſe that are more entangled, corrupted, and hardened in their errors, he adviſes that they endeavour to *ſave them with fear*; that is, terrify them with the fear of God's judgments and wrath, and by ſharp admonitions recover them out of their errors, as Lot was ſnatched out of the fire of Sodom. There is a time when ſeverity is not only uſeful, but abſolutely neceſſary, yet neceſſity muſt be the mother of ſeverity. Lenity muſt be firſt uſed; if that fails, ſeverity muſt ſucceed. *Hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.* By this the apoſtle means every thing that doth defile, though in the leaſt degree; he forbids all affinity or nearneſs to the errors and vices of theſe ſinners, implying, That ſome ſinners are ſo filthy and unclean, that there is no keeping company with them without defilement; and intimating, That chriſtians, in their converſing with erroneous or vicious perſons, whom they labour to recover, ſhould take great care that they be not corrupted nor debauched by them, they being only to deal with them as phyſicians, not as companions.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent *you* faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Obſerve here, 1. How our apoſtle ſhuts up his exhortation with prayer; having exhorted them to duty, he commends them to the divine grace, intimating, that the fruit of all muſt be expected from God, without whoſe bleſſing all exhortations and endeavours will nothing avail. 2. The perſon who is the object of prayer and praiſe, Chriſt, deſcribed by his power. 1. *He is able to keep us from falling*; that is, from apoſtacy: He ſpeaks not of his abſolute power, ſo Chriſt is able to keep us from all ſin, but of ſuch a power as is engaged by promiſe and office; all believers are Chriſt's charge, and he will preſerve them from final deſtruction. 2. *He is able to preſent us faultleſs*; it is Chriſt's office to preſerve his church until he preſents it ſpotleſs to the Father, *before the preſence of his glory*; that is, at his glorious appearance, when he ſhall come to judge the world *with exceeding joy*; on both ſides no doubt, both on Chriſt's part and ours. O ſweet interview betwixt Chriſt and believers! He will joy to ſee us, as we will rejoice to ſee him. *Learn*, That Chriſt will one day make a ſolemn preſentation of his people unto God. 2. That when he doth preſent them, he will preſent them faultleſs. 3. That the day in which he does preſent them, will be a very glorious day in itſelf, and a very joyful day to all his people; when the impenitent world howl, they ſhall triumph.

25 To the only wiſe God our Saviour, *be* glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Our apoſtle ſhuts up his epiſtle (as is uſual) with a doxology; where *Obſerve*, 1. The perſon to whom the praiſe is given, to God, the wiſe God, the only wiſe God, ſo called becauſe he is originally and independently wiſe; becauſe he is infinitely and tranſcendently wiſe; all the wiſdom of the wiſeſt of men is nothing in oppoſition to his wiſdom, nor in compariſon with it. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour is worthy to be accounted the only wiſe God; as he is God, he is called *the wiſdom of the Father*; and in the book of the Proverbs, he is repreſented under that title, and ſpoken of as a perſon, chap. viii. As he was man, all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge were found in him; he received the habits of all created knowledge and wiſdom, together with all other graces without meaſure. 3. As the perſon deſcribed to whom the praiſe is given, ſo the deſcription of the praiſe which is given to this perſon, *Glory and majeſty, dominion and power*; by which underſtand the greatneſs and eminent excellency of the divine nature, which reſults from his perfections, and whereby the divine nature is infinitely exalted above all other beings. *Learn* hence, That we ought to have ſuch a ſenſe of God's tranſcendent excellencies and perfections, as may oblige us to aſcribe all things that are honourable and glorious to him, therefore are ſo many words here uſed. 4. The duration, *now and ever. Learn* thence, That believers have ſuch large and vaſt deſires for the exaltation of God's glory, that they would have him glorified everlaſtingly, and without ceaſing, not only in the preſent, but to eternal ages. To him be glory now and ever. *Amen.*

THE
REVELATION
OF
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

The title of this book is the Revelation, *ſo called, becauſe it contains in general a diſcovery of ſuch ſecrets, as no wiſdom of man could have manifeſted or foreſeen, and in particular reveals ſuch divine things concerning the ſtate of the church, which before lay hid in the purpoſe and counſel of God. Concerning this book,* obſerve, 1. *The penman that wrote it, St John, the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt (as it is believed) the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved; his hand held the pen, whilſt the Spirit of God indicted the myſterious matter of this book.* Obſerve 2. *The time when, and the place where he received the commandment to write what he wrote; the place was in the iſle of Patmos, into which it is ſaid that St John was baniſhed by the emperor Domitian, and there received and wrote this revelation, after he had, by a miraculous providence, eſcaped death at Rome, being there put into a cauldron of burning oil. As to the time when he had his commandment to write, he tells us it was on the Lord's day, chap.* i. 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard a voice, ſaying, What thou ſeeſt write in a book. *The more conſcientious we are in obſerving our Lord's day, and the more zealous and fervent in the religious duties of it, the more receptive we are of divine favours, and the better qualified for receiving diſcoveries from God:* The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him; *that is, devoutly worſhip and perform their duty to him.* Obſerve, 3. *The perſons to whom this epiſtle and prophecy is written, namely, to all the ſervants of God in general, and to the ſeven churches of Aſia in particular, to remain a perfect record for the uſe of the church to all ſucceeding ages, the ſtate of the univerſal church-militant being herein laid open.* Obſerve *laſtly, The authority of what is here written, it is the revelation of Chriſt Jeſus, chap.* xxii. I Jeſus have ſent my angel to teſtify theſe things unto the churches; *that is, for the inſtruction aud conſolation of the church in all ages are theſe things written,* ver. 7. And bleſſed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book; *from whence we may infallibly gather, that it is the mind and will of God, that this book ſhould be read by the church in all ages, and by all her members; for how can they keep the words of this prophecy, except they know them? How can they know them, except they read them, and ſtudy them? And to this, that beſides the prophetical part of this book, there is ſuch a ſpirit of holineſs breathing through it, the main articles of the chriſtian faith ſo clearly and plainly held forth in it, and many religious and moral duties ſo ſtrictly injoined by it, that it is the unqueſtionable duty of the miniſters of God to ſtudy this book with that modeſty and ſobriety, which becomes them as inquirers, and likewiſe the people's duty to give themſelves to the reading of it with fervent prayer, aud a ſimplicity of mind to be guided and directed by it as becomes learners.*

CHAP. I.

THE revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he ſent and ſignified *it* by his angel unto his ſervant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things that he ſaw.

That is, "This revelation God the Father gave to Chriſt, his Son, as Mediator; and therewith a commiſſion to impart it to his faithful ſervants, eſpecially the miniſters of his church, and particularly to St John, who bare record in his goſpel, and his epiſtles, that Jeſus Chriſt was the eſſential and eternal word of God, and alſo bare record of the *Teſtimony of Chriſt*; that is, of his doctrine and miracles, of his death and ſufferings, declaring *all things that he ſaw*, namely, in his viſions, and as they were repreſented to him." Here *note*, 1. The favour granted to St John, he had a viſion or revelation of future things. Revelations from God were ſometimes by viſion, ſometimes by voice, and ſometimes by dreams; this revelation, which St John

ſtate

had, was of a mixed nature, partly by viſion, and partly by voice. 2. The primary Author of this revelation, God the Father, the firſt perſon in the Trinity, he revealed it. 3. The order in which God gave forth this revelation; firſt, it is given to Chriſt, *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt which God gave unto him*; next unto the angel, then unto St John, to reveal it to the church. Chriſt, as God, knew all things from eternity, but as man and mediator he received his *revelation* from God the Father, and imparted it by the angel to his ſervant John; we ſee then that Chriſt, in his ſtate of exaltation, continues to execute his prophetic office, by revealing to his ſervants the mind and will of God. 4. The ſubject-matter of the revelation, *Things which ſhould ſhortly come to paſs*; mark, not things which were already paſt (then this book had been an hiſtory, and not a prophecy) but which ſhould certainly and ſuddenly come to paſs; that is, they ſhould ſhortly begin to be accompliſhed, and to take effect, not that they ſhould all be immediately performed, but in God's time; in reſpect of whoſe eternity, a thouſand years are but as one day. Laſtly, The fidelity and great integrity of St John, in making known to others *all things that he ſaw*; that is, he had by his writings told the churches what Chriſt by his angel told him, even all that he heard and ſaw in this viſion, as St Paul did not ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God, Acts xx. (he doth not ſay he had declared the whole counſel of God, for who but God himſelf could declare that?)

3 Bleſſed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein: For the time is at hand.

Obſerve here, The great encouragement which the Spirit of God gives to all chriſtians to read and regard, to conſider and meditate upon the things contained in this divine book, that is, the neceſſary parts of chriſtianity, which are here mixed with darker paſſages; all muſt, read, ſtudy, and practiſe theſe, that hope for bleſſedneſs. Hence *note*, That although the book of the *Revelation* be in itſelf a very abſtruſe and myſterious part of holy ſcripture, yet chriſtians ought not to be debarred, much leſs debar themſelves from reading of it, and conſultingwithit; *bleſſed is he that readeth*, that is, attentively, underſtandingly, and affectionately; and *bleſſed is he that keepeth the things that are written*, that is, in his mind and memory, in his affection and practice, ſo as to adhere to the truth, whatever trials and temptations it may expoſe him to.

4 John to the ſeven churches which are in Aſia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jeſus Chriſt, *who* is the faithful witneſs, *and* the firſt begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.—

Obſerve, here, 1. The perſons to whom St. John writes, and the particular churches which he does ſalute, namely, the ſeven churches in Aſia, which were then the moſt famous and flouriſhing churches in the chriſtian world, but now over-run with barbariſm. Sin has laid the foundation of ruin in the moſt flouriſhing churches and kingdoms. 2. The apoſtolical ſalutation given to theſe churches, *Grace be unto you, and peace*; by grace underſtand the free favour and rich love of God, in pardoning, ſanctifying, and ſaving; and by peace, the inward ſenſe of that love, and all outward mercies and temporal bleſſings whatſoever. 3. The perſons in whoſe name, or from whom this ſalutation is ſent and given. 1. From God the Father, who is deſcribed by his eternity and immutability, *which is, which was and which is to come*. 2. *From the ſeven ſpirits, which are before the throne*; that is, from the Holy Ghoſt, who is thus deſcribed in regard of the perfection and variety of his gracious operations; the Holy Spirit is called *ſeven*, becauſe he is perfect in working; and he is ſaid to be before the throne, becauſe continually preſent with God, and ready to perform what is needful for the church of God. 3. *From Jeſus Chriſt*, who is deſcribed according to the threefold office of a *prophet*, *prieſt*, and *king*; his being called *the true and faithful witneſs*, points out his prophetical office, that he is the great Prophet of his church, who reveals the will of the Father fully and faithfully to the ſons of men; his being ſtyled *the firſt begotten of the dead*, points out his prieſtly office, and intimates that he died, that he roſe again from the dead, and that he firſt aroſe, or was the firſt begotten from the dead; that is, the firſt that aroſe from the dead by his own power, to a ſtate of immortality, and never to die more; ſome indeed roſe before him, but then they were raiſed by him, he was the firſt that ever raiſed himſelf; others were raiſed from the dead, as Lazarus, before Chriſt, but they died again; whereas Chriſt roſe from the dead never to die more: he entered into a ſtate of immortality after his reſurrection, and lives for ever to make interceſſion for us. Laſtly, Chriſt is ſtyled *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, which phraſe ſhews both his influence upon them (as giving laws and rules unto them) and their dependence upon him, who do receive their power and government, their protection and dominion, all from his hand.

—Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father: To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

In the former verſe our Saviour was conſidered in the excellency of his perſon, and with reſpect to what he is in himſelf; in this verſe he is conſidered in the execution of his office, or with reſpect to what he is unto his church. And here, *obſerve*, 1. His affection in general toward us, *he hath loved us*; our bleſſed Redeemer has given us full and ample demonſtration of his great and wonderful love unto his church and people, and none doth ſo properly and paſſionately love the church as Chriſt himſelf: before converſion he loves his people with a love of commiſeration and compaſſion; after converſion, he loves them with a love of complacency and delight. 2. The diſcovery and manifeſtation which Chriſt has made of this his love particularly towards us, *he hath waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood*; that is, he hath given himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins, and by the merit of his blood freed us from the guilt of ſin in our juſtification, and alſo by the efficacy of that blood cleanſed us from the filth of ſin in our ſanctification; the blood of

Chriſt has both a pacifying and purifying influence; it pacifies God's wrath, and purges the ſinner's conſcience; the blood of Chriſt merited the Spirit of God for our ſanctification, and ſo reconciled us to God, as well as obtained pardon for us, in a way of meritorious ſatisfaction, and ſo reconciled God to us, *he waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.* Where *note*, a great emphaſis in the double word of property. 1. Our ſins; that is, every one of our own ſins, without any limitation or exception whatſoever, as to the number or heinous nature of them; the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is indeed excepted; but this proceeds from the incapacity of the ſinner, not from the inefficacy or inſufficiency of Chriſt's ſacrifice for ſin. 2. There is alſo an emphaſis in the word of property with reſpect to Chriſt, when it is called *his own blood*; the Levitical prieſts ſprinkled the people with blood, but it was not their *own* blood, but the blood of bulls and goats; but Chriſt ſpared not his *own* blood, and he did not barely ſprinkle us with it, but waſhed us in it; it was not the blood of his finger, but the blood of his heart, his very life went with it. *Obſerve*, 3. The conſequent effect, and happy reſult of all this love of Chriſt towards us, and undertaking for us, *he hath made us kings and prieſts unto God.* 1. Kings, not in a temporal but ſpiritual ſenſe; they reign as kings over their unruly luſts and corruptions, over Satan, over the world, over death the king of terrors; they begin their reign upon earth, without which it were impoſſible to perfect and complete it in heaven. 2. Prieſts, conſecrating themſelves a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, and offering up, not expiatory, but gratulatory ſacrifices unto him, namely, prayer and praiſe, ſupplication and thankſgiving. 1 Peter ii. 5. *Ye are an holy prieſthood*, &c. *Obſerve*, 4. After this deſcription of Chriſt, follows an aſcription of all that glory and honour, dominion and power, which is his due, and our duty to aſcribe unto him: *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Where *note*, That the ſame honour and glory, dominion and power, being here attributed and given to Chriſt, which Chriſt teaches us to aſcribe and render unto God, Matth. vi. it is a ſure teſtimony that Chriſt is God, and as ſuch to be acknowledged and adored by us.

7 ¶ Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they *alſo* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him. Even ſo, Amen.

Theſe words are a majeſtic deſcription of our Saviour's coming to judgment; they are uſhered in with a note of attention and admiration, *Behold!* which denotes alſo the truth and certainty of his appearance, and upbraids us likewiſe for our natural backwardneſs to believe, mind, and meditate upon the coming of Chriſt; we are too much guided and governed by ſenſe; what we ſee nothing of, we believe little of; therefore St. John here begins with a note of incitement, in the word *Behold!* It follows, *he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they which pierced him.* This was fulfilled, 1. When Chriſt came by the Roman armies to deſtroy Jeruſalem, by taking vengeance on his murderers, when his crucifiers might diſcern that thoſe heavy and direful judgments were inflicted on them for their crucifying Chriſt, and perſecuting chriſtians. But, 2. It will be more eminently and univerſally fulfilled at the general day of judgment, when Chriſt will come riding upon the clouds, as in a triumphant chariot, and all human eyes ſhall then ſee him, his perſecutors and deſpiſers particularly, beholding him, but not all alike; ſuch as pierced him, but repented, whoſe hearts were afterwards pierced for their piercing of him, theſe at that day ſhall ſee Chriſt with aſtoniſhing joy, though they put him to bitter ſorrow; the death of Chriſt has procured mercy for thoſe whoſe cruelty did procure his death; but as for ſuch as pierced him, but never repented, both ſuch as pierced him in his perſon, or in his members, they ſhall alſo ſee him to their ſorrow, and ſhall wail, or take on heavily, becauſe of him; that is, becauſe they muſt be judged by him. Lord! how will the ſight of a pierced Saviour then pierce their ſouls with ſorrow, with vexation of heart, and anguiſh of ſpirit? To behold Chriſt with an eye of ſenſe *then*, will be very grievous to them that do not behold him with an eye of faith *now*; ſee him they ſhall, ſee him they muſt; but alas, they had rather be covered with mountains and hills falling upon them, than thus behold him! Farther, How St. John cloſes this deſcription of Chriſt's ſecond coming, with a pathetic option on his own and the church's behalf, in the laſt words of the verſe—*Even ſo, Amen*—intimating, that the ſaints, or church of God, do expect and believe that aſſuredly it will be ſo, and do alſo earneſtly deſire and pray that it may be ſo. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt will undoubtedly come to put an end to the ſufferings of his afflicted church, and to puniſh his and their perſecutors; with whoſe coming the ſaints are well pleaſed, and do earneſtly deſire and long for it; behold he cometh—*Even ſo, Amen.* Come, Lord Jeſus.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Obſerve, 1. That what was applied to God the Father, at the fourth verſe, namely, that he *was*, *is*, and *is to come*, is here by Chriſt applied to himſelf at the eighth verſe. *Alpha* is the firſt, *Omega* the laſt letter of the Greek alphabet, and as ſuch they incloſe all the reſt, Chriſt calling himſelf the firſt cauſe and the laſt end (as nothing began before him, ſo nothing can outlaſt him) he does hereby diſcover his divinity to us, that he is co-eſſential and co-ſubſtantial with the Father, the ſame attributes being given to both; underſtand we then that this text plainly ſpeaks the Godhead of Chriſt, againſt the Socinians. Chriſt calling himſelf *the firſt and the laſt*, takes to himſelf abſolute perfection and power, ſovereignty and dignity, eternity and divinity; he is the firſt, becauſe he was before all beginning, and becauſe from him all things had their beginning; he is alſo the laſt, becauſe he ſhall continue for ever; without end, becauſe he is the end of all things, and becauſe when we have attained him, we are at the higheſt and laſt of our attainments; we reſt, and have no more to ſeek when we have found Chriſt, for he brings us to the Father, in whom we have eternal reſt through himſelf, the Son; and the laſt title Chriſt aſſumes to himſelf, namely, *the Almighty*, beſpeaks his divinity; he is God Almighty, able to accompliſh all his promiſes to his people, and to execute his threatenings on his enemies; and if the adverſaries of our Saviour's Godhead,

head, in the glaſs of this text, do not ſee his divinity, it is not becauſe they cannot, but they will not ſee.

9 I John, who alſo am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt, was in the iſle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day; and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt: And, what thou ſeeſt, write in a book, and ſend *it* unto the ſeven churches which are in Aſia; unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The preface being ended in the foregoing verſes, here begins the body or viſionary part of this book; the firſt viſion is here before us, concerning the ſeven Aſian churches. In which viſion we have *obſervable*, 1. The perſon that received it, he is deſcribed by his name John, *I John*; by his ſpiritual relation, *I John your brother*; by his then preſent condition, your *companion in tribulation*; undergoing like ſufferings with you: your companion *in the kingdom of Chriſt*, that is, in expecting of, and hoping for, the ſame kingdom of heaven and glory which ye expect; and I am alſo your companion in patience, called the patience of Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe in his word he requires it, becauſe by his ſpirit he produces it, becauſe in his own example he gave us a pattern of it; and perhaps principally, becauſe of the preſent ſtate of the kingdom of Chriſt in this world calls for it. 2. The place where St. John received this viſion, in the iſle of Patmos, not far from the Aſian churches, into which the emperor Domitian baniſhed him. (Having, as is ſaid, caſt him firſt into a cauldron of burning oil, out of which he miraculouſly eſcaped.) Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſays, St. John was very near an hundred years old, when he was, by that bloody emperor, baniſhed into Patmos, for preaching the word of God, and for bearing teſtimony to this truth, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Saviour of the world. *Learn*, That the greateſt honour which an apoſtle, an aged apoſtle, a beloved apoſtle, can be admitted to the participation of, is to ſuffer baniſhment and death for bearing a faithful teſtimony to Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. The time when St. John had this glorious viſion of Chriſt, communion with him, and communications from him, it was *upon the Lord's day*; *I was in the ſpirit*, that is, in ſpiritual meditation, in a ſpiritual ecſtacy, in a tranſporting rapture by the Spirit, under his more immediate illumination and powerful influences; *on the Lord's day*, namely, the firſt day of the week, ſo called, becauſe Chriſt at his reſurrection took poſſeſſion of it for his own, and becauſe the end of its inſtitution was to commemorate Chriſt's reſurrection, and becauſe applied to ſpecial worſhip and ſervice, and as ſuch religiouſly obſerved by the apoſtles, Acts xx. 7. and by the univerſal church, ever ſince the apoſtles' days. In that St. John, in a ſolitary iſland, kept the chriſtian ſabbath, we learn, that the religious obſervations of the Lord's day, is a duty incumbent upon all perſons, and in all places. *Learn*, 2. How Chriſt owned his own day, and encouraged St. John in his religious and ſtrict obſervation of it, by the influences of his holy Spirit upon him, and by communicating extraordinary revelations to him. *Obſerve*, 4. The viſion and revelation itſelf, which began with his hearing a loud voice like a trumpet; that is, the voice of Chriſt, full of majeſty and power, ſpake unto him, ſaying, *What thou ſeeſt*, that is, what thou ſhalt ſee and hear, *write in a book*, and ſend it to the ſeven churches. Here *note*, 1. That the book of the *Revelation* written by Chriſt's own direction, therefore warranted to be of divine authority. 2. That what Chriſt commanded St. John carefully to write, it becomes us heedfully to read; for though what St. John wrote and ſent concerned the ſeven Aſian churches at that time, and had a particular reſpect to their preſent ſtate: Yet all ſcripture is written for our learning, and we are to beg ſpiritual wiſdom from God to make a right uſe and holy improvement of what is written.

12 And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks; 13 And in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks, *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as ſnow: And his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace; And his voice as the ſound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars: And out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword: And his countenance *was* as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength.

As if St. John had ſaid, "I turned to ſee the perſon whoſe voice I heard ſpeaking with me, and I beheld ſeven golden candleſticks, repreſenting the ſeven Aſian churches, and in the midſt of thoſe candleſticks I ſaw one in the ſhape of a man, which reminded me of Chriſt the Son of man, clothed in garments much like unto Aaron's the high prieſt, who was an illuſtrious type of Chriſt our great and merciful high prieſt, who made an atonement for us on earth, and maketh now interceſſion for us in the higheſt heavens." *Note* here, 1. The compariſon made between the churches of Chriſt and the golden candleſticks; they are called candleſticks in regard of the light which they hold forth; the candleſtick does not give light of itſelf, but holds it forth to others: It is the church's duty to keep within herſelf the pure word of God, and to keep herſelf pure from being beſmeared with errors in doctrine, or vice in converſation. Churches, the holieſt and pureſt of churches, are rather candleſticks than candles; Chriſt is the light, the word is the lamp, the church but the inſtrument to convey the light unto us. Again, the churches are golden candleſticks: Gold is the moſt precious of metals, the church is the moſt excellent of all ſocieties; for it beautifies all ſocieties whatſoever, that are members of the church of Chriſt. 2. How Chriſt was ſeen by St. John walking in the midſt of the golden candleſticks, preſent in and with his churches; that is, St. John had in this viſion a very lively repreſentation of Chriſt in his human nature; not that St. John now ſaw Chriſt in his manhood really, for that was then in heaven, but he had a reſemblance of it in the viſion. 3. The deſcription given of Chriſt, as walking in the midſt of his goſpel-church. He is, (1.) deſcribed by his attire, habited like Aaron the high prieſt, with a garment down to his feet, and girt with a golden girdle, to ſignify, that as Aaron was of the Old, ſo Chriſt is the high prieſt of the New Teſtament, preſenting continually to his Father the memorials of his death, the merits of his ſacrifice, and making interceſſion with the Father for our gracious acceptance with him. 2. He is next deſcribed by the parts and members of the body: His *head and hair as white as ſnow and wool*, ſignify his eternity and his purity, that he is the *Ancient of days*, even the Father of eternity, and perfectly innocent, pure, and holy: *His eyes like flaming fire*, denoting his piercing knowledge; that as head of his church he eſpies out all her ways, words, and thoughts: *His feet like burning braſs, and his voice like many waters*; which expreſſions repreſent the dread and terror of Chriſt towards the enemies of his church; and that vengeance he would execute upon his murderers, in particular, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and upon all the impenitent rejecters of his goſpel-grace, at the general judgment: Then will they underſtand what they now will not believe, that it is a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* 3. He is next deſcribed by what he had in his right hand, namely, *ſeven ſtars*, repreſenting the ſeven angels, biſhops, and miniſters of the ſeven churches. Theſe are called *ſtars*, their office and duty being to enlighten the church, both by the light of life and doctrine: and as ſtars are ſeated above, ſo ſhould their converſation be in heaven, and their affections not ſet upon the things below. Stars give direction, light, and influence to others; they were not made for themſelves. Miniſters muſt not chiefly ſeek their own, but others good. Stars are ſwift in their motion, and their motion is conſtantly in their own orb and ſphere. Vain is the pretence of care and concern for other churches, whilſt we neglect our own. Finally, miniſters are ſtars, as in reſpect to their ſituation, and in reſpect of their conſtant and regular motion; ſo in reſpect of their continuance and duration. Stars are fixed in heaven, ſo are miniſters in the church: Chriſt holds them in his hand, otherwiſe the world would ſoon have them under their feet. 4. He is deſcribed by a ſharp *two-edged ſword* coming out of his mouth, denoting the piercing power of the word of God to conquer ſin, convert ſinners, and to condemn and ſlay the unconverted. Laſtly, It is added, That *his countenance was as the ſun that ſhineth in his ſtrength*; that is, very glorious in itſelf, and very comforting and refreſhing to thoſe that are his members, his ſincere diſciples and followers. This part of the deſcription of Chriſt, ſweetly follows the former: When his feet were as burning braſs, to tread down and conſume his enemies; his countenance was as the ſun, to cheer and cheriſh, to comfort and refreſh his friends.

17 And when I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead. and he laid his right hand upon me, ſaying unto me, Fear not; I am the firſt and the laſt: 18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Obſerve here, 1. The effect which this glorious repreſentation of Chriſt in this viſion had upon St. John, he was aſtoniſhed and amazed at it, and fell down at Chriſt's feet as one almoſt dead. *Note* from hence, That the holieſt man on earth is not able to bear the preſence of Chriſt here, nor able to ſtand before his gracious manifeſtation of himſelf, when he comes to reveal himſelf in mercy towards him. See Hab. iii. 15, 16. Lord, how unable then will the wicked be at the great day to ſtand before the manifeſtation of thy fury! if at this viſionary repreſentation of Chriſt, St. John trembled, and fell at his feet as dead, how unable will the impenitent world be to look him in his face at the great day, when he ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, rendering vengeance to them that know not God! *Obſerve*, 2. The ſeaſonable care of Chriſt for St. John's relief in this great exigency: *He laid his right hand upon me ſaying, Fear not.* Hereby Chriſt diſcovered both his readineſs to help, and his ability to help; the right hand is the ſupporting hand, the ſtrengthening hand; Chriſt did not ſend an angel to comfort St. John, but laid his own hand upon him, to aſſure him both of ſafety and ſuccour. 3. As what Chriſt did, ſo what he likewiſe ſaid, for St. John's comfort and ſupport under the burden of his fears; *Fear not*, ſays Chriſt, for *I am the firſt and the laſt*; that is, I am an eternal being, without either beginning or end. Again, *I am he that liveth, and was dead.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "Fear not death or dying, for I have overcome death by dying, conquered the king of terrors in his own territories; but behold, *I am now alive for evermore*, for the benefit of my church, and to protect and defend my faithful ſervants." Nay, farther, to ſhew that his life was not a bare ſubſiſtence, but clothed with power, Chriſt adds, *I have alſo the keys of hell and of death*; that is, a ſovereign power over the whole inviſible world, to let into heaven, and to lock into hell, as I pleaſe." The keys are an emblem of authority and power; the ſteward who has the keys of the houſe, commands the houſe. There are four keys which Chriſt keeps in his own hands; the key of the womb, the key of the clouds, the key of the earth, as of the granary of corn, and the key of the grave. When Chriſt ſays here, *I have the keys of hell and of death*, the meaning is, that he has a ſovereign dominion over both worlds; over this in which we live, and over that into which we die, whether the one or the other part of it, heaven and hell both; for the words muſt not be underſtood with a debaſing limitation, only reſpecting hell, as if Chriſt had only the keys of the bottomleſs pit: But the original word *hades* ſignifies the inviſible world, conſiſting of both heaven and hell; and he has a power over both, and alſo over death too, which is the common paſſage into both places. *Learn*, 1. If Chriſt has the power of death, and keeps the key of the grave in his own hand, that men do not die at random, by accident and chance, but by determination and judgment: Chriſt by an authoritative act turns the key, and gives man his exit out of the world. 2. That Chriſt, who has the key of death, has alſo the key of *hades*; the upper and lower *hades*, heaven and hell; and ſuch as go out of the world, go not out of being, but go into one of thoſe two ſtates and places. 3. How admirable, and yet how amiable, Chriſt ſhould be in all our eyes, who hath theſe keys in his own hand, with ſuch merciful intentions towards us; and how willingly ſhould we die, when the keys of death are in ſo great, ſo kind an hand as his! O how happy is it when this power of our great Redeemer over death and the grave, and a placid reſignation to his pleaſure, do concur and meet together, not from ſtupidity, but truſt in him that keeps the keys! Lord, when the key is turning, and thou art letting in ſouls into the inviſible world, let thy ſervant depart in peace, and everlaſtingly ſee thy ſalvation.

19 Write the things which thou haſt ſeen, and the things which are, and the things which ſhall be hereafter. 20 The myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, and the ſeven golden candleſticks. The ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches: And the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt are the ſeven churches.

This chapter concludes with a ſolemn charge given by our Saviour to St. John, to write and record the viſion of the ſeven ſtars, and ſeven golden candleſticks, which he had newly ſeen; letting him into the myſtery of both, by telling him, that the *ſeven ſtars are ſeven angels*; that is, ſignify ſeven angels, and the ſeven candleſticks *are*, that is, ſignify ſeven churches, and repreſent them. In like manner, when Chriſt ſays in the ſacrament, *This is my body*; the meaning is, this bread ſignifies and repreſents my body. Here *note*, That the biſhops and governors, the paſtors and teachers of the church, are called angels, becauſe they are ſent by God on his meſſage, becauſe they had their commiſſion from him; and to ſignify that unſpotted purity which ſhould be found with them, both in life and doctrine; and they are repreſented by *ſtars*, to denote their dignity and duty, their uſefulneſs and beneficialneſs, the ſwiftneſs and conſtancy of their motion, but eſpecially in regard to their nature. A ſtar is of the ſame nature with the heavens, celeſtial; not earthly, not elementary; miniſters ſhould be heavenly, holy, blameleſs, inoffenſive; they ſhould teach by tongue and hand, and inſtruct by lip and life. God grant, that in our hearts we may experimentally find the works of holineſs, and in our lives expreſs the power of holineſs. *Amen.*

CHAP. II.

UNTO the angel of the church of Epheſus, write, Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks;

Note here, 1. That the church of Epheſus, with the other ſix churches of Aſia, were, at the time of St. John's writing, very flouriſhing churches, favoured as much with the ſpecial preſence and influence of Chriſt, as ever any churches were. 2. That theſe churches are written to as a ſort of types of all the Gentile churches unto the end of the world, and patterns alſo which the Gentile churches were to take warning by, Chriſt hereby declaring what all other churches, offending and declining in the ſame manner, might expect. 3. That the firſt church St. John is commanded to write unto, is the church of Epheſus, and what is written is directed to the *angel*, the biſhop, the preſident, and chief miniſter in that church, to be communicated to all in the church both miniſters and people, as that which nearly concerned them all. 4. That Chriſt in the beginning of every epiſtle, doth notify himſelf by ſome one or other of thoſe characters which he gave of himſelf in the former chapter: Thus here, *Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand*. *Mark*, He holdeth the ſtars in his *hand*, to ſhew his tenderneſs; in his *right hand*, to ſhew his power, ſupporting and directing them for the good of his people. It is added, Chriſt *walks in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks*. Which expreſſion denotes Chriſt's gracious preſence with them, his ſtrict obſervation of them, his tender care over them, his protecting and defending of them, in doing their duty to him, his encouraging or reproving, his rewarding or puniſhing, as there ſhould be cauſe. *Learn*, 1. That the miniſters of Chriſt are ſtars, yet but ſtars, they ſhine but with a borrowed light, with a light derived from the ſun; they ſhine but for a time, the day haſtens when theſe ſtars ſhall diſappear for ever. 2. Theſe ſtars are in the right hand of Chriſt, in his power, and at his diſpoſal, he appoints them their orbs, where they ſhall ſhine, and appoints them alſo their time for ſhining. 3. That the church is a candleſtick, a golden candleſtick. As a candleſtick has no more light than what is put into it, and muſt be continually maintained by a new ſupply of oil, ſuch is the ſtate of the church; and as a candleſtick is a moveable thing, remove the candleſtick, and the light is removed with it: ſo when God removes the light of the goſpel from a people, he unchurches them. Farther, The church is called a golden candleſtick, becauſe as gold is the pureſt of metals, and excels all other metals in preciouſneſs; ſo God expects his church ſhould differ as much from the world, as gold doth from common clay. 4. That there is a ſpecial gracious preſence of Chriſt with his church in all her adminiſtrations: It denotes his preſence with them, and this preſence of his is an holy preſence, and a joyous preſence.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil: And thou haſt tried them which ſay they are Apoſtles, and are not, and haſt found them liars: 3 And haſt born, and haſt patience, and for my name's ſake haſt laboured, and haſt not fainted. 4 Nevertheleſs I have *ſomewhat* againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.

Obſerve here, 1. A general declaration which ſtands in the front of the ſeveral epiſtles, *I know thy works*, both thy inward and outward works, to obſerve and mark them, to puniſh or reward them, as the caſe requires. This proves the divinity of Chriſt, that he is truly and eſſentially God: he knows the hearts of men, which none but a God can know. 2. The commendation which is here given of this church for her labour, in propagating the goſpel, for her patience in bearing affliction and perſecution for it, for the ſtrictneſs of her diſcipline, that ſhe did not bear with, nor tolerate and endure, ſuch perſons as were either erroneous in judgment, or ſcandalous in practice; for her faithfulneſs in trying the authority of thoſe who pretended to an immediate call from God to be apoſtles, but were found liars and falſe prophets ; ſuch were thoſe two ſeducing heretics Ebion and Cerinthus, and their followers. Mark here, How our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth obſerve and approve, doth commend and praiſe, whatever is good in his church, and whatever is commendable and praiſe-worthy in the members of it ; yet at the ſame time, when he commends them for what is good, he reproves them for what is evil and amiſs; 3. The reprehenſion given, *verſ.* 4. *Nevertheleſs, I have ſomewhat againſt thee*, &c. As if Chriſt had ſaid, “ I obſerve amongſt you a great abatement of your former zeal and fervour; you have not that hearty love to me, and to one another, which you had at firſt, but verily you grow cooler when you ſhould grow better.” *Learn* hence, 1. That where there is truth of grace, there may yet be a ſad decay and declining in grace. 2. That Chriſt takes notice of, and is diſpleaſed with, ſuch decays and declining in grace, and ſeverely checks and reproves his people for them.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works: or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.

We had Chriſt's commendation and reprehenſion of the church of Epheſus before, we have his admonition and exhortation now. The words before us are partly monitory, and partly minatory ; monitory in the former part of the verſe, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.* *Note* here, That Chriſt did not ſurpriſingly come upon this church at unawares ; they were admoniſhed before chaſtiſed, warned before laid waſte ; Chriſt doth premoniſh before he puniſhes. In the minatory part we have a great guilt and ſin ſuppoſed, a great judgment for that guilt denounced, the unchurching of them that had committed it, and the means preſcribed for the averting of that judgment; to wit, repentance. *Learn* hence, 1. That a people profeſſing religion and godlineſs may fall. 2. That fallen profeſſors ſhould and ought to remember from whence they are fallen. 3. That falling profeſſors ſhould be repenting profeſſors, and do their firſt works. 4. That without repentance and reformation, God will certainly remove a people's candleſtick, take away the goſpel from them, as the ſevereſt judgment which he can inflict upon them ; *Remember, repent, and do thy firſt works, elſe I will remove thy candleſtick out of its place:* that is, ſuch a tempeſt of perſecution ſhall ariſe, as will ſhake your tottering candleſtick out of its place. The univerſal church only has a promiſe of ſtability ; any particular church may be unchurched finally.

6 But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, “ Though thou art not what thou ſhouldeſt be, yet this thou haſt commendable in thee, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans (who held community of wives, and eat things offered to idols) which impure ſect I alſo hate for their licentious doctrine, and lewd practices, which tend to the ruin and bane of human ſocieties.” *Note* here, 1. That it is not unlawful to call heretics by the name of their leaders ; the Nicolaitans are here ſo called from one Nicolas, ſuppoſed to be the deacon mentioned Acts vi. who having a beautiful wife, expoſed her as common, to avoid the imputation of jealouſy. 2. That Chriſt hated all licentious doctrines, and looſe practices, and ſo ſhould we.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches ;—

That is, “ Let all that hear or read theſe words unto the churches, which the Holy Spirit has uttered, conſider them, ſet their hearts to regard them as matters of great importance, and which nearly concern them. *Obſerve*, That this form of ſpeech, *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear*, Chriſt often uſed at the end of his parables, when he would ſtir up the people to more than ordinary attention ; and he uſes it here in this, and the next chapter, at the end of every one of theſe epiſtles to the ſeveral churches.

—To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life; which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, “ Let all ſuch as fall away from their holy profeſſion for fear of perſecution, conſider what they loſe, even eternal life, which I will only give to ſuch as perſevere ; for to him that overcometh trials and temptations, will I give ſhare of my merits, and thereby a title to eternal happineſs, ſignified by the tree of life in paradiſe.” *Note* here, 1. It is not ſaid, to him that ſtriveth or reſiſteth, will I give the crown of life, but to him that overcometh. Lazy wiſhes are ſo far from ſaving men, that endeavours, yea, ſtriving againſt temptation, without conquering and overcoming, will not ſave. It is not enough that we reſiſt, but we muſt conquer ; not ſufficient that we ſtrive, but we muſt overcome ; 2. From the promiſe that Chriſt makes of eternal life, *I will give*, a clear argument for Chriſt's being God, eſſentially God ; how is it elſe that he aſſumes to himſelf a power of diſpoſing eternal life.

8 ¶ And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, Theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jews and are not, but *are* the ſynagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer. Behold, the devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be tried; and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches; He that overcometh ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death.

Here we have the ſecond epiſtle which St. John wrote by the command of Chriſt to the church of Smyrna, a famous city in one of the provinces in Aſia where Polycarp was biſhop, and ſuffered martyrdom. Now, in this epiſtle we have theſe particulars obſervable, 1. The deſcription which Chriſt is pleaſed here to give of himſelf, namely, *the firſt and the laſt, which was dead and is alive*, and the ſuitableneſs

neſs of this deſcription, for the conſolation of this church, which was now under great tribulation. It is as if Chriſt had ſaid, "I am an eternal being, the firſt cauſe and laſt end; I was myſelf put to death, but I am alive again; therefore fear neither ſufferings nor death, for I will aſſiſt and ſtrengthen you, and if you loſe your lives for my ſake, I will raiſe your bodies again to everlaſting life." 2. The commendation given by Chriſt of this church at Smyrna, it is large and full; nay, Chriſt blameth nothing in this church; ſhe kept her purity faſt becauſe always in affliction: not but there were failings undoubtedly in this church; but almighty God mercifully overlooked them. As in the caſe of Job, no mention is made of his impatience, though he ſhewed much, but we are called upon him to behold him as a pattern of patience. Next, The particulars of this church's commendation. *I know*, ſays Chriſt; that is, I approve, commend, and praiſe, *thy works*, and *thy tribulation*, and *poverty*; that is, thy labour and ſufferings, and worldly poverty, which thy profeſſion of the goſpel hath brought upon thee: but though thou art outwardly poor, yet art thou inwardly rich, rich in grace, rich in faith and patience, rich in meekneſs and humility, rich in courage and chriſtian fortitude. And farther, I know alſo the *blaſphemy of them that ſay they are Jews, and are not*; that is, I know the malicious reproaches and evil ſpeeches of your enemies; caſt upon you, partly by native Jews, who glory in circumciſion and the law; and partly by falſe chriſtians, profeſſing faith in Chriſt, but not daring to own him for fear of perſecution. Theſe belong to Satan's ſynagogue, not to Chriſt's church. None are ſo bad as they who only profeſs and ſeem to be good. Farther, The encouragement which Chriſt gives this church to perſevere in the faith, though they ſhould ſuffer much ſharper things than ever they yet ſuffered; fear none of the things you may be called forth to ſuffer; what though the devil by his inſtruments caſts ſome of you into priſon, and you ſuffer for a ſhort time, be faithful to your profeſſion until the day of your death, and I ſhall reward you with a crown of life. *Note* 1. That Satan by his inſtrument has been the cauſe of all thoſe bitter and bloody perſecutions which chriſtianity in all ages hath undergone. 2. That though Satan's malice be infinite, yet his power is limited and bounded; he cannot do all the miſchief he would, and he ſhall not do all he can: Satan ſhall caſt you into priſon, but not into hell; and not all of you into priſon neither, but ſome only. 3. How mercifully almighty God over-rules the devil's rage and malice, making it ſubſervient to his own glory, and his church's good, cauſing that which Satan intended for deſtruction, to ſerve only for probation and trial. The devil's deſign by all thoſe floods of wrath, which he pours out againſt the church, is, that ſhe may be deſtroyed: but God's intent is only that ſhe may be tried; even as the wiſe refiner, when he caſts his gold into the furnace, deſigns the purifying of the metal, and only the conſuming of the droſs. 4. That the ſufferings of good men for the cauſe of chriſtianity, though they may be ſharp, yet ſhall they be but ſhort; *Ye ſhall have tribulation ten days*; that is, for a ſhort ſpace of time. 5. That a perſevering faithfulneſs in the ſervice of Chriſt in this life, is indiſpenſably neceſſary to our obtaining the crown of life and immortality in the world to come; laſtly, The concluſion of this epiſtle to the church of Smyrna: this is partly hortatory; *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.* The warnings of the Holy Spirit to the churches are recorded as of great concernment for all to mind: and partly promiſſory, *He that overcometh*; that is, conquereth the love of this world, and the love of life, when God calls him forth to ſuffer, he *ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death*; that is, he ſhall eſcape eternal miſery, that living death, and that dying life, which will be the aſſured lot and portion of the wicked and ungodly world.

12 ¶ And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, Theſe things ſaith he, which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, *even* where Satan's ſeat *is*: and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, to eat things ſacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicoliatans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth ſaving he that receiveth *it*.

In theſe verſes is contained the third epiſtle, which St John by direction had wrote and ſent to the church at Pergamos, in which (as in the former) we have, 1. A deſcription of Chriſt, as having a ſharp two-edged ſword in his mouth, denoting the word of God, and that piercing power which accompanies it to conquer the luſts and corruptions of men. As alſo, 2. A commendation of what was good and excelling in that church, *I know thy works*; that is, with a knowledge of intelligence and obſervation, as alſo with a knowledge of approbation and acceptation. I know thee to be good in bad places, and in the worſt of times, though thou dwelleſt where Satan's ſeat is; that is, where Satan bears ſway by idolatry and perſecution, yet doſt thou *hold faſt my name*; that is, the doctrine of the goſpel preached in my name, and by which I am made known to the world as a man is by his name; *and haſt not denied my faith*, but openly profeſſed it in a time of perſecution, even then when blood and ſlaughter attended the profeſſors and profeſſion of it, namely, when Antipas was ſlain (who probably was a biſhop, or ſome miniſter in Pergamos of extraordinary piety; for upon ſuch the ſtorm of perſecution generally falls) who died a faithful witneſs to the truth of my goſpel; even then and there, I ſay, hadſt thou the courage to profeſs my name, and bear witneſs to the truth. *Mark* here, What an honourable mention Chriſt makes of the ſervices and ſufferings of his people; nothing we either do or ſuffer for Chriſt, but it is recorded, and ſhall be remembered to our commendation and honour in this life, and to our conſolation and happineſs in the next. Yet *note* farther, The holy impartiality of our bleſſed Lord; at the ſame time, when he commends this church for what was commendable and praiſe-worthy, he reproves her for what was faulty and blame-worthy; verſe 14. *But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, and the Nicolaitans*; that is, the doctrine of the impure Gnoſtics, who teach men *now* to eat things offered to idols, and to commit fornication, even *as Balaam of old* directed Balac to inſnare the Iſraelites, by committing fornication with the Moabitiſh women, and to eat of what they ſacrificed unto idols then. Here *obſerve*, That it was not the being of thoſe heretics and hereſies among them, that Chriſt blames them for, but the tolerating of theſe in their communion, who made light both of adultery and idolatry. They ought to have executed church-diſcipline upon them, and denounced the church-cenſures againſt them, as had been done by the church of Epheſus before them, that Chriſt might have ſaid of them as he did of thoſe, ver. 6. *Thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate.* *Obſerve* next, The counſel which Chriſt gives this church, *Repent*; that is, be humbled for this thy connivance at, and tolerating of this wicked ſect, and damnable doctrine, and amend, or verily I will come quickly upon thee, and them, in a way of judgment, *and fight againſt them with a two-edged ſword*; that is, with my holy word convince, wound, and condemn them, &c. The want of zeal and ſeverity againſt ſin, and incorrigible ſinners, is very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and provokes him to anger greatly. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The concluſion and cloſe of this epiſtolary letter, which is partly exhortatory, *He that hath ears let him hear*, and with his mind ponder and conſider what the Spirit ſaith, by way of counſel and caution, unto the churches; and partly conſolatory, *To him that overcometh will I give*, &c. Mark, He doth not ſay, to every one that fighteth; no, nor to every one that conquereth in one, two, or more particular acts of reſiſtance; but to him that perſeveringly conquers, and finally overcomes both tempter and temptations, both perſecutors and perſecutions, both falſe teachers and falſe doctrines; to them will I give the *hidden manna*, laid up, not in the earthly tabernacle, but in the heavenly ſanctuary: by which underſtand Chriſt himſelf, and the joys and conſolations of the holy Spirit, which are hidden from the world, and the peculiar portion of ſuch as ſincerely believe in him, and cheerfully ſuffer for him. It is added, *I will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name*; that is, abſolution and pardon of ſin, together with the privilege of adoption; it being a cuſtom anciently to give a white ſtone in token of abſolution, and a black ſtone as a ſign of condemnation, on which ſtones were written the names of the innocent and guilty; accordingly this new name ſignifies God's pardoned and adopted ones; the ſweetneſs and comfort of which privilege no man knows, but he that is poſſeſſed of it; the happineſs of God's ſons both here and hereafter cannot be expreſſed: only they that are ſo, know what it is to be ſo: and whereas Chriſt ſays, *I will give* the hidden manna, *I will give* the white ſtone, and the new name, to them that overcome, ſurely it affords a good argument to evince and prove his divinity: who but a God can pardon ſin, and ſanctify and ſave ſinners?

18 ¶ And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, Theſe things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine braſs; 19 I know thy works and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the laſt *to be* more than the firſt. 20 Notwithſtanding I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezebel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs, to teach and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication; and ſhe repented not. 22 Behold, I will caſt her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death: and all the churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

The next epiſtle is directed by Chriſt, and written by St John, to the church at Thyatira; in which epiſtle *obſerve*, 1. The name given to Chriſt; he is ſtyled the Son of God; that is, by eternal generation, being the only begotten of the Father, as well as begotten of the Father only; and partaker of the Father's eſſence, as well as of his likeneſs; he is here called the Son of God, as being a diſtinct perſon from the Father; yet is he the *firſt* and the *laſt*, which denotes his eternity; and who *is*, and who *was*, and is to *come*, the Almighty, which are eſſential attributes of the Godhead. 2. The deſcription here given of Chriſt, *his eyes like flaming fire, and his feet like burning braſs*; denoting thereby his piercing and diſcerning ſight to ſee and obſerve his enemies, his fiery indignation, and fierce wrath, ready to take hold of them, and his irreſiſtible power and ſtrength to vanquiſh and tread them under his feet. 3. The great and ſpecial commendation which Chriſt gives to this church; greatly ſhe is commended for her charity to chriſtians in diſtreſs; for her ſervice in miniſtering to them, and in comforting of them; for her faith and conſtant adherence to the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and for her patience under perſecutions for the goſpel ſake; but her ſpecial and peculiar commendation was this, that *her laſt works were more than her firſt*; that is, her laſt works were better, did exceed and excel the firſt: Epheſus was beſt at firſt, and worſt at laſt; but Thyatira's laſt works were beſt. It is a bleſſed thing when chriſtians grow in goodneſs, increaſe in faith, and holineſs, when their laſt days are the beſt days, their laſt works, and their laſt fruit, their beſt, their faireſt fruit. 4. The reprehenſion follows the commendation; as good as Thyatira was, ſhe needed to be better. She was remiſs and negligent in her duty of reproving, cenſuring, excommunicating vile ſeducers, the Gnoſtics and Nicolaitans, the diſciples of Simon Magus, and his lewd Helena, as ſome think, compared to Jezebel, becauſe ſhe enticed Ahab to worſhip Baal, as this woman (whoſoever ſhe was) calling herſelf a propheteſs, and teaching the lawfulneſs of fornication, and eating things offered to idols. Some *obſerve*, That there was ſcarce any hereſy broached, but it had ſome woman or other for the propagater and promoter of it, who took upon them the name of propheteſſes. Simon Magus had his Helena; Montanus had his Priſcilla and Maximilla; Carpocrates his Marcellina. Concerning this perſon it is affirmed, that *God gave her ſpace to repent, but ſhe repented not. Learn* thence, That great is the ſin, folly, and danger, of deferring and putting off the duty of repentance, when God gives us time and ſpace ſufficient to perform it. 1. Great is the ſin, becauſe it is a mocking of God's patience, and undervaluing of his ſervice, a contempt of his authority, a preſuming on his goodneſs, a defiance of his diſpleaſure. 2. Great is the folly, as well as the ſin of it, becauſe we put it off to the moſt improper and unfitting ſeaſon, and becauſe we hereby make the work more hard and difficult, in what ſeaſon ſoever we ſet about it; and the longer we delay our repentance, the more work ſhall we make for repentance. 3. As great is the danger, as either the ſin or folly, becauſe it puts a perſon upon a mighty hazard, he runs a deſperate venture, not knowing whether he ſhall live an hour longer; and becauſe we forfeit by our delays that ſpecial grace, without the aſſiſtance whereof we can never repent. *Obſerve*, 5. How ſeverely God threatens Jezebel here, and in her all ſinners, to whom he gives ſpace for repentance, but it is not improved for that end; I will caſt her into a bed of tribulation and torment, inſtead of her bed of luſt and uncleanneſs, unleſs ſhe repent. Behold here how great and immeaſurable the patience of God is towards the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt of ſinners; they have ſpace for repentance, they have invitations to repent, they have judgments threatened to prevent their final impenitence: But if they prove incorrigible and unreclaimable, nothing is to be expected but approaching ruin; *I will kill her children with death*; that is, ſuch as are ſeduced by her ſhall ſuffer with her, if judgments threatened be not by repentance prevented. Laſtly, The end and deſign of Chriſt in bringing upon vile ſinners theſe exemplary puniſhments, namely, to declare his omniſciency, power, and juſtice. *All the churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the reins and hearts*; that is, all the churches in and about Thyatira, ſays Chriſt, ſhall know, that I not only obſerve outward acts, but take notice of the ſecret counſels, motions, and deſigns of men's hearts, and will judge every man according to his works: A full and clear text to prove the divinity of Chriſt; he that ſearcheth mens hearts, and renders to all men according to their works, is God; but Chriſt doth both, and therefore is eſſentially and truly God.

24 But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they ſpeak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have *already*, hold faſt till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 17 (And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers:) even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning-ſtar. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Here Chriſt returns in his counſel and charge given to the church at Thyatira; *unto you I ſay*; that is, to you the angel, the governors and paſtors, and to all the members of the church; I ſay unto you all, who have not owned nor entertained theſe doctrines of the Gnoſtics, who proudly call their filthy opinions profound myſteries, and depths of knowledge, though they are indeed the depths of Satan, his policies and devices; as if Chriſt had ſaid, "Theſe vile ſeducers call their opinions depths, and ſo they are, but depths of Satan; that is, ſuch depths as Satan has brought out of hell; they are the whiſperings and hiſſings of the old ſerpent, not the inſpirations of the holy God; to you, I ſay, that I will not impoſe or put upon you any new doctrine, but charge you to hold faſt the old, that apoſtolic doctrine which you have received; perſevere therein till I come to relieve you, and to releaſe you from your perſecutions, which will ſoon be at an end." *Obſerve* farther, How our Saviour concludes this epiſtle to the church of Thyatira, as he did the former, with a conſolatory promiſe to ſuch as overcome temptations, perſecutions, all, and all manner of oppoſition in their chriſtian converſation, and faithfully perſevere in well-doing to the end; *to him*, ſays Chriſt, *will I give power over the nations*; that is, power with me, and in ſubordination to me, to judge the world, wicked angels, and wicked men, at the great day; then ſhall you rule them with a *rod of iron, and daſh them to ſhivers like a potter's veſſel.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, "I have received power, as Mediator, from my Father, effectually to ſubdue and conquer all mine and your enemies, and I will make you partakers of it in ſome meaſure, you ſhall exerciſe an irreſiſtible power over them, by conſenting to, by approving and applauding of, that righteous judgment, which I ſhall denounce againſt them, and execute and inflict upon them. *Learn*, That believers ſhall ſit as aſſeſſors with Chriſt in judgment, and approve the equity of his proceedings, againſt the finally impenitent then, though never ſo near and dear unto them now. Laſtly, The full and final reward which Chriſt promiſes to him that finally perſevereth and manfully overcometh, *I will give him the morning ſtar:* that is, myſelf and Spirit to comfort him, and the light of glory to ſhine upon him to all eternity. *Note*, Chriſt is called a Star, becauſe he enlightens all with the light of natural knowledge, and his church with divine illumination; and the *Morning-ſtar*, peradventure with reſpect to his incarnation, becauſe as that riſes not at the beginning of the night, or at the middle of it, but towards morning; ſo Chriſt came not in the beginning or middle of the dark time under the law, but in the laſt age of the world, in which he has ſhined forth to the joy and comfort of all nations.

CHAP. III.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven ſpirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars; I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou haſt received and heard, and hold faſt, and repent. If therefore thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

This chapter begins with the fifth epiſtle, which Chriſt wrote and directed to the church of Sardis. In which *obſerve*, 1. The glorious deſcription given of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, namely, that he *has the ſeven ſpirits of God and the ſeven ſtars*; that is, according to ſome, he hath the holy Spirit of God proceeding from him as from the Father; and becauſe he had power to ſend the Holy Ghoſt, together with the Father, he is therefore ſaid to have the ſeven ſpirits of God; ſo the Holy Ghoſt is called, becauſe of the perfection and variety of his gifts and graces, influences and operations. Others by the ſeven ſpirits underſtand created angels; and the ſeven ſpirits being joined with ſeven ſtars, intimate, according to theſe, that Chriſt is the Lord of angels and miniſters, he upholds his miniſters, and has angels always at hand to defend his members. 2. This church's partial opinion of herſelf; in her own and others eſteem, ſhe was alive; thou haſt a repute for an excellent church, thy profeſſion cauſes many to think and ſpeak well of thee. 3. Chriſt's impartial judgment concerning her, as one that knew her better than either others did, or herſelf could know her; thou ſayeſt thou art thus and thus, alive and lively, but alas! thou art no better than dead, thou art dead or dying, thyſelf, and others are deceived concerning thee. *Learn* hence, 1. That it is poſſible for a profeſſing people to be alive in their own and others eſteem, and yet to be dead or dying in God's account; at the ſame time that they make a ſplendid and glorious profeſſion of religion, they may be under the reign and power of hypocriſy. 2. That no religious pretences, no fair ſhews, can poſſibly hide a perſon's or a people's hypocriſy from God's eye; thou ſayeſt that thou art thus, but I know thee better than others do, or thou canſt know thyſelf; thou haſt a name to live, but thou art dead. *Obſerve*, 4. The counſel given by Chriſt to this languid and languiſhing church. 1. To be watchful; to ſhake off her drowſineſs and formality; no reformation can be expected, if due conſideration, watchfulneſs, and care, be not exerciſed. 2. To ſtrengthen the things that are ready to die; that is, blow up every ſpark of grace which lodges under the aſhes of much corruption, and keep it from going quite out. Spirituals are to be ſuccoured and ſtrengthened, if once they grow languiſhing and dying, leſt they grow quite dead. 3. To remember what they had received and heard from Chriſt's apoſtles and miniſters, *to hold faſt* the truths received, and to *repent* of what is evil, and to reform what has been done amiſs; intimating, that it is the duty of chriſtians to remember thoſe truths which they have heard and received; and alſo to hold faſt what they have heard and received; and that renewed repentance is the duty of chriſtians as well as initial repentance. *Obſerve* 5. The complaint which Chriſt brings in againſt the church of Sardis, *I have not found thy works perfect before God:* Not full, ſays the original; that is, not filled up with that ſincerity and zeal which God requires: A man may be full of good works, and yet his works not be full; a man may be full of prayer, pray much, pray often, and yet his prayer not full, but vain and empty; ſincerity is the fulneſs or filling up of all duties; it is not common frailty, but the want of ſincerity and ſoundneſs, zeal, and ſeriouſneſs, which Chriſt complains of. 6. The danger threatened to ſecurity and ſlothfulneſs; *If thou ſhalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief*; that is, "I will ſurprize thee with my judgments in the midſt of thy ſecurity, as a thief does perſons when they are aſleep, and leaſt expect him;" the expreſſion plainly intimates, both the ſuddenneſs of the judgment, and the ſeverity of the judgment threatened.

4 Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Note here, That though the greater part in Sardis were dead or dying, that is, declining and decaying, yet there were ſome that kept their innocency, and preſerved themſelves from error and falſe worſhip, from erroneous principles and debauched practices. Farther, That theſe few which keep themſelves pure above the reſt, are not commanded to ſeparate from the reſt. Doctrines crying up purity to the prejudice of unity, reject; for the goſpel calls for unity as well as for purity. The reward promiſed to ſuch as keep themſelves in Sardis pure both from error and vice; *they ſhall walk with Chriſt in white*, like perſons of dignity and honour, like kings and conquerors, who of old wore white garments; they ſhall have the reward of their innocency and uprightneſs, for they are worthy of it, according to the law of grace, which promiſeth it to them; they have walked worthily, with a worthineſs of meekneſs, not with a worthineſs of merit; they are therefore meet receivers, though not meritorious purchaſers of this reward.

5 He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Obſerve, Chriſt doth not ſay, he that conflicteth, but he that vanquiſheth; not he that conquereth once or twice, in the ſpiritual combat, but he that overcomes at laſt the temptations and perſecutions from without, the luſts and corruptions from within, he *ſhall be clothed with white raiment*; that is, with robes of glory, as the reward of his innocency and virtue, and as a mark of dignity and honour; and farther, *I will not blot his name out of the book of life*; that is, they ſhall be enrolled in it, and certainly ſaved, and I will preſent them to my Father, yea, I will publicly own them, and confeſs them before God, angels, and men. Lord! what an honour is this, to know thy people by name, and to call them by name before thy throne, and there publicly to acknowledge them, and proclaim the good done by them! Oh let it be our care to get firſt the white garment of grace on earth, and then we ſhall not miſs of the white robes of glory in heaven.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Theſe words are the ſame exhortatory concluſions which we find added by Chriſt to all the foregoing epiſtles; and plainly ſignify thus much, that all perſons ſhould look upon themſelves as concerned in theſe ſeveral meſſages which the Spirit of Chriſt ſends unto the churches; hence it is ſo oft repeated both in the former chapter and in this chapter, becauſe it is of ſuch univerſal uſe, and ſo nearly concerns us all.

7 ¶ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, Theſe things ſaith he that is holy; he that is true; he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and ſhutteth, and no man openeth: 8 I know thy works: behold, I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it: for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the ſynagogue of Satan, which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Here we have the ſixth epiſtle endited by Chriſt, written and ſent by St. John to the church of *Philadelphia*, which name ſignifies *brotherly love*, and we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that grace of love, unity, and concord, was eminently found with and amongſt the members of this church, and had a mighty influence upon them in the practice of univerſal godlineſs, in as much us we find not this church blamed by Chriſt for any thing; not that ſhe was wholly faultleſs, and altogether unblameable, but being free from thoſe groſs miſcarriages which were in other chriſtians, and abounding with love to Chriſt, and one towards another, Chriſt graciouſly paſſes by and overlooks her failings and infirmities, and only proclaims her virtues and good works. Sincerity and love, though they do not blind Chriſt's eye, that he cannot ſee ſin in his people, yet it cauſes him to look upon their failings with a pitiful and compaſſionate eye. This Philadelphia is ſaid to be a mean city, not far from Sardis, yet here Chriſt had a very eminent church, not faulted for any thing; it is not the grandeur, but graciouſneſs of a people, that renders a place renowned: In this epiſtle to the Philadelphians, we have theſe particulars obſervable. 1. A lofty deſcription of Chriſt, by whoſe authority it was written, He is *holy and true*, holy in himſelf eſſentially, holy with reſpect to us communicatively, the author, approver, and diſpenſer of all holineſs; and *true*, that is, a lover and approver of truth. This title aſſures the church of the truth of all his predictions, promiſes, and threatenings; theſe two titles *Holy* and *true*, are generally aſcribed to God in the Old Teſtament; theſe, Chriſt in the New Teſtament often attributes to himſelf, which he had never done, had he not been truly and really God. The other part of the deſcription of Chriſt follows, *that hath the key of David*; that is, of the church, of which David was a type; by *the key* power is denoted; Chriſt, as Mediator, has an abſolute power over the church, being Lord and head of it, and has committed a miniſterial power of the keys to the governors and paſtors of it, and having this key of the church in his own hand, by virtue of it *he opens and none can ſhut*; *and ſhutteth, and none can open*; that is, he can open, when he will, the door of ſucceſs to his faithful miniſters, by opening the hearts of his people through the power of converting grace, and no man can ſhut that door which Chriſt will thus open; and again, when he ſhuts the finally impenitent out of the church and out of heaven, no man can open and bring them in againſt his will. 2. The ſpecial favour which Chriſt indulged to this church, namely, the favour of ſucceſs in her goſpel-adminiſtrations: *Behold, I have ſet before thee an open door.* Under the metaphor of *an open door*, the ſucceſs and progreſs of the goſpel, in the preaching and diſpenſation of it, is ſhadowed forth; it is a ſpecial favour from God when he opens a door of advantage to us to do good, the leaſt good, either by convincing or converting ſinners, or by edifying, ſtrengthening, and comforting ſaints, and when God is pleaſed to open ſuch door, none ſhall ſhut it. *Obſerve*, 3. The commendation given by Chriſt, of this church, *thou haſt a little ſtrength*; a little ſpiritual and inward ſtrength, and but few external and outward helps and advantages, *yet haſt thou kept my word*, my doctrine of faith, and my precepts for holy walking, theſe haſt thou kept pure, *and haſt not denied my name*, but adhered conſtantly to the profeſſion of me and my goſpel, notwithſtanding all the temptations thou haſt met with, by ſufferings and reproaches. *Note* here, How Chriſt took notice of that little meaſure of ſtrength which this church had, and accepted it; weak grace, if ſincere, ſhall always find acceptance with Chriſt; thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word. *Obſerve*, 4. The gracious promiſe made by Chriſt unto his church, that her enemies ſhould ſubmit themſelves unto her, and worſhip before her feet; *behold*, ſays Chriſt, *I will make them of the ſynagogue of Satan*, which falſely call themſelves Jews; I will make them, namely, by the power of my grace, to come and *worſhip* before thy feet; they ſhall reverence thee, and pay a civil reſpect to thee, and ſhall know that I have loved thee. *Learn* hence, That the ſubmiſſion, which the enemies of the church ſhall be forced to make unto her, by the power of Chriſt, is great and wonderful.

10 Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. And he ſhall go no more out: And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: And *I will write upon him* my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Still our bleſſed Saviour proceeds with promiſes and encouragements to this church, *becauſe thou haſt kept thy word* *of my patience.* Here *note*, That the doctrine of the goſpel is called the word of Chriſt's patience, partly becauſe it teaches patience in perſecuting times, and partly becauſe it is a doctrine, which cannot firmly be adhered to without patience, *thou haſt kept the word of my patience.* To keep this word of Chriſt's patience, implies not only the keeping his doctrine pure and uncorrupted from error, but alſo the obſerving and practiſing all the duties of a good life. And *note*, The reward promiſed to this church for the performing of this duty, *becauſe thou haſt kept—I will keep thee*; Chriſt will not be behind-hand in rewarding our obedience, no, not in this life, I will (here) *keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world.* Here *note*, 1. That a time of affliction, much more of perſecution, is a time of temptation, becauſe an afflicted and perſecuted ſtate hath many circumſtances attending it, by which all are tried, and ſome enſnared. 2. That a time of trial and temptation will come, moſt certainly come, ſooner or later, upon all perſons that dwell upon the earth, upon ſinners as well as ſaints, upon hypocrites as well as ſincere chriſtians; which trials will infallibly diſcover the faith and conſtancy of the one, the corruption and apoſtacy of the other. *Behold, I come quickly. Hold that faſt which thou haſt*, &c. *Obſerve* here, Notwithſtanding this church's conſtancy, yet Chriſt exhorts her to ſtedfaſtneſs, *hold faſt*; the ſteadieſt and moſt ſtedfaſt chriſtians have need to be often cautioned and counſelled againſt backſliding. *Obſerve* alſo, The encouragements which Chriſt gives his church to hold faſt her innocency, fidelity, and patience; the firſt is drawn from the ſhortneſs of her ſufferings, by reaſon of Chriſt's ſudden coming, *behold I come quickly*, that is, to deliver my faithful people, and to deſtroy their enemies; the ſecond is drawn from the hazard which they run of loſing the crown, for want of an unfainting perſeverance, *hold faſt, that no man take thy crown.* Where *note*, That only the preſevering chriſtian ſhall be crowned, and that each preſevering chriſtian ſhall have his own crown; there are probably differenecs of reward in heaven, as well as degrees of miſery in hell; for quality the glory will be the ſame, they ſhall ſhine as the ſun, for degree it will likely be differing as much as one ſtar differs from another ſtar in glory. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God*, &c. *Obſerve* here, Chriſt promiſes a threefold reward to them that finally overcome all the temptations and trials of this life. 1. They ſhall be *pillars* in God's temple, that is, honourable and glorious members of the triumphant glorified church, and ſhall have a fixed happineſs therein; poſſibly the Holy Ghoſt here alludes to the pillars in Solomon's temple, which were very beautiful. 2. *They ſhall go no more out*; the pillars in Solomon's porch were removed and carried away by the Chaldeans, but theſe pillars ſhall be perpetual, their glorious ſtate ſhall be a fixed unchangeable ſtate; when all the pillars of the earth ſhall tremble, theſe pillars in the temple of heaven ſhall remain immoveable to eternal ages. 3. As in pillars erected by men, their names were written and engraved, in like manner does Chriſt here promiſe the inſcription of a threefold name upon theſe pillars, the name of *God* the name of the *city of God*, and his *new* name. *The name of God* ſignifies the perſon to be an adopted child of God; *the name of the city of God*, declares ſuch a perſon to be a citizen of the new Jeruſalem, which is ſaid to *come down out of heaven*, that is, the knowledge of it comes down to us from God, elſe we had never known it, nor could ever have conceived of it; and Chriſt's *new* name, is that of the glorious Redeemer, and ſignifies him that overcometh ſhall be honoured as one of Chriſt's redeemed ones; the whole name put together, to wit, the name of God, the name of the city of God, and the new name, ſignifies an adopted ſon of God, and heir of the new Jeruſalem, and a living member of Chriſt the glorified Redeemer; thus ſhall it be done to them whom Chriſt delighteth to honour in the new Jeruſalem; they ſhall ſpend an eternity in the rapturous and raviſhing admiration of that love which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit beſtowed upon them, in making them firſt the adopted, and now the glorified ſons of God. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, &c. This is again the cloſe and concluſion of this as it was before of all the epiſtles, in which Chriſt calls upon all perſons to hear and conſider what he ſaith by his Spirit to his church, and to lay it deeply to heart for their inſtruction and admonition. The counſel which is given by Chriſt to one particular church, he requires and expects ſhould be applied to all, and improved by all.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, Theſe things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs, the beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then, becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.

This epiſtle to the Laodiceans is the ſeventh and laſt epiſtle which Chriſt commanded St. John at this time to write; moſt of the churches were found faulty before, but none like this here. Formality and hypocriſy, coldneſs and indifferency, in religion, had ſo far prevailed in this church, that we find nothing commended in them, nothing of good ſpoken of them, and none of them exempted from the general charge brought in againſt them for that lukewarmneſs and hypocriſy. In this epiſtle now before us, *obſerve*, 1. A deſcription of Chriſt in his deſervedly glorious titles, thus ſaith the *Amen*, *the faithful and true witneſs*, that is, he that is verity and truth itſelf, both in his promiſes and his threatenings, who is holy, and cannot lie; righteous, and cannot deceive; wiſe, and can never be deceived; therefore Chriſt takes upon him this name here of the faithful and true witneſs, to awaken theſe drowſy hypocrites, to ſee and conſider that he knows their ſtate and condition, and will teſtify and witneſs againſt them. There is no ſuch effectual remedy againſt hypocriſy, lukewarmneſs, and indifference, in the matters of religion, as a firm *belief of Chriſt's* omniſciency and veracity. The other title given to Chriſt, is *the beginning of the creation of God*; that is, *the beginner of the creation of God*, the original and firſt cauſe, by which all the creatures of God had their beginning. Chriſt is not only *principium principatum*, but *principium principians*; not the paſſive beginning, or he that firſt created, but the active beginning, or he by whom the creation was begun, both the old and new creation. Now, Chriſt takes upon him this title to encourage the Laodiceans to come unto him (according to the invitation given *verſe* 18.)

18.) to recover them from their formality, ſeeing he is omnipotent, and can give a being and beginning to grace in the new creation, as he did to nature in the old and firſt creation. 2. The reproof here given to this church of Laodicea, *I know thou art neither hot nor cold*, thou art not for open hereſy or infidelity, but likeſt well a profeſſion of chriſtianity; you receive the goſpel, and ſo are not quite cold, but you want zeal to ſuffer any thing for it, and ſo are not at all hot, I ſee nothing in thee but a lukewarm indifferency, for which I diſown thee, nay diſdain thee. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt loaths lukewarm perſons, who profeſs chriſtianity with reſerves for worldly ſafety. Theſe Laodiceans were neither enemies to Chriſt, nor true friends, but ſerved God and gain, Chriſt and the world by turns, as occaſion ſerved. 2. Though God abominates lukewarmneſs and want of zeal, yet he will not diſown thoſe who have any ſpark of true zeal, though defective, and culpably remiſs, he will not quench ſmoaking flax, but blow it up into a holy flame; but all that have not ſo much zeal as to prefer Chriſt before the world, ſhall be accounted his enemies, and diſowned by him.

17 Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 18 I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich; and white raiment that thou mayeſt be clothed, and *that* the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve that thou mayeſt ſee.

Obſerve here, 1. This church's partial opinion of herſelf, her vanity and vain-glorious oſtentation, accompanied with ſelf-eſteem. 2. That this boaſting and vain-glorious oſtentation did very probably ſpring from, and was occaſioned by, this church's worldly proſperity. We are apt to miſtake the warm ſun for God's bleſſing, and to apprehend when we are great, that we are gracious; and becauſe rich in goods, conclude ourſelves rich in grace: But alas! God lifts up the light of his common providence upon thouſands whom he does not lift up the light of his reconciled countenance upon. 3. Chriſt's impartial judgment concerning this church of Laodicea, *Thou ſayeſt thou art rich, and needeſt nothing*; but I ſay, *thou art wretched, and miſerable*, &c. Behold here, how ſome have little or no grace, who yet conceit they have much grace; as ſome reckon their temporal, ſo there are others that value their ſpiritual eſtate, at many thouſands beyond what it really is, and when upon a juſt balance of account, they are worth nothing. Ah miſerable ſouls! empty and guilty, poor and pennyleſs in ſpirituals, wanting every thing, but eſpecially a ſight and ſenſe of their poverty and wants. 4. The counſel given by Chriſt to this church, very ſuitable to her condition; what pinches more than poverty? Here is gold to enrich us. What ſhames us more than nakedneſs? Here is a promiſe of raiment to clothe and cover us. What afflicts and grieves us more than blindneſs? Here is eye-ſalve to anoint us. But *obſerve* the order of the words, 1. Chriſt ſays not, *I command thee*, but *I counſel thee*. O infinite condeſcenſion! the Lord Jeſus does not always command like a king, but ſometimes counſels like a friend; he counſels us by his Spirit, he counſels us by his miniſters, he counſels us by our own conſciences. 2. Chriſt's counſel is to *buy*; that is, earneſtly to deſire, and ſincerely to endeavour, the procuring ſuch ſpiritual bleſſings as we want; we buy with our prayers, our tears, our endeavours. 3. The bleſſings offered, *tried gold*, that will bear the touch-ſtone, that faith and holineſs which will give thee boldneſs in judgment. White raiment, or the merits of the Mediator, which covers our ſhame and nakedneſs out of the ſight of God. An eye-ſalve, or the grace of ſpiritual illumination, whereby we ſee the want and worth of theſe ſpiritual bleſſings.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten: Be zealous therefore and repent.

Here Chriſt lets the Laodiceans underſtand, that although he had been ſharp with them, in reproving them for their formality and lukewarmneſs, yet it was upon a merciful deſign towards them, it proceeded from a principle of love in him, for *as many as I love*, ſays Chriſt, *I rebuke and chaſten*. Chriſt does not therefore hate his children becauſe he corrects them, but he therefore corrects them becauſe he loves them. Name the favourite whom God loved too well to ſtrike; nay, commonly there goes the ſevereſt exerciſes, where there has been the greateſt love. Let not then God's chaſtenings of us abate our love to him; neceſſity compels God to correct; nothing is done by rods but what could not be effected without them: *Be zealous therefore and repent*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, O Laodicea! lay aſide thy lukewarm indifferency, and be fervent in my ſervice, repent and amend your ways, if you would eſcape your chaſtenings and rebukes, for I had much rather give you the kiſſes of my lips than the blows of my hand: if then you love not correction, prevent it by zeal and reformation.

20 ¶ Behold I ſtand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.

Theſe words are very expreſſive of the tender love, and gracious condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards poor ſinners, full of heavenly rhetoric, to win and gain their hearts unto himſelf. Here *obſerve*, That man's heart is Chriſt's door, that this door of the heart is naturally ſhut, yea, locked and barred againſt Chriſt by ignorance and infidelity; that, notwithſtanding this, Chriſt knocks graciouſly at the door of men's hearts by his word, by his rod, by his Spirit; knocking is a vehement motion, a reiterated motion, we knock again and again; a gradual motion, firſt more gently, then loudly; and it is a finite motion, men will not always continue knocking, but if none anſwer, they turn their backs and go their way. All the knocks of Chriſt will ceaſe and end, his Spirit will not always ſtrive. Farther, Chriſt doth not only knock, but ſtands knocking, it denotes the aſſiduity of Chriſt in waiting upon ſinners, and his patience in knocking; ſtanding is a waiting poſture, it denotes an earneſt deſire and patient expectation. Though Chriſt knocks at the door of man's heart, he doth not break it open, he doth not offer violence to men's wills, and ſave them againſt their wills, but the holy Spirit inclines them to hear Chriſt's voice, and enables them to open the door to him, cauſing them to approve of and conſent to the offer and call of Chriſt.

The door is no ſooner open, but Chriſt comes in and ſups with the ſinner; his *coming in* denotes our union to him; his *ſupping*, our communion with him, imperfect on earth, complete in heaven; there is a mutual, ſweet, and intimate communion between Chriſt and believers here on earth; there will be a perfect, complete, and uninterrupted communion with him in heaven, when they ſhall ever be with the Lord.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.

Here our Saviour concludes this epiſtle, as he did the former, with a promiſe to the perſevering chriſtian, *to him that overcometh*, namely, all the trials and temptations of this life, and keeps his faith, love, and obedience entire to the end, *I will grant*, not in a way of merit, but of free gift and grace, *to ſit down with me in my throne*, namely, to partake of the ſame power and glory, and kingdom, that I as Mediator do now partake of. Where *obſerve*, Chriſt here diſtinguiſhes between his own throne and his Father's; the former ſeems to be his mediatorial, the latter his eſſential, throne; and he plainly tells us, that as he obtained his glory by overcoming Satan and the world, ſo muſt we, *to him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me*, &c. the way to heaven for Chriſt and all his members is the ſame; as he conquered and finally overcame on earth before he was crowned in heaven, ſo muſt they.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Thus Chriſt ſhuts up this, as he did all the preceding epiſtles before, with a repeated exhortation to all chriſtians to the end of the world, to hear, read, attend unto, and obſerve all the cautions and warnings, all the reproofs and counſels, all the promiſes and threatenings, contained in this and the other epiſtles, as matters that do greatly concern all chriſtians to underſtand and know.

CHAP. IV.

AFTER this I looked, and behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: And the firſt voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which ſaid, Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee things which muſt be hereafter.

As if St. John had ſaid, After my firſt viſion was over, being deſirous farther to underſtand and know the mind of God, I looked upwards to heaven, from whence divine revelations come, and it was repreſented to me as if a door were opened into the third heavens; and I apprehended, that I heard that former voice, which ſpake to me in the firſt chapter, now ſpeaking to me again, namely, the voice of Chriſt, ſounding like a trumpet in my ear, and ſaying, *Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee*, or give thee a clear repreſentation of, *things that ſhall be hereafter*. Where *note*, 1. That ſuch a ſoul as has taſted the ſweetneſs of communion with Chriſt, does long for the farther and fuller enjoyment of him. *After this I looked:* It was a gracious viſion he had of Chriſt in the firſt chapter, but it did only whet his deſires after more communion with him, and clearer manifeſtations from him. 2. That the knowledge which advances and improves a man's underſtanding on earth, comes all from heaven: Thither we muſt look up, and from thence ſeek, if we will know the things of God.

2 And immediately I was in the ſpirit: And behold, a throne was ſet in heaven, and *one* ſat on the throne. 3 And he that ſat was to look upon like a jaſper and a ſardine ſtone: And *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald.

I was in the ſpirit: that is, in an ecſtacy, in a trance, in a rapture of delight and joy, raviſhed in ſpirit. This viſion was repreſented to his mind more lively than any corporeal objects could be to his outward ſenſes, which were now all bound up. *Obſerve* here, 1. The viſion itſelf, *a throne ſet in heaven*; St. John's mind was not taken up with earthly matters: Worldly crowns and ſceptres were now poor things in his eſteem, and will be ſo in the eſtimation of all others, who have a proſpect of a throne in heaven, as our apoſtle had. 2. The perſon whom he ſaw ſitting upon his throne, God the Father in royal majeſty, whoſe power and glory was repreſented by the ſimilitude of precious ſtones, particularly by the jaſper and and ſardine ſtone; which ſtone, ſay ſome, being of a red and fiery colour, repreſented how terrible God is in judgment, clothed with omnipotent power and inflexible juſtice; but to allay the terror of this viſion, St. John ſaw *a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald:* this was very comforting, for the rainbow was of old a token of God's covenant, Gen. ix. that he would never more drown the world by water; here it denotes the covenant of grace, whereby the church is ſecured from the deluge of God's wrath by the blood of a Mediator; and mark, this rainbow was round about the throne; let God look which way he will, here is that which reminds him of his covenant and promiſe; and the colour of this rainbow was like an emerald; that is, of a moſt pleaſant and delightful greenneſs; ſignifying, that Almighty God, in mindfulneſs of his covenant, takes unſpeakable delight and pleaſure in the exerciſe of mercy towards his children, even then when he appears clothed with terror, to judge and ſentence an impenitent world. Bleſſed be God, that he that ſitteth upon the throne of judgment has a rainbow about him, giving full aſſurance, that, for his covenant ſake, the floods of his wrath ſhall not overwhelm his children when his enemies are ſwept away with the deluge of deſtruction.

4 ¶ And round about the throne *were* four and twenty ſeats: And upon the ſeats I ſaw four and twenty elders ſitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

St. John having deſcribed Almighty God as ſitting upon his throne in the former verſe, here he declares whom he ſaw about the throne as aſſeſſors with him, namely *Four and twenty elders:* by which ſome underſtand the patriarchs and apoſtles, as repreſentatives of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian church; others underſtand hereby the whole body of private chriſtians, a certain number being put for an uncertain, who are repreſented, 1. *As round about the throne*, to denote their nearneſs unto God, and their communion with him. 2. As *ſitting*, to ſignify their ſtate of reſt and eaſe, and to denote their ſettled and ſecure condition of happineſs which they now enjoy. 3. *As clothed with white raiment*, to repreſent their prieſtly dignity, that they were all prieſts unto God; as alſo their celeſtial purity and glory. 4. As having on *their heads crowns of gold*; this kingly dignity, that as kings they do, and ſhall reign with Chriſt for ever and ever, who having *loved them, and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood, has made them kings and prieſts unto God*. 5. They are called *elders*, to ſignify their great wiſdom and experience; ſuch as with patriarchs and apoſtles have done the greateſt ſervices for God on earth, ſhall ſhare with him in the higheſt dignity and honour in heaven, ſitting nearer the throne than others: St. John ſaw the elders not only near the throne, but ſitting round about it.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices: And *there were* ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God.

By the *throne*, God is repreſented as a Judge; by the *thunderings*, and *lightnings*, and *voices*, is repreſented the terribleneſs of God in judging ſinners. As the law was delivered upon mount Sinai in lightning and thunder, ſo will there be the ſame, nay, far greater dread and terror, when God comes to judge and plead with ſinners for their wilful and repeated tranſgreſſions of that law. By the *ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne*, ſome underſtand the holy Spirit of God in its manifold gifts and graces, enlightening, quickening, warming, comforting, the church of God; others underſtand the holy angels, who are continually waiting upon this Judge, and attending of this judicature, who are as his eyes and feet; that is, his ready inſtruments to execute his pleaſure. God, in the judgment of the great day will be attended by his ſaints as aſſeſſors, by his angels as aſſiſtants.

6 ¶ And before the throne *there was* a ſea of glaſs like unto chryſtal.—

By this *ſea of glaſs* there ſeems to be an alluſion to that large veſſel of water in the temple, called the brazen ſea, in which Aaron and his ſons did waſh themſelves before they adminiſtered in holy things; ſignifying that purity which is required in all the worſhippers, but eſpecially in all the miniſters of God: And becauſe the uſe of this ſea, in the temple, is made good in Chriſt, the laver of his blood might be ſignified by this ſea of glaſs here repreſented, which is compared to chryſtal; denoting the ſpotleſs innocency of his perſon and ſufferings, and the purity and clearneſs of his juſtified members. Others, by this ſea of glaſs, will have the world repreſented to St. John's viſionary view: The world (ſay they) is compared to *a ſea* for its inſtability, tempeſtuouſneſs, and uncertain motion; to a *ſea of glaſs*, for its ſlipperineſs, and for its brittleneſs: Glaſs yields no good footing to any that ſtand upon it, nor does the world to any that ſtay themſelves upon it; and to *a ſea of glaſs like chryſtal*, becauſe of the clearneſs and tranſparency of it to God; he ſees quite through it, all the counſels and actions of men being naked and open before God and the throne.

—And in the midſt of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beaſts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the firſt beaſt *was* like a lion, and the ſecond beaſt like a calf, and the third beaſt had a face as a man, and the fourth beaſt *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about him; and *they were* full of eyes within: And they reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

By the four beaſts here, underſtand the four evangeliſts in ſpecial, and all goſpel miniſters in general, who went forth to preach the word in all the quarters of the world: And here we have a moſt ſtately emblem of true goſpel-miniſters, they have the courage of the lion, the ſtrength of the ox, the loftineſs of the eagle, the face, that is, the prudence and diſcretion of a man. Farther, they are deſcribed *as full of eyes*; they have eyes looking *before* them to God for direction, looking *behind* them to the flocks they lead, and *within* them to their own hearts. They have alſo ſix wings; with two they cover their faces, manifeſting their deep reverence of God, with two they cover their feet, manifeſting the humble ſenſe of their infirmities, and with two they fly with cheerful expedition to the ſervice of God. *Obſerve* next, What was repreſented to St. John, as the perpetual employment and work of heaven; namely, inceſſantly to admire, love, and praiſe the holineſs of God, which is the excellency of all his other excellencies. *Learn* hence, That the celebrating of the praiſes of the moſt high and holy God, is the inceſſant work of glorified ſaints and angels in heaven, and a very great part of the work and duty of the faithful miniſters of God here on earth. 2. From this example, how much it is the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, to ſtudy and endeavour to make God known in all his glorious attributes, particularly in his holineſs and his power; as alſo in his eternity and ſimplicity, as he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, without variation, and ſhadow of changing.

9 And when thoſe beaſts give glory and honour and thanks to him that ſat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. 10 ¶ The four and twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: For thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.

Obſerve here, 1. How St. John ſaw both beaſts and elders repreſenting miniſters and people, unitedly joining together; and with one conſent ſounding forth the high praiſes of their God; intimating, how the whole body of ſincere chriſtians ought heartily to join with their faithful miniſters in that bleſſed work of praiſing and worſhipping the eternal

God. 2. That as a farther act of homage and adoration, the four and twenty elders caſt *their crowns down to the ground*; not in a way of contempt and diſdain, as if they ſlighted the glory conferred upon them by God, but in a way of humble gratitude, attributing their victory and reward to God, and not to themſelves, and acknowledging that whatever honour they have, they have it from God's hand, and are willing, very willing, and ready to lay it down at God's feet, and to diveſt themſelves of it, that they may put honour upon God; profeſſing hereby, that all the goodneſs wrought in them, or done by them, does proceed from God's free grace and mercy, and that the glory of it is entirely due to him. 3. The hymn of thankſgiving itſelf, which was jointly ſung among them, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory*, &c. As if they had ſaid, That God thou art, unto whom all the homage and adoration of thy creatures are juſtly and peculiarly due; for thou haſt created all things by thy omnipotent power, and for thy pleaſure, and for the manifeſtation of thy glory, they are ſtill preſerved as they were at firſt created. Where *remark*, That every moment's preſervation is virtually a new creation, and that the ſame omnipotent power is neceſſary every moment to preſerve us, which was at firſt requiſite to create us. Therefore worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and everlaſting praiſes, as thou art he who giveſt being to all creatures, and therefore giveſt it them, that they might love and laud, magnify and bleſs, glorify and ſerve, honour and obey thee, their great Creator, and gracious Preſerver. *Amen*.

CHAP. V.

AND I ſaw in the right hand of him that ſat on the throne, a book written within, and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals.

In this chapter we have a continuation of the viſion recorded in the former chapter: There St. John ſaw a throne ſet in heaven, and a perſon ſitting upon that throne in majeſty and great glory, repreſenting to him God the Father. Here he beholds the ſame glorious perſon ſitting upon the throne, with a book in his right hand, *written within and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals*. *Obſerve* here, 1. What St. John ſaw, namely, *a book*, by which Mr. Mede and others underſtand a roll, containing God's decrees and counſels, his purpoſes and reſolutions, concerning the future ſtate of the church, as they were to be fulfilled according to prophecy, and brought to paſs in ſeveral ages, as the providence of God ſhould order and ſee fit. 2. The perſon in whoſe hand this book of the ſecret counſels of God was; namely, in God's own hand, and in his *right hand*, thereby denoting his authority to impart and communicate the knowledge of this ſealed book to whom he pleaſed, and as he pleaſed. And as none but God himſelf can declare who God is, ſo none but God himſelf can declare what God does, and what in after ages he will do. 3. The copious fulneſs of this book, it was written *within*, and *on the backſide*, inſide and outſide filled up, ſo that there was no room left either for *addition* or *alteration*. 4. It was a ſealed book, yea, ſealed with ſeven ſeals, denoting the matters that are therein contained to be moſt divine and excellent, ſecret and myſterious, certain and unalterable, and the knowledge of them impoſſible without the help and favour of ſpecial revelation.

2 And I ſaw a ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much becauſe no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders ſaith unto me, Weep not: Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to looſe the ſeven ſeals thereof.

Obſerve, 1. Here is a proclamation made by an extraordinary angel, like an herald or officer, inquiring who was *worthy*, either in regard of *authority*, or in reſpect of *ability*, to open this book, and unlooſe the ſeals; that is, to diſcloſe the ſecret counſels of God, and to make them known unto the ſons of men; *implying*, that every angel in heaven is not worthy or meet to be the expoſitor of God's mind and myſteries unto man. 2. The great ſilence which there was in heaven upon this proclamation, amounting to an abſolute and peremptory denial, that not any one, either in heaven or earth, or under the earth; not angel in heaven, nor any ſaint living upon earth; nor any dead ſaint under the earth, nor any devil or infernal ſpirit, was either worthy to open the book, or able to foreſee and foretel the leaſt event concerning the church, farther than revealed to them. *Learn* hence, That neither angels nor devils do underſtand the myſterious counſels of God, or can reveal future things to man, any farther than as God is pleaſed to reveal the ſame unto them. *Obſerve*, 3. St. John's great and bitter lamentation, becauſe no perſon was found worthy to open the book, and reveal unto the church, the ſecret counſels of God concerning her; *I wept much*; fearing, no doubt, leſt the church of God ſhould be deprived of the benefit and comfort of this relation. Such as are the true members of the church are greatly afflicted with all the providential diſpenſations of God which do befal her; but nothing goes ſo near them, as to have the mind and will of God hidden and concealed from her. 4. A ſeaſonable conſolation given to St. John; one of the elders that were about the throne ſaid to him, Weep not, for care is taken for the opening and revealing of the book. Chriſt, who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Son of David, as man, and the root of David, as God, is found worthy, in regard of the dignity of his perſon, and the prevalency of his merits, to open unto the church all the myſteries of God, which are meet and convenient for her to underſtand and know. *Queſt.* Why is Chriſt called the Lion of the tribe of Judah? *Anſ.* In alluſion to Jacob's bleſſing, Gen. xlix. where Judah is called a lion's whelp, denoting the dignity and ſuperiority of that tribe above the reſt. Now, Chriſt deſcended of this tribe, and is called a lion, in regard of his kingly power and ſtrength, in regard of his ſtoutneſs and courage, in regard of his mildneſs and clemency, and true nobleneſs of ſpirit ſubmit and yield unto him, and in reſpect of his vigilancy and watchfulneſs over his church; all which are the known properties of the lion; and as that creature is the king of beaſts, ſo is Chriſt King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only potentate; dominion and fear are with him. *Queſt.* But how could Chriſt be called David's root, when we know that David did not ſpring from him, but he from David, according to the fleſh? *Anſw.* In a natural ſenſe, David was the root of Chriſt, but in a ſpiritual ſenſe, Chriſt was the root of David. David, as man, was the root of Chriſt; Chriſt, as mediator and God-man, was the root of David. Thus he was both David's Lord, and David's ſon.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt of the throne and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders ſtood a lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beaſts, and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of ſaints. 9 ¶ And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the earth.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. John had a viſion of Chriſt in the former verſe, under the repreſentation of a lion: Here he is repreſented under the form and figure of a lamb, as wounded, bloody, ſacrificed, and ſlain; as bearing upon him the ſigns and ſcars, the marks and tokens of his bypaſt death; his appearing as a lamb ſlain, denoted his death; his ſtanding, denoted his reſurrection. *There ſtood a lamb as it had been ſlain*, it is added *having ſeven horns*, the ſtrength of a beaſt lying in its horns; this expreſſion of *ſeven horns* denotes, that omnipotent power which Chriſt has in himſelf, and that fulneſs of power which he does exert, and put forth on all occaſions in defence of his church. It follows, *and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God*; theſe repreſent the holy Spirit of God in its manifold graces given by Chriſt unto the church, as his agent and advocate upon earth; ſo that here in the text and context are all the three perſons in the holy Trinity, whoſe divinity we believe, and in whom we truſt; God the Father upon the throne, with a book in his hand; Chriſt the Lamb in the midſt of the throne opening the book; and the ſeven ſpirits, or Holy Ghoſt, diſtinct from the two former. 2. The office, which Chriſt, as Mediator God-man, performs; he goes to the throne, and takes the book out of the Father's hand; that is, he received power from God to open the book of myſteries, and to execute them: Chriſt ſat upon the throne as God, but went to the throne for the book, as God-man; this power was due unto him as the reward of his ſufferings. 3. The joyful acclamations accompanied with the profoundeſt adorations, which were deſervedly given by the holy inhabitants of heaven to Jeſus Chriſt, as the only perſon worthy to take the book, and open the ſeals. *Note* here, Divine worſhip given to Chriſt the Lamb, which proves his deity; they ſing an hymn of divine praiſe to the bleſſed Redeemer, with harps, and golden vials in their hands, a *new ſong*; that is, a moſt excellent ſong, ſetting forth the benefits, and extolling the praiſes of the Lord the Redeemer. *Obſerve*, 4. The church's celebration of thoſe benefits and bleſſings, which by the death of Chriſt ſhe had received, namely, 1. They were redeemed unto God out of every kindred and tongue, people and nation; which ſhews the univerſal extent of the goſpel-church ſcattered over the face of the whole earth, in and among all the nations of the world. 2. They were by him made kings and prieſts unto God, to reign on earth; that is, ſpiritual kings and prieſts unto God, to reign over ſin, Satan, and the world, trampling their ſpiritual enemies under their feet, not expecting an earthly dominion.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beaſts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying, bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beaſts ſaid, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, 1. The office of the holy angels in heaven declared, they ſtand *round about the throne of God* continually, as nobles, and chief miniſters of ſtate attend upon a prince, awaiting his pleaſure, and expecting his commands. 2. The numberleſs number of them, *Thouſands of thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand*; and as almighty God is attended by an innumerable company of angels in heaven, ſo do the holy angels ſtand ready to accompany and protect his people here on earth, Pſal. xxxiv. 7. *They encamp round about them.* 3. How readily and cheerfully the holy angels joined with the elders, in bleſſing and praiſing Chriſt, for the invaluable fruits and benefits of man's redemption; thoſe beneficent ſpirits rejoice in our happineſs; they joy at the converſion of a ſinner, and triumph at the glorification of a ſaint. Here they are ſaid to ſing with a *loud voice*, to ſhew their affection and zeal in the work of bleſſing and praiſing God for Jeſus Chriſt, who is an head of confirmation to them, as he was an head of redemption unto us. 4. How the angels give the ſame worſhip, pay the ſame homage, aſcribe the ſame honour to Chriſt, which they do to God the Father; this had never been given, had he not been eſſentially God: The angels pronounce and proclaim Jeſus Chriſt worthy of omnipotent power; and that honour, glory, and bleſſing, do appertain to him for evermore. Laſtly, That not only all the angels, but all the creatures in *heaven*, in *earth*, *under the earth*, and in the *ſea*, all and every of them, do worſhip Chriſt with religious worſhip, and pay him divine honour; adore him that ſits on the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever, that is, the rational part of the world, to wit, angels and men, actively: The ſenſitive part of the world, objectively: The diabolical part, paſſively: Chriſt extorts that glory from them by their torments, which they refuſe to give unto him by confeſſions, and voluntary acknowledgments. What greater argument than this can we deſire for our ſatisfaction, that Chriſt is truly and eſſentially God? He thinks it no robbery to be equal with God, to ſhare with him in all that honour and homage, in all that adoration and religious worſhip which the whole creation do pay to almighty God; for thus do the angels and elders above, and the whole church militant here below, chaunt forth the praiſes of the Creator and Redeemer, ſaying,

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Amen, Hallelujah.

CHAP. VI.

AND I ſaw when the Lamb opened one of the ſeals, and I heard as it were the noiſe of thunder, one of the four beaſts ſaying, Come, and ſee. 2 And I ſaw, and behold a white horſe: and he that ſat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

The former chapter acquainted us with Chriſt's receiving of the ſealed book; this, with the opening of it ſeal by ſeal, Chriſt reveals unto St. John the deep counſels of God, which were hidden and ſecret: the only begotten Son that lay in the boſom of the Father he hath revealed them, he only received authority, and he only was endued with ability to reveal them. *Note*, 1. The preparation made for St. John's viſion of the ſeals; he ſtanding afar off with profound reverence, heard a voice like thunder proceeding out of the mouth of one of the four beaſts, who performed the office of a public crier, ſaying, *Come, and ſee.* It is dangerous ſearching into God's ſecrets, and prying into his hidden counſels, until we have a call and commiſſion, a command and invitation, from God himſelf ſo to do; thus had St. John here; one ſaid unto him, *Come* near, *and ſee*. *Note*, 2. The viſion itſelf, *I beheld a white horſe, and he that ſat on him had a bow and a crown*, &c. By the white horſe is generally underſtood the goſpel, ſo called in regard of the divinity and ſpotleſs purity of its doctrine: the rider upon this horſe is Chriſt, who rode ſwiftly in the miniſtry of the apoſtles and other faithful teachers in the firſt ages of chriſtianity; and he rode with a bow in his hand, and a crown on his head: with a bow, that is with threatnings and terrors denounced againſt his enemies before they were inflicted upon them, as the bow is firſt held in the hand, then the arrow prepared upon the ſtring, and at laſt ſhot forth: and with a crown, denoting that royal ſtate of kingly dignity and honour, to which Chriſt the Lamb that was ſlain was now exalted, and thus he rode on conquering and to conquer, until he had conſummated his victories in a glorious triumph over his enemies, namely, in the converſion of ſome, and deſtruction of others; thus the opening of the firſt ſeal gave the church a very encouraging and comfortable proſpect of the victories, ſucceſſes, and triumphs of Chriſt, notwithſtanding the rage, ſubtlety, and power of all his enemies: Chriſt rode on with a bow in his hand, and with a crown on his head, conquering and to conquer, until his arrows were ſharp in the hearts of his crucifiers; and will thus ride on till the people fall under him, and all his enemies become his footſtool.

3 And when he had opened the ſecond ſeal, I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 4 And there went out another horſe *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that ſat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was given unto him a great ſword.

The ſecond ſeal opened did repreſent to St. John's viſionary view, *a red horſe*, of a bloody colour, denoting firſt the dreadful execution of God's wrath upon the Jews, embroiling the land with wars, diviſions, bloodſhed, unpeaceable tumults, killing and ruining one another, to which purpoſe he apprehended that he ſaw a ſword in his hand that rode upon this horſe, ſignifying the great ſlaughter which would be committed by the Jews upon one another. Others, ſecondly, by this *red horſe* underſtand the bloody Roman emperors, Nero, Trajan, &c. and the perſecution which the primitive church underwent in their days: Euſebius relates, that ſo fierce was their rage againſt the poor chriſtians, that a man might ſee cities full of dead bodies, old and young, men and women, caſt out naked, without any reverence of perſons, or regard to ſex. From hence we may *learn*, What little reaſon the chriſtian church has *to think ſtrange of the fiery trial, as if ſome ſtrange things happened to them*; when as we ſee all the rage and cruelty, all the blood and violence, which the chriſtian church has fallen under in the ſeveral ages of it, have been from the beginning revealed and prophetically foretold.

5 And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The third ſeal opened, ſets forth the great calamity which ſhould befal the church by famine, which ſome underſtand literally, others figuratively and myſtically. 1. A literal famine in Judea, ſeems here to be prefigured by a perſon riding on a black horſe with a balance to weigh food in his hand; famine diſcolours the face of men, and makes them look black, ſad, and diſmal; accordingly it is repreſented by a black horſe; and the rider having a pair of ſcales in his hand to weigh corn by the pound, and not to meaſure it by the buſhel, imports the great ſcarcity that there ſhould be of bread; and St. John heard a voice ſaying, *A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny.* The Roman penny was the ordinary wages for a day's work to a labourer, ſo that the quantity of bread was but ſufficient to keep perſons alive for one day. Famine is a very ſore and terrible judgment, it conſumes a people by piece-meal; other judgments cut off ſuddenly, but this is a lingering and languiſhing death: Lord! help us in the midſt of our fulneſs, when we eat the fat, and drink the ſweet, to remember how righteouſly thou mayeſt cut us ſhort of our abuſed mercies; how is it that we have not long ago ſinned away our plenty, who have ſo often ſinned with our plenty? 2. Others underſtand the famine here repreſented by the black horſe, to be meant of a ſpiritual famine, a ſcarcity of the word of God, which fell out in the time of the ten perſecutions, when the ſtorm fell upon the biſhops, and moſt uſeful miniſters in the church, when many bright and burning lamps were extinguiſhed, others hid under a buſhel: a diſmal gloomy day, when the church of God did eat her ſpiritual bread by weight, when all the ſpiritual food men could get to keep their ſouls alive from day to day could be but ſufficient for that end.

7 And when he had opened the fourth ſeal, I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horſe: and his name that ſat on him was death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth.

The fourth ſeal opened repreſents a pale horſe (peſtilence) with *death* riding upon it; and *hell*, that is, the grave following it, denoting, ſay ſome, all the calamities of ſword, peſtilence, and famine, which Chriſt (St. Mark xiii.) foretold ſhould come upon the Jews, and cauſe an univerſal devaſtation of their city and nation, and as univerſal a deſtruction of their perſons. *Note* here, 1. How death is repreſented as ſitting upon a pale horſe: by a horſe, for his ſtrength, there is no reſiſting of him; for his ſwiftneſs, it is always poſting towards us; for his office and uſe, which is to cut off and carry away; and by a pale horſe for its ghaſtlineſs. Death has a grim and ghaſtly countenance, that ſtrikes terror into all hearts, and paleneſs into all faces. 2. As terrible as death was, it muſt and did receive power before it could deſtroy and kill; *I beheld a pale horſe*, &c. *Learn* thence, That all the executioners of God's wrath and vengeance, ſword, peſtilence, and famine, death of all kinds, do act by commiſſion, yea, they all come forth with limited commiſſion; power was given to them: others conceive that by this pale horſe the perſecution of the primitive church was repreſented under the Pagan emperors, who made her face look pale like death, by the loſs of a vaſt quantity of blood and ſpirits, when the church was mowed down like a meadow, and ſprang as faſt.

9 And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was ſaid unto them that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they *were*, ſhould be fulfilled.

Here we have the fifth ſeal opened; under which Chriſt repreſents to St. John the condition of thoſe precious ſouls of the holy martyrs who died for the teſtimony of Chriſt, by the bloody hands of tyrants; the deſign whereof is to ſupport and encourage all that were to come after in the ſame bloody path. *Obſerve* here, 1. The viſion which St. John ſaw, namely the ſouls of the martyrs; but how could they be ſeen? *Anſ.* Not by the external ſenſes, being immaterial ſubſtances, but *in ſpirit* they were ſeen by him; he had a ſpiritual repreſentation of them made to his mind. *Obſerve*, 2. The place where he ſaw them, *under the altar*; that is, lying at the foot of the altar, as ſacrifices ſlain and preſented unto God. Where *note*, That however men look upon the death of the martyrs, yet in God's account they die as ſacrifices: and their blood is no other than a drink-offering poured out to God, which he highly prizeth, and graciouſly accepteth. *Obſerve*, 3. The cauſe of their ſufferings and death deſcribed, it was for *the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held*; as one of the martyrs in the Marian days held up his Bible at the ſtake, ſaying, "This is that hath brought me hither." They die not as malefactors, but as martyrs, giving a threefold teſtimony of the truth, a lip-teſtimony, a life-teſtimony, and a death or bloody teſtimony: they held the profeſſion of their faith faſter than they held their own lives. 4. What St. John heard, *a loud cry*, ſaying, *How long?* Not, 1. That ſouls can ſpeak audibly to the ears of men; nor, 2. That they have any ſenſe of ſufferings when they are in glory, it doth not imply that ſouls there are in a reſtleſs ſtate, or that they want true ſatisfaction and repoſe, when they are out of the body; much leſs, 3. Doth this cry ſuppoſe, that they carried with them to heaven any angry reſentment, or revengeful diſpoſitions towards their murderers; but this cry ſuppoſes in them a vehement zeal for the glory of God, a flagrant deſire that God would clear their innocency, and make known his juſtice among men, that he would aboliſh the kingdom of Satan, and conſummate the kingdom of Chriſt, making all his enemies to become his footſtool; ſo that they pray for what Chriſt waits in glory, Heb. x. 13. all the revenge here deſired was only a vindication of God's holineſs and truth, which he himſelf had promiſed. *Obſerve*, 5. The gracious anſwer which God gave to the cry of theſe gracious ſouls, in which he ſpeaks ſatisfaction to them theſe two ways, 1. By ſomewhat given them for the preſent, 2. By ſomewhat promiſed them hereafter; firſt, white robes were given at preſent to every one of them, that is, large meaſures of heavenly glory, as the reward of their ſufferings and ſervices, beyond other ſaints; as if God had ſaid, "Though the time be not yet come to ſatisfy your deſires in the final ruin of Satan's kingdom, yet it ſhall be well with you in the mean time, you ſhall walk with me in white, and enjoy my glory in heaven." *Secondly*, That is not all, but of omnipotent power; and that honour, glory, and bleſſing, do appertain to him for evermore. Laſtly, That not only all the angels, but all the creatures in *heaven*, in *earth*, *under the earth*, and in the *ſea*, all and every of them, do worſhip Chriſt with religious worſhip, and pay him divine honour; adore him that ſits on the throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever, that is, the rational part of the world, to wit, angels and men, actively: The ſenſitive part of the world, objectively: The diabolical part, paſſively: Chriſt extorts that glory from them by their torments, which they refuſe to give unto him by confeſſions, and voluntary acknowledgments. What greater argument than this can we deſire for our ſatisfaction, that Chriſt is truly and eſſentially God? He thinks it no robbery to be equal with God, to ſhare with him in all that honour and homage, in all that adoration and religious worſhip which the whole creation do pay to almighty God; for thus do the angels and elders above, and the whole church militant here below, chaunt forth the praiſes of the Creator and Redeemer, ſaying,

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5 And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The third ſeal opened, ſets forth the great calamity which ſhould befal the church by famine, which ſome underſtand literally, others figuratively and myſtically. 1. A literal famine in Judea, ſeems here to be prefigured by a perſon riding on a black horſe with a balance to weigh food in his hand; famine diſcolours the face of men, and makes them look black, ſad, and diſmal; accordingly it is repreſented by a black horſe; and the rider having a pair of ſcales in his hand to weigh corn by the pound, and not to meaſure it by the buſhel, imports the great ſcarcity that there

there ſhould be of bread; and St. John heard a voice ſaying, *A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny.* The Roman penny was the ordinary wages for a day's work to a labourer, ſo that the quantity of bread was but ſufficient to keep perſons alive for one day. Famine is a very ſore and terrible judgment, it conſumes a people by piece-meal; other judgments cut off ſuddenly, but this is a lingering and languiſhing death: Lord! help us in the midſt of our fulneſs, when we eat the fat, and drink the ſweet, to remember how righteouſly thou mayeſt cut us ſhort of our abuſed mercies; how is it that we have not long ago ſinned away our plenty, who have ſo often ſinned with our plenty? 2. Others underſtand the famine here repreſented by the black horſe, to be meant of a ſpiritual famine, a ſcarcity of the word of God, which fell out in the time of the ten perſecutions, when the ſtorm fell upon the biſhops, and moſt uſeful miniſters in the church, when many bright and burning lamps were extinguiſhed, others hid under a buſhel: a diſmal gloomy day, when the church of God did eat her ſpiritual bread by weight, when all the ſpiritual food men could get to keep their ſouls alive from day to day could be but ſufficient for that end.

7 And when he had opened the fourth ſeal, I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horſe: and his name that ſat on him was death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth.

The fourth ſeal opened repreſents a pale horſe (peſtilence) with *death* riding upon it; and *hell*, that is, the grave following it, denoting, ſay ſome, all the calamities of ſword, peſtilence, and famine, which Chriſt (St. Mark xiii.) foretold ſhould come upon the Jews, and cauſe an univerſal devaſtation of their city and nation, and as univerſal a deſtruction of their perſons. *Note* here, 1. How death is repreſented as ſitting upon a pale horſe: by a horſe, for his ſtrength, there is no reſiſting of him; for his ſwiftneſs, it is always poſting towards us; for his office and uſe, which is to cut off and carry away; and by a pale horſe for its ghaſtlineſs. Death has a grim and ghaſtly countenance, that ſtrikes terror into all hearts, and paleneſs into all faces. 2. As terrible as death was, it muſt and did receive power before it could deſtroy and kill; *I beheld a pale horſe*, &c. *Learn* thence, That all the executioners of God's wrath and vengeance, ſword, peſtilence, and famine, death of all kinds, do act by commiſſion, yea, they all come forth with limited commiſſion; power was given to them: others conceive that by this pale horſe the perſecution of the primitive church was repreſented under the Pagan emperors, who made her face look pale like death, by the loſs of a vaſt quantity of blood and ſpirits, when the church was mowed down like a meadow, and ſprang as faſt.

9 And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was ſaid unto them that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they *were*, ſhould be fulfilled.

Here we have the fifth ſeal opened; under which Chriſt repreſents to St. John the condition of thoſe precious ſouls of the holy martyrs who died for the teſtimony of Chriſt, by the bloody hands of tyrants; the deſign whereof is to ſupport and encourage all that were to come after in the ſame bloody path. *Obſerve* here, 1. The viſion which St. John ſaw, namely the ſouls of the martyrs; but how could they be ſeen? *Anſ.* Not by the external ſenſes, being immaterial ſubſtances, but *in ſpirit* they were ſeen by him; he had a ſpiritual repreſentation of them made to his mind. *Obſerve*, 2. The place where he ſaw them, *under the altar*; that is, lying at the foot of the altar, as ſacrifices ſlain and preſented unto God. Where *note*, That however men look upon the death of the martyrs, yet in God's account they die as ſacrifices: and their blood is no other than a drink-offering poured out to God, which he highly prizeth, and graciouſly accepteth. *Obſerve*, 3. The cauſe of their ſufferings and death deſcribed, it was for *the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held*; as one of the martyrs in the Marian days held up his Bible at the ſtake, ſaying, "This is that hath brought me hither." They die not as malefactors, but as martyrs, giving a threefold teſtimony of the truth, a lip-teſtimony, a life-teſtimony, and a death or bloody teſtimony: they held the profeſſion of their faith faſter than they held their own lives. 4. What St. John heard, *a loud cry*, ſaying, *How long?* Not, 1. That ſouls can ſpeak audibly to the ears of men; nor, 2. That they have any ſenſe of ſufferings when they are in glory, it doth not imply that ſouls there are in a reſtleſs ſtate, or that they want true ſatisfaction and repoſe, when they are out of the body; much leſs, 3. Doth this cry ſuppoſe, that they carried with them to heaven any angry reſentment, or revengeful diſpoſitions towards their murderers; but this cry ſuppoſes in them a vehement zeal for the glory of God, a flagrant deſire that God would clear their innocency, and make known his juſtice among men, that he would aboliſh the kingdom of Satan, and conſummate the kingdom of Chriſt, making all his enemies to become his footſtool; ſo that they pray for what Chriſt waits in glory, Heb. x. 13. all the revenge here deſired was only a vindication of God's holineſs and truth, which he himſelf had promiſed. *Obſerve*, 5. The gracious anſwer which God gave to the cry of theſe gracious ſouls, in which he ſpeaks ſatisfaction to them theſe two ways, 1. By ſomewhat given them for the preſent, 2. By ſomewhat promiſed them hereafter; firſt, white robes were given at preſent to every one of them, that is, large meaſures of heavenly glory, as the reward of their ſufferings and ſervices, beyond other ſaints; as if God had ſaid, "Though the time be not yet come to ſatisfy your deſires in the final ruin of Satan's kingdom, yet it ſhall be well with you in the mean time, you ſhall walk with me in white, and enjoy my glory in heaven." *Secondly*, That is not all, but the very things they cry for ſhall be given them after a little ſeaſon, for God had more to call unto ſufferings beſides them, and they having conquered ſhall be crowned together; as if God had ſaid, "You my faithful witneſſes, wait a little while till your brethren be got through the Red-ſea of ſufferings as well as you, and then you ſhall ſee the feet of Chriſt upon the necks of all his enemies, and juſtice ſhall fully avenge the precious innocent blood of all the ſaints, which in all ages has been ſhed for the teſtimony of the goſpel, from Abel the martyr to the laſt ſufferer. Now from the whole *learn* theſe leſſons of inſtruction: *Learn*, 1. That the ſouls of men periſh not with their bodies, but do certainly outlive them, and ſubſiſt in a ſtate of ſeparation from them; the bodies of thoſe martyrs were deſtroyed by divers ſorts of torments, but their ſouls were out of the reach of danger, they were in ſafety under the altar, and in glory, clothed with their white robes, when their bodies were either turned to aſhes, or torn in pieces by wild beaſts; we ſhall not ceaſe to be, when we ceaſe to breathe; our ſouls do not vaniſh with our breath. 2. That as the ſoul is alive in a ſtate of ſeparation from the body, ſo is it awake alſo, and doth not ſleep with the body. Mark, Theſe ſouls *cried* with a *loud voice*, then they were not aſleep, though their bodies were aſleep in the duſt; the opinion of the ſoul's ſleeping with the body till the reſurrection, is a wicked dream; it is granted that the organical acts of the ſoul, that is, ſuch acts as do depend upon the members of the body, muſt ceaſe when the body ceaſes; but we find, when we are aſleep, that our ſoul can act of itſelf, without the aſſiſtance of the body; the ſoul grieves and rejoices, hopes and fears, chuſes and refuſes, therefore the ſoul is not only alive, but awake alſo in its ſtate of ſeparation from the body. 3. That there are not only praiſes, but prayers in heaven, and that for juſtice to be inflicted upon perſecutors here on earth. O the miſerable condition of bloody perſecutors! when heaven and earth both pray againſt them. 4. That there is no ſin committed upon earth, which doth more loudly call for vengeance from God in heaven, and which he will more certainly and ſeverely puniſh, than perſecuting and wronging of his ſaints and ſervants. 5. That one reaſon why the ſuffering ſervants of God are not preſently delivered from their perſecutions is this, becauſe more of their brethren muſt ſuffer beſides them, before their perſecutions are ripe and ready for ſignal vengeance. Laſtly, That the ſouls of God's martyrs ſhall be under the altar in heaven clothed in white, enjoying divine glory, before the fatal day of final vengeance come upon the perſecuting world; for though the patience of God ſuffers long, yet the holineſs of God cannot permit that innocency ſhould always ſuffer, and violence with perſecution go unpuniſhed, but in the mean time they ſhall put on their crown and their robes.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the ſixth ſeal, and lo, there was a great earthquake: and the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. 13 And the ſtars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree caſteth her untimely figs when ſhe is ſhaken with a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a ſcroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and iſland were moved out of their places.

A threefold interpretation is given relating to this ſixth ſeal, of the opening of it. 1. Some apply it altogether to the Jews, and that their deſtruction in Judea and at Jeruſalem was ſo diſmal, that it was repreſented to St. John as the darkening of the ſun, and the moon looking like blood, and the ſtars falling, ſuch calamities impending as if heaven and earth were diſſolving; doubtleſs at and before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem there was a confluence of ſuch calamities, ſo diſmal, and ſo dreadful, as can very difficultly be repreſented or deſcribed. 2. Others apply it to the overthrow of Paganiſm, and the deſtruction of the Heathen emperors; the fall of Paganiſm, by means of Conſtantine's converſion to the chriſtian faith, was the moſt terrible judgment that ever fell upon the devil's kingdom; and accordingly, by the earth quaking, the ſun's becoming black, the moon's becoming blood, and the ſtars falling from heaven to earth, is to be underſtood the great changes that were made in the Roman empire, by overturning the whole Pagan ſtate, and making chriſtianity the religion of the greateſt part of the world; ſo that the ſenſe of the foregoing expreſſion is metaphorical, and ſignifies a great and general alteration of the face of affairs, as if the world was to be another thing. But, 3. There are that interpret all this of the great and horrible confuſion of the chriſtian world under antichriſt, when Chriſt the Sun of righteouſneſs began to be obſcured, that is, his doctrine concerning his offices and benefits darkened; the moon or church turned into blood, the ſtars or paſtors fallen from heavenly offices, the Scriptures, like the heavens rolled up, forbidden to be read; the mountains, kings and princes in jeopardy, and the iſlands brought under antichriſt's yoke and tyranny. Laſtly, Some apply all this to the laſt diſſolution of the world, and the final judgment at the great day, according to what follows in the three next verſes.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themſelves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?

Obſerve here, That if this was meant of the ruin of the Jews at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, it was exceeding dreadful, and beſpake all ſorts of men, from the higheſt to the loweſt, to be under a moſt dreadful conſternation, when they ſaw an inevitable vengeance coming upon them for crucifying Chriſt, and perſecuting his members, which made them run into rocks, and call upon mountains to hide them: If it be applied to the judgment of the great day, it ſhews the juſtice of Chriſt in forcing thoſe to call upon the mountains to hide them, who by perſecution had driven his members to hide themſelves in mountains, dens, and caves of the earth: Any ſort of hope of deliverance would be then welcome; but alas! all help will fail, and all hope will be then in vain; neither greatneſs nor numbers will ſave any from miſery and terror, when that day of vengeance is come. *Learn*, That wicked men, how numerous, how powerful and ſtrong ſoever, ſhall fall before the wrath and indignation of Chriſt; if when Chriſt appears like an angry lamb, the greateſt in the world fall before him, what will they then do, when Chriſt ſhall put on the fierceneſs and ſeverity of a roaring lion! If the wrath of the Lamb cannot be borne; if the unbelieving kings and potentates of the earth ſhall be caſt down at the ſight of Chriſt, where ſhall the wicked and the ſinner appear? If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, what will the wrath of God, an angry God be? Let us now be caſt down at the ſight of ſin, and we ſhall not be caſt down hereafter at the ſight of God; but when others, at his appearance, cry to the rocks to cover them, and to the mountains to fall upon them, ſuch as have ſeen ſin to their abaſement and humiliation, ſhall ſee a Saviour to their joyful ſatisfaction, and ſpend an eternity in the rapturous contemplation and raviſhing fruition of him. *Amen*.

CHAP. VII.

AND after theſe things I ſaw four angels ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds ſhould not blow on the earth, nor on the ſea, nor on any tree.

Obſerve, 1. That if a temporal judgment of the Jews be here intended, then this viſion repreſented to St. John God's decree and purpoſe for ſuſpending the dreadful execution of the threatened and intended vengeance upon Judea for a time, namely, until God had *ſealed* his number, that is, marked them for preſervation, according to Ezek. ix. 4. *Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men*, &c. that is, preſerve the penitent believers from the common deſtruction, as the Iſraelites were preſerved in Egypt from the deſtroying angel. *I beheld four angels* that had power to inflict judgments, famine, ſword, and peſtilence, foretold chap. vi. upon Judea, I beheld theſe angels making a ſtay and ſtop, before they would ſuffer thoſe miſchiefs to break forth upon the earth. Where *note*, That the office of the holy angels in heaven is at God's command, and by God's direction, to execute vengeance, and to inflict all temporal judgments upon obſtinate ſinners here on earth; yet glad they are, when it pleaſes God to ſtay and ſtop them from a ſpeedy execution of his wrath and vengeance: for as judgment is God's ſtrange work, in which he does not delight, ſo neither is it pleaſing to the angels as an act of puniſhment, but only in obedience to the command of God, and with an eye and reſpect to the glory of God. *Obſerve*, 2. That if a ſpiritual judgment be here intended, as others apprehend, namely, the calamities befalling the church by reaſon of an apoſtacy under antichriſt; then by the *winds* they underſtand hereſies, and falſe doctrines of all ſorts, which have an impetuous force and violence, like winds, to drive unſtable ſouls from their ſtedfaſtneſs in the truths of God, into damnable errors. Now, God takes ſpecial care that theſe winds ſhould not blow, theſe antichriſtian errors and falſe doctrines ſhould not overflow the earth, until he had *ſealed* his people, that is, ſecured them from that danger, preſerving them from ſpiritual defilement, as the undoubted fruit of their *ſealing*; where we ſee, that in all times of public calamity, be it temporal or ſpiritual, God has a ſpecial care of his own, and bears a ſpecial regard unto his own; here he commands the angels to hold the winds from ſmiting the earth, until the number of his *ſealed* ones was completed.

2 And I ſaw another angel aſcending from the eaſt, having the ſeal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the ſea. 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed the ſervants of our God in their foreheads.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing care which God took of his church and faithful people before he ſuffered the approaching ſtorm to come upon the world: he did by another angel cry to the four angels that were ready, as God's executioners to hurt the earth, that they ſhould hurt nothing until the ſervants of God were ſealed in their foreheads; and his crying with a loud voice intimates his great care to preſerve his faithful ones. *Queſt.* What was this ſealing? *Anſ.* Some underſtand it of an external viſible ſealing, by ſetting a mark upon their foreheads for preſervation, according to Ezek. ix. 4. the letter *Tau*; doubtleſs there was ſome notification made by almighty God to the deſtroying angels, of every one whom he would have preſerved. Others do underſtand this ſeal to be internal, by ſanctification; and from thence we may gather, that inward holineſs is the beſt guard againſt temporal or ſpiritual judgments. But take this ſealing in either ſenſe, either for an outward or inward ſealing, the notion doth imply, 1. That the perſons ſealed are of precious and excellent eſteem with God. 2. It imports preſervation, and ſecurity from danger; God ſealeth his people, that the deſtruction coming upon others may eſcape them; thus here God's ſervants were ſealed, that they might be preſerved; that they are kept either from ſin and error, or from judgment and danger, is not from themſelves, but from God's care and love towards them in the ſealing of them.

4 ¶ And I heard the number of them which were ſealed; *and there were* ſealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael. 5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 6 Of the tribe of Aſer *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Manaſſeh *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Iſſachar *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Joſeph *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

Obſerve here, 1. That the true church is repreſented in this book by the name of the Jews, and the falſe church by the Gentiles; ſo that by the tribes of the children of Iſrael is to be underſtood the whole univerſal church of ſincere and ſerious chriſtians, all that profeſs and practiſe the faith of Abraham, and ſo are his ſpiritual ſeed. 2. That theſe hundred forty and four thouſand are particularly mentioned, chap. xiv. 1. as the pure virgin church diſtinguiſhed from the adulterers; this number then comprehends all ſuch as during antichriſt's tyranny ſhould be kept from his deluſions, of whatſoever nation they be; all that adhere to Chriſt againſt antichriſt are ſealed, to preſerve them from that defection wherein others would be involved. 3. The great care which almighty God takes in a time of general apoſtacy, to preſerve a number in all his churches from that fatal miſchief, that the catholic church may not fail: God has a number ſealed; and ſuch as are ſealed ſhall be preſerved. 4. That though the number of God's ſealed ones be great in itſelf, 144,000, yet how ſmall is it in compariſon of the not ſealed. 5. That as God had a number out of all the tribes of Iſrael, ſo doth he gather to himſelf a people out of all nations, ranks, and conditions of men, in and throughout the whole world. 6. That the tribe of Dan is here left out; the reaſons aſſigned for it are various; becauſe, ſay ſome, antichriſt was to come of that tribe: but it doth not any where appear, that ever almighty God puniſhed a people before they committed a ſin: others with more reaſon conceive it was the great idolatry which this tribe fell into and continued in until the captivity, ſee Judg. xviii. 30. and Amos viii. 14. yet we muſt not ſuppoſe that none of this tribe were ſaved, becauſe here not mentioned; for we find Samſon of this tribe, and reckoned among thoſe worthies, whoſe names are recorded, Heb. xi. *By faith Samſon.* 7. That Levi, or the Levites, who had no inheritance in the earthly Canaan, but were diſperſed and ſcattered throughout all the tribes that they might teach the people the law of the Lord, and ſo could not be numbered there; yet, ſays the learned and pious Dr. Hammond, in Chriſt their portion was as good as the reſt, and therefore were not omitted *here*. Behold here a conſideration which adminiſters much comfort to us the miniſters of the goſpel, though many of us have no earthly poſſeſſions, and ſome cut ſhort of outward comforts, yet our title to the heavenly inheritance is good, and we ſhall not miſs of it as the reward of our faithfulneſs. Laſtly, That although Levi had the charge of all the tribes, and had the peculiar favour above all the reſt to ſtand before God, and adminiſter to him in holy things, yet no more are ſealed of this than of the other tribes; all were teachers, but all were not ſealed; all are not ſaved that are of the holy calling, and who may be inſtrumental to ſave others.

9 ¶ After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number of all nations and kindred of people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

St. John having had in the former verſes a viſionary view of the church militant, under the denomination of *ſealed* ones, in theſe verſes a proſpect is given him of the church triumphant in heaven; a moſt magnificent deſcription of which we have here before us. Where *note*, 1. The triumphant church above, is deſcribed by its multitude; according to the promiſe made to Chriſt, of *bringing many ſons into glory*. 2. They are deſcribed by their variety; ſome out of every nation, tribe, people, and language, according to that of our Saviour, Matth. viii. 11. *They ſhall come from the eaſt*, &c. 3. They are deſcribed by their poſture, they *ſtand* before the throne, and before the Lamb, as ſervants attending upon their Lord, a moſt happy ſtation, as ſuch accounted by them; not that they ſtand perpetually gazing upon God, and doing nothing elſe; but they expreſs their love unto him, by attending upon him, to execute his command. 4. They are deſcribed by their habit, they are *clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands*; white garments import their dignity, their purity, their joy. The ſaints dignity in heaven is great, they are kings and prieſts unto God; their purity great, being purified as he is pure; their joy great, being entered into the joy of their Lord, this joy being too great to enter into them. Farther, How theſe glorified ſaints do aſcribe all their glory, happineſs, and ſalvation to Chriſt, and nothing to themſelves, *Salvation to our God who ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. Sancti quaſi ſanguine tincti*, ſay ſome; "Many of theſe ſaints were martyrs, that ſhed their blood for Chriſt." But mark, Their garments were made white not in their own blood, but in the blood of the Lamb. Again, They are deſcribed *with palms in their hands*, as well as clothed in white. Now, this denotes their victory, and the rewards of their victory. Palms were amongſt the Roman enſigns of victory. All the ſaints enter heaven with palms in their hands, having conquered ſin, Satan, and the world, and the whole hoſt of ſpiritual enemies. *Obſerve* next, How the holy angels in heaven do join with theſe ſaints and martyrs in worſhipping God, and adoring the Lamb, verſe 11, *And all the angels ſtood round about the throne*, &c. concurring with the church in their congratulations, adding their *Amen* to what the palm-bearers had ſaid, and much more of their own, aſcribing *Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom*, &c. *Note*, How the triumphant church is made up of an innumerable company of angels, as well as ſaints, as part of the church of the firſt-born. (*Angeli στασιν Sancti αναστασιν debent Chriſto mediatori*, ſays one.) And St. Paul, Eph. i. 10. ſays, *That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time it might gather together in one, all things in Chriſt*, &c. Whence it appears, that though angels ſinned not, yet Chriſt gathered them and us into one ſociety, and is an head both to them and us.

13 And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 ¶ And I ſaid unto him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid unto me, Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood

of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them.

As if St. John had ſaid, One of the elders, not out of ignorance as to himſelf, but out of deſire to inform me, aſked me, Whether I knew what theſe were that ſtood arrayed in white? And I told him, I did not know, but deſired him to inform me. He replied they were ſuch as had ſuffered great tribulation for Chriſt, and were now accepted of him, and dignified by him; not for their own worthineſs, but for the ſake of his ſufferings. *Note* here, 1. The preſent ſtate and condition of the church of God, and members of Chriſt in this world, they are *in tribulation*, yea, in great tribulation here; as long as there is a devil in hell, and wicked men upon earth, all that will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer tribulation. 2. The future ſtate which they ſhall be advanced to, they ſhall *come out of great tribulation*; the ſaints ſharp ſufferings ſhall have a joyful iſſue and glorious end. 3. That though the croſs was the way to the crown, yet the croſs did not merit the crown: their ſufferings would not, could not, bring them to heaven, without having their *ſouls waſhed in the blood of the Lamb*, much leſs could their ſufferings merit and purchaſe heaven; but it pleaſed God of his free grace thus to reward their ſufferings. They were *waſhed in the blood of the Lamb*, whoſe blood paid the price of their ſalvation. 4. The deſcription which is here given of heaven; it is called a temple, in alluſion to the Jewiſh temple, in which God dwelt of old; as God by his gracious preſence dwelt in his temple on earth, ſo by his glorious preſence he dwells among his glorified ſaints in his temple in heaven; and accordingly the glorified ſaints in heaven do temple-ſervice, they worſhip God continually, and ſerve him day and night. In alluſion this is probably ſpoken to the prieſts ſtanding in the material temple; and ſerving in their courſes night and day, Pſal. cxxxiv. 1. Heaven is a place of employment and ſervice, as well as of pleaſure and joy; and the greateſt joy reſults from the greateſt ſervice.

16 They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more; neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them into living fountains of waters: And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Here St. John proceeds in giving a farther deſcription of the place and ſtate of the bleſſed; he acquaints us both with the private evils they ſhall be everlaſtingly delivered from, as alſo with the poſitive good they ſhall eternally reſt in. As to the former he aſſures us, that glorified ſouls ſhall be acquainted with no wants, and expoſed to no afflictive providences. *They ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt*; that is, they ſhall be in a condition free from all, and all manner of wants whatſoever. *Neither ſhall the ſun, nor the heat light upon them*; that is, the ſcorching heat of perſecution, to which they were expoſed here, ſhall never more affect or afflict them there. And *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; that is, all cauſe of ſorrow and mourning ſhall everlaſtingly ceaſe. Farther, he acquaints us with the poſitive good which glorified ſaints do eternally reſt in, the Lamb in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them; that is, Chriſt ſhall ſatisfy them with a ſatiety of joy, and fulneſs of pleaſure: And *lead them to the living fountains of water*, that is, to the never failing comforts of God's preſence. O happy place and ſtate! which will at once cauſe the ſaints to forget all former ſorrows for time paſt, and happily prevent any farther cauſe of affliction and ſorrow for time to come; where no ſin ſhall afflict them, no ſorrow affect them, no danger affright them, where all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes, all ſorrows baniſhed from their hearts, and everlaſting joys ſhall poſſeſs their ſouls: Where they ſhall obey their God with vigour, praiſe him with chearfulneſs, love him above meaſure, fear him without torment, truſt him without deſpondency, ſerve him without laſſitude and wearineſs, without interruption or diſtraction, being perfectly like unto God, as well in holineſs as in happineſs, as well in purity as in immortality. Lord, ſtrengthen our faith in the belief of this deſirable happineſs, and ſet our ſouls a longing for the full fruition and final enjoyment of it.

CHAP. VIII.

AND when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour.

When he had opened, that is, when the Lamb, who opened the ſix foregoing ſeals, did open the ſeventh, there was *ſilence in heaven about half an hour*, by way of alluſion to what was done in the temple at the time of offering incenſe. The end of which ſilence was to give St. John an opportunity to contemplate thoſe high myſteries which he had revealed to him, and to prepare him for new viſions, as ſilence is cried before the proclamation of great and weighty matters. When great things are to be uttered, great attention is expected, and great ſilence prepares for great attention.

2 ¶ And I ſaw the ſeven angels which ſtood before God: and to them were given ſeven trumpets.

Obſerve here, 1. The readineſs of the holy angels to execute the will of God at all times: *They ſtand before God*, namely, to miniſter at his pleaſure, and to execute judgments at his command: Whether theſe were good angels or bad, it is not material to diſpute, ſeeing God makes both the executioners of his judgments when he pleaſes. 2. The number of theſe angels, they were *ſeven*, and no more, becauſe it pleaſed not God to pour down his whole wrath at once upon the rebellious world, but at divers times, and gradually. 3. That to theſe *ſeven angels* were given *ſeven trumpets* to publiſh God's judgment to the world. Theſe trumpets ſignified that God would proceed againſt the world in fearful hoſtility, and appear againſt it as an enemy to battle, proclaiming as it were open war, with ſound of trumpet, and beat of drum, and hanging out a flag of defiance againſt it. The patience of God, though laſting, yet will not be everlaſting. Theſe angels ſounding the alarm of judgments before they did inflict theſe following dreadful judgments upon the world, ſhews that God warns before he ſtrikes: He doth uſually pre-admoniſh before he puniſheth.

Judgment is his ſtrange work, he delights not in it. But when ſin calls upon him to ariſe out of his place, to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, he doth it with unſpeakable reluctancy and regret, like a tender-hearted Father, with a rod in his hand, and tears in his eyes.

3 ¶ And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden cenſer: And there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer *it* with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the ſmoke of the incenſe, *which came* with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God, out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the cenſer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and caſt it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Obſerve here, That all along in the viſions which St. John had, a preſentation was made to his mind of things pertaining to the Jewiſh worſhip; his viſionary *temple*, the *altar*, the *incenſe*, the *fire*, the *cenſer*, which he ſaw, were in alluſion to the material temple, and to the worſhip and ſervice performed there at Jeruſalem; and accordingly this other angel here mentioned, repreſented the high prieſt (who was an illuſtrious type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt) whoſe office it was to offer incenſe at the altar, and therewith to offer up prayers for the people. Farther, that Chriſt is here repreſented as having a golden cenſer, whereas the high prieſt's was only of braſs, to denote that he was a more excellent high prieſt; and the *much incenſe* given to him, repreſents his abundant merits, whereby he renders the prayers of all his ſaints acceptable to his Father. *Learn*, That as Chriſt was the only Mediator of redemption, ſo is he alſo the only Mediator of interceſſion; his mediation is founded upon his ſatisfaction: None had to do with the cenſer to offer incenſe, but he that had to do with the altar to offer ſacrifice: Who durſt offer to intercede with an offended God on the behalf of ſinners, but he that has firſt ſatisfied the juſtice of God for ſin? Now, to ſatisfy an offended God is Chriſt's peculiar, therefore to intercede with God authoritatively, on the behalf of offenders, is Chriſt's ſole prerogative. Again, Chriſt's interceſſion gives virtue and effect to our ſupplications. This truth was ſignified, ver. 4. where it is affirmed, *That the ſmoke of the incenſe*, &c. that is, the virtue and efficacy of the Mediator's merits, which came up with the prayers of the ſaints, and perfumed them, did both plead for, and procure acceptance with God. Behold here the true reaſon why our ſupplications do find acceptance with God; namely, becauſe perfumed with the odours of Chriſt's merits, and preſented to the Father by his own mediation and interceſſion. The Father heareth him always, and ſo he doth all them whoſe prayers are offered by him. Laſtly, The ſucceſs and efficacy of the ſaints prayers thus perfumed and preſented unto God; there followed *voices, and thunders, and lightnings*, ſignifying the wonderful effects of prayer, or the terrible things that would follow after their prayers, even dreadful judgments upon the earth; that is, upon the land of Judea, ſay ſome; upon the Roman empire, ſay others. However it was, we may gather thus much from it, that in times of national provocation, the fervent prayers of God's faithful ſervants have a mighty prevalency with God, for ſtaying off for a time national ruin and deſtruction.

6 ¶ And the ſeven angels which had the ſeven trumpets prepared themſelves to ſound. 7 The firſt angel ſounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were caſt upon the earth: And the third part of trees were burned up, and all green graſs was burnt up.

Note, 1. The readineſs of the holy angels in heaven to execute the will and pleaſure of God here on earth; they knew that the execution of God's judgments was to be performed by them, and accordingly they prepare themſelves for it. 2. The judgments denounced by the firſt angel, *Fire and hail mingled with blood.* A ſtrange ſtorm, alluding probably to one of the plagues of Egypt, mentioned Exod. ix. denoting, ſay ſome, direful temporal judgments which God would bring upon Judea in general, and Galilee in particular, by bloodſhed and inſurrections. The trees, ſays Dr. More, ſignify the great men, and the graſs the common people. Others by this ſtorm of hail and blood underſtand a ſpiritual judgment, namely, an inundation of hereſy upon the chriſtian church, which is of a fiery and bloody nature wherever it prevails, it is a dreadful plague, and a conſuming ſtorm; juſtly inflicted by God upon a people for their contempt of the goſpel, and not receiving the truth in the love of it, that they might be ſaved.

8 And the ſecond angel ſounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was caſt into the ſea; and the third part of the ſea became blood: 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed.

Obſerve here, The univerſality of the judgment inflicted; the former judgment was upon the earth, this upon the ſea, that no place might eſcape, a ſtorm of hail and blood falls upon the former, a mountain of burning fire is caſt into the latter; both ſignifying increaſing wars and bloodſhed by ſea and land according to ſome; the mighty prevalency of error and hereſy, ſay others, and particularly of the Arian hereſy, which puffs up, and ſwells with pride, and is the harbinger and forerunner of ruin and deſtruction; as only by pride cometh contention, ſo after pride, or along with pride, cometh deſtruction.

10 And the third angel ſounded, and there fell a great ſtar from heaven burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: And the name of the ſtar is called wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters, becauſe they were made bitter.

The next judgment inflicted, or rather the farther progreſs of the former judgment, was the infecting of the waters and rivers with a mortal bitterneſs by a bitter ſtar falling from heaven into them; denoting, ſay ſome, the fall of a great captain among the Jews in Judea: others underſtand it of hereſy in general; of the Arian hereſy in particular;

and ſome apply it to the fall of Rome, the ſeat of the weſtern empire; ſo Mr. Mede. If it be underſtood of hereſy, it ſhews us what a poiſonous, bitter, and deadly nature error and hereſy is of. Error is as damnable as vice, the one is an open road, the other a by-path to hell and deſtruction; and accordingly that perſon, and that people, which have a due care of their ſoul's ſalvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous principles as they are of debauched practices.

12 And the fourth angel ſounded, and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars; ſo as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo to the inhabiters of the earth, by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to ſound.

Obſerve here, 1. That by ſun, moon, and ſtars, in ſcripture-prophecies, the potentates and powers of a ſtate are underſtood; accordingly the darkening of the ſun, moon and ſtars, ſignifies generally the fall of ſome great powers either eccleſiaſtical or civil; others who interpret theſe judgments ſpiritually, by the darkening of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, do underſtand the prevalency of ignorance and error in the church, occaſioning a fearful eclipſe of that ſaving and comfortable light which would illuminate our eyes, and direct our ſteps in the way that leads to eternal happineſs. 2. That in this and all the former judgments, the third part only is mentioned as ſmitten, which ſhews that the Lord corrects in meaſure, and delights more in mercy than in juſtice, and deſires rather the converſion than confuſion of ſinners, by making the puniſhments of ſome inſtructive warnings unto others. 3. God's way of dealing with his people in giving warning of future and ſevere judgments before they come, *I heard an angel flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying, Wo*, &c. thus God warneth of approaching judgments before they come, that ſinners may repent, and his own people being forewarned, may be forearmed ere the judgment comes upon them. *Præmoniti, præmuniti, previſa jacula minus feriunt*; darts foreſeen are dintleſs.

CHAP. IX.

AND the fifth angel ſounded, and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit. 2 ¶ And he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air were darkened by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth; and unto them was given power as the ſcorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads.

Obſerve here, 1. That thoſe who underſtood this *wo* denounced by the fifth angel, to denote a temporal judgment, apply it to the Jewiſh ſeducer, who headed the turbulent zealots; he was a ringleader of moſt helliſh villains, and the zealots under him did all the miſchiefs imaginable, marching up to Jeruſalem, plundering the city, ſeizing the temple, and killing the high-prieſt, with the reſt of the prieſts; but by God's providence it ſo happened, that this judgment of the zealots fell not upon the chriſtians, ſignified by the trees and green things, but upon the Jews themſelves only, becauſe they were not of the faction of zealots. 2. That thoſe who underſtand this *wo* to intimate a ſpiritual judgment, apply it, ſome to the firſt riſing of the Turks and Mahometans, others to the papacy and papal clergy: Mr. Mede applies it to the former, King James to the latter: "By locuſts and graſshoppers (ſays he) underſtand monks and friars, who ſeem to fly a little from the earth, but indeed are gorge-bellied devourers: in locuſts you ſee little but a mouth and a belly; in monks you ſee a mouth to mumble over maſſes, and a belly to conſume; they ſeized, when time was, upon the meadows, the fat and pleaſant parts of the land, and like graſshoppers conſumed every green, that is, every good thing." 3. The commiſſion and command given to them not to hurt the *trees*; ſuch as are fruit-bearing and fruitful bearing chriſtians, are preſerved, and the ſtorm falls upon droſſy hypocrites: whence we may *remark*, That in times of error and ſeduction, as well as in times of judgment and calamity, God takes a ſpecial care of his faithful ones for their preſervation; and has a ſpecial regard to the fruit of the trees of righteouſneſs.

5 And to them *(which had not the ſeal of God in their foreheads)* it was given that they ſhould not kill them, but that they ſhould be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a ſcorpion, when he ſtriketh a man. 6 And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it; and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them.

That is, God would bring ſuch dreadful judgments and calamities upon the wicked world, that men ſhould prefer death before life; and it ſhould be an affliction beyond all other afflictions, that they could not die: to flee death is a great miſery; but to have death flee from us, or flee before us, and not be able to find it, is a far greater miſery; God can ſo imbitter life by afflictions and ſufferings, that thoſe who dread death may yet deſire to die; not for any good that they ſee in death, but only to get rid of the troubles of this life.

7 And the ſhapes of the locuſts *were* like unto horſes prepared unto battle: and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. 9 And they had breaſtplates as it were breaſtplates of iron; and the ſound of their wings *was* as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt

men five months. 11 And they had a king over them *which is* the angel of the bottomleſs pit, whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

This metaphorical deſcription of a terrible army of cruel men, ſeems very plain; ſome underſtand it of the Jewiſh zealots, who appeared as warriors, and were devouring waſters; they looked like men, kind and friendly, and pretending to be redeemers of the people, ſaviours of, and benefactors to their country; but at the ſame time plundering and carrying away the ſpoils of their brethren, without any tenderneſs or compaſſion. Others apply all this to the papal clergy, *numerous*, like locuſts; *well fed*, like horſes for battle; *mighty*, for earthly poſſeſſions; *crowned*, like petty princes; *alluring*, like women with their hair, and other ornaments, &c. Others again make the application to belong to the Turks and Saracens, who are repreſented as having many crowns on their heads, and as moved with wings, in regard of the many and vaſt conqueſts, ſays Mr. Mede, which they made in a ſhort time, even Paleſtina, Syria, Armenia, Aſia the Leſs, and many others; as to the king named here, Abaddon and Apollyon, ſome underſtand it to be the devil, others Mahomet, others the Pope; to whom, to every of whom, the name of a deſtroyer too fitly belongs, as ſeeking and endeavouring to deſtroy men's ſouls, and by blood and perſecution to deſtroy and lay waſte the church of Chriſt.

12 ¶ One wo is paſt; *and* behold there come two woes more hereafter. 13 ¶ And the ſixth angel ſounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God. 14 ¶ Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet, Looſe the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were looſed, which were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horſemen, *were* two hundred thouſand thouſand: and I heard the number of them.

Note here, 1. From thoſe words, *One wo is paſt, and two more are to come*, that God has a ſtorehouſe of judgments, as well as a treaſury of mercy, and when one judgment will not do, he has more to inflict. 2. The golden altar, which is here ſaid to be before God, ſignifies our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his purity and excellency, and his appearing continually in the preſence of his Father for us, as our Interceſſor and Mediator. 3. That this vaſt army of horſemen, conſiſting of two hundred thouſand thouſand, is expounded generally of Turks and Arabians who have vaſt armies beyond all nations whom God makes the executioners of his vengeance at his pleaſure. 4. Whereas it is ſaid, that the four angels were bound in the great river Euphrates, and, till looſed by God's command, could never hurt nor ſtir, it teaches us, that the Lord has Satan, and all his inſtruments, in his own power to looſe them for our ſins, and to bind them again for our repentance: though their malice be infinite, yet their power is bounded; they cannot do all the miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. 5. That when theſe deſtroying angels were looſed, their time of hurting was limited *to a year, and a month and a day*; ſhewing, that the ſet and determinate time of the wicked's inſolency is appointed by God to be either ſhorter or longer as he thinks fit; yea, they execute nothing but with a divine permiſſion; nay, nothing without a ſpecial warrant and commiſſion from God. It is matter of ſingular conſolation to us, that evil angels and wicked men are limited powers; they cannot move, much leſs hurt, till God looſe them.

17 And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them, having breaſtplates of fire and of jacinth and brimſtone: and the heads of the horſes were as the heads of lions: and out of their mouths iſſued fire and ſmoke and brimſtone. 18 By theſe three was the third part of men killed, by the fire and by the ſmoke and by the brimſtone which iſſued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto ſerpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the reſt of the men which were not killed by theſe plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they ſhould not worſhip devils, and idols of gold and ſilver and braſs and ſtone and of wood, which neither can ſee, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their ſorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

St. John proceeds here in deſcribing this vaſt army of Turks and Arabians, that with incredible ſwiftneſs did overrun and ruin the eaſtern churches: All theſe expreſſions of fire, and brimſtone, and ſmoke, denote that cruel devaſtation and deſtruction which was occaſioned by the Turks and Mahometans. Behold here the inſtruments of Satan, how his own cruel and deſtructive nature is diſcovered, how exceedingly he is delighted in the perdition of mankind, having been a murderer from the beginning. In the two laſt verſes St. John declares, 1. What were the ſins which procured ſo great a plague, namely, idolatry and worſhipping the works of their own hands, a ſin very odious to God, and for which God ſuffered the Turks to be ſo ſevere a ſcourge to chriſtendom; what little reaſon had the Chriſtians then to call their wars againſt the Turks, the *holy wars*, when idolatry the cauſe of it, was not repented of; what ſucceſs could they expect, as long as the idolatry of Chriſtians, and their other provoking ſins were ſo many? *Obſerve* farther, What was the end God aimed at by ſuch ſtrong phyſic, by ſuch terrible judgments as he then brought upon the world? it was to bring them to repentance; but ſo mad was the anti-chriſtian world upon their idols, that they would not be reformed by the judgments they ſaw upon their brethren. Hence *learn*, That when God once begins to enter into judgment with a ſinful people, he will follow them with a variety and ſucceſſion of plagues and judgments one upon another, till he has either brought them to himſelf, or brought them to nothing.

CHAP. X.

AND I ſaw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open. And he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth.

This angel is concluded to repreſent our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the angel of the covenant; he is called a *mighty* angel, in oppoſition to the mighty enemies of his church, mentioned in the foregoing chapter; he is ſaid *to come down from heaven*, to intimate his ſignal and ſeaſonable appearing for the relief of his church; *clothed with a cloud*, repreſenting the manner of his coming in the clouds at the final judgment; with a *rainbow on his head*, ſignifying that covenant of peace which he had made with his church, and his continual mindfulneſs of that covenant: *His face was as the ſun*, to denote that light of comfort and deliverance which he would bring to his church in his own time: *His feet as pillars*, ſignifying the ſteadineſs and ſtability of his purpoſes and actions, that where he ſets his feet, none can remove him; and as *pillars of fire*, denoting his ability to tread down his enemies under him, and alſo to conſume them; this is according to the deſcription of his perſon given, chap. i. 15, 16. The emblems and figures by which he is repreſented here, are the ſame by which he was deſcribed there; conſequently he is the ſame perſon. *Obſerve*, The account of what he did, *He had a little book in his hand open*, to diſtinguiſh it from the former book ſealed; a book in which the purpoſe and decree of God was made known, concerning what ſhould happen to the church; a book ſealed and ſhut to us, but obvious and open to Chriſt. Chriſt, that lay in the boſom of the Father, reveals his Father's ſecrets to us, ſo far as it is needful and neceſſary for us to know them. *And he ſet his right foot on the ſea, and his left foot on the earth*, to let us know his ſovereignty and dominion over the whole world; as well over the turbulent and unquiet, as over the quiet and more peaceable part of it; and alſo to ſignify his ability to tread down his enemies, wherever they are; a conſideration that adminiſters much comfort and conſolation to his church; his dominion is over the earth and ſea, none can diſpoſſeſs him of his power, and none can eſcape his preſence.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the ſeven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven ſaying unto me, Seal up thoſe things which the ſeven thunders uttered, and write them not.

This angel, who repreſented Chriſt, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is ſaid to cry like a roaring lion, whoſe voice is both loud and terrible; this, ſome conceive, ſhadowed forth the efficacious and ſucceſsful preaching of the goſpel, and that the ſeven thunders ſignified the ſame; but others apprehend hereby the thundering judgments of God, which were ſhortly to be inflicted on the wicked world; and particularly on Jeruſalem by Titus, ſay ſome; upon antichriſt and his adherents, ſay others. The judgments of God are fitly ſet forth by thunder, becauſe they do not fly at random, but by divine direction; the loudneſs, the ſwiftneſs, the forceableneſs of thunder is known, and the terribleneſs of God in his doings towards the children of men, has been ſufficiently underſtood. *Obſerve* next, St. John's intention to write what theſe thunders uttered, for the benefit of the church, as conceiving them to be of great concernment to her; but he receives a command from Chriſt to the contrary, not to do it at preſent; God foreſeeing that the oppoſers would not hear, but deſpiſe; therefore theſe judgments ſhall be known by experience, and not by words. Others ſay, this inhibition was only temporary, not perpetual: write them not, that is, conceal them for the preſent, till thou haſt thoſe things repreſented to thee in other types, and till they are nearer their accompliſhment; hereafter he might write them, for what God revealed to John, was to be ſhewed to his ſervants, chap. i. 1.

5 And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 ¶ And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the ſea and the things which are therein, that there ſhould be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, as he hath declared to his ſervants the prophets.

The angel that repreſented Chriſt, is here repreſented to St. John as *ſwearing*. *Obſerve*, 1. The ceremony uſed in ſwearing, *lifting up of the hand to heaven*, appealing thereby to God as a witneſs, and a judge. 2. The perſon ſworn by, God, deſcribed, (1.) By his eternity, *He lives for ever*, before and after all time. (2.) By his omnipotency and almighty power in the work of creation, making heaven, and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein. An oath is proper to God, and as we are to ſwear by God, ſo God is only to be ſworn by. *Obſerve*, 3. The thing ſworn, namely, *That time ſhall be no more*; that is, that there ſhould be no farther delay of time, for the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the obdurate Jews, ſay ſome; for the ruin of the Roman empire, for the deſtruction of antichriſt, ſay others; the performance of God's word, both in his promiſes of deliverance to his church, and in the execution of judgment on her enemies, are now at hand. 4. The promiſe made, and the aſſurance here given, namely *that the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed*, that is, the deliverance of the church ſhould be completed, and the final confuſion of her enemies ſhall be accompliſhed; which is called a *myſtery*, becauſe the world underſtands it not, nor will they believe the ſame. As myſteries have their own time to be made manifeſt in, ſo, to the comfort of the faithful, and the terror of the wicked, a day was then approaching, in which the happy condition of the afflicted ſhould appear, and the calamitous ſtate of the ungodly be diſcovered.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven ſpake unto me again, and ſaid, Go, *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which ſtandeth upon the ſea and upon the earth. 9 ¶ And I went unto the angel, and ſaid unto him, Give me the little book. And he ſaid unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it ſhall

be in thy mouth ſweet as honey. 10 And I took
the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up;
and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey: and as ſoon
as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11 And he
ſaid unto me, Thou muſt propheſy again before
many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and
kings.

Expoſitors generally make this *little book* the emblem of the holy ſcriptures, and the command given by the angels to St. John to *eat* this book, imports the great duty of ſtudying diligently the holy ſcriptures, inwardly digeſting them, and making them our own by particular application. What we eat is turned into nouriſhment, and becomes one ſubſtance with ourſelves; thus the myſteries of the goſpel muſt be eaten by the interpreters of goſpel-myſteries. It is not enough that we know divine things, but we muſt know them divinely; we muſt have a ſavoury knowledge of them, and an experimental acquaintance with them. *Obſerve*, 2. The effect which eating of this book had upon St. John, it was in his mouth ſweet as *honey*, in his belly very *bitter*; that is, the knowledge he had of divine myſteries, was in itſelf very pleaſant, but the knowledge of the perſecutions and cruelties which the chriſtians were to ſuffer and undergo, was very bitter to his *ſoul*. *Learn*, That though communication of light from God, and the revelation of the mind and will of God, be in itſelf very delightful to his miniſters, yet in reſpect of the ſad meſſages contained in his word, it is very burdenſome and bitter to them: however, it being the burden of the Lord, they muſt bear it, they muſt carry it. Every good man, much more every gracious miniſter, has a very high eſtimation of the word of God, he eſteems it as food, he eſteems it as neceſſary food; he eſteems it more than his neceſſary food; but when God ſends us to denounce judgments upon ſinners, our *belly trembles*, our lips quiver, anguiſh takes hold upon us, we deſire not the woful day, Lord, thou knoweſt. *Obſerve* laſtly, The aſſurance God gives St. John of farther revelations of his mind unto him, *As thou haſt propheſied, ſo thou muſt propheſy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings*; ſee here in St. John's perſon the true end and reaſon why God calls his miniſters, and fits them with gifts, and why they furniſh themſelves with acquired abilities; it is to render themſelves the more ſerviceable in his work, that they may ſpeak of his word before kings, and not be aſhamed.

CHAP. XI.

1 AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel ſtood, ſaying, Riſe and meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein.

Obſerve here, 1. The command given by God to St. John to take a ſurvey of his church, his ſpiritual temple, conſiſting of living ſtones, and built upon the chief corner-ſtone Jeſus Chriſt. God's faithful and true worſhippers are only thoſe whom God will have to be meaſured, and taken notice of as being his part and portion, his tabernacle in which he will dwell. And, bleſſed be God! in the worſt of times they are meaſurable, even in times of epidemical degeneracy, and univerſal apoſtacy, God has a number to ſtand up for his name, and to bear witneſs to his truth. 2. That the temple, the altar, and the worſhippers therein, are here all joined together, and the command given, is to meaſure them together. *Ariſe, and meaſure the temple, the altar, and them that worſhip therein*; intimating, that the true church, and the true worſhippers, are ever found together; and by the true worſhip, and true worſhippers, is the true church ever known; ſo that if the queſtion be aſked, "Where is true church?" the anſwer is, Where the true altar is; and where the true worſhip is, there the true church is: That worſhip, which will bear God's meaſuring reed, the ſecurity of the ſcruiting, and the examination of his holy word; where that worſhip is found, there the church of God is found.

2 But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and meaſure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

Obſerve here, What St. John is forbidden to meaſure, and commanded to leave out, as no part of the true church, namely, *The court which is without the temple*; that is, that part of the viſible church which is over-run with idolatry, and anti-chriſtian worſhip, as bad as Gentiliſm, and accordingly ſhall be treated as Gentiles, and trodden down under foot, as droſſy hypocrites: *Meaſure the temple*, ſays God, but not *the outward court*. The temple had but few worſhippers, the prieſts only, in compariſon of the outward court, where the body of the people was; whence we ſee that the true church is but *ſmall*, *very ſmall*, in compariſon of the falſe and anti-chriſtian church, and conſequently multitude can be no right note of the true church. *Obſerve* farther, That whereas theſe Gentiles are ſaid to tread under foot the holy city forty-two months, thereby is ſignified, that they ſhould kill and perſecute the true ſpouſe and church of Chriſt (called the holy city in alluſion to the earthly Jeruſalem) during the time of antichriſt's prevalency, yet here we have the church's ground of comfort and ſupport, that her preſſures, and antichriſt's prevalency, ſhall be but for a limited time, a ſhort time. *The holy city, ſhall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

3 ¶ And I will give *power* unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall propheſy a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth.

Obſerve here, 1. That the church of God, during antichriſt's prevalency, ſhall not want witneſſes, or faithful teachers, though removed by perſecution into corners. 2. By mentioning *two* only, we may gather the paucity of faithful teachers, during the time of antichriſt's prevalency, *two* are a number, but the leaſt of numbers: We muſt not have our eye upon the multitude, or conclude that it is not truth which is not embraced and practiſed by the moſt: The train of Chriſt is not large, nor are his ways thronged as they ought, few comparatively there be that walk in them. As they, whom he calls forth to be eminently his witneſſes, are not many, therefore called *two*; ſo they that received their witneſs are but few, for *the world wonders after the beaſt*. *Queſt.* But who and what are theſe witneſſes? *Anſw.* The whole ſucceſſion of faithful miniſters, martyrs, and confeſſors, which almighty God, from time to time, has raiſed up in his church to be the aſſertors and maintainers of divine truth, and to bear their teſtimony for Chriſt againſt all hereſies, blaſphemies, idolatries, and uſurpations in the time of antichriſt's reign. *Obſerve*, 3. The proper work of theſe witneſſes declared, *it is to propheſy*; that is, to inſtruct the people how to worſhip God according to his word and will. The manner of their propheſying is ſaid to be in *ſackcloth*; that is, in much affliction, and with great lamentation, bewailing the pollutions of the church by the overſpreadings of idolatry: and the time of their propheſying is ſaid to be *a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days*; that is, during the time of antichriſt's reign, ſo long the witneſſes ſhall have a mournful time of it; during the whole reign of antichriſt, God will have a true church, a true miniſtry, and faithful witneſſes, whom, though antichriſt will fight with, yet he ſhall never prevail againſt. 4. How God is pleaſed to own and bear witneſs to theſe his witneſſes. 1. He calls them *his*, *my two witneſſes*. 2. He gives them *power to propheſy*; that is, they have their commiſſion and authority from him, and they are enabled, aſſiſted, and ſucceeded by him in the diſcharge of their teſtimony: Their reſolution and courage is from God, who calls them forth to bear their teſtimony for him. *Learn* hence, That when God calls any of his to a martyr's fire, he does endue them with a martyr's faith; he furniſhes his miniſters and faithful ſervants with noble endowments, anſwerable to their great employments; God evermore gives much grace, where he tries grace much. As the command of God makes every duty neceſſary, ſo the aſſiſtance of God makes every duty eaſy, and the reward of God makes every duty and ſervice gainful and advantageous.

4 Theſe are the two olive-trees, and the two candleſticks ſtanding before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed. 6 ¶ Theſe have power to ſhut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Obſerve here, 1. A double title given by God unto the two witneſſes, ſpoken of in the former verſe; they are ſtyled *olive-trees* and *candleſticks*. As the olive-tree is always green, ſo the miniſtry of theſe witneſſes is lively and efficacious; as the olive is a ſign of peace, and the oil that drops from the olive, an emblem of grace, ſo the miniſtry of theſe witneſſes was a miniſtry both of grace and peace. Again, they are called olive-trees, becauſe they are to miniſter oil to the candleſticks, which are to hold out light unto others. Here *note*, That the title of candleſticks given to the churches *chap*. i. is here given to the miniſters of the church; partly to ſhew the near relation that is between them, and partly to point out the duty that is mutually incumbent upon them; namely, to hold forth the light of truth unto others. And farther, Theſe candleſticks are ſaid to *ſtand before the God of the earth*, ſignifying their fidelity in the diſcharge of their duty, as in the preſence of God before whom they ſtand. *Obſerve*, 2. The efficacy and power of theſe witneſſes' miniſtry in the certain effects of it. What was ſaid of Elijah and Eliſha literally, is applied unto them ſpiritually. 1. As Elijah brought fire down from heaven, which devoured the enemy, ſo fire proceeds out of theſe witneſſes' mouth not by way of imprecation, but by way of denunciation, pronouncing the threatenings and judgments of God againſt them, continuing in their impenitency. 2. As Elijah had power to ſhut heaven, ſo have theſe witneſſes power to do the like during the time of their prophecy; that is, God is provoked for the world's ill treatment of his faithful witneſſes, to with-hold the ſpiritual rain of the world, and the refreſhing doctrine of the goſpel from them. Again, When it is ſaid that theſe witneſſes have power to *turn the waters into blood*, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, there is a manifeſt alluſion to Moſes and Aaron, who exerciſed ſuch a power, Exod. vii. Accordingly, God being provoked by the indignities offered to his faithful witneſſes, permits the pure doctrine of the goſpel to be corrupted, and avenges their cauſe, by bringing judgments on the world, as Moſes did upon Egypt, according to the threatenings denounced by them. Whence we may *learn*, What great credit and eſteem the faithful witneſſes, and miniſters of Chriſt, are in with God; what power and prerogative is given to them, far ſurpaſſing the power of any mortal prince, even a power to open and ſhut heaven, to turn waters into blood, and to ſmite the earth; that is, God doth all theſe things upon a juſt occaſion, in vindication of them, and in revenge for the injuries done unto them.

7 And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them. 8 ¶ And their dead bodies *ſhall lie* in the ſtreet of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where alſo our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and an half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Theſe verſes ſet before us the barbarous uſage which the two witneſſes ſhould meet with from the antichriſtian world, for the faithful diſcharge of their duty, *they ſhall be ſlain*, politically and civilly, ſay ſome, depoſed, ſilenced, impriſoned, and laid aſide as uſeleſs and dead. Literally, ſay others, they ſhall be put to death for the teſtimony of Jeſus, by bloodſhed, fire, and faggot. *They ſhall overcome* *them*, that is, in their perſons, but not in their cauſe. See here the chriſtian church founded in blood, that of Chriſt, its head; watered with blood, that of his miniſters and members. God ſuffers his ſometimes to be actually ſlain, for his own glory, their honour, and the church's good; but mark the time ſpecified when the witneſſes were ſlain; it was *when they had finiſhed their teſtimony*, and not before then, but not till then. So long as God has ſpecial work and ſervice for his witneſſes to do in the earth, their mighty and cruel enemies cannot touch an hair of their heads, much leſs can they take away their lives, *till they have finiſhed their teſtimony*. 2. Beſides the antichriſtian cruelty, in killing theſe witneſſes, their barbarous inhumanity in denying them burial, not ſuffering ſome to be buried at all, and digging up the bones of others that have been long buried. The place where this was done is called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, and the great *city* where our Lord was crucified; which, if literally underſtood, ſignifies Jeruſalem, compared to Sodom for the abominable ſins of the Gnoſtics committed in her; and to Egypt for oppreſſion; but if myſtically underſtood, Rome, or the Roman empire, is conceived by moſt Proteſtants to be here intended by Egypt and Sodom; like Egypt for idolatry, tyranny, ſpiritual darkneſs, obſtinacy, and obduracy; like Sodom for uncleanneſs, yea, worſe than Sodom, uncleanneſs being not only practiſed, but tolerated, yea, allowed publicly, licences being there given to ſuch public houſes, and books written in defence of Sodomy at Rome, where Chriſt may be ſaid to be crucified in his members as long as this apoſtate power holds up. 3. The great joy and exultation which is here diſcovered at the ſlaughter of theſe witneſſes; the antichriſtian rabble triumph, and make merry, rejoice, and *ſend gifts* to one another. Lord! how madly do the wicked rejoice at the death of thoſe men that uſed their utmoſt endeavours to have ſaved them. 4. The ſpecial reaſon aſſigned why the members of antichriſt's kingdom did thus triumph at the death of the witneſſes, and their ſuppoſed utter extinction, namely, becauſe the two witneſſes *tormented them that dwell on the earth*; that is, by their public preaching, by their private reproving, by their denouncing of God's judgments againſt them; for not ſuffering them to go on quietly and undiſturbedly in the ways of ſin, they grew very uneaſy with them, and rejoiced when they thought the world fully rid of them. Lord! how does the preaching of thy word, which comforts and ſupports thy children, which is ſweeter to them than the honey, and more eſteemed by them than their neceſſary food, how does the ſame word preached torment notorious ſinners? and inſtead of receiving the meſſage, they rage at the meſſenger, and triumph and dance with Herod, to ſee that head cut off whoſe tongue was ſo bold to tell them of their faults.

11 ¶ And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them; and they ſtood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

The death of the witneſſes was deſcribed in the foregoing verſes, their reſurrection is declared in theſe. This is underſtood politically by ſome, that they who were civilly dead, that is, laid aſide as uſeleſs, were now politically alive; that is, reſtored to their public work and employment in the church again, God cauſing princes and magiſtrates to own and favour them; and accordingly by their aſcending up into heaven they underſtand their re-entering into the church, their re-enjoying their public liberties and goſpel privileges, which in compariſon of the low and ſackcloth condition they were in before, was like heaven and earth unto them. And they *aſcended in a cloud*, that is glorioſly, and their enemies beheld them with an envious eye, becauſe of the work in their hands, which it was not in their power to hinder. Others underſtand this reſurrection (in the manner forementioned) to be meant not of the ſame men, but of men of the ſame ſpirit and office, reſtored to the ſame work, to the admiration of the good, and conſternation of the bad; and that the voice of Chriſt ſpake to the ſlain witneſſes, ſaying Come up hither, that is into heaven, to receive the reward of your ſufferings and ſervices, and others that ſucceed you in office ſhall partake of your ſpirit, and perfect that work which you began and carried on. Where *note*, That oft-times God's faithful witneſſes, namely, ſuch magiſtrates and miniſters as have done great things for the church of God, are taken up to heaven before they behold the deſired iſſue, which is left to their ſucceſſors to ſee completed.

13 And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were ſlain of men ſeven thouſand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Theſe words are conceived by interpreters to ſet forth the great ſucceſs of the witneſſes miniſtry after their reſurrection; it was accompanied with a mighty earthquake, or a great ſhaking of the kingdom of antichriſt; inſomuch that a *tenth part of the city fell*; that is, many nations and kingdoms under antichriſt's tyranny and dominion ſhook off the yoke, and diſowned his juriſdiction, and fell off from him. *Obſerve* farther, What this earthquake, and fall produced, namely, a twofold effect. 1. *Seven thouſand were ſlain*. 2. Others were *affrighted*, turned from their ſins, and *gave glory to God*. Behold here the great power of the word of God and the happy ſucceſs thereof, to the ſhaking of antichriſt's kingdom, which falls not at once, but by degrees, as it roſe. The man of ſin is to be conſumed with the breath of Chriſt's mouth at firſt, which is a gradual death, till at laſt he be quite aboliſhed by the brightneſs of his coming. Upon the whole then we may comfortably conclude, that whatever ground antichriſt on the one hand may ſeem to have gained of late in any place, that yet he is certainly in a deep conſumption; nay, far gone in it, and will languiſh more and more, till he draws his laſt breath: And on the other hand whatever clouds may overſpread the church of Chriſt in any place, it will not be long ere they will vaniſh, and that affairs are moving forwards towards the church's higheſt outward proſperity, and moſt flouriſhing condition that ſhe ſhall ever arrive at on this ſide heaven, which is to be under the bleſſed millennium, or thouſand years, which began probably with the reſurrection of the witneſſes at the beginning of the Proteſtant reformation, by the preaching of Luther. Thus ſpeaks our learned Dr. More, *Myſt. Iniq. p.* 477. ‘ I doubt ‘ not,’ ſays he, ‘ but this viſion of the reſurrection of the ‘ witneſſes, was a prediction of our Proteſtant reformation, ‘ begun at Spires in Germany, anno 1529, when ſeveral ‘ German princes and imperial cities, made a ſolemn proteſtation againſt the innovations and uſurpations of the ‘ church of Rome; from whence came the name of Proteſtants, which continues to this day. This therefore,’ ſays he, ‘ ſhould make our reformation the more ſacred, ‘ and keep all perſons that wiſh well to our holy religion, ‘ from caſting any dirt upon our firſt reformers, whoſe ‘ names ought to be had in honour, and will be ſo in the ‘ church of God throughout all generations.’

14 ¶ The ſecond wo is paſt; *and* behold, the third wo cometh quickly. 15 ¶ And the ſeventh angel ſounded; and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Chriſt; and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.

An account is here given of the angel's ſounding the ſeventh trumpet, at the beginning of antichriſt's ruin and downfal. St. John heard great acclamations and ſhoutings in heaven for the victory which Chriſt by his witneſſes had gotten over him, ſaying, *The kingdoms of this world*, that is, ſeveral kingdoms, or main bodies of kingdoms and nations, are now brought in to acknowledge Chriſt for their Sovereign and Lawgiver, who did not ſo before; but whereas formerly they owned another maſter, namely, antichriſt, now they do eſpecially own and acknowledge Chriſt, by profeſſing to believe in him, and becoming a pure church to him; *And he ſhall reign for ever and ever.* Even under antichriſt's reign and tyranny Chriſt had a kingdom, but he will have a more viſible kingdom in the world, and which ſhall continue without any eclipſe by antichriſt, or any other, as it ſuffered before.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which ſat before God on their ſeats, fell upon their faces, and worſhipped God. 17 Saying, We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldeſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great; and ſhouldeſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple, the ark of his teſtament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

This chapter concludes with a doxology and ſolemn thankſgiving in heaven, for the victory which Chriſt obtained over antichriſt here on earth; that is, for the begun victory over him. Here *obſerve*, 1. The perſons rendering praiſes, the *four and twenty elders*; all the miniſters of the church, ſay ſome; the whole church, ſay others, who are ſaid to ſit before God; denoting, (1.) That they reſt from their labours; they *walked* as pilgrims before, they *ſit* now. Would we with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, *ſit* down in the kingdom of God in heaven? we muſt with Abraham walk before God in uprightneſs here on earth, Gen. xvii. 5. (2.) It denotes their honour and dignity unto which they are now advanced; as ſervants they *ſtood* before, as friends they *ſit* now: but upon this great occaſion mark their humble geſture, their proſtrations and adorations before God, *They fell upon their faces and worſhipped.* 2. The ground and occaſion of it; what it is which they thus ſolemnly bleſs God for; namely, for Chriſt's victory over his enemies, for aſſuming to himſelf his great power, and univerſal dominion; and becauſe the *kingdoms of the world were now become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt.* For if there be joy in heaven at the converſion of one ſinner unto Chriſt, what is there, ſuppoſe we, at the converſion of nations and kingdoms, unto Chriſt? Behold here the whole hoſt of heaven, the church triumphant in the new Jeruſalem, breaking forth into the higheſt praiſes for eſtabliſhing the public exerciſe of religion in its purity, never more to be driven into corners, as it was twice before; firſt by Pagans, next by Pagan chriſtians. 3. The doxology or thankſgiving itſelf, *Lord God Almighty, we give thee thanks* for this begun overthrow of antichriſt, which by thy almighty power thou wilt certainly carry on, being always the ſame, and as able to help thy church as ever. As if they had ſaid, In the time of antichriſt's full power, when thy church was under a bitter and bloody perſecution, thy power ſeemed to be laid aſide, and thou ſeemedſt not to reign, having thy power obſcured by his tyranny; but now thou ſheweſt thyſelf to be a ruler over all the world, both King of ſaints and King of nations. 4. The indignation and wrath which the friends of antichriſt expreſs upon this occaſion, verſe 18. *The nations were angry*; that is, the idolatrous nations; they who formerly perſecuted, do now fret becauſe they are overcome; they gnaſh their teeth at the ſucceſsful progreſs of the goſpel; and becauſe *thy wrath*, that is, the time to execute thy wrath, *is come*, upon all idolaters and falſe worſhippers. And *the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged and rewarded*; that is, the time is now come, when thoſe witneſſes, which were civilly dead, and accounted as dead by the world, ſhall revive again, or, *the time of the dead*, that is, of thoſe that have been ſlain by antichriſt; the time is come that their blood ſhall be avenged, and all thy faithful ſervants and ſufferers recompenſed and rewarded; particularly *thy prophets*, whoſe work being greater, ſuch ſhall their reward be alſo. *And all that fear thy name, both ſmall and great*; that is, all true believers of a more private capacity, who have cleaved unto Chriſt's pure and undefiled religion, how obſcure ſoever they have been in the world, none of theſe ſhall miſs of a recompence, when God's time of rewarding is come; and then, *he will deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth*, that is, thoſe bloody perſecutors, who deſtroy the inhabitants of the earth by perſecutions, or falſe doctrines.

5. The great bleſſing which follows upon the downfal of antichriſt, verſe 19. *The temple of God was opened*; alluding to the frequent ſhutting up of the temple at Jeruſalem by idolatrous princes, Ahaz and others, when the ark, in which the law of God lay, was not ſeen; but Hezekiah and Joſiah, thoſe two reforming princes, opened the temple, and reſtored the true worſhip of almighty God. In like manner, during antichriſt's reign, the temple of God was ſhut up, his true worſhip ſuppreſſed; but now, ſince antichriſt's falling, the temple is opened, the ark ſeen, the pure word of God expounded, and a more than ordinary preſence of God (of which the ark was a ſymbol) found in his church.) Well might the church then, upon this happy occaſion, triumphingly ſay, *We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty*, &c.

CHAP. XII.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars:

Obſerve here, 1. That by the woman we are to underſtand the chriſtian church in her militant ſtate, called a woman in regard of her weakneſs and dependency; as alſo in regard of her fruitfulneſs, ſhe bringing forth many children unto God, which are born upon her knees. 2. This woman the church, is ſaid to appear in heaven, having her original from heaven, her converſation in heaven, her tendency towards heaven, and her dependency upon heaven. 3. The woman deſcribed by her rare perfections, which are three, 1. *Clothed with the ſun*, that is, adorned with thoſe graces, which Chriſt the Sun of righteouſneſs has put upon her, and environed with the pure light of the goſpel ſhining about her. 2. Having the *moon under her feet*, that is, the legal worſhip, according to ſome; the chriſtian church outſhining now the Jewiſh ſtate of imperfection, caſting off, and trampling under the yoke of the Moſaic diſpenſation. Others by the *moon* underſtand the *world*, which is like the moon, full of ſpots, defiling and polluting, full of changes and alterations, the *faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 13. It is never long in one garb; and her having the moon *under her feet* implies, the church's being enabled by Chriſt to overcome and trample upon all the enjoyments and ſatisfactions of the world, and to deſpiſe all the affronts and inſults of the world. 3. *Upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars*, that is, holding faſt the pure doctrine of the goſpel, firſt preached by the twelve apoſtles, and after them by ſucceeding miniſters, which is as a crown on the church's head. Where *note*, That the apoſtles, and all faithful miniſters with them, are ſtiled *ſtars*. As ſtars they ſhine before men, by the light of life and doctrine. As ſtars they ſhine with a borrowed light, derived from the Sun of righteouſneſs. Again, as *ſtars* are in continual motion for the good of the univerſe, ſo are the miniſters of the goſpel for the good of the church; as ſtars they ſhine in their own orb, attending the proper duty of their place and ſtation; and as ſtars ſhine brighteſt in the cold winter-nights, ſo do they in the times of affliction and perſecution.

2 And ſhe being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The church, typified by a woman, deſcribed in the former verſe by her rare perfections, in this verſe by her weak and perilous condition, ſhe cries like a woman in travail for delivery, to God in her prayers, to men in her apologies. The plain ſenſe is this, "That the chriſtian church was poſſeſſed with an earneſt deſire to propagate the chriſtian religion throughout the world, and ſhe earneſtly cried to God to aſſiſt her therein, and ſtrove with utmoſt endeavours to accompliſh this her deſign; and was truly ſolicitous to ſee the ſucceſs of her labours in the lives of her members." Many and ſore have been the ſick and breeding fits which the church has conflicted with, by means of heretics and perſecutors, which ſometimes gave occaſion to fear that ſhe would certainly miſcarry; but at laſt God ſent her eaſe from heaven by the birth of a child, which cauſed the woman to forget all her ſorrows; and the prayer of faith was then in the greateſt activity, when the woman was found to be in the greateſt extremity.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads. 4 ¶ And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and did caſt them to the earth.—

The church was deſcribed before; her arch-enemy, the devil, is deſcribed now; he is called a *dragon* for his ſubtlety, a *great* dragon for his power, a *red* dragon, for his fiery cruelty. His *ſeven heads* denote his manifold ſubtleties, and miſchievous contrivances, his devices and wicked imaginations againſt the church; his *ten horns* denote his vaſt power and great ſtrength; both in himſelf and his members; alſo the number and power of his agents, who ſerve as *horns* to puſh and hurt the church. His *ſeven crowns* upon his head denote his regal power, which he holds by uſurpation, and his many victories and conqueſts which he obtains in the world, yet over none but thoſe who are willingly overcome by him. The whole of the deſcription repreſents Satan as a powerful, ſubtle, cruel, victorious adverſary; all which properties he diſcovers in the aſſault he makes upon the miniſters of the church, called the *ſtars of heaven*, which he endeavours to caſt down to the earth; that is, to hinder their ſhining in the firmament of the church. *Learn*, 1. What a mighty enemy the church has, fierce and fiery, red and bloody, full of craft and cruelty, of power and policy; and how deplorable her condition would be, if the Lord himſelf was not on her ſide. 2. Who is prime author of all that cruelty and bloodſhed againſt the church of God, even the *red* dragon with its heads and horns, his miniſters and agents: The greateſt monarchs upon the earth, if they gore and hurt the church, are the baſe *heads* and *horns* of this monſtrous *dragon*.

—And the dragon ſtood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born. 5 And ſhe brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne. 6 ¶ And the woman fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days.

That is, "As Herod watched to deſtroy Chriſt as ſoon as he was born, Matth. ii. ſo while the church was endeavouring to propagate chriſtianity, and make converts to Chriſt, the dragon watched, intending to devour them." The devil's great deſign is to cruſh every good thing in the beginning, to nip grace in the bud, to kill the infant-church in the cradle; he is therefore ſaid to *ſtand before the woman*, to prevent all poſſibility of her child's eſcape. Behold his bloody cruelty! but though he ſtood before her, he had no power to hurt or touch either mother or child: Behold his powerful reſtraint! *Obſerve* farther, The child's birth, preſervation, and preferment. 1. Its birth, ſhe brought forth a *child*, not *children*, to ſhew the paucity of the church's members, and alſo their unity, they are all but one man-child, make up all but one body, and the dragon's purpoſe was to devour all in one, and all at once. 2. Its preſervation, the child is *caught up to God and to his throne*; that is, heaven took it immediately into his care and protection, out of the dragon's reach, to his ſhameful diſappointment. 3. Its preferment, it was to *rule all nations with a rod of iron*; that is, with ſuch ſeverity, mixed with lenity, as was needful; the church ſhall prevail againſt all oppoſers. Laſtly, After the woman's delivery, her flight into the wilderneſs, is ſet down, and her continuance there for a time, together with God's protection over her, and proviſion for her; a plain alluſion to Elijah's flying into the wilderneſs from the rage of idolatrous and bloody Jezebel, and God's feeding him extraordinarily at the brook of Cherith. From the woman's, that is, the church's flying into the wilderneſs for a while, we *learn*, That the viſibility of the church is not always conſpicuous, to her enemies eſpecially. 2. That it is ſometimes lawful to fly in time of hot and bitter perſecution; *the woman fled into the wilderneſs*. 3. In that the woman had a place, and food prepared for her, we learn, God's provident care for his church in the day and hour of her greateſt extremities; when ſhe lurks and hides herſelf in obſcurity. During the time of antichriſt's reign, God will take care that ſome ſhall feed her with wholeſome food, the doctrine of the goſpel, that ſincere milk of the word, to the intent that ſhe may grow thereby.

7 ¶ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels: 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was caſt out, that old ſerpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was caſt out into the earth, and his angels were caſt out with him.

By *Michael and his angels* underſtand Chriſt, whoſe the angels are, and ſo much the name imports. *Michael*, that is, *who like God*; Chriſt is the likeneſs of his Father, his eſſential likeneſs. St. John in a viſion beholds Michael and his angels combating with the dragon and his angels; yea, vanquiſhing and overcoming them. This may comfort the church under all her conflicts, that at length her Michael will finally prevail, and ſhe in him. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the powerful preaching of the goſpel, has weakened the kingdom of ſin, Satan, and antichriſt. His angels are his miniſters, martyrs, and confeſſors; thoſe particularly of the firſt ages, who, by their cries to God, and apologies to their rulers, by their holy lives, and patient deaths, did overcome their enemies. And thus Michael and his angels, Chriſt and his miniſters, fought againſt the dragon and his angels, againſt Satan and his cruel inſtruments, who were ſo far from prevailing, that they loſt ground continually; the chriſtians overcome them by their faith and patience. And the *great dragon was caſt down*; he was by the preaching of the goſpel depoſed from being worſhipped as a God, and his power was taken away. *Note*, 1. That though Michael, *Chriſt alone*, be able to overcome the dragon, and all his angelic powers, yet for his own greater honour, and their greater confuſion, he overcomes him and them by his miniſters and faithful ſervants. 2. If Michael our prince be with us, Chriſt Jeſus the captain of our ſalvation, our leader, then though the combat may be ſharp, yet the victory is ſure: For if he be for us, who can (ſucceſsfully) be againſt us? 3. That Satan and his angels were caſt out together; for of the devil and his inſtruments the lot ſhall be alike; they ſin together, and they ſhall ſuffer together; and ſhall never be parted. Lord, how dreadful will an impriſonment with devils and damned ſpirits be to eternal ages? To lie for ever with Satan in that myſterious fire of hell, whoſe ſtrange property it is always to torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume. The dragon was not only caſt out of heaven with his angels, but both were caſt down into hell, even into that lake which burns with fire and brimſtone.

10 And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven, Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt: for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the ſea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time.

After Michael and his angels, Chriſt and his followers victory over the dragon and his angels, over Satan and h inſtruments, here follows a ſolemn thankſgiving for the devil's downfal; the ſaints in heaven join with believers o earth in this ſong of confidence and triumph; when the ſpeak of God, they ſay *our* God; and when they ſpeak c the church below, they ſay *our* brethren; behold a ſwee communion between the church militant, and the churc triumphant: Indeed they conſtitute and make up but on church, one family, one houſehould; the whole family i heaven and earth is but one. *Obſerve* farther, Anothe name here given to Satan, *the accuſer of the brethren*; he accuſes them continually before God, and by his inſtruments before men; the primitive chriſtians were accuſed by their enemies to the magiſtrates as guilty of the moſt villanous practices, in their religious aſſemblies: And behold the aſſiduity of Satan in accuſing the ſaints *day and night*; but bleſſed be God, as Satan is a continual accuſer, Chriſt is a continual mediator. *Obſerve* again, How the ſaints overcome Satan. 1. By the *blood of the Lamb*; that is, by faith in his blood. 2. By the *word of their teſtimony*; that is, by their preaching, profeſſing, and practiſing the word of God. 3. By their ſufferings and martyrdom, *they love not their lives unto death*; that is, they loved not their lives ſo well but that they were willing to expoſe them to death, rather than renounce the cauſe of Chriſt, and deſert their holy profeſſion. *Obſerve* laſtly, After this great exultation and joy in heaven for the devil's downfal, here is a denunciation of *Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the ſea*, upon that account; that is, to all earthly, ſenſual men; whether they inhabit the continent, or any iſland in the ſea; becauſe the devil is come down full of rage, knowing that his time is ſhort to execute his malice in. *Learn*, 1. Who is the author of wrath, and malice, and revenge; and whoſe children they are that partake of that ſpirit and temper: The *devil* has *great wrath*; that is his character, and the very ſoul and ſpirit of the apoſtate nature. 2. That ſomething *good* may be learned from the *evil* one; Satan is very buſy, doubly diligent, becauſe his time is ſhort; ſo ſhould we be; our grave and coffin are at hand, our glaſs has but a little ſand; ſince but a few leaves are remaining in the book of our lives unfilled up, it concerns us to write the cloſer, and the faſter too; as Satan's time for miſchief is ſhort, ſo is our time for doing good.

13 ¶ And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto the earth, he perſecuted the woman which brought forth the man-*child*. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs, into her place: where ſhe is nouriſhed for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the ſerpent.

Obſerve here, The inceſſant and reſtleſs malice of Satan and his inſtruments againſt the church; neither his forementioned diſappointment, his preſent foil and downfal, nor his fear of future deſtruction, could move him to deſiſt; but having attempted to deſtroy the church with the fire of perſecution before, he endeavours to drown it with a flood of errors now, *Diabolus mutat conſilium, non deponit malitiam*; the devil ſometimes changes his methods in doing miſchief, but never lays down his malice; he perſecutes the woman, the church of Chriſt, after another manner, namely, by a flood of errors and hereſies. 2. The care that God took for his church's preſervation from this fatal miſchief alſo; to the woman *were given wings of a great eagle for flight into the wilderneſs*; that is, all means and ways of evaſion, which God out of his care for his church provides for her ſafety and protection in the time of trouble; the church's flight in time of perſecution is by no means to be cenſured or condemned, eſpecially when God by his providence provides her *wings*; that is, gives her opportunity ſo to do. 3. The place ſhe flies into for ſafety, (namely, into the wilderneſs) called *her place*, becauſe prepared by God for her ſafety; *here ſhe is nouriſhed*; that is, hath ſpiritual food provided for her by God, and a number of faithful miniſters are qualified for the feeding of her; *for a time, and times, and half a time*; that is, for a certain time determined by God, but altogether unknown to us; thus when the church meets with new diſtreſſes, God provides for her new deliverances.

15 And the ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cauſe her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

Two things are here obſervable; a new danger, ver. 15. a renewed ſuccour, ver. 16. *Obſerve*, 1. A new danger: this is ſet forth, By the author of it, the *ſerpent*; the former attempt againſt the church was managed by the wrathful dragon, this contrived by the ſubtle ſerpent; open cruelty is more dreadful, but ſubtle policy is more dangerous; the cunning devil is a more miſchievous enemy to the church of Chriſt than the raging devil; ſubtle Julian did the church more miſchief than bloody Nero, or Diocleſian. *Learn* hence, That what miſchief Satan cannot effect by open cruelty, he will attempt againſt the church by ſubtle policy; when he fails as a dragon, he will try what he can do as a ſerpent. *Obſerve*, 2. The matter as well as the author of this danger. *The ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water as a flood*; that is, a flood of errors, hereſies, falſe doctrines, and corrupt opinions, caſt out of the mouth of the corrupting ſeducers, endangering the very eſſence and being of the church of Chriſt, particularly the Arian hereſy, which prodigiouſly overſpread the world in its time. Hereſy may fitly be compared to a flood; it is a corrupting and defiling flood, it is a ſwelling and increaſing flood, it is a drowning and overwhelming flood. *Learn*, That the ſerpent's flood of errors and falſe doctrines, is the worſt and chiefeſt of the church's dangers. 3. The church's ſeaſonable relief and ſuccour: *The earth helped the woman*, &c. by the earth ſome underſtand earthly ones, wicked men, who are ſaid to help the woman, not intentionally, but eventually, by their greedy ſwallowing down thoſe errors which come out of the dragon's mouth, hearkening to his lies, and believing his errors for truths; others by the *earth* underſtand the kings and rulers of the earth, helping the woman, by calling ſynods and councils to ſtem the tide, to dam this flood, and to condemn theſe errors and hereſies, which by their overflowing endangered the church's ruin; the devil raiſed four abominable errors preſently after the church had obtained peace, and there was a great concurrence of magiſtrates and miniſters in confuting, cenſuring, and condemning the ſame, in and by their councils and ſynods. 1. The hereſy of Arius, who denied the divinity of Chriſt, this was condemned by the council of Nice, called by Conſtantine. 2. The hereſy of Macedonius, who denied the perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt, condemned by a council at Conſtantinople, called by Theodoſius the firſt. 3. The hereſy of Neſtorius, who aſſerted that Chriſt had two perſons, as well as two natures, condemned by a council at Epheſus, called by Theodoſius the ſecond. 4. The hereſy of Eutyches, who confounded Chriſt's natures, making him to have but one nature, as well as to be but one perſon; this was condemned by the council of Chalcedon: Thus the earth helped the woman; theſe four councils tended very much to the maintaining the truth, and preſerving the church from that flood of error and hereſy which the dragon caſt out of his mouth. Laſtly, The dragon's rage, ver. 17, *He was wroth with the woman*; that is, he was greatly enraged becauſe the woman was extraordinarily helped, and his deſigns wonderfully diſappointed, and when he ſaw he could not ruin the whole church, he reſolves to attack ſome particular members of it, even ſuch *as kept the commandment of God, and had the teſtimony of Chriſt*; that is, thoſe who kept cloſe to the ſcriptures, which contain the doctrine of faith, and teſtify that Chriſt is the only Saviour of the world. Now, from the dragon's making war with the remnant of the woman's ſeed, we learn how inſatiable the blood-thirſtineſs of Satan and his inſtruments is, who when they had killed the witneſſes before, and many other, yet can they not reſt till they have killed this little *remnant*, and made themſelves drunk with the blood of the ſaints; and never let proteſtants expect any other, or any better uſage at the hands of Romaniſts, with whom this is a certain principle, that heretics in a nation are to be extirpated root and branch, where it may ſafely be done; that is, when they are not too numerous, and the loſs of one of our lives may not coſt two of their own. If any ſay, that papiſts are now become better natured, by being under the reſtraint of our laws, I wiſh they may never be tempted out of their humanity by advantages of power: And as Almighty God has once more delivered the neck of this nation from the pinchings of the antichriſtian yoke, may our ſins never provoke him more to deliver us into the hands of thoſe men, whoſe tender mercies are cruel. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII.

AND I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy.

Obſerve here, 1. The place where St. John had the viſion related in this chapter; he apprehends himſelf to ſtand on the *ſea-ſhore*, a place fit for the ſight he was to ſee, namely, a *beaſt riſing out of the ſea*. Where *note*, That it is uſual in the prophets, Daniel eſpecially, to ſet out temporal monarchies oppreſſing the church by great beaſts. Where we *learn*, What a baſe and vile, what a low and mean eſteem God has of the mightieſt enemies of his church and people; let the world admire them as gods, if they abuſe their power God calls them beaſts; and as ſuch, in his own time, they *ſhall be deſtroyed*. *Obſerve*, 2. The monſtrous deſcription of that beaſt which St. John ſaw; it had *ſeven heads*, denoting, ſome ſay, the ſeven hills upon which Rome ſtands; or the ſeven ſorts of government ſucceſſively in the Roman ſtate, ſay others; *and ten horns*, that is, ten kings under Rome, and confederate with her. Where *note*, That all ſuch kings, be they ever ſo mighty or many, which perſecute ſincere chriſtianity, are vile in the eſteem of God, accounted no better than the horns of a bloody beaſt, which Almighty God in the end will either blunt or break. Sovereignty is from heaven, however men come by it, or however they abuſe it; which ſhews the horrid ingratitude of thoſe princes, who having received their power from *God*, do improve it againſt him, and turn it upon him by whom they reign. *And upon his heads the name of blaſphemy*: Thoſe that apply this deſcription of the beaſt to Rome pagan, underſtand hereby their paganiſh idol-worſhip in general; and their defying of the Roman emperors in particular. Others, as moſt proteſtants, who apply it to Rome papal, by this name of *blaſphemy*, underſtand thoſe blaſphemous titles which are given to the pope, as "Lord God, The univerſal Head, The Huſband of the Church, The Light which came into the World," &c. Which are the incommunicable attributes of Chriſt; and by flatterers and admirers frequently given to the papal antichriſt.

2 And the beaſt which I ſaw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his ſeat, and great authority.

St. John here proceeds in giving a farther deſcription of this monſtrous beaſt; it was in appearance like a *leopard*, ſpotted with divers kinds of idolatry, with variety of idol-gods; with *feet* like a *bear*, denoting its ſtrength and fierceneſs; its mouth like a *lion*, that is, cruel and ravenous. Next, an account is given from whom this beaſt receives its power and authority; the *dragon*, that is, the devil, by God's permiſſion, gave unto this beaſt power and great authority, to deceive by ſtrong deluſions, and hurt the ſoul, as alſo to kill and deſtroy the body. *Note*, That when the dragon is ſaid to give the beaſt his throne and power, his ſeat and great authority, we muſt not underſtand it as by right, for all power is from God, but as the uſurpation belonging to him. That authority, which is claimed to depoſe kings, to diſpoſe of kingdoms, to diſpenſe with the laws of God, all this is from the dragon, and in no wiſe from God.

3 And I ſaw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beaſt.

Here St. John farther declares what he ſaw concerning this beaſt, namely, 1. That *one of its heads was wounded*; by which head many underſtand the fall of the ancient imperial powers, the decay of its wonted glory; and that ample juriſdiction which Rome heretofore had under the pagan emperors: And by the wounding of this head they underſtand the aboliſhing of paganiſm and idolatry, and putting a ſtop to perſecution by the chriſtian emperors. 2. It is aſſerted, That *his deadly wound was healed*; namely, when idolatry, the ſame for ſubſtance with the pagan and old heatheniſh idolatry, but in a new dreſs, was gradually reſtored by the papal powers. 3. Here is the effect of this healing, *all the earth wondered after the beaſt*, that is, followed him in blind devotion. 4. Who the admirers of the beaſt are, the *earth*, the men of the world: No wonder to ſee them ſeduced! This admiration is general, the whole earth wondered after the beaſt; how falſe is it then, that multitude is a note of the true church. Behold the ſeveral inſtances of the world's wondering after the beaſt at Rome; they receive their doctrine and worſhip from him, they make all their appeals to him, all church officers receive their ordination from him, and are inſtalled by him.

4 And they worſhipped the dragon which gave power unto the beaſt: and they worſhipped the beaſt, ſaying, Who *is* like unto the beaſt? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth ſpeaking great things and blaſphemies: and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

From admiration in the former verſe, they proceed to adoration in this, they worſhip both the dragon and the beaſt, that is, they did worſhip idols, which are often in ſcripture called devils; like the Gentiles of old, who are ſaid by St. Paul to ſacrifice to devils, and not unto God, 1 Cor. x. 20. Behold here a vaſt difference between God's judgment and the opinion of the ſeduced world. They think the worſhip they give to a creature is given to God; but God accounts it as given to the devil, who is the author of all idolatry. *Note* next, That as the ſeduced world worſhipped the beaſt, ſo do they extol his earthly grandeur and ſurpaſſing power, ſaying, *Who is like unto the beaſt? Who is able to make war with him?* See how pomp and worldly grandeur dazzles the eyes of its admirers. Farther, A *mouth* was given this *beaſt* to ſpeak, that is, a power by the devil's inſtigation and God's permiſſion, to utter blaſphemies againſt the Moſt High. 1. The blaſphemous mouth of the *beaſt* is opened againſt the *name* of God, that is, againſt the word of God, by which God makes himſelf known, as a man is known by his name. Now, the word of God is blaſphemed by the *beaſt* and his worſhippers, when it is charged with obſcurity, with imperfection, called *a dead letter, and a noſe of wax*, &c. The ſpirit of God is then blaſphemed, when his divinely inſpired writings are thus vilified and undervalued. 2. This blaſphemous mouth is opened not only againſt God's name, but againſt his *tabernacle*, the place of his inſtituted worſhip, meaning by his *tabernacle* the true church, wherein God is worſhipped according to his word. God accounts himſelf blaſphemed when his true worſhippers are called *heretics*, *ſchiſmatics*, and, in a way of ſcorn, *Hugonots*, and the *ſynagogue of Satan*. 3. They blaſpheme them that *dwell in heaven*, by which ſome underſtand the holy martyrs now in heaven, whom they frequently called damned heretics, blackening their names, and blaſting their reputations; others underſtand it of ſome ſaints in heaven, whom they pretend to honour, as the Virgin Mary, &c. They *blaſpheme* them, namely, by ſpeaking of them, and praying to them *blaſphemouſly*, as when they bid the holy Virgin, "in the right of a mother, "command her Son." *Obſerve*, That when we give that honour and worſhip to ſaints and angels, which is only due to God, it is an idolatrous and impious blaſpheming of them that dwell in heaven; were the Virgin Mary ſenſible in heaven of that idolatrous adoration which is given her here on earth, with what indignation and diſdain would ſhe look down upon this ſacrilegious violence offered to her holy Son, in robbing him of that divine honour, which is peculiarly due to his divine nature? for religious adoration is peculiar to a deity.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations, 8 And all that dwell upon the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

Obſerve 1. A war proclaimed; the *beaſt* makes war upon the ſaints, by bloodſhed and perſecution, and by the force of thoſe weapons overcomes them; that is, to outward appearance, and in the opinion of the world, they ſeem to be totally overcome, becauſe viſibly ſlain; but really do the ſaints overcome him by their patience and conſtancy under ſufferings; and by rejecting his curſed idolatry, and adhering to the truth. 2. The large extent of the *beaſt*'s power that was given him, namely, *over all kindreds, tongues, and nations*. This muſt not be underſtood of individual perſons, nor univerſally of all nations, but of the nations belonging to the Roman empire; whole nations were carried away with his idolatry, though not all of every nation. Chriſt's flock is a little flock, compared with antichriſt's herd: how wrong a note then is multitude of the right church? 3. That as the power of the *beaſt* is univeral, ſo is the worſhip alſo: *All that dwell on the earth ſhall worſhip him*; that is, the generality of the Roman empire ſhall obey and honour him, and comply with him in his idolatry; few comparatively refuſing it. 4. We have a number excepted, *whoſe names are written in the book of life*. Bleſſed be God for this comfortable reſtriction; all are not worſhippers of the *beaſt*. Chriſt has his number of faithful ones, who are not defiled by antichriſt's pollutions; a number whoſe converſations are in heaven, and whoſe names are written there, in the book of life, called the book of the Lamb: becauſe it is by him, and by the merit of his blood, that we obtain eternal life. Laſtly, The title here given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is ſtyled *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, and that in ſeveral reſpects, 1. In the purpoſe and decree of God. 2. In the promiſe of God made from the beginning, Gen. iii. 15. 3. In reſpect of the types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices, whereby his death was prefigured and repreſented, Chriſt was ſlain typically in thoſe ſacrifices which Adam and Abel offered up unto God daily. 4. In reſpect of the virtue and efficacy of his death, which was effectual to all that truly believe in him, from the firſt promiſe made of him. The merits of Chriſt's death have ſaved all that have been ſaved from the foundation of the world. Behold here, The tender care of God in providing for our ſalvation before we were, yea, before the world was; and obſerve alſo, that the ſaints of God, in all ages, have been ſaved the ſame way, and by the ſame mean, namely, by faith in the death of Chriſt, which has extended itſelf to all true believers.

believers from the beginning of the world; and the efficacy of it will reach to all ſuch, even to the end of the world; the virtue of the ſacrifice is as freſh as the firſt moment it was ſlain, the death of Chriſt is of eternal efficacy.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity ſhall go into captivity: he that killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the ſword. Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints.

Obſerve here, 1. That this acclamation, *If any man have an ear, let him hear*, is added in ſcripture, when ſomething went before, which required a very diligent attention and cloſe application of mind: *If any man have an ear*, that is, a ſpiritual underſtanding to diſcern the meaning of what has been foretold, let him ponder and conſider what is here revealed concerning this beaſt, and take heed that he be not found amongſt the number of the worſhippers of it. 2. The conſolation here given to the ſaints, from the conſideration of God's juſt retribution to his and their enemies, *He that leadeth into captivity, ſhall go into captivity*; that is, the beaſt, who has brought many of the ſaints into captivity, ſhall himſelf at length be taken captive, and thrown into that lake of fire and brimſtone, ſpoken of chap. xix. 20. With what meaſure antichriſt metes to others, it ſhall be meaſured to him again: God has as many ways to hurt his church's enemies, as they have to hurt his people; if they lead into captivity, ſo can he; if they kill with the ſword, ſo will he. 3. The end and deſign of God in ſuffering antichriſt's rage to break forth againſt the church: it is for the trial of the church's faith and patience. *Note*, 1. That none can ſtand under, or bear up under ſufferings like ſaints. 2. That under great ſufferings, ſaints themſelves will have great occaſion for the exerciſe of faith and patience. 3. That the faith and patience of the ſaints will be made very conſpicuous by great and ſharp ſufferings. 4. That faith and patience muſt accompany each other in ſuffering times. Patience is the ſoul's ſhoulder to bear what is afflictive at preſent: faith is the chriſtian's eye to diſcover a glorious deliverance to come: where no patience is, it is a token of no faith: and where no faith is, there will appear great impatience. Behold then, the faith and patience of the ſaints.

11 ¶ And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he ſpake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciſeth all the power of the firſt beaſt before him, and cauſed the earth and them which dwell therein to worſhip the firſt beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doth great wonders, ſo that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the ſight of men. 14 ¶ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* thoſe miracles which he had power to do in the ſight of the beaſt; ſaying to them that dwell on the earth, that they ſhould make an image to the beaſt which had the wound by a ſword, and did live.

Here St. John enters upon the deſcription of a ſecond beaſt, very different from the former, yet not ſucceeding the former, but appearing during his continuance; and this beaſt (whoever he is) we find ſundry ways here deſcribed, namely, 1. By his original, he *aſcendeth out of the earth*, verſe 11. which denotes his riſe from a ſmall beginning to a mighty height, as thoſe things which from ſmall ſeeds grow out of the earth to be tall trees. Thus has one ariſen from being *epiſcopus urbis*, to be *epiſcopus orbis*. 2. He is ſaid to have *two horns*, whereas the former beaſt had *ten*, verſe 1. which ſignifies ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire, after its diſſolution, ſhould be divided. Accordingly, by the two horns here, in all reaſon, may be underſtood two of thoſe kingdoms of which this beaſt (whoever he be) ſhall be poſſeſſed. 3. He is ſaid to look like a *lamb*, but to ſpeak like a *dragon*; that is, to pretend to great meekneſs, and make a ſhew of much lenity and mildneſs in his proceedings, but ſhould really be very cruel; pretending to do all without violence, but doing indeed all by force, aſſiſted by his armed dragons, and booted apoſtles with javelins in their hands. 4. It is affirmed, ver. 12, that he ſhall ariſe during the continuance of the firſt beaſt, and engage in his cauſe, aſſuming to himſelf as great, or a greater power, than any emperors did before him, cauſing the *earth*, that is, all earthly-minded men who are ſubject to him, to worſhip the firſt beaſt, that is, to yield as great reverence and obedience to his decrees for eſtabliſhing idolatry, as ever the people did under the pagan emperors. 5. He is remarkable for working wonders, and particularly for cauſing fire to come down from heaven in the ſight of men; that is, he ſeemeth to the deluded multitude to do as great miracles as Elias did, who brought down fire from heaven to confirm the religion he profeſſed: In like manner the beaſt here works wonders ſeemingly great, lying wonders, falſe miracles, ſuch as falſe prophets may work, and have wrought for confirming their falſe doctrines: Accordingly we find this beaſt here called the *falſe prophet*, elſewhere, chap. xvi. 8, 9.—6. He requires the inhabitants of the earth to make an image to the beaſt, that is, he perſuades them, now profeſſing chriſtianity, to introduce and bring in ſuch a kind of idolatry, that the old heatheniſh idolatry may ſeem to revive again. Here *note*, That the idolatry of the church of Rome is a living image of the old heatheniſh idolatry; this is but the image of that, that was performed to heathen deities, this to departed ſaints. Popery, ſays the learned Dr. More, is ſuch a chriſtianity, as in all points anſwers the model of the old execrable heatheniſm, with which the Gentiles were enamoured then as are the Papiſts now: Thus the wounded and dead image of pagan idolatry revived, and lives again in papal idolatry: Good God! that any perſons profeſſing to know and worſhip the bleſſed Jeſus, ſhould thus diſhonour him, by intermixing the old heatheniſh ſuperſtitions, or ſomething worſe, with his holy inſtitutions.

15 ¶ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt, ſhould both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt ſhould be killed. 16 ¶ And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or ſell ſave he that had the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wiſdom. Let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt. For it is the number of a man; and his number *is* ſix hundred threeſcore *and* ſix.

St. John proceeds here to give a farther character and deſcription of the beaſt, which he had begun to deſcribe, ver. 11. And, 1. His bloody cruelty is ſet forth, ver. 15, *He cauſed them to be killed*, &c. Where *mark*, It is not ſaid that he killed them himſelf, not challenging directly the power of life and death to himſelf; but he cauſeth them to be killed, namely, by the ſecular power, by the kings and princes, who are the horns of the beaſt, and who give their power and ſtrength to the beaſt, and war againſt the Lamb. Again, 2. After his cruelty follows his compulſion, he cauſes all ſorts of men, high and low, bond and free, to receive a mark in their right hand, and in their forehead, in alluſion to an ancient cuſtom which was to mark ſervants and ſoldiers on the arm, by which it was known what maſter or captain they belonged to; in like manner the beaſt here is ſaid to have a mark for thoſe that are his, which mark ſeems probably to have been an open owning of him, and active engagement for him, a profeſſed ſubjection to him. 3. The beaſt is here ſaid to interdict and forbid all trade and commerce with thoſe that had not his mark, ver. 17. Several bulls and decrees have been ſent from Rome, commanding that no traffic or commerce be had with any heretic in buying or ſelling, but only with thoſe that profeſs themſelves members of the Romiſh church. 4. It is added, that the *number of the beaſt is ſix hundred and ſixty-ſix*, that is, that the numeral letters of a certain word or name, being computed, ſhould amount to that number. I ſhall cloſe this chapter with the words of a great man, Archbiſhop Tillotſon, on Rev. xiv. 13, page 329, "Unto whom all the formentioned characters of the "beaſt do agree, and eſpecially the number of his name, I "ſhall not preſume to conjecture, much leſs poſitively to "determine, becauſe it is ſaid to require a particular wiſdom "and underſtanding to find it out. However the event "will diſcover it." And again, on St. Luke, ix. 55, he thus ſpeaks: "It is believed by many, and not without "cauſe, that the pope and his faction are the antichriſtian "beaſt: I will ſay no more than I know in this matter; I "am not certain that it is he that is particularly deſigned "in ſcripture by that name; but however that be, I challenge antichriſt himſelf, whoever he is, and whenever he "comes, to do worſe and wickeder things than he has "done; verily it almoſt looks uncharitably, barely to relate what theſe men have not bluſhed to act."

CHAP. XIV.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb ſtood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thouſand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

This verſe repreſents to us a freſh viſion which St. John had, in which ſeveral things are very obſervable, as, 1. What and whom St. John ſaw, a *Lamb*, by whom Chriſt is to be underſtood. 2. The poſture which this Lamb was found in, *he ſtood*, ſhewing thereby his readineſs to deliver his church, and to do every thing that is needful for her. 3. The place where he ſtood on, *Mount Sion*, that is, in the midſt of the church. Chriſt ever has been, is, and will be preſent with his church, even to the end, although his preſence with her is not always ſenſibly perceived, his care is myſteriouſly exerciſed; he is then taking moſt care of her when he ſeems to take leaſt, nay, when the men of the world think he takes none at all. 4. His company and attendants; and they are deſcribed two ways (1.) By their number, to wit, an hundred forty and four thouſand, whereby the collective body of the whole church is to be underſtood, and intimates to us, that in the worſt of times, even when apoſtacy and perſecution do moſt univerſally prevail, Chriſt never wants a church, and is not without a number of true worſhippers. (2.) They are deſcribed by their badge or mark, having the *Father's name written in their foreheads*; in oppoſition to the mark of the beaſt mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and in alluſion to a cuſtom among men, who put their marks or names upon their goods, eſpecially upon ſilver or gold veſſels, and the like; ſo that the mark of the Father's name upon the forehead denotes both the precious eſteem which God has of his people, and alſo intimates their open profeſſion and owning of him for their Lord and Maſter, and their faithful adherence to his worſhip. *Learn* hence, That the ſincere worſhip of God, with the open and avowed profeſſion of his holy and undefiled religion, accompanied with a ſuitable converſation, is a better mark and note of the true church than multitudes and numbers, which are a note of the antichriſtian ſynagogue; the world wonders after the beaſt, when mount Sion here affords only 144,000, which had the Father's name written on their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they ſung as it were a new ſong before the throne, and before the four beaſts, and the elder: and no man could learn that ſong but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand; which were redeemed from the earth.

St. John here deſcribes the true worſhippers of Chriſt in the midſt of antichriſtian idolatry, where we have, 1. The acceptable worſhip they perform, prayer and praiſe, an heavenly exerciſe, which, like *thunder*, and the *voice of many waters*, ſounds loud in the ears of God, and is certainly heard by him, and is melodious like the *harp*, and therefore as acceptable to him as the ſweeteſt muſic is to us. 2. The perſons deſcribed who perform this acceptable worſhip, ſuch as were *redeemed from the earth*; where the *earth* is put for earthly-minded men, the falſe church: the meaning is, that God has fetched this ſmall number of true worſhippers, the hundred forty-four thouſand, from among the falſe worſhippers and impure ones, he hath reſcued them from the world of idolaters, and from the ſuperſtitious multitude. 3. The perſons deſcribed before whom this worſhip is performed: *Before the throne*, to ſhew the reverence and ſincerity wherewith they performed the ſame, as in the ſight of the great and glorious God: *and before the beaſts and elders*, that is, the whole congregations of the ſaints, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxxix. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſemblies of his ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.*

4 Theſe are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. Theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth. Theſe were redeemed from among men, *being* the firſt fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

St. John proceeds here in deſcribing the true worſhippers of God, which would not comply with antichriſtian idolatry. 1. He ſtyles them *virgins*, thereby intimating that they are the chaſte ſpouſe of Chriſt, and the true church, who worſhip God alone with religious worſhip; *and they have not defiled themſelves with women*, that is, ſpiritually committed whoredom; they have not been inveigled with the whore to commit ſpiritual fornication. Where *note*, That idolatry is a filthy ſin, it is as odious to God as whoredom and uncleanneſs; and an idolatrous church is a filthy whore, unworthy to claim the title of a mother, unleſs it be the mother of fornications. 2. They are ſaid to *follow the Lamb, whitherſoever he goes*; this is ſpoken in oppoſition to thoſe who *followed the beaſt*, and denotes their imitation of Chriſt's example, and their firm adherence to the purity of his doctrine and worſhip, although it expoſe them to hazard and danger. 3. They are called the *firſt-fruits unto God, and the Lamb*, which denotes their paucity, like a few ſheaves in compariſon of the whole harveſt; their ſanctity, the firſt-fruits were holy to the Lord, and were his peculiar portion, alſo their ſafety and ſecurity, as the firſt-fruits were God's portion, ſo it was both ſacrilegious and unſafe to rob God of his portion. By calling them the firſt-fruits which were holy to the Lord, we ſee the ſpecial intereſt and propriety that God has in his faithful ſervants and true worſhippers beyond all others, they are his peculiar portion, his inheritance, his treaſure, which he will ever take care of, and be concerned for.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Here St. John cloſes the deſcription of the forementioned followers of the Lamb, 1. With the character of their integrity, like the Lamb, no guile is found in their mouth, as there was none in his, 1 Pet. ii. 22. they were free from that hypocriſy which was found amongſt antichriſt's followers, who profeſs to worſhip God, but adore their idols: Sincerity and uprightneſs of heart towards God and man was found with them. 2. They are ſaid to be without fault before God, which may be underſtood comparatively; they have no ſuch faults as antichriſt's followers are guilty of; they worſhip God aright, and are approved by him; or if abſolutely, we muſt underſtand it of their glorification in heaven, where all the ſaints are without ſpot, and blameleſs *before the throne of God*, perfectly like unto God and the Lamb, as well in purity as in immortality.

6 ¶ And I ſaw another angel fly in the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven and earth and the ſea and the fountains of waters.

Here St. John has another viſion of an angel flying in the midſt of heaven with great ſwiftneſs, which interpreters apprehend to ſignify the faithful miniſters' zeal and diligence in preaching the glad tidings of the goſpel to a loſt world. Where *note*, 1. The title given to the goſpel of Chriſt, it is called the *everlaſting goſpel*: ſo it is, partly in regard of its author the everlaſting God, partly becauſe it promiſes and offers everlaſting life; but chiefly becauſe it was preached from the bginning of the world, and ſhall continue to the end of the world, and never be abrogated, as the legal adminiſtration was. 2. The univerſality of that grace and ſalvation which in and by the goſpel is held forth and tendered even unto all nations, tongues, kindred and people: ſo that none are debarred, but thoſe who by impenitency and unbelief do wilfully and finally debar themſelves. 3. That God ſending the everlaſting goſpel to be preached, is here called *the hour of his judgment*; the preaching the goſpel is the hour of mercy to ſome, but wrath and judgment to others, even to all refuſers and contemners; and accordingly all are warned to fear God, and give glory to him, and inſtead of worſhipping idols and images, to worſhip the true God according to his will revealed in his word.

8 ¶ And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Here we have the ſecond angel's proclamation, denouncing the fall of Babylon, whoſe fall is in the prophecy threatened, and in the threatening ingeminated; *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, to ſhew the certainty of her downfal: And it is obſervable how this comes in, immediately after the reſtoring of the goſpel, mentioned in the foregoing verſes, *I ſaw an angel fly, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach*, ver. 6. *And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen*, ver. 8. Whence *learn*, That it is the zealous and faithful preaching of the goſpel which is the ruin of antichriſt, and the means of his downfal and deſtruction; this is the breath of the Lord's mouth, by which he is conſumed, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Queſt.* What is here meant by *Babylon? Anſw.* All agree that literal Babylon is not here meant, which was the chief city of Chaldea, but ſpoken figuratively; and it is generally agreed that by Babylon is Rome here intended; ſome will have it Rome pagan, under the heathen emperors, others Rome papal, under the antichriſtian tyranny, and that ſhe is paralleled with Babylon for her idolatry and cruelty, yea, far exceeding her in both, *for in her is found the blood of the prophets*, Rev. xviii. 24. *Obſerve* next, Her ruin declared in the preſent tenſe, *is fallen*, as if already accompliſhed; and ingeminated, *Is fallen, is fallen*; which repetition denotes both the certainty of her fall, and the joy which the church ſhould expreſs upon that occaſion; though Babylon be never ſo great, yet ſhe ſhall fall, ſhe ſhall aſſuredly fall; and it is the church's duty to pray, that as it is in the prophecy, ſo it may be in the hiſtory, that *Babylon is fallen*, and to expreſs the higheſt joy upon that great occaſion. Laſtly, The cauſe of Babylon's ruin is here aſſigned, *ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* Where *note*, 1. That by *fornications*, her errors, idolatries, and falſe worſhip are underſtood. 2. That theſe are compared to wine upon ſeveral accounts. Is wine pleaſant to the palate? ſo is idolatry to corrupt nature, which is hugely pleaſed with a pompous worſhip, and a ſenſual religion. Is wine inflaming? ſo is idolatry; inflaming themſelves with idols, Iſa. lvii. 5. Does the wine deceive, and inſenſibly ſteal upon the drinker, and intoxicate him ere he is aware of it? ſo doth error and idolatry grow upon perſons by inſenſible degrees; and accordingly, chap. xiii. 14. the beaſt is ſaid to deceive them that dwell on the earth: In a word, as perſons drunk with wine are altogether incapable of counſel and advice from their beſt friends, in like manner ſuch as are drunk with error and idolatry, with the wine of the whore's fornication, are beſotted, benumbed, will not acknowledge their error, nor receive inſtruction. 3. That this wine, as ſweet as it is, is called *the wine of wrath*, partly becauſe it inflames them that are drunk therewith with rage and cruel fury againſt ſincere worſhippers, and partly becauſe it brings the wrath of God upon them that drink it: little do idolaters think of this, becauſe it is a worſhip of their own invention, it pleaſes them becauſe it feaſts their outward ſenſes, it is as grateful as wine unto them, but they forget that this wine is mixed with wrath, even with the wrath of God, the dregs of which ſhall be wrung out, and all idolaters ſhall drink them up.

9 And the third angel followed them, ſaying with a loud voice, If any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead or in his hand, 10 The ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb: 11 And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no reſt day nor night, who worſhip the beaſt, and his image, and whoſoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Obſerve here the great and ſpecial care which Almighty God takes to warn men and women of thoſe dreadful plagues, which ſhould moſt certainly come upon the heads of idolaters; *a third angel followed, crying with a loud voice.* O how good is God, in that he doth always premoniſh before he puniſhes! warns before he ſtrikes, and adviſes all not to partake with others in their ſins, leſt they be partakers of their plagues? 2. A moſt dreadful denunciation of the wrath of God, againſt all thoſe who ſhall *worſhip the beaſt and his image*, that is, ſubmit to the enjoined idolatry, and *receive his mark in their foreheads or hands*, that is yield obedience to the beaſt as a ſervant, and openly own ſubjection to him as his ſlaves. Lord! what a dreadful guiltineſs is it to follow antichriſt, and to continue obſtinate in idolatry, after God has ſent one angel after another, miniſter after miniſter, to acquaint them both with their ſin and danger. 3. The denunciation itſelf in the ſeveral parts of it, 1. *They ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, that is, for their ſin ſhall partake of ſevere judgments, the effects of God's wrath. *Mark*, Here is wine for wine; for the *wine of Babylon's fornication*, here is *the wine of the wrath of God*; the former wine was not ſo ſweet, but the latter ſhall be as ſharp. 2. Here is the quality of this wrath, *it is poured out without mixture*; its being poured out ſhews the abundance of it, and without mixture, ſhews that it is without the leaſt drop of mercy to allay the extremity of their torment. 3. It is called *a cup of indignation*, thereby intimating, that it is not the correction of a father, which is accompanied with lenity and love, but the vengeance of a judge that deſigns utter deſtruction. 4. Here is the effect of their drinking of this cup of the Lord's indignation, their being tormented with fire and brimſtone, which expreſſion denotes theſe ſinners torments to be moſt exquiſite, both intolerable and interminable, and their puniſhment both eaſeleſs and endleſs. 5. It is here ſaid, that this their torment ſhall be in the preſence of the holy angels, and of the Lamb; in the ſight of the Lamb, againſt whom, and in the ſight of the angels, before whom they had ſinned, in worſhipping the beaſt, they ſhall ſee them, but none ſhall help them. 6. The eternity as well as the extremity of their torments is here ſet forth; *their ſmoke aſcends for ever and ever*; the torments of hell are here ſet forth as moſt acute and exquiſite, and as endleſs and eaſeleſs, they have no reſt day nor night, nor a moment's eaſe. It is well obſerved by Mr. Mede, that there is not a more terrible deſcription of puniſhment in the whole book of God, than is here denounced againſt thoſe idolaters which adhere to the beaſt, *the ſmoke of their torment*, that is, the fire and ſmoke wherewith they are tormented, aſcendeth up for *ever and ever, and they have no reſt day nor night.* And if the church of Rome, or papal Babylon, be here intended and not pagan, as moſt proteſtants believe and affirm, then this ſhews that thoſe of her communion, living and dying in a firm adherence to the chief doctrines of popery, and framing their lives by them, after they have had, or might have had, ſufficient means to convince them of their error and idolatry, do expoſe their ſalvation to extreme hazard and danger. Bleſſed be God for our happy reformation, from the idolatry and ſuperſtition, from the tyranny and oppreſſion, and the intolerable yoke of the church of Rome. God grant we may be reformed in our lives as well as in our religion, otherwiſe our damnation is as ſure as theirs is great, for the holieſt doctrine and pureſt worſhip, will be of no avail to impure worſhippers and unholy livers; it matters not what church, or what communion a bad man is of, for it is certain he cannot be ſaved by any.

12 Here is the patience of the ſaints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus.

That is, here at this time will be exerciſed all the faith and patience of Chriſt's faithful ſervants, and this their exerciſe of theſe graces will make it appear that they were true, and not counterfeit chriſtians; it follows, *here are they which keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus*, that is, who diſcover themſelves ſincere in their profeſſion, by obeying the commands of God, and rightly believing in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where *note*, What is the characteriſtical mark of a ſincere chriſtian, namely, faith and obedience united together, faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and obedience to the will of God in all things, are never ſeparated where they are ſincere.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed *are* the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Theſe words in their original and primary intention were delivered by the Spirit, and commanded to be written by St. John, for the ſupport and comfort of the church under that ſevere perſecution which ſhould befal it; and do declare the happy condition of martyrs particularly, and ſuch as die for the Lord; but they may be conſidered in a greater latitude, and be of general uſe to the church of God in all ages, and under all circumſtances, and adminiſter comfort to all believers who die in the Lord, that is, in the faith of the Lord, in the fear of the Lord, and in the favour of the Lord, to all that die ſincere chriſtians, both in faith and practice. *Note*, 1. A ſolemn declaration of the bleſſed ſtate of good men after this life, their death is bleſſed, and a bleſſing to them. 2. The time from whence their bleſſedneſs commences, *from henceforth*, that is, from the time of their death, then doth their bleſſedneſs begin. *Learn*, That all good chriſtians, immediately upon their diſſolution and departure out of this life, are in a bleſſed and happy condition. 3. Wherein the bleſſedneſs of the righteous after their departure doth conſiſt, 1. In reſting from their labours, that is, from all the troubles, ſorrows, and ſufferings, from all the calamities, infirmities, and miſeries of this frail mortal ſtate; no ſin ſhall effect them, no ſorrow afflict them, no danger affright them. 2. In reaping the comfort of all the good works they have done in the world, *their works follow them*, that is, A delightful remembrance of their good works and the ſpecial reward belonging to them, ſhall accompany good men into another world, which will render them completely bleſſed, by procuring for them, through the merits of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, an admiſſion into heaven, where they ſhall drink of thoſe pleaſures which are at God's right hand for evermore. Laſtly, How this truth concerning the future bleſſedneſs of the righteous, deſerves our moſt ſerious and attentive regard and meditation, becauſe delivered by an audible voice from heaven, expreſsly commanded to be written, and confirmed by the ſolemn aſſeveration of the Spirit.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* ſat like unto the ſon of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a ſharp ſickle. 15 ¶ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud, Thruſt in thy ſickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that ſat on the cloud thruſt in his ſickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

In theſe verſes a deſcription is given of Chriſt as coming to judgment, to inflict puniſhment upon his ſtubborn enemies, and here we have the judge deſcribed, 1. By his form or ſhape, he was one like the Son of man. 2. By his place and poſture of judgment, ſitting on a white cloud, the cloud denoting the ſovereignty of the judge, and whiteneſs prefiguring the uprightneſs of his proceedings, and both ſignifying his ſpeed and ſwiftneſs in coming to execute judgment; on this white cloud did he ſit, denoting thereby, both his compoſedneſs and freedom from all paſſion and perturbation as a judge, and alſo his majeſty and authority, ſitting as a king upon his throne, as well as like a judge upon his tribunal. 3. He is deſcribed by his royal ornament *having on his head a golden crown:* behold here the different eſtate of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt above, from what it was here below; here crowned with thorns, there crowned with gold, the reward to his ſufferings! bleſſed be God, that as it was with the head, ſo ſhall it be with all the members! 4. By the inſtrument which he had in his hand fit for the work which he had in hand, namely, a ſharp ſickle for the reaping of the earth. A ſickle is a circular inſtrument, and compaſſeth the corn round about, which it is to cut down; the judgment of Chriſt upon the wicked will encloſe them all, not a ſoul of them ſhall be able to eſcape it; and a ſharp ſickle ſignifies the quality of his judgment, that it will be ſevere. Behold here the unavoidable deſtruction of the wicked, and how impoſſible it is for them to eſcape the judgments of Chriſt; all the wicked together are no more in the hand of Chriſt than as a handful of graſs, or ripe corn, to a ſharp ſickle in a ſtrong hand. In ver. 15. we have a manifeſtation of the church's fervent deſire that Chriſt would make ſpeed, and haſten his work, and come quickly to judgment, both for the conſummation of their glory, and for the deſtruction of his own and their enemies: *thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap, for the harveſt is ripe*; that is, it is full time to execute thy judgment on the wicked, for their ſins (which call for theſe judgments) are now come to the height. Behold here Chriſt's day of judgment is like a day of harveſt; when the corn is ripe the ſickle is got ready; when the ſickle is got ready, it is ſet to work; when it is ſet to work it cuts all down, wheat and tares, corn and graſs, without diſcrimination; but the Lord of the harveſt ſoon commands a ſeparation to be made of the good grain from the tares, of the righteous from the wicked, laying up the former in the granary of heaven, binding up the latter for the fire of hell. In verſe 16. we have obſervable, 1. Chriſt's ready anſwering of, and complying with, the deſires of his people, to thruſt in the ſickle of his judgment, and reap the earth. How ready is Chriſt to fulfil the deſires of them that fear him, to hear their cry, and help them in his own time, in the beſt and fitteſt ſeaſon! 2. The great and infinite power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that upon the thruſting in of his ſickle, the whole earth was preſently reaped. Behold the ability of Chriſt for judgment, as well as his impartiality in judging; ſuch a judge is he, as the power of the mightieſt cannot daunt; ſuch a judge as the riches of the wealthieſt cannot bribe; ſuch a judge, as the ſubtlety of the wiſeſt cannot deceive; in a word, ſuch a judge, as there is no appealing from, no repealing of his ſentence. O great day! when the ſtiffeſt knee ſhall bow at the tribunal of Chriſt, and the ſtrongeſt back ſhall bend under the unſupportable burden of the wrath of the Lamb; when the Alexanders and Cæſars, which once ſhook the earth, and cauſed the world to tremble, ſhall revere and lie proſtrate at the foot of Chriſt! Behold then, and admire the wonderful power and dexterity of Chriſt in judging; that upon the *thruſting in of his ſickle the whole earth was preſently reaped!*

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he alſo having a ſharp ſickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle ſaying, Thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 ¶ And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and caſt *it* into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine-preſs was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-preſs, even unto the horſe-bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand *and* ſix hundred furlongs.

In the former verſes we meet with a metaphor of an harveſt, in theſe we meet with that of a vintage; there the wicked were compared to ripe corn fit for the harveſt, here to ripe grapes fit for the wine-preſs: ſignifying by both, that the wicked, by filling up the meaſure of their ſins, do make themſelves ripe and ready for judgment. *Note* here, 1. That as the true church is called a vine, ſo is the wicked anti-chriſtian church here called; but with this addition *a vine of the earth*, cleaving to, and only ſavouring of the earth; a good name will ſignify little in judgment; to be called chriſtians, virgins, &c. what will it profit, without burning and ſhining lamps? 2. Whereas the grapes of this vine are ſaid to be not only ripe, but fully ripe, how great is the forbearance and long-ſuffering of God towards the wicked? The patience of God towards ſinners is the greateſt miracle in the world; but though laſting it will not be everlaſting; when long abuſed, it turns at laſt into fury; ripeneſs in ſin, is a ſure prognoſtication of judgment at hand. 3. The vine with all its cluſters are gathered, ſmall and great, one and another, all ſhall appear before the bar of Chriſt, chap. xx. 12. *Note*, 4. Whither this degenerated vine, with all its cluſters, was caſt, namely, into the wine-preſs of God's wrath, which is called *a great wine-preſs*, becauſe it can contain all the wicked; it will hold them them all, be they ever ſo many; and is ſaid to be trodden, that is, by Chriſt, denoting the ſeverity of that vengeance which will be inflicted upon ſinners; the grapes which have hung a long time ripening in the ſun are ſeverely preſſed at laſt. 5. That the blood which came out of the wine-preſs (the blood of the grape) was ſo much in quantity, that it came up to the *horſes bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred furlongs*; all metaphorical expreſſions, ſignifying that wine is the wrath of God, and the cup of his indignation; and the hyperbolical expreſſion of its height, reaching as high as the horſe's bridle; and of its length, reaching more than a thouſand furlongs, ſhews that mighty deluge and inundation of God's wrath, which the wicked in general, and all antichriſt's followers in particular, ſhall not only drink of, but ſwim in; and as they ſhed the blood of the ſaints abundantly, in like manner God will give them blood to drink in great abundance. Laſtly, That although theſe two metaphors of the *harveſt* and the vintage ſignify one thing only, the viſion is doubled, like Pharaoh's dream, to ſhew the certainty thereof, yet we may conceive that the ſimilitude of a vintage here holds forth greater judgment than the harveſt: Almighty God, in his providential diſpenſation towards the wicked, proceeds gradually; as they proceed from one degree of wickedneſs, ſo does he from one degree of wrath and vengeance to another; the vintage follows the harveſt, the ſharp ſickle follows the ſickle, the harveſt is ſaid to be ripe, the vintage to be fully ripe; if the flood of God's anger in this life will not waſh ſinners clean, the deluge of his wrath in the next will waſh them quite away. Eternal thanks to Chriſt the Lamb, who has delivered *his* from this dreadful wrath to come!

CHAP. XV.

AND I ſaw another ſign in heaven great and marvellous, ſeven angels having the ſeven laſt plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

This and the following chapter acquaints us with a freſh viſion, which St. John had of the *pouring forth of the vials*, or the inflicting of the ſeven laſt plagues and judgments upon the world, upon the heathen world, ſay ſome; upon the antichriſtian world, ſay moſt: *I ſaw ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues*, &c. where by *ſeven angels*, underſtand the miniſters and executioners of the wrath of God; by the *ſeven plagues*, underſtand the laſt dreadful judgments that ſhould be inflicted, which would make a final end of him, whoever he be, that they ſhould be poured forth upon him one after another. *Note*, 1. How the patience, forbearance, and long-ſuffering goodneſs of God is wonderfully ſeen in his carriage towards ſinners: though he puniſhes the wicked ſometimes, to let them ſee that his juſtice is not aſleep, yet he doth not ſtir up all his wrath, nor poureth it out all at once upon them, but gradually; deſirous of, and waiting for their repentance, even when he has begun in juſtice to puniſh them. 2. Whereas it is ſaid, *in them* (that is, in the preſent ſeven plagues) *is filled up the wrath of God*: We *learn*, what final impenitency and incorrigibleneſs under former judgments, will produce at laſt; namely, judgment to the uttermoſt; ripeneſs in ſin will at laſt make men ripe for ruin: and when they have filled up the meaſure of their ſins, God will fill up the meaſure of his *wrath*.

2 I ſaw as it were a ſea of glaſs mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, ſtand on the ſea of glaſs, having the harps of God. 3 ¶ And they ſing the ſong of Moſes the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God almighty; juſt and true *are* thy ways, thou King of ſaints. 4 Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only *art* holy: for all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

There ſeems here to be an alluſion to the Iſraelites deliverance out of Egypt, and to the ſong of Moſes upon that occaſion, recorded Exod. xv. As they were delivered out of literal Egypt, ſo theſe from myſtical Egypt, both neſts of idolatry and falſe worſhip; a deliverance from both which deſervedly called for a ſong of thankſgiving. *I ſaw a ſea of glaſs mingled with fire*; that is, a great number of pure zealous chriſtians, their multitude being repreſented by the *ſea*, their purity by *glaſs*, and their zeal by *fire: who had gotten victory over the beaſt, and over his image*; that is, who overcame all temptations to idolatry, both from the pagan and antichriſtian emperors, called the beaſt and his image. *Having the harps of God in their hand*, in alluſion to the muſical inſtruments uſed in the temple-ſervice, and denoting hearts fitted for, and tuned by, the Spirit of God, to praiſe him with cheerfulneſs for preſerving them from being overcome by temptations to idolatry. *Learn*, That ſuch as are ſincerely gracious, are truly thankful to God for all his benefits and bleſſings, but eſpecially for their preſervation from ſin, and their getting victory over temptations. *Obſerve* next, The work of ſolemn praiſe and thankſgiving, which the purified and preſerved ſouls were engaged in, and employed about. *Note*, 1. The title of the ſong, namely, *The ſong of Moſes and the Lamb*. The ſong of Moſes, that is, a ſong much like unto that of Moſes and the Iſraelites, after they had paſſed ſafely through the Red ſea, Exod. xv. And *the ſong of the Lamb*; ſo called, becauſe it was a ſong indited by the Spirit of the Lamb, and tending to advance the glory of the Lamb. 2. The matter of the ſong, which is divided into two parts (1.) The church's confeſſion and declaration of thoſe works which Chriſt doth: *Great and marvellous are thy works*, &c. that is, they are great and wonderful works, fit only to be done by him who is the Lord God almighty: *juſt and true*, well becoming him who is King of ſaints. (2.) The uſe which the church makes of theſe works: and that is, 1. To record, celebrate, and publiſh them. 2. To oblige and bind themſelves, faſter and cloſer to him in his worſhip and ſervice. *Obſerve* farther, The titles which are here by the church given unto God. 1. *The Lord God almighty*. A title full of comfort to the ſaints in their greateſt ſtraits, and full of terror to their enemies in the midſt of their abundance. 2. He is ſtiled *King of ſaints*, they receiving ſpecial protection from him, and he exerciſing a particular care over them. 3. *He only is ſaid to be holy*; that is, eſſentially and cauſally: Eſſentially in himſelf, and cauſally with reſpect to us; all holineſs is originally in him, all holineſs is derivatively from him, therefore ſhould the praiſe thereof be given to him. Laſtly, The duty inferred from all thoſe glorious titles which are here given to God, and for all the great and marvellous works done by him: *Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?* As if he had ſaid, "All ought to do ſo, and there is great reaſon for ſo doing." As God is to be feared becauſe he is full of power and juſtice, ſo then eſpecially ſhould his people fear him, when he is taking vengeance on his enemies, his own and his church's adverſaries.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the ſeven angels came out of the temple, having the ſeven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breaſts girded with golden girdles.

Obſerve, 1. The viſion which St. John had; he thought he ſaw the Holy of holies open to him, *and ſeven angels* coming forth with ſeven plagues, as the executioners of God's judgments upon idolatrous perſons. *Note*, 1. The inſtruments employed by God for executing his wrath upon ſinners, *angels, ſeven angels*; not that he needs them, but he is pleaſed to make uſe of them; and they are but inſtruments in his hand, his bow, and his battle-ax, mere dead tools, who receive all their efficacy from the hand that uſes them: Their preſence adds no ſtrength to him, their abſence makes the work no more difficult to him. 2. From whence theſe ſeven angels came, namely, *out of the temple*, out of the oracle, more immediately from the preſence of God, implying, that they came forth to execute vengeance by God's ſpecial directions, and not barely by his permiſſion; and conſequently that the work was very acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God which they went about. 3. How they are furniſhed, *having ſeven plagues*; namely, to inflict upon the idolatrous enemies of the church. 4. In and after what manner theſe angels were apparalled and appeared. 1. They were clothed *in pure white linen*, to denote the holineſs of their perſons, as alſo the holineſs of that work which they had then in hand. 2. This clothing of their's was girded to them, expreſſing thereby their great readineſs for, and their great alacrity and cheerfulneſs in, their work. 3. The girdle wherewith they were girded was a *golden* girdle, exactly anſwering the habit of the high prieſt, when he entered into the Holy of holies, to enquire of God, or came out with an anſwer from God. From the whole *learn*, That when the Lord comes to pull down Babylon, as well as to build up Sion, he will appear in glory: The angels are God's ſpecial miniſters; when they go forth to pour out the vials of his wrath upon Babylon, they appear glorioully apparelled, glittering like the high prieſt, *and girded with golden girdles*.

7 ¶ And one of the four beaſts gave unto the ſeven angels, ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with ſmoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled.

Obſerve, 1. That what was called ſeven plagues in the foregoing verſe, is here called *ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of God:* In this verſe vials are full cups. Vials of wrath are prepared when the meaſures of a people's ſins are filled up; full cups of ſin are followed with full vials of God's wrath. Next, Theſe vials are ſaid to be of *gold*, ſignifying, that theſe judgments proceed from a juſt God, with whom there is no corruption nor iniquity in judgments, he being holy in all his ways and righteous in all his works. Theſe vials are alſo ſaid to be *full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever*, as an aggravation of the ſame, it not being like the wrath of a mortal man, of ſhort continuance, but of endleſs duration; it is the wrath of him that ever lives to maintain his wrath, and to uphold and ſuſtain the ſinner under the execution and infliction of this wrath, that the ſinner cannot run from him. O what a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God, whoſe wrath is both intolerable and interminable! the ſinner can neither ſtand under it, nor flee from it. 2. The executioners of this wrath are ſaid to be *ſeven angels*. The angels which are merciful attendants upon the godly, are alſo, at God's command, the executioners of his wrath upon the wicked. Theſe angels are here ſaid to be *ſeven*, to ſignify that God's judgments upon his church's adverſaries ſhall be heavy and great: One angel plagued all Egypt, and deſtroyed Senacherib's mighty hoſt, but here went out ſeven angels to deſtroy antichriſt. 3. The tremendous dreadfulneſs of this wrath, intimated by filling *the temple with ſmoke*, thereby ſignifying, that the wrath of God kindled againſt his enemies ſhall be unto them like a devouring and conſuming fire, before the flame of which burſt forth, a cloud of ſmoke appears. *Learn*, That almighty God is glorified in the deſtruction, as well as in the ſalvation of ſinners; his glory is as well ſeen in his ſmoking wrath againſt the wicked, as in his ſaving mercy towards the godly. *The temple was filled with ſmoke from the glory of God, and from his power*; it follows—*No man was able to enter into the temple*; that is, to deprecate God's anger, and ſupplicate his mercy, or to avert the plagues threatened, and now juſt ready to be inflicted; when mercy has been long offered and deſpiſed, the Lord at laſt becomes inexorable, and will ſuffer none to intercede, or plead with him, Jer. xv. Though Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, yet my mind cannot be towards this people; caſt them out of my ſight, &c. The ſins of a people may ſometimes grow to ſuch an height, that almighty God will no longer be entreated; and when we know it, it is our duty to ceaſe praying for them, *Wo, wo, wo*, be unto ſuch a people.

CHAP. XVI.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, ſaying to the ſeven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Obſerve, 1. The command given to the ſeven angels, the executioners of God's juſtice, to do their office, namely, in pouring out the vials of his wrath upon the earth. The command is here ſaid to be given by a *voice*, by *a great voice*; becauſe it was the command of a great God, and about a great work: and it is ſaid to *come out of the temple*, in alluſion to the Holy of holies, the place of God's exhibiting himſelf, and from whence he gave forth oracles of old. 2. How the ſeven angels (the inſtruments of God in executing his judgments) receive their commiſſion from God, and pour not out one vial on the earth till they are required ſo to do; and being called *vials of the wrath of God*, it gives us this intimation, that what is done againſt antichriſt is not the effect of man's revenge, but the fruit of God's wrath; and whereas vials are veſſels of large content, but of narrow mouths, which pour out ſlowly, but diſtil effectually, and drench deeply, it imports, that the wrath of God is, though ſlow, yet ſure; it comes upon ſinners gradually; but if, upon its approach, they repent not, it will at laſt, like a mighty torrent, waſh them away from off the earth.

2 And the firſt went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt, and *upon* them which worſhipped his image.

Obſerve, 1. What alluſion this plague inflicted upon Babylon has to that plague which God of old inflicted upon Egypt, Exod. ix. 9. Egypt had her boil breaking forth, with blains upon man, and upon beaſt; in like manner, the worſhippers of the beaſt have noiſome and grievous ſores upon them: that is, great trouble and uneaſineſs of mind upon the firſt proſpect of the ſhaking of their kingdom, by diſcovering the vanity, blaſphemy, hypocriſy, and tyranny, of their deviſed religion; even as ſores and blains do vex and torture thoſe that are troubled with them. *Learn*, That it is no ſmall vexation and trouble to the wicked, when they have their ſins detected and diſcovered, it is as great a torture to their minds as an ulcer or boil is to their bodies.

3 And the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea, and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living ſoul died in the ſea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Obſerve, That this ſecond and third plague poured out upon the ſea, and the rivers of waters, whereby they became blood, have a manifeſt alluſion to that plague of Egypt whereby all the waters were turned into blood, Exod. vii. 19. Farther, That by the ſea and the rivers full of blood, the bloody perſecutors in the antichriſtian church are ſuppoſed to be meant, who, by ſlaughter and bloodſhed, ſeek to plant and propagate a bloody religion throughout the earth. Laſtly, That the pouring out of theſe vials gradually and ſucceſſively upon idolaters and perſecutors, and not altogether, and all at once, but one after another teaches us, how abounding the patience, forbearance, and long-ſuffering goodneſs of God is even toward the worſt of ſinners; not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters ſay, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus. 6 ¶ For they have ſhed the blood of ſaints and prophets, and thou haſt given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar ſay, Even ſo, Lord God almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

Theſe verſes ſeem to be a key to let us into the right underſtanding of the verſes immediately foregoing; and clearly ſhew that as the idolatrous enemies of the church did ſhed the blood of ſaints and martyrs, ſo ſhould theirs be ſhed; which is called *their having blood to drink*. *Note*, 1. The approbation which the angel gives of the equity and righteouſneſs of God's judgments upon theſe bloody perſecutors. Where the retribution which God makes of blood for blood, ſhews the righteouſneſs of God in his judgments inflicted; and alſo declares that almighty God doth ſometimes ſo ſuit his judgments to the ſin committed, that perſons may read their ſin in their puniſhment. As theſe perſecutors thirſted after blood, ſo here they get blood to drink. 2. How the angel in the fifth verſe, and the other in the ſeventh verſe, do both rejoice in the execution of God's judgments, and in the terrible revenge of the blood of ſaints.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the ſun; and power was given unto him to ſcorch men

with fire. 9 And men were ſcorched with great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Obſerve here, 1. That the fourth vial is ſaid to be poured forth upon the ſun, which metaphorically taken in ſcripture uſually ſignifies ſome great prince or potentate: Here the head of the anti-chriſtian party is ſuppoſed to be *the ſun*, upon which the wrath of this vial falls. 2. The effect which followed hereupon, *Power was given him to ſcorch men with fire*; and the event which enſued was double, men *blaſphemed the name of God*; *and repented not to give him glory.* *Learn*, 1. That although God ſends his judgments to call the wicked to repentance, yet they will not repent of ſin, even when they lie under the wrathful hand of God, but will rather break forth to farther wickedneſs, even to blaſpheme the holy name of God. 2. That what the damned do in hell, where the wrath of God is poured out upon men to the uttermoſt, that do incorrigible and unreclaimable ſinners upon earth; they are ſcorched with great heat, the vengeance of God cometh upon them; they are mad and enraged, and blaſpheme the holy and juſt God, who bringeth ſuch plagues upon them; but they have no ſenſe of their ſins, no thoughts of turning unto God, or of giving glory to him: Theſe men here blaſphemed, but repented not.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt; and his kingdom was full of darkneſs: and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blaſphemed the God of heaven, becauſe of their pain and their ſores, and repented not of their deeds.

Obſerve here, 1. The gradual approaches which almighty God makes by his plagues and judgments towards the antichriſtan beaſt; he began farther off at firſt, and then came nearer and nearer to him; the firſt vial was poured out upon the earth, the ſecond upon the ſea, the third upon the rivers, the fourth upon the ſun, now the fifth upon the ſeat of the beaſt; that is, probably, the ſeat of his empire, the chief place where he appeareth in the higheſt majeſty and glory. This ſhould teach us all at the firſt alarm of judgments to draw near to God by a true and timely repentance, before he comes nearer to us by a ſucceſſion of plagues and puniſhments. 2. The effect and conſequent which did enſue and follow upon the pouring out of this vial upon the throne or ſeat of the beaſt. 1. His kingdom *was full of darkneſs:* this vial did not deſtroy, but diſtreſs him, it filled his kingdom with the darkneſs of miſery and trouble, of calamity and horror; by the loſs of that luſtre, reſpect and reverence, which the throne of the beaſt had before, but was wanting now. 2. As an evidence of this diſtreſs, it is here ſaid, that *they gnawed their tongues for pain*; that is, they were almoſt diſtracted at the declining of their grandeur. *Note*, 1. From the gnawing of their tongues, which was an indication of the horror of their conſciences, that as almighty God makes the guilty conſciences of the wicked to be their own accuſers, ſo he can make them, whenever he pleaſes, to be their own tormentors. 2. How almighty God ſo ſuits his judgments ſometimes to a people's ſin, as that if they do not wink hard, or wilfully ſhut their eyes, they may and muſt ſee and read their ſin in their puniſhment. Theſe worſhippers of the beaſt ſeduced others by their falſe doctrine, and ſinned with their tongues, and now God makes their tongues like ſo many ſcorpions' tails, the inſtruments of their torments. *Note*, That as the plagues he inflicted reſembled the plagues of Eggpt, ſo the worſhippers of the beaſt, whom they were inflicted upon, reſembled Pharaoh king of Egypt, who hardened his heart yet more and more againſt the Lord, and repented not.

12 And the ſixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared.

Obſerve, 1. In the drying up of the river Euphrates, a manifeſt alluſion to the manner of old Babylon's deſtruction. The river Euphrates ran through old Babylon, and was a greater defence to it than its celebrated *walls*, which for thickneſs and height were the wonder of the world. Cyrus, when he took Babylon, cut many ditches, and let the river Euphrates run out, and ſo he and his ſoldiers entered the city, then fordable, and took it. Now, as the drying up of Euphrates then was an immediate forerunner of the deſtruction of Babylon, in like manner the drying up of Euphrates, ſignify it what it will, ſhall be the immediate forerunner of the deſtruction of antichriſtian Babylon, whenever it ſhall be. The Romiſh Euphrates being dried up, the Romiſh Babylon will haſten amain towards its final ruin. *Queſt.* But what is meant by Euphrates here? *Anſw.* Probably the Turkiſh empire, according to Mr. Mede and Dr. More, the Turks firſt taking up their habitation about this great river: So that by Euphrates may be underſtood the people inhabiting about Euphrates; and by drying up its waters, the diminiſhing and leſſening of their empire. By the kings of the *eaſt*, the Jews are ſaid to be underſtood, who inhabit the eaſtern countries, to whom God made a promiſe, Exod. xix. 6. that they ſhould be a kingdom of prieſts: So that here ſeems to be a prophecy of the Jews converſion to the chriſtian religion, which two things do chiefly hinder, namely, the idolatry of Rome, and the power of Conſtantinople; the image-worſhip of the Papiſts, and the puiſſance of the Turks; but both theſe being taken away by the fall of Babylon, and the ruin of the Turks, the way then will ſeem prepared for the Jews receiving of the chriſtian faith. Taking the words in this ſenſe, the *notes* are theſe, 1. That the days will come wherein Chriſtian princes and ſtates ſhall pour out the wrath of God upon Popiſh idolatry, and Turkiſh tyranny. 2. That the pouring out of the wrath of God upon both theſe grand enemies of God, will prepare and make ready the way for the Jews converſion to him.

13 And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet. 14 For they are the ſpirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.

In the foregoing verſes an accouut was given of the ſubject upon which the ſixth vial was pointed out, namely, upon the river Euphrates. Here we have an effect that followed thereupon, namely, a warlike expedition or gathering to battle. *Note*, 1. The principal commanders in this battle, namely, the *dragon*, the *beaſt*, and the *falſe prophet*. 2. The inſtruments employed, and made uſe of by them, who are here ſaid to be, for their nature, *ſpirits*, for their quality, *unclean*, for their number *three*, for their ſimilitude and reſemblance, *like frogs*, namely, with reſpect to their original, they breed of corruption and in great numbers ſwarm and croak in all places, and live both in the water, and upon the earth; by all which many interpreters underſtand emiſſaries, miſſionaries, negociators, ſolicitors, and legates, ſent forth and employed by antichriſt for the ſupport and ſtrengthening both of him and his kingdom, by ſoliciting the kings of the earth to join together, in a battle againſt the church. Behold here how the *dragon*, the *beaſt*, and the *falſe prophet*, do ſend forth all their emiſſaries, and employ all their inſtruments, to ſtir up princes, and engage them in battle, to withſtand the reformation of chriſtians, and the converſion of the Jews. *Obſerve* farther, The actions here ſaid to be performed by them, namely, their working miracles by the power of the devils: That is, ſuch wonderful things as Satan can ſometimes produce, or at leaſt delude people's ſenſes, and make them believe that they are produced and effected by him. Where *note*, That the advantage which the falſe church makes of a pretended power with her to work miracles, the Spirit of God, both here and elſewhere (2 Theſſ. ii. 9.) makes to be a badge of antichriſt and his followers.

15 ¶ Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.

Theſe conſolatory words of Chriſt ſeem to be inſerted here for the ſupport of the faithful ſervants of God, againſt thoſe great preparations of the enemy in the day of battle, *Behold*, ſays Chriſt, I then *come as a thief*, ſecretly, ſuddenly, and unexpectedly, to deſtroy theſe enemies when they leaſt expect me; and then am I at hand to take vengeance on them, and to deliver my church, when they leaſt think of me; *Bleſſed is he that watcheth*, namely, againſt thoſe temptations which he will be then expoſed to; and keepeth his garments, that is, his profeſſion, unſpotted from ſin, and the defilements of antichriſt; *leſt he walk naked*, that is, appear as a man deſtitute of uprightneſs and ſincerity; *and they ſee his ſhame*, which ever follows upon a ſinful courſe. *Note* here, 1. That when Chriſt comes, he comes ſuddenly, even as a thief cometh. 2. That although Chriſt comes ſuddenly, and as a thief, yet he is pleaſed to give us warning of his coming, *Behold I come*. 3. That when Chriſt's coming is near at hand, there is danger that many for want of watchfulneſs will loſe their garments. 4. That is, to ſuch as through negligence ſhall loſe their garments, this miſery will befal them; they ſhall walk naked, and men ſhall ſee their ſhame. 5. That thoſe few who watch and keep their garments, are certainly in a happy and bleſſed condition.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

He, that is, almighty God, by his permiſſive providence ſuffered the kings of the earth to hearken to antichriſt's miſſionaries, who, like frogs hop abroad even into kings' palaces, and perſuade them to aſſemble and gather together, as Jabin and Siſera gathered together againſt Iſrael, to their own deſtruction: And whereas the place of their gathering together is called Armageddon, this is ſo named from the event of the battle; ſignifying ſuch a place where the enemies of the church ſhall be deſtroyed. *Learn* hence, That the event and ſucceſs of that battle, which the adherents of antichriſt ſhall fight for him, will be deſperate deſtruction to themſelves, joyful victories and triumphs to the churches of Chriſt.

17 And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, ſaying, It is done. 18 And there were voices and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake *and* ſo great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath. 20 And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every ſtone* about the weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Theſe words deſcribe and declare unto us the pouring out of the ſeventh vial by the ſeventh angel; in which we have *obſervable*, 1. The ſubject upon which it fell, namely, the air; not that the elements of air, earth, or water, are to be underſtood in this chapter literally; for the vials poured forth are vials of wrath, and conſequently are poured forth upon the proper ſubjects of God's diſpleaſure, which the elements are not; but it is the earthly antichriſtian church which is thought to be here intended, ſo called in oppoſition to the heavenly and pure church. So that by the *air* here, Mr. Mede underſtands all the ſubjects of Satan's kingdom, who is called the prince of the air; and the pouring out of this vial upon the air denotes the full and final deſtruction of Satan's power. 2. The adjunct and accompanying the pouring out of this vial, namely, a voice out of heaven, ſaying, *It is done*; that is, "Theſe laſt plagues are now finiſhed, the work of God is done, and what in his counſels he deſigned for the deſtruction of his enemies, and for the deliverance of his people; this is ſaid to be *done*, becauſe it was now *doing*; and accompliſhed, becauſe it was now accompliſhing." God's threatenings of judgment (except men repent) are ſure when denounced, as if they were already executed. 3. The direful effects and dreadful conſequences of this laſt vial's pouring forth; namely, 1. *Thunder, lightening*, and *earthquake*; all implying thus much, that the ſtorm of God's wrath now coming upon the kingdoms of ſin, Satan, and antichriſt, would be very terrible and amazing. 2. *The great city was divided into three parts*; into three factions, ſay ſome, and that antichriſt's kingdom was now falling by being divided within itſelf: *and the cities of the nations fell*;

namely, heathen nations, and places which withſtood Chriſt and his goſpel. For all Chriſt's enemies are now to be depoſed from public authority. *And great Babylon came up in remembrance before God:* Not that God was ever unmindful of her, either of her impiety towards himſelf, or of her cruelty towards his people; but as good works are ſaid to be remembered when they are rewarded, ſo wickedneſs is then remembered when it is puniſhed; *God remembered Babylon*, when, for the full cup of her ſins, he put into her hand a full cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath. God is never forgetful either of his church's ſufferings, or his enemies ſins, but will puniſh the one, and redreſs the other, in his own appointed time. 3. As another effects of the pouring forth of this vial, it is added, *every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not to be found*; ſignifying, ſay ſome, that the remoteſt and ſtrongeſt places, which owned and maintained Babylon, ſhall either be converted or confounded. Intimating, ſay others, that there ſhall be no place in that day of God's wrath, to flee unto for ſafety; neither iſland on the ſea, nor mountain on dry land. Laſtly, The ſuperadded judgment of unuſual hail which God poured forth upon Babylon, as before upon Egypt, Exod. ix. *There fell great hail out of heaven, every ſtone about the weight of a talent.* An hyperbolical expreſſion, ſetting forth the deſign and purpoſe of God to purſue Babylon, and the worſhippers of the *beaſt*, until they be utterly deſtroyed. A talent, ſay ſome, was an hundred pound weight; if ſo, theſe hail-ſtones were ſufficient not only to kill men, but to daſh them all in pieces. This heavy hail ſhews that weighty ſins procure heavy judgments; yet mark what a bad uſe theſe obdurate ſinners made of all theſe tremendous judgments, *they blaſphemed God.* They were ſo obſtinate in their idolatry, that they ſtood it out againſt all God's judgments. And when they ſhould have humbled themſelves under his mighty hand, they open their mouths in blaſphemies againſt him. *Note*, That in the book of Exodus we do not read that the old Egyptians blaſphemed God when the plague of hail was inflicted upon them, nor when they lay under any of the ten plagues: But theſe idolaters, inſtead of giving glory to God, they blaſpheme him, becauſe of the greatneſs of their plagues. This perhaps is an emblem of what the damned will do at the day of judgment; though their conſciences be convinced of the righteouſneſs of their ſentence, yet will they not ceaſe to pour out blaſphemies againſt God, upon the account of the ſeverity and eternity of their torments. But verily then will all the divine attributes be conſpicuouſly glorified, his wonderful clemency ſweetly diſplayed, his exact juſtice terribly demonſtrated, his perfect wiſdom clearly unfolded, and all the knotty intrigues of providence wiſely reſolved, and the injured honour and glory of almighty God viſibly cleared and repaired, to the joyful ſatisfaction of all good men, and to the dreadful conſternation and confuſion of all impenitent ſinners, who with theſe worſhippers of the *beaſt* will gnaw their tongues for anguiſh, and blaſpheme the holy and juſt God moſt unjuſtly, for bringing upon them that deſtruction which they had deſerved, yea, that damnation which they had choſen: *And men blaſphemed God becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

CHAP. XVII.

AND there came one of the ſeven angels which had the ſeven vials, and talked with me, ſaying unto me, Come hither, I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that ſitteth upon many waters:

Obſerve here, 1. The angel's invitation to the ſubſequent viſion, *One of the angels talked with me, ſaying, Come hither*, &c. Where we ſee the readineſs of thoſe miniſtering ſpirits, the holy angels, to do any good office for the ſaints, and with what cheerfulneſs they are employed about things for our conſolation, and the ſweet familiarity that is between them and the ſaints, evidenced by that expreſſion, *He talked with me*, &c. 2. The promiſe which the angel makes to St. John namely, to *ſhew him the judgment of that great whore.* By the whore all underſtand the city of Rome: only ſome will have it Rome pagan, others Rome papal, or the great idolatrous city and church of Rome: Idolatry is often, in ſcripture-ſtyle, called whoredom; and idolaters are ſaid to go a whoring from God. A whore is a perſon married to an huſband, who afterwards proves falſe to his bed. The papal preſent church of Rome deſerves this name, having been guilty of the greateſt defection and apoſtacy from the true evangelical doctrine and worſhip that ever was in the world; and ſhe is deſervedly alſo called the *great whore*, becauſe of her whoredoms committed with ſo many under her power and juriſdiction, having many people ſubject to her, and for that reaſon is here ſaid *to ſit upon many waters.* The true church is Chriſt's bride and ſpouſe, ſhe is betrothed unto him in righteouſneſs, in loving-kindneſs and in tender mercy, and at any time by idolatry to apoſtatiſe from him in ſpiritual whoredom, which ſhall not paſs without deſerved puniſhment. *Learn* hence, How hateful idolatry is to God, and how highly it provokes God's wrath, even as the whoredom of a woman who plays the common harlot, provokes the jealouſy of her huſband. Verily, never was huſband more jealous of the chaſtity of his ſuſpected wife, than God is jealous in point of worſhip.

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Babylon was charged with committing whoredom in the former verſe; in this, the perſons are declared *whom* ſhe committed whoredom with, viz. with *kings*, and the *inhabitants* of the earth; that is, with all ſorts of perſons, ſmall and great, rich and poor. Where *note*, That ſhe is, 1. A catholic whore, common and ſhameleſs; ſhe refuſes none that will be lewd with her. 2. A politic whore; ſhe firſt draws kings and princes to commit fornication with her, and then other inhabitants; well knowing how faſt the example of ſuperiors is commonly followed by inferiors; and whereas ſhe is ſaid to *make them drunk with the wine of her fornication*, the Spirit of God ſeems to intimate, that idolatry is like unto wine; a ſenſual ſort of worſhip, and therefore alluring; making perſons drunk, therefore intoxicating. Wine is ſweet, but proves deceitful; idolatry is pleaſing to man's corrupt nature, but brings wrath and judgment upon the ſinner.

3 ¶ So he carried me away in the ſpirit into the wilderneſs: and I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, full of names of blaſphemy, having ſeven heads, and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious ſtones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthineſs of her fornication. 5 ¶ And upon her forehead *was* a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.

Obſerve, 1. That St. John was not in one continued ecſtaſy, but at ſeveral times *in the ſpirit*; that is, in an ecſtaſy or rapture of mind, wherein his outward ſenſes being bound up, his underſtanding was fixed and raiſed up to the contemplation of divine objects, repreſented to him in the viſion. A ſpiritual frame of mind is requiſite for diſcerning the viſions of God. 2. The place whither St. John was carried, and where he ſaw the following viſion, namely, in the *wilderneſs:* A place of privacy ſay ſome, where he might diſcern things undiſturbedly and undiſtractedly. Solitude is fitteſt for contemplation. A wilderneſs, ſay others, was the fitteſt place to ſee *that church* in a viſion, which was itſelf a *wilderneſs:* The apoſtolical church before, was driven into the wilderneſs; here the apoſtate church follows her, as an harlot ſucceeding to a faithful city. 3. The viſion itſelf: *I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt*, &c. The woman here is the ſame with her that was called whore, ver. 1. namely, idolatrous Rome: ſhe is repreſented as a woman richly and ſplendidly arrayed, with her wealth and riches, with her pomp and power enticing the world to her idolatry, called ſo often whoredom and ſpiritual fornication; and the *golden cup* in her hand is an alluſion to harlots, who, with their philters or inchanted cups, do allure and provoke men to ſenſual ſatisfactions; in like manner doth Rome, by her outward ſplendour, allure, and, by other ſpecious pretences and means, draw perſons to her idolatries and ſuperſtitions. Laſtly, The name written on her forehead, to wit, *Myſtery, Babylon the Great*; that is, not literal, but myſtical Babylon, the great city of Rome, the mother of idolatry, the patron of cruelty, the patroneſs of all impiety; and propagating all theſe by her power and policies, who calls herſelf *the mother church*, but it is indeed *the mother of harlots*, and of all manner of *abominations*; that is, of abominable doctrines and practices.

6 And I ſaw the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus: and when I ſaw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7 And the angel ſaid unto me, Wherefore didſt thou marvel? I will tell thee the myſtery of the woman, and of the beaſt that carrieth her, which hath the ſeven heads and ten horns. 8 The beaſt that thou ſaweſt, was, and is not; and ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth ſhall wonder, whoſe names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beaſt that was, and is not, and yet is.

St. John proceeds in the deſcription of this woman: he declared her to be a filthy and common whore, in the foregoing verſe; in this, he repreſents her as a cruel and bloody whore: ſhe is ſaid to be *drunk*, drunk *with blood*, drunk with holy blood, drunk with the blood of *ſaints and martyrs*. Behold the blood-thirſtineſs of the Roman church, and her inſatiableneſs therein, even unto drunkenneſs. 2. With what wonder and admiration St. John was filled, when he ſaw this woman drunk with blood, *I wondered with great admiration*; intimating, that ſo aſtoniſhing is the cruelty of that church, that it juſtly cauſes wonder and admiration to all that are not of her cruel and bloody diſpoſition. I wondered that God ſhould ſuffer ſo much of his dear ſervants blood to be ſhed by her, and at her inſatiable cruelty in the ſhedding of it. 3. How the Spirit of God was pleaſed to open this myſtery, which indeed is the only viſion of this nature expounded throughout the whole book: He begins firſt with a deſcription of the beaſt, affirming, that *he was*, and *is not*, and *yet is:* As if he had ſaid, "The Roman empire was once pagan, now is not pagan, but chriſtian; and yet is as idolatrous now, as it was of old; the ſame as it was, only in another form." Rome papal is certainly as idolatrous, as cruel and bloody, as ever Rome pagan was of old; yea, perhaps, much more ſo, beyond compare. The riſe and original is declared whence this idolatrous church ſhould ſpring, namely, *out of the bottomleſs pit*, becauſe her working is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableneſs, with ſigns and lying wonders. And as its riſe is declared, ſo is its ruin foretold; it *ſhall go into perdition*, that is, ſhall be finally deſtroyed, never to revive again: But before this deſtruction, the world ſhall be under ſuch an infatuation, that the generality of the inhabitants of the earth, ſome few excepted, *ſhall wonder after the beaſt*; that is, be wonderfully taken with him, and ſhall follow him with an implicit faith, paying homage and ſubjection to him. But theſe admirers and adorers of the beaſt are only ſuch whoſe *names were not written in the book of life*; intimating to us, that in the times of greateſt apoſtaſy, and moſt univerſal defection from the truth, the Lord wants not his own true church; he ever had, and has, yea, ever will have, a number to ſtand up for his name, and bear witneſs to his truth.

9 ¶ And here *is* the mind which hath wiſdom. The ſeven heads are ſeven mountains, on which the woman ſitteth. 10 And there are ſeven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he muſt continue a ſhort ſpace. 11 And the beaſt that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the ſeven, and goeth into perdition.

Here the angel cometh directly to declare and unfold the myſtery of the beaſt, premiſing firſt, that it requires heavenly wiſdom in a perſon to underſtand it, and apply the marks accordingly. *Here is the mind that hath wiſdom*, that is, the mind that hath wiſdom, may here exerciſe itſelf. *The ſeven heads*, ſaith the angel, *are ſeven mountains*, that is, ſignify ſeven mountains; a clear deſcription of Rome, as to its local ſituation, being built upon ſeven hills. *And there are ſeven* *kings*, that is, ſeven forms of government, by, and according to which, Rome was governed, namely, by kings, conſuls, tribunes, decemviri, dictators, and emperors, that were pagans. Five of theſe were fallen in St. John's time, that is, utterly extinct, namely, the government by kings, conſuls, tribunes, decemviri, and dictators. *And one is*, to wit the government by pagan emperors, which was in St. John's time in being. *And the other is not yet come*, that is, the government by chriſtian emperors was not yet in being, and when it did come, it held but a little while before the biſhops of Rome wreſted the government out of their hands, and took it into their own. Behold here the great mutability of all earthly things! governments have their periods, kingdoms come to an end. Happy they, who, ſerving God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, have ſecured to themſelves a kingdom that cannot be moved! Heb. xii. 28.

12 ¶ And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beaſt. 13 Theſe have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt. 14 ¶ Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him, *are* called, and choſen, and faithful.

Obſerve here, the angel farther explains to St. John this great myſtery of the beaſt; declaring, that the *ten horns* of the beaſt, do ſignify ten kings, which ſhould employ their power with the beaſt, and in conjunction with his eſtabliſhed idolatry, to uphold his bloody religion. Next, their wicked unity is declared, in giving their power and ſtrength to the beaſt: *They have one mind*, ver. 13, that is, they unanimouſly concur in aiding, ſtrengthening, and aſſiſting the beaſt, in uſing their power, and employing their authority to maintain him in his idolatrous and pagan-like ſuperſtitions. Laſtly, It is declared for what end they thus concur together, in giving their power and ſtrength to the beaſt; namely, *to make war with the Lamb*; that is, to take part with antichriſt, and oppoſe Chriſt in his truth and goſpel, in his miniſters and members, in his children and ſervants. *But the Lamb ſhall overcome them*. Some ſhall be converted by the power of the goſpel, others ſhall be confounded, one way or other brought into ſubjection; for *he is Lord of lords, and King of kings*; that is, clothed with divine power. Chriſt, though a meek Lamb, yet is a mighty Lord. The titles here given him, ſhew his Godhead and omnipotency; and having ſuch a power, he knows how to fit inſtruments for his purpoſe; and thoſe whom he will make uſe of in this work, ſhall be choſen perſons, and faithful in the diſcharge of the truſt committed to them. All that are faithful to Chriſt, ſhall ſhare with him in his victory.

15 And he ſaith unto me, The waters which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 ¶ And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt, theſe ſhall hate the whore, and ſhall make her deſolate and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire.

Here the angel proceeds, and goes on farther in the explication of the viſion. By the *waters* whereon the whore ſat, he declares, are to be underſtood, many and divers nations belonging to the Roman empire. Behold then of what church *multitude* is a note! not of the church of Chriſt, his flock is a little flock; but of the antichriſtian ſynagogue, which vaunts, that multitudes are on her ſide. Alas! the multitude, or generality of perſons, are prone to oppoſe that which is good, and thoſe that do good. Next, it is declared what inſtruments God will make uſe of, as the executioners of his vengeance upon this great whore; *the ten horns*, that is, the ten kings which did before idolize her, and commit idolatry, and ſpiritual whoredom with her, ſhall at length revolt from her, hate her, *make her deſolate and naked*, *ſhall eat her fleſh*, *and burn her with fire*. Lord! what a ſtrange, ſudden, and mighty change doth the power of converting grace make! Behold theſe ten kings who ſometimes doted upon the painted beauty of this great whore, when once their eyes ſhall be opened, their hearts will ſoon be alienated, Babylon's courts ſhall be crouded with ſuiters no longer; they ſhall make her *deſolate*, by deſerting their communion; make her *naked*, by withdrawing their former ſupplies afforded to her; they ſhall eat her fleſh, feed themſelves with ſpoils, and take her revenues to themſelves, and burn her with *fire*; that is, ſhall utterly ruin and deſtroy her. The deſtruction of antichriſt once begun, ſhall hold on conſtantly by degrees, till his final deſtruction.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beaſt, until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. How the infinitely wiſe and perfectly holy God, can, and does ſo order things, that all his judgments ſhall be executed by ſinners, without his being the cauſe of any of their ſins; though, by the permiſſive will of God, theſe kings gave their power for a time to the beaſt, yet they never had his approbation for ſo doing. God ſo over-rules the actions of wicked men, that when they are doing their will, contrary to their own intentions, in and by them the Lord is likewiſe doing his will. God ſometimes does his will by thoſe who reſolve they will not do his will. 2. The time when almighty God, who permitted them to ſubmit to the whore, will put it into their hearts to hate her, and help to deſtroy, namely, *when his word is fulfilled*. God's word ſhall be fulfilled, in ſpite of Satan, and all his inſtruments; yea, the wicked are then fulfilling God's word and will, that is, his permiſſive will, when they are going on in their wickedneſs.

18 And the woman which thou ſaweſt is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

This is ſo clear a deſcription of Rome, that the church of Rome herſelf acknowledges it: For, if that be the city built upon ſeven hills, the city that allures the inhabitants of the earth to idolatry; if her idolatries be a lively image of the old pagan idolatries; if to her many kings have given their power and ſtrength; and if ſhe reigneth over the kings of the earth, there remains no doubt but that this great city is Rome; that Rome is myſtical Babylon, which has ſhed the blood of ſaints and martyrs without number, and muſt be deſtroyed for ſo doing; no pomp nor grandeur can exempt, or ſhall ſave her from the revenging hand of God, and his juſt indignation. Lord! haſten that deſirable time!

CHAP. XVIII.

AND after theſe things I ſaw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 ¶ And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice, ſaying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

The deſtruction of ſpiritual Babylon hath, in this prophecy, been ſeveral times predicted and already foretold: Now here, an angel from heaven is employed, to declare it ſhall certainly be performed. This angel is variouſly here deſcribed: 1. By the place from whence he came, namely, from heaven; ſignifying, that the deſtruction of Babylon was there ſurely decreed, and ſhould moſt certainly be accompliſhed. 2. By the authority and power with which he came, in the name of, and by commiſſion from the great God, and *having great power*. A mighty angel is employed in this great and mighty work, to deſtroy Babylon, the mighty throne of antichriſt. 3. By the effect of his appearance; *The earth was lightened with his glory:* denoting, that Babylon's deſtruction ſhould be open and manifeſt, and matter of joy and glorious rejoicing both to heaven and earth. *Learn* hence, That as the deſtruction of Babylon is the work and office of an angel, under God, ſo is it unto the angels matter of joy and triumph, eſpecially to ſuch of them as are employed as officers therein. *Obſerve*, The place againſt which the mighty angel doth denounce the vengeance of God, and that with an ingemination, or repetition of the threatening: *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*; where, by Babylon, all, both papiſts and proteſtants, do underſtand the city of Rome, though in different reſpects. This is called myſtical Babylon, in an alluſion to ancient Babylon, becauſe of their reſemblance, 1. In *ſin*; namely, in pride and ſelf-exaltation, in cruelty and oppreſſion, in ſorcery and witchcraft: See Jer. li. 7. 2. In *puniſhment:* The deſtruction of old Babylon was a ſudden deſtruction, Iſa. xlvii. 9. and a perpetual deſtruction: See Iſa. xiii. 20. compared with Rev. xi. 10. and Rev. xviii. 8. It is called *Babylon the great*, 1. Becauſe of the greatneſs of its ſtrength and glory; it was the ſtrongeſt and moſt fortified place in the world. Cyrus beſieged it thirteen years before he took it, and then by cutting channels, and drawing dry the river Euphrates. 2. In regard of her great power and dominion: Literal Babylon ſaid, *Are not my princes altogether kings?* and myſtical Babylon *ruleth over all the kings of the earth.* Farther, it is here ſaid, that *Babylon the great is fallen*, nay, it is ingeminated and repeated; *is fallen, is fallen*; implying, 1. The certainty of her ruin; it is a ſpeech of faith, ſpeaking of things to come as already paſt; God's puniſhments, when threatened, are as certain as if already inflicted. 2. It denotes the *ſuddenneſs* of her deſtruction, *ſhe is fallen*, that is, *ſubito ruitura*, ſhe ſhall ſoon fall; as when Chriſt ſaid of his ſuffering work, *It is finiſhed*; he meant, that it was very near finiſhing. 3. It denotes her utter ruin and deſtruction, *is fallen, is fallen*, never to riſe more; the church ſhall never more be tormented by her, or troubled with her. 4. It denotes the joy and rejoicing which will be found in Sion, at Babylon's downfal and deſtruction; *ſhe is fallen, ſhe is fallen*; it is not only a ſpeech of faith and truſt, but of joy and triumph. *Learn* hence, 1. That Rome, or myſtical Babylon, ſhall certainly fall, ſhall utterly fall, ſhall irrecoverably fall. 2. That the downfal of Babylon will be matter of great joy and triumph to the inhabitants of Sion, becauſe ſhe has been to the church of Chriſt an old and inveterate enemy, a cruel and bloody enemy, and ſhall be the laſt enemy. When Babylon is fallen, then ſhall all perſecutions ceaſe: Satan ſhall be bound, and the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt. Let all that have an intereſt in God, be inſtant in prayer with him to haſten its time, that it may be in the hiſtory, as it is here in the prophecy, that *Babylon is fallen.* Laſtly, What an heap of multiplied expreſſions the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to make uſe of, to ſet forth the utter ruin, and final deſolation of Babylon: *She is become the habitation of devils*, &c. that is, as devils and evil ſpirits are ſuppoſed to haunt deſolate places; and birds, which make hideous and diſmal noiſes, do dwell in ruinous and ruined places; in like manner theſe expreſſions denote how entirely and abſolutely God will bring about the deſtruction of Babylon; inſomuch that the place which hath known her ſhall know her no more, and her habitation ſhall be an eternal deſolation, ſo that none that paſs by ſhall ſay, *This is Babylon.*

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

The Spirit of God is pleaſed here to aſſign the reaſon and cauſe of Babylon's fatal ruin and final deſolation; namely, 1. Becauſe *all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* *All nations*, that is, *very* many; the generality of the Roman empire have been allured to, and intoxicated by her idolatries, which have brought all this wrath upon her and them. Where *note*, 1. How idolatry is compared to wine, becauſe very pleaſing to corrupt nature and alſo very enticing and enſnaring, overtaking, like wine, a perſon unawares; and it is called *wine of wrath*, becauſe it exciteth and provoketh God's wrath againſt a perſon or people guilty of it. 2. Becauſe *the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her*; that is, joined with her in idolatrous worſhip. Where *note*, The policy of Babylon in drawing kings and princes to the bed of her fornications, well knowing how faſt their example will be followed by inferiors. The example of ſuperiors in doing evil is ſtrangely powerful; Jeroboam made Iſrael to ſin; not by commanding them to worſhip the golden calves, but commending that idolatrous worſhip to them in his own perſon. 3. Becauſe *the merchants of the earth were waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.* By the merchants, underſtand all ſuch as trade in Babylon's wares, her pleaſing and coſtly wares of pardons, as maſſes and indulgences, by which ſo many were enriched. All things are vendible at Rome; any ſin may be forgiven for ſilver, and a licence for any thing that is unlawful for money. Theſe are the reaſons here aſſigned for Babylon's ruin. *The nations were made drunk by her, kings committed fornication with her*, &c.

4 ¶ And I heard another voice from heaven ſaying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Obſerve here, An admonition given, and a double reaſon aſſigned for that admonition. 1. The admonition itſelf: *Come out of her my people*; that is, come out of myſtical Babylon, have no communion with that idolatrous church; abſtain from all communicating with her in her ſins, as ever you would approve yourſelves to be my faithful people. Here *note*, It is not ſo much a local departure, as a moral ſeparation, that is here intended; not ſo much from Babylon's local bounds, as from her abominable errors, ſuperſtitions, and idolatries. *Learn* hence, 1. That God has, and ever had, a people, even in Babylon. 2. That it is a ſpecial duty which God requires of his people, to depart from myſtical Babylon, eſpecially when her downfal is approaching. 3. That ſuch a departure from Babylon is no ſchiſmatical ſeparation; it is not a departure from the true church, but the true church's ſeparation from an idolatrous communion; and that by the expreſs and poſitive command of God himſelf, *Come out of her, my people*; an alluſion to the charge given with reſpect to Babylon of old, Jer. li. 6. 9. *We would have healed Babylon, but ſhe would not be healed; forſake her.* *Obſerve*, 2. A double reaſon aſſigned for this admonition. 1. Becauſe we are in danger of being partakers of her ſins, namely, by incurring the guilt of her ſins, and by contracting the ſpot and filth of her ſins. 2. There is a danger alſo of being made partakers of her plagues; there is no ſafety in being near thoſe who are under the curſe of God; participation in ſin will certainly cauſe a participation in judgment. How dreadful is this text to ſuch as continue in, or apoſtatize unto, Babylon's idolatry and communion!

5 For her ſins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as ſhe rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double. 7 How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her. For ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a queen, and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow. 8 Therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and ſhe ſhall be utterly burned with fire. For ſtrong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

Obſerve here, 1. The reaſon aſſigned why Almighty God inflicted ſuch ſevere puniſhments upon Babylon; becauſe *her ſins*, that is, the cry and clamour of her ſins *had reached up to heaven:* the meaſure of her ſins was filled up, *and God had remembered her iniquities*, that is, manifeſted his remembrance of them, by inflicting on her ſo great, ſo juſt a puniſhment for them, viz. for her idolatry and perſecution. *Learn* hence, That although ſins be tranſient actions, yet they have a permanent pleading before the Lord's tribunal, to bring down judgments upon incorrigible ſinners. And 2. That although the juſtice of God may be thought to be aſleep, and he may ſeem to be forgetful of ſin and ſinners, yet he will take his own time to manifeſt that he remembers them, by inflicting the heavieſt of his judgments upon obdurate ſinners. *Obſerve*, 2. The injunction and command given by God unto his people, to every one of them in their place and ſtation, to contribute regularly all they can towards Babylon's downfal and deſtruction, *Reward her as ſhe rewarded you, yea, double*; this is required, not from a private ſpirit of revenge, which chriſtianity expreſsly forbids, but as a public work, in an authoritative way and manner, out of an ardent zeal for the glory of God, and from a juſt idignation againſt her tyranny and idolatry; and the command to *double unto her double*, implies, that a double puniſhment is due unto her, yea, a juſt one, *according to her works*. Behold here! what bloody perſecutors may at length expect, namely, to receive at the Lord's hand double for all their ſins. Babylon's puniſhment ſhall be double, reſpecting what ſhe has acted, but not double in reſpect of what ſhe has deſerved; if poſſible, let her have as much blood again to drink as ever ſhe ſpilt; for one drop of the blood of Sion is more worth than an ocean of the blood of Babylon; give her therefore double, for though it be more in quantity, it is nothing ſo much in value. 3. How ſuitable and anſwerable Babylon's puniſhment inflicted will be to her ſin committed; her ſins were pride and inſolence, luxury and voluptuouſneſs. *Note*, 1. Her pride, *ſhe ſaid in her heart, I ſit as a queen:* Mark, ſhe did not barely ſay, *I am a queen*, but, *I ſit as a queen*; as if ſhe had ſaid, "I am not only in a high place, but in a ſure place: I have a warm and a firm ſeat, I am well ſettled, I have a great command, yea, an uncontrollable command: *I am no widow*, no deſolate widow, no diſconſolate widow, for I have many children to comfort me, many ſons and daughters to ſupport me: *I ſhall ſee no ſorrow*, I neither feel nor fear any." Behold how worldly men fancy to themſelves an everlaſtingneſs in worldly things; they fancy themſelves ſitting as upon down pillows for eaſe and ſoftneſs, and as upon rocks of adamant for ſureneſs and unmoveableneſs. 2. Her luxury and voluptuouſneſs: *ſhe lived deliciouſly*, in pompous palaces pleaſantly ſituated, plentifully furniſhed; and her judgment bears a ſtrict proportion to her ſin *how much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her:* the juſtice of God will exact all the arrears of abuſed mercy. Sinners that now fare deliciouſly every day, ſhall paſs from their good things here, to the flames which live by the breath of God's revenging wrath. Ah! doleful exchange! one hour's feeling of that fire will be more tormenting than an age's enjoyment of this world's delight can be pleaſing. 4. The equity, the celerity, and multiplicity of Babylon's puniſhments; their equity is intimated in the illative particle *therefore*, that is, becauſe of her former ſins her plagues ſhall come; the celerity and ſwiftneſs of her puniſhment is intimated, they ſhall come upon her in one day, as did Sodom's plagues, ſuddenly and unexpectedly: And the multiplicity and variety of her plagues is particularly here expreſſed: *death*, for putting the ſaints to death; *mourning*, for her former rejoicing; *famine*, for famiſhing God's people; and *burning*, for having burnt ſo many of the bodies of the holy martyrs to a coal. Laſtly, The reaſon here aſſigned for the unavoidablenſs of all theſe plagues coming upon Babylon, *for ſtrong is the Lord who judgeth her*. True! Babylon has all natural power and all civil ſtrength on her ſide; but the ſtrong God is againſt her, it is his controverſy with her, and he is able to effect what he pleaſeth, how incredible ſoever the thing may ſeem to us; ſooner may the ark and Dagon be reconciled, and ceaſe to be adverſe, than God can be at peace with Babylon.

9 ¶ And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication, and lived deliciouſly with her, ſhall bewail her, and lament for her, when they ſhall ſee the ſmoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

The Spirit of God having in the former part of the chapter ſet forth the certainty and ſeverity of thoſe judgments which ſhould come upon myſtical Babylon: He next declares what wailings and bitter lamentations her downfal would occaſion to her votaries and admirers, to her friends and followers; more particularly, he acquaints us with three ſorts of perſons that ſhall bewail Babylon's deſtruction, kings, merchants, and ſeamen; the former we have here before us, in theſe two verſes; *the kings of the earth*, who have adhered to the whore, committed ſpiritual fornication with her, and delighted themſelves in her carnal and pompous idol-worſhip, when they ſee the ſmoke of her burning, and underſtand the certainty of her deſtruction, they ſhall ſtand afar off, like perſons aſtoniſhed, and like perſons afraid, amazed at the dreadfulneſs of the judgment, and afraid to come near, leaſt they be involved in it; and the words of their lamentation are here ſet down, *Alas, alas, that great city Babylon! in one hour is her judgment come!* As if they had ſaid, "Notwithſtanding all Babylon's grandeur, which we ſo admired and magnified, and which ſhe herſelf put ſo much truſt and confidence in, to our aſtoniſhment we behold, in one hour, her judgment come upon her; a great and mighty city deſtroyed, a gay and ſplendid church politically founded, powerfully ſtrengthened, on a ſudden broke in pieces, and brought to deſolation: *Alas, alas, that great city Babylon!*" *Learn* hence, That when God begins to enter into judgment with his church's enemies, the ſtrongeſt arm of fleſh cannot avail, but kings with their armies will flee and be diſcomfited, the ſtouteſt hearts will be afraid and terrified, not daring to approach the preſence of an angry God.

11 ¶ And the merchants of the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandize any more. 12 The merchandize of gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and ſilk, and ſcarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of veſſels of ivory, and all manner of veſſels of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe, and wine, and oil, and fine flower, and wheat, and beaſts, and ſheep, and horſes, and chariots, and ſlaves, and ſouls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy ſoul luſted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou ſhalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of theſe things, which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple and ſcarlet, and decked with gold and precious ſtones and pearls! 17 For in one hour ſo great riches is come to nought.—

The ſecond ſort of people who paſſionately lament, and bitterly bewail Babylon's downfal and deſtruction, are, the merchants who traded in and with Babylon. Here we have an alluſion to the merchants and merchandize of Tyre, ſpoken of Exek. xxvii. As Tyre was the mart of the earth for temporal things, ſo was Babylon for ſpiritual things; making merchandize even *of the ſouls of men*, perſuading the people that they could purchaſe the redemption of ſouls out of purgatory by maſſes. Here *note*, That pagan Rome, though ſhe did traffic for ſlaves, yet not for ſouls; but papal Rome deals for both. She ſells alſo the ſouls of men, by ſelling her eccleſiaſtical benefices, and cure of ſouls. And I would to God that this piece of ſpiritual merchandize were only found amongſt them, and not heard of elſewhere. *Obſerve* next, The Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to enumerate at large ſeveral ſorts of wares, and the kinds of merchandize, which Babylon dealt and trafficked in, namely, *gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, fine linen, purple, ſilk, and ſcarlet*; all things for ornament, neceſſity, and delight; the pride and ſenſuality of Rome prompted her to buy up all ſorts of commodities, and took off all that the countries round about could bring in; partly to gratify her pride, and partly to ſerve her idolatry. Farther, What a bitter lamentation is here taken up; but for what? Not for their ſins, their luxury, or idolatry, but for the loſs of their market and merchandize only. Behold, in theſe Babylonians, the ſpirit and temper of all natural men; they weep not for ſin, but for ſufferings; for any temporal croſs they have tears enough, they refuſe to be comforted; but for their ſins, which are not their *croſs*, but their *curſe*, their *plague*, yea, the greateſt of all plagues, becauſe ſpiritual, theſe they can ſpeak of with dry eyes and unaffected hearts. *Obſerve* laſtly, How theſe merchants here, as the kings before, *ſtand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing*; pitying and condoling one another, greatly affected and ſorely afflicted to ſee the ruin of that polity that ſuſtained them, but not able to help one another. Behold! how fruitleſs and helpleſs the wicked's friendſhip is to one another in the day of viſitation; that ſtand afar off for fear of torments, but can afford no ſuccour to each other: They durſt not come near to help Babylon or them.

—And every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips, and ſailors, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtood afar off, 18 And cried, when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning, ſaying, What *city is* like unto this great city? 19 And they caſt duſt on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ſhips in the ſea, by reaſon of her coſtlineſs? for in one hour is ſhe made deſolate.

The laſt ſort of mourners for Babylon's ruin are ſailors and ſeamen: All ſpiritual ſeamen that have an oar in St. Peter's boat, ſhall lament greatly, whoſe life and livelihood did depend upon the merchant trade of that great city: Theſe, though they ſtuck cloſe to her, and trafficked with her in the day of her proſperity, yet now with the reſt they ſtand afar off from her, lamenting her ruin, and their own loſs, in the day when her deſolation cometh. And, as an evidence of the greatneſs of their ſorrow and mourning, they are here ſaid to *caſt duſt on their heads*; which amongſt the ancients was uſed as a ſpecial token of extraordinary grief and ſorrow, Job ii. 13. In a time of deep affliction, we may expreſs our outward ſorrows by our outward geſtures: Theſe mourners for Babylon expreſs their ſorrow for her and themſelves, by caſting duſt upon their heads.

20 ¶ Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Note here, 1. That as Babylon's ruin was matter of great grief and ſorrow to the forementioned mourners who merchandized and traded with her; ſo is it matter of great joy and rejoicing to all ſpiritual and heavenly-minded perſons which are the true church, who are commanded to rejoice at it. *Rejoice over her, O heaven*; that is, ye angels in heaven, or ye ſaints, or that are of an heavenly diſpoſition. And all *ye holy apoſtles and prophets*; that is, all faithful miniſters who ſucceed them, who are endued with the ſame ſpirit, and teach the ſame pure and holy doctrine with them. *Note*, 2. The cauſe of this rejoicing declared; *for God hath avenged them upon her*. The church does not, the ſaints of God dare not, rejoice at Babylon's calamity as ſuch, but as an act of divine vengeance. God will be avenged on Babylon for the doctrine of the goſpel corrupted by her, and for the rules of worſhip violated by her, and for all the barbarities and indignities which his church and people have ſuffered from her: God will revenge the wrongs of his people, when through want of power they cannot, and through his prohibition they may not avenge themſelves.

21 And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like a great millſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with violence ſhall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and muſicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftſman, of whatſoever craft *he be*, ſhall be found any more in thee; and the ſound of a millſtone ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ſhall be heard no more at all in thee. For thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy ſorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of ſaints, of all that were ſlain upon the earth.

Obſerve here, 1. Babylon's utter deſolation repreſented by the type and ſign of a millſtone caſt into the ſea: Like a millſtone ſhe had ground, and oppreſſed the church of God, and now, like a millſtone thrown into the ſea, ſhe ſinks into the pit of deſtruction. Almighty God, by this ſign or ſymbol, ſignified to St. John, that Babylon's ruin ſhould be violent, irrecoverable, and irreparable; ſhe falls never to riſe more. The caſting of a ſtone into the ſea was anciently the emblem of everlaſting forgetfulneſs. 2. The amplification of Babylon's ruin particularized in ſeveral inſtances. 1. That nothing ſhould ever more be found in her that belonged to pleaſure or delight; *no voice of harpers, muſicians or trumpeters*. 2. Nothing which belonged to profit or trading, no artificers or craftſmen. 3. Nothing belonging to food, no noiſe of a millſtone for grinding corn and making proviſion for bread. 4. Nothing to relieve againſt the darkneſs and terror of the night; *as the light of a candle*. 5. No means for the propagation of mankind by marriage; *The voice of the bride and the bridegroom ſhall be heard no more*. All which expreſſions do imply extreme deſtruction and utter deſolation; intimating, that Babylon ſhall be a place utterly abandoned and forſaken. *Obſerve* 3. A threefold cauſe aſſigned for all this, to wit, 1. Damnable covetouſneſs; *Her merchants were the great ones of the earth*. Her ſinful way of merchandizing, by dealing in ſpiritual commodities peculiar to Rome, ſeems to be here pointed at, her making merchandize of the ſouls of men, as we have it, *ver.* 13. 2. Her bewitching idolatry, called here *ſorceries*, whereby ſhe enticed people to join with her in her ſuperſtitious worſhip. 3. Her cruelty and bloodſhed; *in her was found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth*. *Queſt.* But how can the blood ſhed by others be laid to her charge? *Anſ.* 1. Becauſe the doctrines which cauſed their blood to be ſhed were with her. 2. Becauſe her juriſdiction gave commiſſion to ſlay the ſaints which were ſlain in other kingdoms. 3. Becauſe by the influence of her example at home, much blood had been ſhed abroad. God will charge upon others, as he did upon Babylon, not only the ſin which they have acted, but all the ſins which they have been acceſſary unto.

CHAP. XIX.

AND after theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

Note here, That the firſt who ſing this ſong of thankſgiving for Babylon's deſtruction, are glorified ſaints, called here *much people in heaven*, and they are ſaid to ſing with *a great voice*, expreſſing thereby their united zeal and fervent affection in this duty of thankſgiving, and they begin their ſong with an Hebrew word, *Alleluia*, which is a word of excitation, and ſignifies, *laud ye the Lord*. Some think that hereby the chriſtian church do invite the Jews or Hebrews to join with them in praiſing God, and that after Babylon's overthrow Chriſt ſhall be ſolemnly praiſed, as by the Gentile, ſo by the Jewiſh church: The tenor of their ſong is much the ſame with that which we had before, *chap.* vii. 10. to wit, *ſalvation*, (or deliverance from all evils, ſpiritual and temporal, particularly from thoſe which the church ſuffered under Babylon's tyranny) *and glory, and honour, and power, be aſcribed, unto the Lord our God*, and to him alone, who is the Author of all good, and hath manifeſted his great power in deſtroying our enemies. *Learn* hence, 1. That the church's ſalvation is entirely from God, and the ſpecial effect of his divine power. 2. That to him, upon that account, all poſſible honour and glory is due, as having ſhewn himſelf his people's God.

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand. 3 And again they ſaid, Alleluia. And her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, 1. The cauſe aſſigned and ſet down of this their doxology and ſolemn thankſgivings, namely, the truth and faithfulneſs, as alſo the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God in the execution of his judgments upon Babylon; his truth appeared in performing the threatenings which Babylon deſpiſed, and his righteouſneſs in ſuiting his judgments inflicted upon her, to the ſins of idolatry, and bloodſhed committed by her. 2. The title here given to Babylon, ſhe is called the *whore*, becauſe of her idolatry, which is often in ſcripture ſtyled *ſpiritual whoredom*, and *the great whore*, becauſe of her univerſal corrupting the whole earth; ſhe made others to ſin, and cruelly murdered thoſe who would not ſin. Hence *learn*, That idolatry and perſecution conſtantly go together. Babylon's idolatrous practices were accompanied with bloody cruelties. 3. An intimation given of the irreparable ruin and irrecoverable deſtruction of Babylon, *her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever*, that is, God followed her with a ſucceſſion of plagues and judgments until ſhe was ruined paſt recovery. 4. That the word *Alleluia*, as it begins the ſong, ſo does it alſo cloſe the ſame, to ſhew thereby the raiſedneſs of the church's affections, and their unweariedneſs in praiſing God for this deliverance of Babylon's deſtruction.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beaſts fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the throne, ſaying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God, all ye his ſervants, and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great.

Note here, 1. How the whole heavenly choir praiſe God on the forementioned account, acknowledging the juſtice of his proceeding againſt Babylon; and, 2. An invitation is here given to all the ſaints upon earth, both ſmall and great, to fear and praiſe him: Whence *note*, How the church triumphant and militant, the ſaints in heaven, and chriſtians on earth jointly give praiſe to God, and glorify him for this great work, adoring his divine juſtice in deſtroying Babylon, the mother of idolatry, the neſt of luxury, the ſeat of oppreſſion and cruelty: It is a duty well becoming the ſaints, both ſmall and great, to celebrate the praiſes of God for the equity of his judgments upon his church's incorrigible and unreclaimable enemies; and here God himſelf, and his miniſters, call upon the whole church to join in this ſolemn work of praiſe and thankſgiving.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, ſaying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 ¶ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready. 8 And to her was granted that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints.

In the former verſes, an exhortation was given to all the ſaints, to abound in the duty of thankſgiving; here we find them unanimouſly addreſſing themſelves to the practice and performance of that duty; and accordingly, they are called here *a great multitude, their voice like many waters* for unity, and *like mighty thunderings*, denoting that zeal and fervour which is in their thankſgiving. Where *note*, How exceedingly the church doth rejoice and triumph, not ſo much in Babylon's ruin, as in the glory of God advanced, and as his own kingdom is promoted by it. *Obſerve* 2. A ſupperadded ground and reaſon for this extraordinary joy and rejoicing, *for the marriage of the Lamb is come*, &c. By *the marriage of the Lamb*, Mr. Mede and Dr. More do underſtand the converſion of the Jews; by *the Lamb's wife*, the nation of the Jews, ſo called; in regard of that relation which they ſtand in to God, by virtue of the covenant; and ſhe is ſaid to have *made herſelf ready*, namely, by the wedding garment of faith, to accept of her formerly deſpiſed bridegroom. *Note*, That it is probably conjectured by ſome, that the converſion of the Jews ſhall ſoon follow the deſtruction of antichriſt; for his idolatry and perſecution are great ſcandals to the Jews, and mighty ſtumbling-blocks in the way of their converſion. And whereas it is added, *that it was granted her to be arrayed in fine linen*, the words do ſeem to import, that the Jews ſhall, in due time, be brought in to Chriſt, to ſubmit to his righteouſneſs, and be clothed with it, and that an holy emulation ſhall be found between the Gentiles and them, which ſhall moſt and beſt adorn the profeſſion of the goſpel. From the whole, *note*, How the church is called Chriſt's wife. Chriſt and ſhe are here betrothed each to other; but at the great day, the marriage will be here conſummated. *Note* farther, The church's ſpiritual nakedneſs in herſelf conſidered: *It was granted to her to be arrayed in fine linen*; ſhe had it not of herſelf, but it was put on by Chriſt; he decks and dreſſes his own bride with the ornaments of grace here, and glory hereafter.

9 And he ſaith unto me, Write, Bleſſed *are* they which were called unto the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. And he ſaith unto me, Theſe are the true ſayings of God. 10 ¶ And I fell at his feet to worſhip him. And he ſaid unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren that have the teſtimony of Jeſus. Worſhip God: for the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy.

Bleſſed are they which are called to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb; that is (ſay they, who, underſtand, by the marriage of the Lamb, the converſion of the Jews) who ſhall live in the happy time, when the Jews being converted, ſhall, with the Gentiles, make up one glorious goſpel-church. But the marriage is one thing, and the marriage-ſupper another; the marriage-ſupper follows the marriage; ſo that the kingdom of glory rather ſeems here intended: Bleſſed are they which are called to it, being made meet and prepared for it, by grace here, for glory hereafter: We muſt be made meet for heaven, before we can be admitted into heaven. *Obſerve* next, That St. John being overjoyed at the good news of his countrymen's (the Jews) converſion, fell down at the angel's feet to worſhip him, as Cornelius did at St. Peter's, when he heard of the converſion of the Gentiles, Acts x. 25. *And I fell at his feet to worſhip him.* The holieſt and beſt of ſaints are not wholly free from paſſionate infirmities: He would now have worſhipped this angel, yet we read not of any attempt made to worſhip any of the former angels which converſed with him. This makes it probable, that he apprehended it to be an uncreated angel, even the Son of God, which now talked with him. Next, With what indignation this holy angel rejected the offer of religious adoration, and how peremptorily he forbids it; *ορα μη*, by no means, upon no terms, do it, *See thou do it not*. The church of Rome aſks us, Why we reprove them for worſhipping the angels, when St. John himſelf did it? Our anſwer is ready, That St. John himſelf was reproved for it; the angel rejected it as none of his due. O the preſumption of thoſe men, who dare do that which the angel expreſsly forbids to be done! Yet, after all, Bellarmine ſays, That St. John did well to worſhip the angel; then, ſay we, the angel did ill to reprove St. John: But whether we ſhall believe a cardinal at Rome, or an angel of God, judge ye. Laſtly, The reaſons aſſigned by the angel who forbade it. 1. Becauſe God, and God alone, is the ſole and proper object of religious worſhip: 2. Becauſe the angel was St. John's equal in office, though not in nature: As if he had ſaid, "Thoſe who ſerve and worſhip God together with you, muſt not be worſhipped by you: Thoſe who are fellow-ſervants to one maſter, ſhould not give to one another that worſhip which is only due to their Lord and maſter. *But we are fellow-ſervants*: How doth that appear? Thus: You have the *teſtimony of Jeſus*, and I have *the ſpirit of prophecy*. Now, the ſpirit of prophecy, and the work of the miniſtry in teſtifying of Jeſus, being of the ſame nature and kind of ſervice; therefore, from thoſe that are employed in one of them, religious worſhip is not due to the other. It is Chriſt that employs us both, and therefore, he alone is to be worſhipped, and neither I nor thou: *Worſhip God*, to whom religious worſhip is juſtly and peculiarly due."

11 And I ſaw heaven opened, and behold, a white
horſe; and he that ſat upon him *was* called Faithful
and True, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and
make war. 12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and
on his head were many crowns; and he had a name
written that no man knew but he himſelf: 13 And
he *was* clothed with a veſture dipped in blood: and
his name is called, The Word of God. 14 And the
armies which were in heaven followed him upon
white horſes, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
15 And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that
with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: and he ſhall
rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the
wine-preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of almighty
God. 16 And he hath on his veſture and on his
thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord
of Lords.

Here we have a new and freſh viſion, in which St. John ſaw heaven opened, and Chriſt repreſented as a great and victorious General, marching forth with a glorious army for his church's enemies full and final deſtruction. This great General is firſt deſcribed from the place whence he comes, namely, from heaven; he is no earthly prince or potentate, but an heavenly monarch. Next, he is ſaid to ſit *on a white horſe*, denoting victory, proſperity, and ſucceſs: *He is called faithful and true, and righteous*, becauſe faithful in all his promiſes, true in his threatenings, righteous in all his diſpenſations towards his enemies; he will do them no wrong. Next *his eyes* are ſaid to be as a flame of fire; denoting his clear and piercing knowledge, and alſo his terror as a judge, his eyes being in wrath as a flame of fire, ready to conſume his enemies. And farther, to ſhew his royal dignity, it is added, *on his head were many crowns*, which alſo denoted his many victories over his many and mighty enemies. And by the *name*, which *no man knew* but himſelf, ſome uuderſtand his nature and eſſence, which is ſo incomprehenſible and unſearchable, as that none but he who is true God, is able to comprehend it fully, or reveal it perfectly. Others by his name, underſtand his judgments and ways, by which he is known, as a man by his name. *Obſerve* next, This great and mighty General is deſcribed from his *veſture dipped in blood*, which denotes the mighty overthrow of his enemies: The crueleſt and proudeſt of them can expect nothing in the end from him, but extremity of wrath and deſerved deſtruction; for they muſt all become his foot-ſtool. And his name being called, *The Word of God*, ſpeaks dread and terror to antichriſt, who ſlanders, oppoſes, corrupts, and ſuppreſſes, and offers all manner of indignities to the word of God; exerciſes the utmoſt cruelties againſt the preachers and profeſſors of it. *Obſerve* farther, That after the deſcription of this great and mighty General, follows next the deſcription of his *armies*, his attendants and followers, namely, the holy angels and glorified ſaints, ver. 14. theſe alſo ride upon *white horſes*, as their General before them, and are clothed in *fine linen, white and clean*. Behold the comely conformity, and purity, and holineſs, between the General and his ſoldiers, between Chriſt and his followers; they both appear on white horſes, ſuitable to one another. Chriſt will admit none to be his followers that are not like him. Next, we have the *weapon* deſcribed, *ver.* 15. which Chriſt makes uſe of for the deſtruction of antichriſt, and all his church's enemies; and that is *a ſword, a ſharp ſword*, the holy ſcriptures, particularly the threatenings of the word, with which he will ſmite all the wicked nations that ſide with antichriſt againſt him and his kingdom; dealing with his enemies as men do with grapes gathered into a wine-preſs, which they can eaſily cruſh. Laſtly, He is deſcribed by a new name of royal dignity and ſupreme power, being called *King of kings, Lord of lords*. And this name is ſaid to be written on his *veſture*, and on his *thigh*, partly for perſpicuity, that all might take notice of it; and partly for permanency, to ſhew, that as long as himſelf laſts, which is for ever, ſo long ſhall his kingdom and dominion over all endure.

17 And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun: and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh of captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all *men*, both free and bond, both ſmall and great.

After the deſcription of the General and his army, follows next the event and ſucceſs of the battle, which is a prodigious ſlaughter of the church's enemies: And as eagles and vultures, and other birds of prey, do attend an army, and flock where the ſlain lie, in like manner, almighty God here invites the fowls of the air to ſup upon the carcaſes of his ſlain enemies. Antichriſt would not ſuffer the dead bodies of the witneſſes to be buried, but to be caſt out, and ly in the ſtreets; and here God metes to him the ſame meaſure; their carcaſes alſo ſhall be a ſupper for the birds and fowls of the air. *Come to the ſupper of the great God*, to the ſlaughter of antichriſt and his adherents. Where *note*, That by calling it a ſupper, two things may be probably intended. 1. The facility and eaſineſs of the victory; that Chriſt's and his church's enemies, will not put him hard to it to overcome them; as we proverbially ſay, they will be but a ſupper to him, or a breakfaſt for him. 2. The word *ſupper* ſeems to import, that this ſhall be the laſt effort, the laſt great oppoſition, that antichriſt and the church's enemies ſhall ever make againſt Chriſt to the end of the world, as the ſupper is the laſt meal of the day.

19 And I ſaw the beaſt, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army. 20 And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image. Theſe both were caſt into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone. 21 And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which *ſword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh.

Obſerve here, 1. The final iſſue of this great battle, namely, the total ruin of all the enemies of the church; the beaſt and falſe prophet were taken, *and caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone*. Behold the puniſhment of idolators and idolatry; the falſe prophet had cheated credulous princes and peoples, with his pretended miracles, into idolatry; he had caſt others into a bed of fornication, and God caſts him into a bed of flames. Laſtly, it is added concerning the *remnant*, that they were ſlain *with the ſword of his mouth*: That is, by Chriſt's judicial ſentence, they were righteouſly adjudged to be ſlain, and when they were ſo, all the fowls were filled with their fleſh. Where *note*, That theſe perſons were not excuſed, becauſe they followed their leaders, and did what they bade them; Chriſt commands, for all that, that they alſo ſhould be ſlain. Lord! how vain will the plea of many ſinners be at the great day; we followed our guides, we did as we ſaw others do before us! *Remember me*, that God has given us a rule to walk by, the infallible and inflexible rule of his word; and neither the example of the moſt, nor of the beſt, muſt influence us to act contrary thereunto; for if we will do as the moſt do, we muſt be contented to go where the moſt go, even *into the lake of fire burning with brimſtone*.

CHAP. XX.

AND I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand: 2 ¶ And he laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years. 3 And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, until the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled; and after that he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon.

This chapter begins with a freſh and glorious viſion which St. John had of an angel's deſcending from heaven, to bind Satan for a thouſand years: And herein we have *obſerveable*, 1. The perſon binding, *the angel* of the covenant, Chriſt Jeſus, (for he only has the keys of the bottomleſs pit, of hell, and of death, Rev. i. 18.) This angel is here ſaid to come down from heaven, and with a great chain in his hand, denoting his omnipotent power and ſovereignty over Satan, and his ability to reſtrain him. 2. The perſon bound, Satan: Where *mark*, That he is ſet forth here by five names; he is called the *dragon*, the *ſerpent*, the *old ſerpent*, the *devil*, and *Satan*. And *note*, Chriſt's power is ſet forth in as many terms as the devil has titles; he is ſaid to lay *hold* on him, to *bind* him, to *caſt* him into the bottomleſs pit, to *ſhut* him in, or ſeal him up for a thouſand years; that is, to reſtrain him, and render him incapable of doing ſuch miſchief to the world as he had done before. 3. What we are to underſtand by Chriſt's binding Satan; ſome thereby do underſtand Chriſt's overthrowing the power of the devil in the heathen world, his caſting down thoſe ſtrong holds of Satan, to wit, ignorance, ſuperſtition, idolatry, and lying oracles, by the light and power of the goſpel, preached among the Gentiles; his curbing of Satan, that he ſhould no more cozen the world with heatheniſh deluſions as he had done. Others underſtand this binding of Satan to be after the deſtruction of antichriſt; when the Jews ſhall be converted, and there ſhall follow a quiet and peaceable ſtate of the church for a long time, ſtyled here a thouſand years; during which time, Satan ſhall be bound, and there ſhall be no moleſtation from him. From the whole, *learn*, That be the devil never ſo deviliſh, Chriſt has power to overpower him. Chriſt has a great chain in his hand to bind Satan: Intimating, That how mighty and malicious ſoever Satan is, Chriſt has him as a dog in a chain. But *obſerve* a little, how Chriſt's power meets with, and maſters Satan's power; the devil carries power in his *name*, he is called a *dragon*; in his *nature*, as being an *angel*; in his *numbers*, which are numberleſs; but Chriſt overpowereth him, ſo that he cannot do his own will without him; he bounds him in the execution of his malice, though his malice be boundleſs. Satan is bound in a double chain, in a chain of juſtice, and in a chain of providence; he cannot move a foot, either to tempt or trouble us, without a permiſſion from Chriſt.

4 And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them: and judgment was given unto them: and *I ſaw* the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years.

Theſe words are conceived to ſet forth the glorious and happy condition of the church of Chriſt here on earth, during the time of Satan's reſtraint; and the term of a *thouſand years* ſhews, that it will be the longeſt happy condition that ever the militant church enjoyed, for purity of ordinances, for increaſe of light and knowledge, for the power of godlineſs, for the abundance of profeſſors, for the more open and public profeſſion of chriſtianity, for outward freedom and peace, and all this for a long continuance of time; which happy ſtate and condition is here ſet forth by *thrones*, ſhewing the ſaints' dignity and dominion over their enemies. And whereas St. John ſays, he ſaw the ſouls of martyrs who had ſhed their blood for Chriſt, the meaning, ſay ſome, is, *He ſaw them* in their ſucceſſors of the ſame faith, thoſe pious chriſtians which ſhould at that time live, and in their principles and practices are like the holy martyrs; theſe ſhall then enjoy a more quiet, happy, and comfortable ſtate, during this time than the ſervants of God enjoyed at any time before. Yet *obſerve* farther, That this glorious condition of the church is not abſolute, but comparative only, both in reſpect of purity, and in reſpect of peace; for whilſt the church is on this ſide heaven, there will be both corruptions without, and temptations with croſſes: Hypocrites will be, and offences will come, though freedom from all theſe will at that time be more than uſual; yet taking up the croſs, and being conformed to Chriſt in his ſufferings, will be duties belonging to ſaints whilſt the world endures. *Obſerve*, laſtly, That yet there is no ground from hence to expect Chriſt's perſonal reign upon earth, or his corporeal preſence with his church here; for it is not ſaid that he reigned *with them*, but that they reigned *with him*; denoting that this kingdom is ſpiritual, conſiſting in purity and peace, in righteouſneſs, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. As to a perſonal reign of Chriſt then with his people here on earth, it ſeems not probable, becauſe the ſcripture is ſilent of it, and joins Chriſt's perſonal coming, and the day of judgment, together. Beſides, were Chriſt perſonally upon earth, how ſhould we enjoy him, and converſe with him? It is impoſſible we ſhould enjoy a glorified Chriſt till our bodies be ſpiritualized, which they will never be till they get to heaven. Once more, What will become of the ſaints during theſe thouſand years of Chriſt's ſuppoſed preſence with them? Either they will live all that thouſand years (which is not rational to ſuppoſe) or they will die in that time; if they die, and go to heaven, they will go *from* Chriſt, and not *to* him, and muſt for a time be abſent from him, inſtead of being for ever with him; and doubtleſs, heaven will be a melancholy place, if Chriſt be out of it. The ſum then is this, "That the ſaints living and reigning with Chriſt, holds forth the flouriſhing condition of the church militant: The expreſſion of ſitting upon thrones, ſpeaks an honourable condition that the church will be certainly in, after the downfal of antichriſt: And the term of a thouſand years, ſhews it will be the longeſt happy condition that ever the church enjoyed." God almighty haſten that deſirable time!

5 ¶ But the reſt of the dead lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed. This *is* the firſt reſurrection. 6 ¶ Bleſſed and holy *is* he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, but they ſhall be prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

By the reſt of the dead, underſtand the ſubdued enemies of the church in their ſucceſſors, who are ſaid to be dead politically, in reſpect of their outward condition, which will now be very low; *they lived not again* a political life; that is, they did not regain or recover that power to perſecute the church, which once they had, but are now diveſted of in great meaſure, namely, till the thouſand years are finiſhed; then they ſhall have liberty again to vent their enmity againſt the church, joining with Gog and Magog, as their predeceſſors, the worſhippers of the beaſt, did combine together before them. *This is the firſt reſurrection*; that is, the living again of the ſaints, in that glorious manner before deſcribed, in holy ſocieties, with greater degrees of purity and peace. *Learn*, That the reformation of the church, after the ruin of its Pagan and Papal enemies, is as a ſplendid and glorious reſurrection to her; and accordingly, ſuch as are ſharers in this political reſurrection are pronounced bleſſed; *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection*; that is, bleſſed are they that ſhall have their lot to live in this happy time, when the means of holineſs will more abound, and the meaſures of holineſs be more extenſive and univerſal. *The ſecond death* ſhall never affect them; everlaſting miſery ſhall be eſcaped of them; *and they ſhall be prieſts unto God*, to offer up, not expiatory, but gratulatory, ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe unto him; and as the prieſthood is ſpiritual, ſo is the kingdom alſo. *They ſhall reign* ſpiritually over their luſts and corruptions, and have greater power to overcome temptations, and this for a thouſand years; that is, during the time of their living here, in that part of the happy millenium in which they ſhall live, they ſhall in that time enjoy a more holy, happy, peaceful and flouriſhing condition than the church of God did ever ſo long enjoy in former times. Some will have all this to be underſtood concerning a ſpiritual reſurrection from the grave of ſin to a life of holineſs and grace; over ſuch indeed the ſecond death, or everlaſting miſery, ſhall have no power; but though this may be alluded to, yet a political, not a ſpiritual, reſurrection ſeems here to be principally intended.

7 And when the thouſand years are expired, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon, 8 And ſhall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the ſand of the ſea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 ¶ And the devil that deceived them, was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet *are*, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, 1. A prophetical prediction, that when the long time of the church's liberty and peace ſhall be expired, which is here expreſſed and ſet forth under the notion of a thouſand years, God will then take off his reſtraint from the devil, and he ſhall influence the wicked world once more to make oppoſition againſt his church; *When the thouſand years are expired, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon.* Behold here Satan's reſtleſs malice againſt mankind, and particularly againſt the church of Chriſt. *Obſerve* next, That Satan is firſt ſaid to deceive the nations, and then to gather them together to battle againſt the ſaints: The ſame ſaints, either in their perſons, or in their ſucceſſors, who did formerly reign, will now ſuffer; but by whom? By Gog and Magog; where is probably an alluſion to theſe two names mentioned often in the Old Teſtament, who were the laſt enemies of the Jewiſh church before Chriſt's firſt coming. In like manner, the laſt enemies of the chriſtian church are here ſet forth by that name, who ſhall be utterly deſtroyed a little before Chriſt's ſecond coming to judgment. Satan, with all his united power, and combined force, will attempt the whole body of the chriſtian church before his laſt and fatal overthrow. *Obſerve*, laſtly, That after the deſtruction of theſe agents and inſtruments of Satan's fury his own full and final deſtruction is declared; which may be called his ſecond impriſonment in that lake of fire and brimſtone, which is both eaſeleſs and endleſs, there to keep company with the beaſt and falſe prophet to all eternity. Behold here the deceiver and the deceived plagued together; the devil that deceived, and the beaſt and falſe prophet that were deceived by him, and were his inſtruments to deceive others, are caſt together into the lake of fire, to be tormented for ever. Satan was indeed condemned to this before, and reſerved thereunto, but the actual and final execution thereof is ſuſpended till the end come.

11 And I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 ¶ And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire. This is the ſecond death. 15 And whoſoever was not found written in the book of life was caſt into the lake of fire.

Here is another viſion which St. John ſaw, namely, a lively repreſentation of the great day of judgment, when all, both good and bad, that ever lived, ſhall be raiſed and ſentenced according to their works; the ſtate of the wicked is ſet forth in this chapter, and the happy condition of the righteous in heaven gloriouſly deſcribed in the two next chapters. *Obſerve* here, 1. The Judge deſcribed, as ſitting upon a throne or ſeat of judgment; a *throne*, to denote that this Judge is a King; and a *white throne*, to denote the purity and righteouſneſs of this Judge; and *a great white throne*, becauſe erected for a great Judge, and for a great ſervice, namely, the judging of the whole world. *Obſerve*, 2. The dreadful majeſty and glorious power of this Judge declared, that neither heaven nor earth are able to abide his preſence, but are ſaid *to flee away, and that there was no place found for them.* *Obſerve*, 3. The perſons judged are here deſcribed, and that, 1. By their condition and qualification, all the dead, both ſmall and great; all that ever lived, and all that ſhall then be found alive. 2. By their poſture; they ſtand before the Judge, whilſt he ſits, to ſhew his authority. 3. By the manner of proceeding, which is repreſented as being after the form of well-ordered judicatories here on earth; wherein the books are produced, namely, the book of God's omniſcience, and the book of conſcience. the book of the law, and the book of the goſpel. They that had not the written law, ſhall be judged by the law of nature; they that had the written law, are to be judged by that; and they that had the goſpel, to be judged by that; and every one according to their works. *Obſerve*, 4. The execution of the ſentence of this great Judge upon the wicked and impenitent world; they are caſt into the lake of fire, which is the ſecond death. From the whole, *learn*, 1. That it is certain that there ſhall, and neceſſary that there ſhould, be a day of judgment. 2. That in that day there will be no exemption of any perſons from the examination of the Judge; *I ſaw all the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God.* 3. That Jeſus Chriſt, called here *God* (which clearly proves his deity) ſhall come in the clouds to Judge the world; and will then be found ſuch a Judge that the riches of the wealthieſt cannot bribe; ſuch a Judge that the power of the mightieſt cannot daunt; ſuch a Judge as the ſubtilty of the wiſeſt cannot delude; ſuch a Judge as there is no appealing from, no repealing of, his ſentence. *Learn*, 4. That as the ſame perſons ſhall be judged, who formerly lived, ſo in the ſame bodies that died, and were either buried in the earth, or conſumed in the ſea: *The ſea gave up her dead*; by which underſtand all places, though attended with never ſo many improbable circumſtances of a reſurrection, ſhall yet give up the dead. *Death and hell*, that is, death and the grave, *gave up the dead which were in them*, that is, by the power of God were made to reſtore them. *Learn*, 5. That the ſentence denounced will be according to every man's work at the great day; according to the nature and quality of the wicked man's works, ſhall his judgment and puniſhment be; according to the ſincerity, not according to the imperfection of the righteous man's works, ſhall his reward be, God grant that the conſideration of this may ſo far influence us, that no profit may tempt us, no pleaſure entice us, no power embolden us, no privacy encourage us, to do that thing, of which we cannot give a good account in the day of judgment.

CHAP. XXI.

AND I ſaw a new heaven and a new earth: for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away: and there was no more ſea. 2 And I John ſaw the holy city, new Jeruſalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband.

By the new heavens and the new earth here, all underſtand a new ſtate and face of the church; but ſome apply it to the ſtate of the church militant here upon earth, and others to the ſtate of the church triumphant in heaven. Accordingly they take the new heavens and the new earth to be the effect of that great change which ſhall be made by fire at the univerſal conflagration; and they are called *new*, not ſo much in regard to ſubſtance, as in reſpect of qualities, being now for nature more ſtable, and for beauty more glorious. *Queſt.* But what uſe ſhall there be of this new heaven and new earth? and who ſhall dwell therein? *Anſw.* We cannot tell, but muſt reſt ſatisfied with what God hath told us, that therein *ſhall dwell righteouſneſs*; and it will be a ſtanding monument of God's power and greatneſs: It is added, that *the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away*; not by annihilation, but by a qualitative mutation. *And no more ſea*; that is, ſay ſome, as it was before, turbulent, changeable, ſubject to corruption and vanity; ſay others, no more troubleſome ſtate of things, which is oft-times ſignified by the ſea. A new and glorious ſtate of things was undoubtedly here deſigned relating to the church. *Obſerve* next, The character St. John gives of the glorious ſtate of the church triumphant. ver. 2. He compares her, 1. To a beautiful city, for amplitude and largeneſs, for compact ſtructure, and for commodious habitation; ſhe is called *holy*, becauſe no unclean thing can enter into her, and becauſe that holineſs ſhall there be perfected which was here begun. 2. To an adorned bride; no ſpouſe on her marriage-day ſo adorned as ſhe was. The church in heaven is ſo called, to denote her dignity, and the love which Chriſt bears to her, and the delight which he takes in her, which is ſo continual, as if it were always a wedding-day; and ſhe is adorned for him, and adorned by him, with ſpiritual beauty, and glory, and perfection of grace.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, ſaying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away.

Obſervable is that variety of expreſſions which the Holy Ghoſt here makes uſe of, to ſet forth the excellency of the church triumphant by. 1. She is bleſt with God's immediate preſence and abode, of which the tabernacle was a ſign; the Lord manifeſting himſelf in heaven unto his ſaints in a more immediate way than ever he did unto them here on earth. *The tabernacle of God is with men*; and to ſhew the premanency of this privilege, it is added, *He ſhall dwell with them*; after an inhabitation here by grace, ſhall follow a cohabitation hereafter in glory. Next it is ſaid, *They ſhall be his people, and he will be their God*; which muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if that relation did now begin between them, but the comfort of that relation is now perfectly underſtood, and they reap the complete advantage of that covenant-promiſe, whoſe ſweetneſs they did only taſte before. 2. Having deſcribed the poſitive good which the triumphant church ſhall eternally reſt in; St. John next ſets forth the private evils, which they ſhall everlaſtingly be freed from. All ſorrow, and all the cauſes of ſorſow, ſhall be removed; they ſhall have no outward occaſion, nor inward diſpoſition to weep: There ſhall be no death, but immortality and eternal life; nor any more pain or ſickneſs, but pleaſure for evermore. Lord! what a ſovereign cordial is this againſt all our preſent ſorrows and ſufferings! to conſider the time is at hand when all tears ſhall be wiped from our eyes, all ſorrows, and the cauſes of ſorrow, baniſhed from our hearts, and everlaſting joys ſhall poſſeſs our ſouls, and we ſhall be with our Lord for ever, to obey him with vigour, to praiſe him with cheerfulneſs, to love him above meaſure, to fear him without torment, to ſerve him without interruption or diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him as well in holineſs as in happineſs, as well in purity as in immortality!

5 And he that ſat upon the throne, ſaid, Behold, I make all things new. And he ſaid unto me, Write: for theſe words are true and faithful. 6 And he ſaid unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirſt, of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Note here, 1. How theſe new heavens and a new earth come to be effected and made, namely by the omnipotent power of Chriſt, *Behold, I make all things new*: A good argument to encourage us to go unto Chriſt by prayer for renewing grace. Surely, he that makes new heavens can make new hearts; he that renews an old world, can renew us in the ſpirit of our minds, and make old things paſs away, and cauſe all things to become new. Next he commands St. John to write, that theſe words ſet down here and throughout this prophecy are *true and faithful*. We ſee then that the holy ſcriptures were written at the Lord's command, and therefore from him they do derive their authority. 2. The word of aſſurance here utttered by Chriſt, for the confirmation of what he had before declared and promiſed, *he ſaid unto me, It is done*; ſignifying thereby, that it is as certain as if it were already done; namely, whatever he had promiſed relating to his church's happineſs, and all he had threatened relating to her enemies deſtruction: Let not the church then at any time ſtagger in her faith. 3. The title which Chriſt is pleaſed here to reſume, which before was given by himſelf, chap. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*, to ſhew that as he firſt made the world, ſo he was now about to put a period to it, and would give to every thirſty or believing ſoul an everlaſting life in the new Jeruſalem, which ſhall no more decay, than water, which is an ever-ſpringing fountain, can be dried up.

6 He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon.

Obſerve, 1. That our deſires of happineſs muſt be accompanied with endeavours after it, or they will be ineffectual; to thirſting in the former verſe, he joins overcoming in this verſe: We muſt not barely wiſh but work; not only talk, but fight; and not only fight but overcome our ſpiritual enemies in fighting, or we are miſerable; how ſtrong ſoever our deſires after happineſs may be ſuppoſed to be, without proportionable endeavours, we can have no good ground of hope. 2. *He that overcometh*, that is, he that is overcoming, he that daily maintains the combat, though he has not yet obtained a perfect conqueſt over his ſpiritual enemies, yet he keeps the field with ſword in hand, reſolving never to thrown down his weapon, but to die as a conqueror, rather than be taken a priſoner. *Obſerve*, 3. The encouraging promiſe given to the conqueror, *He ſhall inherit all things*. Where *note*, The extent and latitude of the promiſe, the enjoying *all things*, that is, all bleſſings and benefits, all joys and comforts that are requiſite to make him perfectly and perpetually happy. *Note* alſo, God's way and manner of diſpenſing the mercy promiſed, and that is by free gift, *he ſhall inherit all things*, not merit any thing: An inheritance is *gratuitum paterni amoris pignis*, an eſtate freely given by the father to his children. 4. A ſuperadded promiſe, *I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon*; that is, I will give him the manifeſtation of his adoption before angels and men: I am now his God, and he is now my ſon, but the world knoweth it not; they brand my people for a generation of hypocrites, and ſometimes they call in queſtion their own ſincerity, and their title to the privilege of adoption; but at the great day I will publicly own them before angels and men, and make it appear that I love them as a father, and they ſhall live with me as ſons for ever and ever: *He that overcometh*, &c.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.

After a deſcription given of the celeſtial happineſs of the righteous at the day of judgment, here follows the eternally miſerable condition of the wicked; and eight ſeveral ſorts of ſinners are here ſummed up, who ſhall be excluded out of heaven, and caſt into hell; namely, the *fearful*, ſuch as dare not own Chriſt, or for fear of ſuffering have diſowned him, or apoſtatized or revolted from him; *unbelievers*, ſuch eſpecially as have ſat under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, but have rejected our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and refuſed to come unto him that they might have life; the *abominable*, ſuch as live in the practice of ſins againſt nature, ſodomy, and ſuch uncleanneſs as renders them abominable in the ſight of God and man, Rom. i. 26. *Murderers*, ſuch as deſtroy either the ſoul, body, or good name of their neighbours, eſpecially perſecutors; the whore and her followers, who are drunk with the blood of the ſaints; *whoremongers* of all ſorts, both ſpiritual and corporeal, particularly ſuch as are guilty of uncleanneſs in a conjugal ſtate; *ſorcerers*, ſuch as exerciſe witchcraft, conſult with the devil, and trade with familiar ſpirits; *idolaters* of all ſorts and kinds, ſuch as worſhip falſe gods, or the true God after a falſe manner; covetous perſons, who make the world their God, and ſenſual perſons, who make their belly their God; laſtly, all *liars*, thoſe who lie with the lip, and talk falſely; thoſe that lie in their lives, as all hypocrites do, whoſe practice gives their profeſſion the lie: thoſe who are the inventors of the doctrine of lies, which is no better than the doctrine of devils: theſe, all theſe ſhall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, that is, in exquiſite torments, and everlaſting. From the whole, *note*, 1. How the timorous and fearful ſtand in the front of all thoſe vile ſinners, whoſe ways lead down to the chambers of death and hell. Behold here! God's martial law executed upon cowards and renegadoes, whoſe fear makes them revolt from Chriſt in time of danger. Think of this, all you timorous and faint-hearted profeſſors! who cannot bear the thought of lying in a naſty dungeon for owning Chriſt, how will you endure to lie in a lake of fire and brimſtone for diſowning of him! Is not the little finger of an angry God heavier than the loins of all the tyrants and perſecutors in the world? 2. That although eight ſorts of ſinners only are here reckoned up, yet all others who live and die impenitently in any known ſin, beſides theſe, of what kind ſoever, are certainly included, and their damnation implied alſo, as well as theſe; for whoever lives in the habitual practice of any known ſin, without converting from it unto God, is certainly in a ſtate of damnation. *Note* laſtly, That the ſins here mentioned muſt not be underſtood copulatively, but diſjunctively; we muſt not ſuppoſe that ſuch as are guilty of all the before-mentioned ſins, are the perſons threatened with hell fire; but ſuch as are with allowance guilty of any one of theſe, or of any other beſides theſe, and continuing impenitently in them.

9 And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels
which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues,
and talked with me, ſaying, Come hither, I will ſhew
thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 ¶ And he car-
ried me away in the ſpirit to a great and high moun-
tain, and ſhewed me that great city, the holy Jeruſa-
lem, deſcending out of heaven from God, 11 Having
the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a ſtone
moſt precious, even like a jaſper ſtone, clear as
cryſtal;

chryſtal; 12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Iſrael. 13 On the eaſt, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the ſouth, three gates; and on the weſt, three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb.

St. John having delivered, before, a general account of the ſaints' happineſs in heaven, deſcends here to a more particular deſcription of it. Heaven, called the New Jeruſalem, is repreſented by a city, with magnificent gates and walls; and the church, the collective body of glorified ſaints, is here called the Lamb's wife, eſpouſed before, but the marriage ſolemnized now. *Note* here, 1. That as the earthly Jeruſalem was a type of the church militant, ſo the church triumphant is called the New Jeruſalem, and compared to a great city, for the multitude of its members; and ſtyled holy, becauſe ſanctity is the ſpecial qualification of thoſe who are the inhabitants of it. 2. The light which is found in this city, it is not compared to the light of the ſun, for that is attended with ſcorching heat, not to the light of the moon, which is variable and uncertain, but to the light of precious ſtones, which is clear and pure, and has nothing annoying in it. 3. The great ſafety and ſecurity of this city, and of all the citizens, inhabiting therein; here is a wall great and high: Walls are for defence (called *mœnia a muniendo)* and the higher the wall, the greater the defence; God's omnipotency is as a wall, and will be an invincible bulwark about his ſaints in heaven, nothing ſhall endanger them, nothing ſhall offend them. 4. Here are twelve gates, for the conveniency of entrance into this city on all ſides, and to give free and eaſy acceſs from all parts, eaſt, weſt, north, and ſouth; to ſignify, that the church in heaven will be made up of perſons coming from all parts, as Chriſt foretold, Matt. viii. 11. Luke xiii. 29. They ſhall come from the eaſt, &c. and ſhall ſit down with Abraham. The triumphant church is a collective body of believers, of all nations, kindreds, and people, tongues and languages. Laſtly, That as the names of workmen are ſometimes ſet upon foundation-ſtones, by which it is well known in after-ages who were the builders; in like manner it is here intimated, that as the ancient Jewiſh church was founded in twelve patriarchs, ſo the latter chriſtian church in and by twelve apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone, or the foundation of both, he being *fundamentum fundans*, they *fundamenta fundata*; teaching us, that our faith muſt be built upon the doctrine of Chriſt and his apoſtles, and upon no other doctrine whatſoever, though it has a pretended ſtamp of infallibility upon it.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to meaſure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth four-ſquare, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he meaſured the city with the reed, twelve thouſand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he meaſured the wall thereof an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the meaſure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Still St. John proceeds in the deſcription of the heavenly ſtate, and the church triumphant in it; this is called *a city*, in reſpect of its magnificent building, comely order, and invincible ſtrength; *a great city*, in regard of its largeneſs and capaciouſneſs, being full of glorified ſaints and angels; and *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of that everlaſting peace which is there enjoyed, as the Hebrew word ſignifies; and here an account is given of the meaſuring of this great city: We read of its meaſuring before, chap. xi. but differently from its meaſuring now; then it was meaſured by a man, now by an angel; then by an ordinary reed, now by a golden reed; intimating the tranſcendency of the ſtate of the church now, to what it was before, and repreſenting the firmneſs, perfection, and greatneſs of the New Jeruſalem. *Note*, An obſervable difference in the meaſuring of the church militant, and of the church triumphant; the church militant, upon a juſt meaſure by the reed of the word, is found unequal in its parts, ſome parts of it are purer and better than others, but in the New Jeruſalem all parts are equal in perfection and purity; the length is as large as the breadth, and the height equal to either; the church of Chriſt in heaven ſhall be exceeding large and great, perfect and complete, nothing ſhall be found irregular in it, all things can there endure the meaſuring reed, and abide the exacteſt trial.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jaſper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glaſs. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones. The firſt foundation *was* jaſper; the ſecond, a ſapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, a ſardonyx; the ſixth, a ſardius; the ſeventh, a chryſolite; the eighth, a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryſopraſus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyſt. 21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every ſeveral gate was of one pearl: and the ſtreet of the city *was* pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs.

Some will have all this to ſignify and repreſent the pureſt ſtate of the church here upon earth; but if there ſhall be any ſtate on this ſide eternity which anſwereth this glorious repreſentation, how much more will the perfect glorious church in heaven fully anſwer it? What was ſaid of Jeruſalem of old, may be truly ſpoken of the New Jeruſalem above, Pſal. lxxxvii. 3. *Very excellent things are ſpoken of thee, thou city of God*: her pavement of gold, her gates of pearl, her walls of precious ſtone, denoting the durableneſs and permanency of the ſaints happineſs, the delight and ſatisfaction that accompany it, and the reſplendent glory of it; as gold excels all metals, and is not ſubject to corruption, as precious ſtones are full of ſplendour and glory, in like manner will the manſions of heaven be moſt glorious, the converſation there pure and incorrupt, affording ſaints ſuch an entire ſatisfaction as entirely exceeds all that the moſt rich and glorious things of this world can afford for the gratification of the outward ſenſes.

22 And I ſaw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. 23 ¶ And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the moon, to ſhine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. 24 ¶ And the nations of them which are ſaved ſhall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day: for there ſhall be no night there. 26 And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatſoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Obſerve here, 1. St. John declares that the new Jeruſalem ſhall not want either thoſe ſpiritual ſupplies or natural advantages which Jeruſalem below ſtood in need of; no need of any temple there for external worſhip and ordinances, which it is our duty to wait upon God in here: What need an houſe of prayer for them that want nothing to pray for? what need of miniſters and ordinances, to teach them whoſe knowledge is perfected? what need of ſacraments to remember Chriſt in and by, when they ſhall always ſee Chriſt face to face? Again, What need of the natural light of the ſun and moon, where the Sun of righteouſneſs for ever ſhineth, and where God is all in all! Happy they that enjoy him, for they enjoy all good in him and by him, he being the fountain of all goodneſs! 2. Having thus deſcribed the city, St. John next declares who ſhall be the citizens, namely, the nations that are ſaved, all believing Jews and converted Gentiles, called elſewhere, *the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born*, which are a great multitude; theſe ſhall be admitted into it, and partake of the glory and happineſs of it: And whereas it is added, that *kings do bring their honour and glory into it*, this is not to be ſo underſtood as if there would be a diſtinction in heaven between kings and ſubjects; no, all the ſaints there are kings and prieſts unto God; neither is it meant that kings ſhall carry their earthly glory and honour with them into heaven; but that kings who ſhall be ſo happy as to come thither, ſhall ſee all their honour and glory ſwallowed up in the glory and happineſs of that place and ſtate, and ſhall confeſs that all their crowns are infinitely ſhort of the crown of glory, and that their thrones are dunghills compared with the dignity of this throne. 3. It is declared what perfect ſecurity and peace the ſaints enjoy in the new Jeruſalem, together with their glory, riches, and happineſs; this is ſignified, ver. 25, *The gate ſhall not be ſhut at all by day*, and there is no night to ſhut them in; the gates ſhall be open, to ſhew their peaceable ſtate and ſecure tranquility, without fear of any hoſtile invaſion or entry of enemies, either by force or fraud: It is added, *There ſhall be no night there*, either in a literal or metaphorical ſenſe, no darkneſs, no interruption of happineſs, nor fear of danger, nothing that can either diſturb or diſquiet. 4. Who the perſons are that ſhall be everlaſtingly debarred the enjoyment of all this happineſs, all that have defiled themſelves by luſt and uncleanneſs, every perſon that hath not, by holineſs of heart and life, ſeparated himſelf from ſin and wickedneſs, and dedicated himſelf to God and his ſervice; *nothing that defileth*, nothing that *worketh abomination*, no open ſcandalous ſinner, or he that maketh a lie, ſhall be admitted; to tell a lie is bad, but to make a lie is much worſe, this is the devil's ſin in a ſpecial manner, it is his by temptation, it is his by approbation, it is his by practice; he is a liar, and the father of lies and liars; it were well if our cuſtomary liars would conſider it. The ſum of all is, "That without grace and holineſs here, there can be no expectation of glory and happineſs hereafter; this fits at once for the employment of heaven, and the enjoyment of heaven, it makes meet for the inheritance in light, and if we have not our preſent *fruit unto holineſs*, our end can never be *everlaſting life*."

CHAP. XXII.

And he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

St. John, in this and the four following verſes, goes on with the deſcription of the heavenly Jeruſalem, which he had begun in the former chapter; and here we have obſervable, 1. The city deſcribed, as having *a clear river* running through it, and this *of the water of life*, an alluſion, doubtleſs, to the earthly paradiſe, Gen. ii. which was well watered, without which accommodation, no place can be happy; the heavenly paradiſe here, or the new Jeruſalem, is ſaid to have a pure river of water in it, denoting the pure and unmixed joys of heaven, and thoſe *rivers of pleaſure which are at God's right hand for evermore*. Here is not a well of water, but a river, not of muddy or feculent water, but *clear as cryſtal*, not corruptible or dead, but living water, *water of life*. 2. The head or ſpring of this river declared, from whence it doth ariſe, not from the hills, which may be cut off, diverted, or dried up, but it *proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb*, and therefore can no more fail, than God and Chriſt can fail; no river can fail, unleſs the ſprings that feed it fail; the ſaints in heaven ſhall be refreſhed with ſuch conſolations as flow from the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, and their comforts cannot fail till they fail.

2 ¶ In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and on either ſide of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

Note, 1. That as there was a river and a tree of life in the terreſtrial paradiſe, ſo, in alluſion thereunto, both are ſaid to be in the heavenly paradiſe; behold here a tree of ſuch vaſt proportion and extent, that its branches extend to both ſides, that all may receive benefit by it: Who can this agree with but Jeſus Chriſt, who is called *a tree of life*, becauſe from him we have our natural, our ſpiritual, and our eternal life? from this tree do bud forth all the fruits of grace and comfort, and that for all ſeaſons and conditions. In *Its leaves are for healing, as well as its fruits for food.* 2. All Chriſt, 1. Our ſouls have all neceſſaries for food and phyſic, variety of fruits, called here *twelve manner of fruits*, that is, variety of graces, and comforts of all ſorts. 3. In him are theſe fruits at all times: This tree bears fruit every month, winter fruits as well as ſummer fruits, even in the black month of ſickneſs and death. Chriſt is continually diſtributing of his divine fulneſs to the ſatisfaction of his people; he is all in all, in the enjoyment of mercy; he is all in all, in want of mercy; he is all, in order to his people's ſalvation; and he is all, in their glorification. *Queſt.* But will there be any need either of food or phyſic in heaven? If not, what need of the fruits of this tree for food, or of its leaves for healing? *Anſ.* We cannot ſuppoſe that in the heavenly ſtate there will be any want either of meat or medicines, any hunger that ſhall require food, or any ſickneſs to ſtand in need of phyſic; but as food and phyſic are the inſtrumental means of the preſervation of natural life, without which it will certainly and ſuddenly decay; in like manner our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth not only give ſpiritual life unto his people, but he is the conſerving cauſe of it, he doth maintain, and will preſerve it without the leaſt decay to all eternity.

4 And there ſhall be no more curſe: but the throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it, and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him. 4 And they ſhall ſee his face; and his name *ſhall be* in their foreheads. 5 ¶ And there ſhall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the ſun; for the Lord giveth them light: and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.

St. John has not yet done with this copious deſcription of the new Jeruſalem, but here he cloſes it by doing theſe two things. 1. He ſhews what ſhall not be found there, *there ſhall be no curſe*, no accurſed perſon, or accurſed thing, no ſin, nor any thing ſinful, that deſerves the curſe: *and there ſhall be no night there*, no darkneſs of ignorance or error, or darkneſs of affliction, temptation, or deſertion, no night of natural darkneſs, no night of ſpiritual darkneſs, much leſs of eternal darkneſs which is the portion of the wicked: farther, there ſhall be no need of natural light, the light of the ſun; no need of artificial light, the light of a candle; no need of the ſpiritual light of the word and ordinances, all which ſhall then and there ceaſe. 2. He ſhews what there ſhall be there, namely, (1.) *The throne of God and the Lamb*, that is, the glorious and everlaſting preſence of God and Chriſt, as on a throne of royal majeſty, inſomuch, that, the name of the city may be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. (2.) It is added, that *his ſervants ſhall ſerve him*, that is, the glorious angels and glorified ſaints ſhall continually ſtand before him, and adminiſter unto him, not ſpend their eternity in a perpetual gazing upon God, but executing his commands, obeying him with vigour, praiſing him with cheerfulneſs, loving him above meaſure, fearing him without torment, truſting him without deſpondency, ſerving him without laſſitude and wearineſs, without interruption or diſtraction, praiſing God, and ſinging eternal allelujah's to the Lamb for ever and ever. 3. It is declared *that they ſhall ſee God's face*, which imports fruition as well as viſion of him, together with a ſweet and ſatisfactory delectation in him. St. Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart*, and holy in life, *for they ſhall ſee God*; that is, have a clear and apprehenſive, though not a full and comprehenſive knowledge of him. (4.) *His name ſhall be in their foreheads:* his name, that is, his holy nature, his image and likeneſs, by which they ſhall be known, as a man is by his name; an alluſion probably to the high prieſt, who had *holineſs to the Lord* written on his frontlet; or a reflection upon the worſhippers of the beaſt, who have his name on their foreheads; in like manner the name of God ſhall be on his ſervants foreheads; they are thankful for imperfect lineaments here, but ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs then and there. Laſtly, It is cloſed with this, *they ſhall reign for ever and ever*, not for a thouſand years, as the militant church is ſaid to reign on earth after antichriſt's deſtruction, but for eternal ages, and this not partially, but fully and completely, when all their ſpiritual enemies, ſin, Satan, and the world, yea, death itſelf, ſhall be put under their feet, and that for ever. From the whole *learn*, That when we are at any time dejected upon the account of our dark and imperfect knowledge, or afflicted upon the occaſion of many weariſome nights and days of ſin and ſorrow, of trouble and temptation, of miſery and deſertion, which we have here on earth, let this meditation comfort us, that the happy day is coming, when there ſhall be no night, but an eternal ſubbath of reſt, light and life, with plenty of all good things, even *fulneſs of joy and rivers of pleaſure for evermore*.

6 And he ſaid unto me, Theſe ſayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: bleſſed *is* he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John ſaw theſe things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and ſeen, I fell down to worſhip before the feet of the angel which ſhewed me theſe things. 9 ¶ Then ſaith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the ſayings of this book. Worſhip God.

The prophetical part of this book being now ended, here follows the concluſion, which is managed in a way of dialogue between Chriſt, the angel, and the apoſtle. *Note* here, 1. How the divine authority of this book is ſtrongly aſſerted, and its excellency commended: *Theſe ſayings are faithful and true*; that is, all things contained in this book of prophecies are certain and infallibly true. The holy Spirit of God foreſaw that this book would be more queſtioned than other books of holy ſcripture, therefore he confirms the divine authority of it by an holy angel, and the truth of all things in it, and eſpecially that which relates to the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, the inhabitants of the new Jeruſalem, with a frequent aſſertion, viz. *Theſe ſayings are faithful and true.* It is added, *they ſhall ſhortly be done*; this is ſpoken of the beginning of their accompliſhment, they ſhall begin to be fulfilled, and to take effect, and ſhall receive their full and final accompliſhment in due time. Behold here in Chriſt's omniſciency an evident proof of his divinity, he knows all things to come, as well as all things paſt; and whereas Chriſt ſays, *theſe things ſhall ſhortly be done*; we *learn*, that the time of the church's ſuffering is a limited time, it is a ſhort time, after which ſhall follow an eternal deliverance and a great reward. *Note* farther, That Chriſt ſubjoins a promiſe and aſſurance of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of his coming to judgment, for the ſupport of his church, during the ſhort time of her ſufferings and ſervices, *Behold, I come quickly*; next, he pronounces them bleſſed who keep the words of this book, not only in memory and profeſſion, but in practice and performance. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The ſincerity of St. John, the penman of this book, he leaves here upon record his relapſe into that error into which he had fallen before, chap. xix. 10. The good man relates his own ſin; yea, records his relapſe into the ſame ſin, once and again, which, as it diſcovers that he preferred the glory of God before his own reputation, ſo it evidently declares that a holy man may poſſibly relapſe into the ſame ſin, through inadvertency, or the power of a temptation, and how much it is the duty of every one that thinketh he ſtandeth, to take heed leſt he fall. Of St. John's weakneſs in worſhipping the angel, ſee the *notes* on *chap.* xix. 10. as alſo the angel's anſwer, *Worſhip God*; as much as if he had ſaid, "Thou miſtakeſt the object of thine adoration, I am a created being, and can accept of no ſuch homage as this, which is peculiarly due to the great Creator.

10 And he ſaith unto me, Seal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand, 11 He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill: and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſtrict charge given unto St. John, not to ſeal or cloſe up the words of this prophecy, but to publiſh and make it known, for the uſe and benefit of the church, for which reaſon this book is called a revelation; *Seal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book.* Where *mark*, That although this book be the obſcureſt part of the ſcripture, yet it is Chriſt's command that it ſhould not be concealed from the knowledge of the people: How ſacrilegious then is the practice of the church of Rome in robbing the common people of all the ſcriptures, locking them up in an unknown tongue, and forbidding the people to read the ſame? *Obſerve*, 2. How the Holy Ghoſt here pre-occupates an objection, which St. John might be ready to make: "If I ſeal not up, but make known this prophecy, the wicked men of the world, perſecutors eſpecially, will be made worſe by it, they will be unjuſt ſtill, and filthy ſtill, and more ſo than ever:" Be it ſo, ſays he, yet the righteous will be more confirmed in their courſe of obedience, and ſuch as are holy, will be holy ſtill; and ſuch as are righteous, will be righteous ſtill. There is, we ſee, a dangerous perſeverance in ſin, as well as a deſirable perſeverance in grace and holineſs; let him that is unclean be unclean ſtill: Where *mark*, This is no permiſſion, much leſs a perſuaſion to ſin, but a dreadful threatening or commination, that ſuch as give up themſelves to ſinning, ſhall be judicially given up by God to ſin as a puniſhment; ſuch a liberty as this to ſin, is the worſt of bondage. Again, he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill; the words carry with them not only the force of a command, and the direction of a rule, but the ſweetneſs of a promiſe, and a gracious privilege, that they ſhall perſevere in holineſs unto the end.

12 And behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work ſhall be.

The former verſes contained a dialogue or interlocutory diſcourſe between the angel and St. John; here Chriſt begins to ſpeak, and continues his ſpeech to the middle of the 20th verſe, wherein he declares, that it will not be long before he comes to judge the world, to give unto thoſe who are good, everlaſting happineſs; and to them that are evil, everlaſting puniſhment. Here *obſerve*, 1. An excitation, *behold!* 2. The celeſtial object, Chriſt Jeſus, *I come quickly.* And, 3. The end of his coming, *My reward is with me, to render unto every one according to his works.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the notices of our Lord's coming to judgment are uſually, in ſcripture, uſhered in with great ſolemnity, with a mark of attention and obſervation; this word, *behold*, is generally prefixed and ſet before; thus, Jude 7. *Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints*, &c. So the Apoſtle James gives an awful admonition, *Behold! the Judge ſtandeth before the door*, ready to paſs a final ſentence. And St. John in this book of the Revelation ſeldom ſpeaks of Chriſt coming, but he breaks forth into an extaſy of admiration. *Learn* 2. That the ſpecial diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments is reſerved till the ſecond coming and appearance of Jeſus Chriſt; *My reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work.* *Learn* 3. That it is our wiſdom and duty to repreſent, by actual and ſolemn thoughts, the certain and ſpeedy coming of Chriſt to the righteous judgment of the world.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt. 14 Bleſſed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, "I am the eternal God, the firſt cauſe and the laſt end of all things; I firſt made the world, and I will at laſt put a period to it; and when time ſhall be no more, they ſhall for ever be happy in the enjoyment of me, who have here obeyed me, and lived in conformity to my doctrine and example; they ſhall through holineſs enter the gates of the New Jeruſalem, that glorious city, having the tree of life in it; preſent bleſſedneſs, as well as future happineſs, belongs to thoſe that obey God's will, and keep his commandments; *Bleſſed are they*, and bleſſed for ever ſhall they be."

15 For without *are* dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Without, that is, without the gates of the city of the New Jeruſalem, are all filthy and unclean ſinners, all cruel and bloody perſecutors, all raging and furious enemies to me and my people, all idolaters, and all liars; theſe ſhall be ſhut out of heaven, as dogs are ſhut out of the houſe; and ſhut into hell, to be impriſoned with devils and damned ſpirits, and that everlaſtingly, to lie for ever in that myſterious fire, whoſe ſtrange property it is always to torture but never to kill, or always to kill but never to conſume: They would die, but they cannot die; they ſeek for death, but cannot find it; they deſire it, but it flies from them.

16 I Jeſus have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe things in the churches. I am the root and the off-ſpring of David, *and* the bright and morning-ſtar.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the author of this revelation, and owneth it to be his; the angel did but declare it, St. John did but write it, Chriſt himſelf was the inditer of it: They were not the inventions of St. John nor the ſayings of the angel, but the revelation was Chriſt's; which leaves all men inexcuſable who believe not the ſame, but queſtion the divine authority thereof. 2. The titles here by Chriſt given of himſelf (1.) The root of David; that is, as God, from whom by creation David and all mankind had their being, and did ſpring. (2.) The off-ſpring of David, according to his humanity: Chriſt as God was the root of David; but conſidered as man, David was the root of Chriſt, Iſa. xi. 1. *There ſhall come forth a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, and a branch ſhall grow out of his roots.* (3.) Chriſt ſtyles himſelf the bright morning-ſtar, that is, the light of the world, enlightening and enlivening the new creation: The fountain of all knowledge, grace, and comfort on earth, and of all glory and happineſs in heaven. As the morning-ſtar firſt brings light to the world, ſo Chriſt firſt publiſhed the light of the goſpel, and now, by this revelation, gives a ſuperadded light to his people, informing them what ſhall befal his church until his *ſecond coming to judgment.*

17 And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: and whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Obſerve here, 1. The perſons mentioned, *the Spirit and the bride:* By the Spirit underſtand the Holy Ghoſt, and by the bride the whole catholic church in general, both in heaven and earth, and every true believer in particular. Behold how the Spirit ſpeaks in the bride, and how the bride ſpeaks from and by the Spirit. Chriſt by his Spirit is preſent with her, by his influence he is aſſiſtant to her. 2. The title here given to the church, ſhe is called Chriſt's *bride*, and he elſewhere called her Bridegroom: Now this title of a *bride* given to her, is, 1. A title of eminency and excellency, and ſtands in oppoſition to adultery; ſhe is a *bride*, not a *whore:* The falſe church is not a *bride*, but the *whore*, and ſo often called: She deſires not Chriſt's coming, no more than an adultereſs deſires the return of her huſband; but the *bride*, being a chaſte virgin, longs for it. 2. As the word *bride* is a word of excellency, as it ſtands in oppoſition to adultery, ſo it is a word of extenuation and diminution, as it ſtands in a diſtinction from matrimony and complete marriage; it is the *bride* not a married wife. The ſaints are contracted to Chriſt in this world; the marriage is near, and ſhall be conſummated in the next. A *bride* is a ſpouſe in the confines of marriage, near the approaches of the conjugal ſolemnity: Bleſſed be God! it will not be long before Chriſt and his church, Chriſt and every believer, who are now betrothed and eſpouſed, ſhall be fully and completely married, and in the perfect enjoyment of each other. *Obſerve* 3. The affection which this *bride* expreſſes towards her bridegroom; ſhe ſays, *Come*; ſhe paſſionately and impatiently deſires, and vehemently longs for his coming. *Come*, is a word of invitation, "I pray, come, it is my earneſt ſuit and requeſt that thou wouldſt come." *Learn* hence, That the glorious coming and appearance of Jeſus Chriſt to judgment, is vehemently deſired and earneſtly longed for by all believers. The Spirit in the *bride*, and the *bride* by the Spirit, ſay *Come*. *Obſerve*, 4. The invitation of acceſs returned by Chriſt: the *bride* ſays, *Come*; ſays Chriſt, *Let him that is athirſt, come:* We muſt firſt come to Chriſt by faith and repentance, before we can ever deſire Chriſt's coming to us by death and judgment. Laſtly, The intimation given by Chriſt of a gracious acceptance, and a grateful entertainment: *Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.* Here *note*, 1. The benefit mentioned, or the mercy offered, water of life, all grace here, and glory hereafter; grace, as it leads to glory, and glory, as it follows upon grace: Grace carries life in the boſom of it, even eternal life. 2. The perſons to whom this benefit is offered and tendered, and that is, to *whoſoever will*; to ſhew that ſalvation is not forced upon us againſt our wills, but beſtowed upon us in the uſe of our faculties, and in the exerciſe of our own endeavours. We are the ſubjects of this willingneſs, but God is the author of it, Pſal. cx. 3. *Certum eſt nos velle, cum volumus; ſed Deus facit ut velimus; præbendo vires efficaciſſimas voluntati*; ſays St. Auſtin. *Note*, 3. The offer itſelf, *let him take it freely:* Grace is the free gift of God as well as eternal life. Such is God's munificence and royalty, that he will not ſell his good things; if he did, ſuch is our indigence and poverty, that we could never buy them; therefore, ſays God, *take freely:* Yet we muſt underſtand it only of a freedom from merit, not of freedom from endeavour. God's offers in the goſpel are conditional; he proffers his Son, and all good with him, but upon condition of our acceptance on his own terms. Let none then ſtraiten the grace of God where he has enlarged it. If a man has a mind to keep his ſins, he ſhall have no mercy, be they never ſo ſmall; but if he be willing to leave his ſins, and to accept an offered Saviour, as offered, he ſhall not be excluded from mercy, be they never ſo great.

18 ¶ For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Here we have a dreadful commination and ſevere threatening denounced by Chriſt, againſt all ſuch as ſhall add any thing to the ſcriptures in general, and to this prophecy in particular; not by way of true interpretation, but either *formally*, by joining any thing to be received as ſcripture which God never revealed to be ſuch; or *virtually*, by putting ſuch a ſenſe and meaning upon ſcripture as God never intended, and the words cannot rationally bear. Almighty God here declares, that he will add to ſuch his plagues, and ſhut them out of the holy city, the new Jeruſalem, the kingdom of heaven: And if ſo, *learn* we, what great guilt the church of Rome contracts, and what a dreadful curſe ſhe lies under, by making oral tradition of equal authority with the ſcriptures, and by adding new articles of faith, new points of doctrines, which is, in effect, to accuſe God of ignorance or inadvertency. True, the doctrine of chriſtianity is a tradition; it was delivered by Chriſt to the apoſtles, and by the apoſtles to their ſucceſſors; but now they being long ſince dead, we cannot receive from them the doctrine of life by word of mouth, but muſt ſtick to the ſcriptures, or written word, for theſe things were written for our ſake. But *if any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.* We reject not all traditions, becauſe ſcripture itſelf is a tradition; but we blame the church of Rome, and deſervedly ſure, for making her private unwritten traditions of equal authority with the ſcriptures, and for urging, that they ought to be received *pari pietatis affectu*, with the ſame pious affection with which we receive the holy ſcriptures. And thus they ſet their poſt by God's poſt, and equal their traditions with the doctrines of faith: Their opinion is bad, but their practice is worſe; for they value their own traditions above the ſcriptures, and prefer them before the ſcriptures; they never call their own traditions 'a noſe of wax, a dead letter, a dumb rule, an obſcure doctrine;' but in this manner have they ſtigmatized the holy ſcriptures; and how they will eſcape Chriſt's ſevere commination here before us, for adding to, and taking from, the word of God, concerns them to look to it; for they muſt certainly anſwer for it at the bar of God.

20 He which teſtifieth theſe things, ſaith, Surely I come quickly.—

That is, Jeſus Chriſt, the faithful and true witneſs, from whom St. John received this revelation, as he formerly had done the holy goſpel, ſaith, *Surely I come quickly.* Where *note*, 1. That this prophecy or promiſe of God's ſecond coming to judge the world, is here left as Chriſt's laſt word upon record; it is almoſt the laſt word in the bible; doubtleſs, that it might be ſeriouſly minded, and frequently remembered by us. Chriſt had in this chapter twice before, namely, at ver. 7, and 12, teſtified that he came quickly; yet he repeats it here again, to excite us to prepare for it, and to live continually in the expectation of it. *Note*, That as Chriſt has three ſeveral times in this chapter given us the aſſurance of the certainty of his coming, ſo he prefixes an *ecce*, or *behold*, before it, *Behold! I come quickly*; and here he prefixes the word *ſurely* before it, *Surely, I come quickly*, to awaken the ſecurity and leave the incredibility of ſinners without excuſe, who live as if they did not believe any ſuch day would come.

—Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.

To the forementioned aſſurance of the certainty of our Saviour's coming, St. John, in the name of the whole church, ſubjoins a hearty *Amen*, an earneſt wiſh, a paſſionate deſire and longing for our Lord's coming, ſaying, *Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus*, as thou haſt promiſed, and thy people long expected. *Learn* hence, 1. That the coming of Chriſt to judgment, is a truth firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired by all good chriſtians. St. John here, in the name of the church, takes, as it were, the word out of Chriſt's mouth, like a quick echo, preſently improves the promiſe into a prayer. Chriſt's farewel word to his church is, *I come quickly*; the church's farewel ſuit to Chriſt is, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly. Queſt.* But why is Chriſt's ſecond coming ſo exceedingly deſired by his church and children? *Anſ.* For finiſhing the days of ſinning, and deſtroying the works of Satan; for accompliſhing the number of his own elect, and for haſtening his kingdom; for freeing the creature from ſubjection to vanity; for manifeſting the glory of his juſtice and mercy, and for putting his ſaints into the full and final poſſeſſion of their promiſed inheritance. *Learn*, 2. That it is the unfeigned deſire of God's faithful ſervants, to have the full fruition of Jeſus Chriſt; this is the habitual deſire of their hearts, that Chriſt would come, and receive them to himſelf, though at the ſame time, they may tremble at ſome circumſtances of his coming: There is a degree of ſinful bondage, which hinders much our ſpiritual confidence and boldneſs; but the more holy we are, the more emboldened we ſhall be againſt the day of judgment.

21 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

This is an epiſtolary concluſion, uſed almoſt in all the epiſtles of the New Teſtament, and ſo here, becauſe this prophecy was in the manner of an epiſtle directed to the churches: St. John began this epiſtle with this ſalutation, chap. i. 4. and ſo ends with it here; he knew there would be a long tract of time intervening between the giving of the promiſe, and the fulfilling of it, between the bride's making herſelf ready, and the day wherein the marriage was to be ſolemnized; he well knew, that before the conſummation of all things, there were many ſad diſpenſations which the churches would certainly meet with, many falſe doctrines would be ſpread, many duties to be performed, many afflictions to be endured; all which would require an extraordinary aſſiſtance and ſpecial grace; therefore, he prays, that the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be with them all: teaching us, inceſſantly to deſire for ourſelves, and to crave for others, the auxiliary aids of divine grace, to enable the acceptable performance of every duty, and to the patient enduring of every trial; the greateſt mercy that can be wiſhed to any, or that any can wiſh unto themſelves, is the grace of God to excite and quicken us to our duty, and to aſſiſt and help us in the performance of it; and accordingly, St. John ſhuts up this book, and therewith the canon of the whole ſcripture in theſe words, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be with you all. Amen.*

Trinitati gloria ſempiterna.

29 OC 62

FINIS.